

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES</b> <b>CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 5:</b> General Case Management <b>Section 08:</b> Developing the Case Plan/Prevention Plan	
	<b>Effective Date:</b> January 1, 2026	<b>Version:</b> 13

**POLICY OVERVIEW**

Federal law requires a written Case Plan/Prevention Plan be made for any child getting foster care maintenance payments. These plans help the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) identify and monitor the activities and services children and families need to reach successful outcomes.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

DCS will create and approve a Case Plan/Prevention Plan in the case management system within 45 days of removal or disposition, whichever comes first, for all children who:

1. Have an open Child in Need of Services (CHINS); or
2. Have an open Informal Adjustment (IA); and

**Note:** For children on an IA, the signed IA/Prevention Plan serves as the Case Plan/Prevention Plan (see policy [5.09](#)).

3. Are at imminent risk of removal (see policy [7.01](#)).

**Note:** Indiana law uses the phrase “imminent risk of placement” rather than “imminent risk of removal”.

DCS will also make sure a Case Plan/Prevention Plan is completed (within federal guidelines) for all Juvenile Delinquent/Juvenile Status (JD/JS) cases when DCS is ordered to pay for placement.

The Case Plan/Prevention Plan will address the child’s:

1. Safety;
2. Stability;
3. Permanency;
4. Well-being;
5. Educational needs (if identified); and
6. Any cultural considerations.

DCS will work with the following to develop the plan:

1. The child (if developmentally appropriate);
2. Parent, guardian, or custodian (including noncustodial and incarcerated parents);
3. Extended family members; and
4. Members of the Child and Family Team (CFT) using the CFT Meeting process (if applicable).

DCS will update the Case Plan/Prevention Plan:

1. At least every 180 days from the effective date of the previous plan; and
2. Anytime there is a significant change in the child and/or family needs.

### **Case Planning for Older Youth**

DCS will make concerted efforts to include children in creating the Case Plan/Prevention Plan goals (as developmentally appropriate).

Youth ages 14 and older are required to participate in the Case Plan/Prevention Plan process.

DCS may excuse the youth if they are unable to participate due to a:

1. Physical;
2. Mental;
3. Emotional;
4. Developmental; and/or
5. Intellectual disability.

The reason the youth is unable to participate must be documented in the Case Plan/Prevention Plan.

**Note:** If the youth refuses to participate, DCS must document the refusal and all efforts made to get the youth's input and participation in the Case Plan/Prevention Plan process.

Youth ages 14 and older may choose up to two (2) child representatives to be a part of their CFT and help with the Case Plan/Prevention Plan.

DCS must:

1. Give all youth ages 14 and older a copy of the Indiana DCS Bill of Rights for Youth in Foster Care;
2. Inform them of their rights; and
3. Have the youth sign the completed Case Plan/Prevention Plan.

### **LEGAL REFERENCES**

- [IC 31-9-2-22.1: "Concurrent planning"](#)
- [IC 31-34-15: Chapter 15. Case Plan](#)
- [IC 31-34-15-4: Form; contents](#)
- [IC 31-34-15-7: Consult with child; selection of child representatives; adviser](#)
- [IC 31-37-19-1.5 Completion of case plan; copies of case plan; contents; review and update](#)
- [P.L. 96-272 Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980](#)
- [42 USC 675\(1\) and \(5\): Definitions](#)
- [42 USC 671 \(a\)\(16\) State plan for foster care and adoption assistance](#)
- [42 USC 672: Foster care maintenance payment program](#)
- [42 USC 12102: Definition of disability](#)
- [45 CFR 1356.21\(g\): Case plan requirements](#)