

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES</b> <b>CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 5:</b> General Case Management <b>Section 23:</b> Diligent Search Efforts	
	<b>Effective Date:</b> January 1, 2026	<b>Version:</b> 6

**POLICY OVERVIEW**

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) conducts a diligent search for parents, adult relatives, kin, and case participants to locate support for the child or a safe possible placement option.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

DCS will conduct a diligent search starting from the child’s first contact with DCS and continuing throughout the case to find:

1. Absent and noncustodial parents, to notify them of an assessment, court hearings, and engage them in case planning and services unless:
  - a. A parent is deceased (certified by a death certificate),
  - b. A parent has signed a Consent to Adoption,
  - c. A parent has surrendered the child for adoption,
  - d. Termination of Parent Rights (TPR) has been finalized, or
  - e. DCS has visited the home within the last month and confirmed the address.
2. All individuals named on a Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect (310), if their location is unknown, to conduct an assessment;
3. Relatives required by law to be notified within 30 days of a child’s removal;
4. All adult relatives/kin and other significant individuals who have a relationship with the child, to find the best and earliest placement for the child that may lead to permanency, childcare, or other family support;
5. Siblings to place the siblings together or have regular visitation;
6. Potential informal supports identified by the child and/or family;
7. Any child absent from their DCS placement without the consent of the caregiver or DCS; and
8. Any child placed in protective custody and who has been abducted or their location is unknown during an assessment or pending case.

The following individuals must be notified of a child’s removal within 30 calendar days:

1. Maternal and paternal grandparents;
2. Adult aunts and uncles;
3. A sibling’s parent if they have legal custody of the sibling;
4. All siblings who are at least 18 years of age; and
5. Any other adult relatives suggested by the parent or child.

**Note:** When provided notice that a child has been removed, each relative must be provided documentation outlining the information that must be provided by law. DCS can only share the information outlined in the documentation.

#### **LEGAL REFERENCES**

- [IC 31-9-2-107: "Relative"](#)
- [IC 31-34-3-4.5: Procedures for notices to adult relatives and siblings; content](#)
- [IC 31-34-18-2: Predispositional report; participation by parent, guardian, or custodian; out-of-home placement with blood or adoptive relative caretaker](#)
- [42 USC 671 \(a\)\(29\): notification of parents of siblings](#)