

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES</b> <b>CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 5:</b> General Case Management <b>Section 06:</b> Locating Absent Parents	
	<b>Effective Date:</b> January 1, 2026	<b>Version:</b> 8

**POLICY OVERVIEW**

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) knows that parents are the main caregivers for their children. When a parent is absent from a child’s life, DCS works hard to find them. This helps DCS tell the parents about court hearings and involve them in planning and services for the child. It can also help the child and parent, or other relatives, build a relationship, which can lead to a faster permanent home for the child.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

If DCS doesn't know who or where a parent is, they will try to find them using different tools like the Putative Father Registry and Federal Parent Locator Services (FPLS). DCS will start looking for the parent as soon as possible and keep looking until the case is closed or the court ends the parent's rights. See policy [5.23](#).

**LEGAL REFERENCES**

- [IC 31-34-3-2: Procedures for notice; custodial parent, guardian, or custodian who cannot be located](#)