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|  | <b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES</b><br><b>CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>                       |                   |
|                                                                                   | <b>Chapter 3:</b> Hotline<br><b>Section 06:</b> Child Abuse and Neglect (CA/N) Screen-Out Report |                   |
|                                                                                   | <b>Effective Date:</b> January 1, 2026                                                           | <b>Version:</b> 7 |

## POLICY OVERVIEW

The DCS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (Hotline) decides if a report is screened-out, meaning it will not be assigned for further assessment when certain criteria have been met.

## POLICY STATEMENT

A report will be “screened-out” when it:

1. Does not meet the legal definition of Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N);
2. Does not have enough information to find or identify the child and/or family; or
3. Occurred in another state and there is no current risk of harm in Indiana.

**Note:** Reports where the alleged CA/N happened in another state will be referred to that state’s child welfare agency.

Reports involving a homeless unaccompanied minor staying at an emergency shelter, shelter care facility, or program that provides shelter to homeless individuals without their parent, guardian, or custodian, **may not** be screened-out.

### Intentional False CA/N Reports

DCS will work with the local prosecutors to take legal action against people who intentionally make false CA/N reports.

## LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-9-2-14: “Child abuse or neglect”](#)
- [IC 31-33-8-1: Investigations by the department of child services; time of initiation; investigations of child care ministries](#)
- [IC 31-33-22-3: False reports; criminal and civil liability; notification of prosecuting attorney](#)
- [IC 31-36-3: Chapter 3. Homeless Children](#)