

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 14: Adoption Assistance and Guardianship Assistance Section 10: Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) Payments	
	Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 8

POLICY OVERVIEW

Federal law encourages the adoption of eligible children from the child welfare system through adoption assistance.

POLICY STATEMENT

Adoption assistance usually continues until the child turns 18, or may end earlier or be suspended if the adoptive parent is no longer legally responsible for or financially supporting the child, as decided by the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) Central Eligibility Unit (CEU). Assistance may also extend beyond age 18 if certain criteria are met.

Unless DCS CEU decides otherwise, all regular payments under an adoption assistance agreement will stop when one (1) of the following happens:

1. The child turns 18 years old;
2. The child is emancipated;
3. The adoptive parent is no longer legally responsible for the child;
4. The adoptive parent is no longer giving financial support to the child;
5. The child gets married;
6. The adoptive parent or the child dies;
7. The child's adoption ends;
8. The youth is on active duty in the United States (US) Armed Forces for more than 30 calendar days in a row in a year;
9. The adoptive parent asks to stop the periodic payment; or
10. The youth no longer meets the requirements after turning 18.

Note: Adoption agreements that continue after age 18 will end the day before the youth's 21st birthday, unless CEU decides the youth no longer meets the requirements. DCS CEU will send a notice to the adoptive parent 60 days before the youth's 21st birthday to let them know the periodic payments and Medicaid will end.

Continuation of Adoption Assistance After Age 18

DCS will decide if a youth is eligible for adoption assistance after turning 18. Assistance does not continue automatically. The youth or adoptive parent must apply and show that the youth meets certain requirements.

The youth or adoptive parent must tell DCS right away if anything changes that affects the need for continued periodic payments. Examples include:

1. Any change in legal, financial, or other support the adoptive parent gives the youth (e.g., living costs, medical needs, or care and supervision);

2. The youth leaves school or educational program before graduation or finishing the program (if this applies to the youth's subsidy type); or
3. The youth stops working or leaves a program that helps with getting a job (if this applies to the youth's type of help).

Continuation of County Adoption Subsidy (CAS) and State Adoption Subsidy (SAS)

A youth's CAS or SAS may continue until age 21 if the youth is in high school or college. Medicaid may also continue until age 21 if there is a letter from a doctor, psychiatrist, psychologist, teacher, or other school official that explains the youth's needs.

Continuation of Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Program (AAP)

AAP and Medicaid may continue until age 21 if:

1. The youth has a mental or physical disability that makes it hard to support themselves (per the Severe Impairment Determination process); or
2. The youth meets the requirements under the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351):
 - a. The adoption was finalized on or after the youth's 16th birthday but before they turned 18; and
 - b. The youth still meets at least one (1) of these:
 - Is in high school or a program to get a diploma or High School Equivalency (HSE);
 - Is in college or a job training program;
 - Is in a program that helps them with employment;
 - Works at least 80 hours each month; or
 - Cannot do any of the above because of medical condition (per Severe Impairment Determination process).

Ending or Suspending Adoption Assistance

The adoptive parent must tell DCS CEU in writing if something happens that could cause the adoption assistance to stop or pause. If the adoptive parent does not tell DCS CEU within 30 calendar days, DCS may ask the adoptive parent to pay back any money received after the date of the event.

All adoptive parents must send a completed Adoption Program Status Report form when DCS asks for it. This form helps DCS check if the youth still qualifies for assistance. The Adoption Program Status Report form must be sent to DCS CEU by the due date on the report.

If the adoptive parent is no longer giving financial support to the child, adoption assistance may stop. DCS may decide the parent is still giving support if the child is in out-of-home placement and:

1. The parent visits the child often;
2. The parent is working on case plan goals to reunify with the child; and
3. One (1) of the following is met:
 - a. The parent is paying child support by court order; or
 - b. The parent is:
 - Paying at least half of their monthly adoption assistance amount, or
 - Giving materials, supplies, or services that cost the same. Examples include:
 - Family therapy,
 - School tuition,
 - Clothing,

- Maintenance of special equipment in the home, or
- Services for special needs (e.g., occupational, physical, or speech therapy).

DCS will:

1. Suspend payments if:
 - a. DCS decides the adoptive parent is no longer giving legal or financial support; or
 - b. DCS asks for information (not based on the periodic Adoption Program Status Report), and DCS cannot reach the parent to determine if the parent is still legally or financially responsible for the child.
2. Send a Notice of Administrative Suspension of Adoption Assistance Periodic Payment form and a Request for Administrative Review Indiana Adoption Program form at least 10 days before suspending the adoption assistance payment.

If the adoptive parent starts giving legal or financial support again to the child and asks DCS to end the suspension, DCS will:

1. End the suspension; and
2. Resume payments as stated in the Adoption Assistance Agreement.

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-19-26.5-9: Limits on term of adoption subsidies agreement](#)
- [Public Law 110-351-Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act](#)
- [42 USC 673: Adoption and guardianship assistance program](#)
- [465 IAC 4-1-30 Termination of adoption assistance agreements](#)
- [465 IAC 4-1-32 Continuation of adoption assistance agreements beyond age 18](#)