

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 5: General Case Management Section 04: Locating and Engaging Noncustodial Parents	
	Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 7

POLICY OVERVIEW

Locating and engaging the noncustodial parent can lead to good outcomes for the child. It may help the child build a relationship with their parent, other relatives, or kin. This can also help the child reach permanency faster.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will make diligent efforts to locate and engage the noncustodial parent. This will start during the assessment and continue through the case.

DCS will consider placement with the noncustodial parent before choosing an out-of-home placement if a child must be removed from their custodial parent (see policy [8.01](#)).

The noncustodial parent may:

1. Be a possible permanency option and lifelong connection for the child;
2. Share medical history about the child or family;
3. Give information about benefits the child may be eligible to receive (e.g., child support and health benefits);
4. Participate in the Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting or Case Plan Conference and help make the child's Permanency Plan; and
5. Help find family or kin and may be:
 - a. A placement option if the noncustodial parent is not,
 - b. A member of the CFT meeting or Case Plan Conference, and/or
 - c. A permanency option for the child.

DCS will use the information from the noncustodial parent when:

1. Developing the Case Plan/Prevention Plan or IA/Prevention Plan (see policies [5.08](#) or [5.09](#));
2. Planning services for the child and family; and
3. Checking if the child is eligible for federal funding (see policy [15.01](#)).

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-9-2-22.1: Concurrent Planning](#)
- [IC 31-34-19-7: Placement of child; relative evaluation; background checks](#)