

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 13: Background Checks Section 07: Conducting Checks – Adoptions	
	Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 12

POLICY OVERVIEW

Background checks are done on prospective adoptive homes to help ensure the safety and well-being of children placed in the home.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will run background checks for adoption purposes (including for the adoption home study, adoption summary, or Indiana Adoption Assistance Program [AAP] eligibility) on people who:

1. Live in the prospective **DCS** adoptive household;

Note: This includes for a petitioner’s spouse, even if they do not live in the same house.

2. Stays in the home for 21 calendar days or more within a 12-month period (days do not have to be in a row); or

Note: Background checks must be done **before** the person moves in.

3. Are members of a prospective **private** adoptive home who are applying for AAP.

Note: DCS will not run background checks on children under DCS care and supervision.

If any household member is arrested, convicted of a crime, or substantiated for child abuse and/or neglect (CA/N), the prospective adoptive home must tell the adoption worker within 24 hours.

Required Background Checks

The type of background check conducted depends on the age of the subject and must be completed **annually**:

1. **Child Protective Services (CPS) History Check**
 - All household members age six (6) years and older
 - In every state they have lived in the last five (5) years
2. **Fingerprint-Based National Criminal History Check (Fingerprint-Based Check)**
 - All household members age 18 and older
 - With “qualified” results (see policy [13.15](#)).
3. **Local Criminal Records Check**
 - All household members age 18 and older

- In every criminal court jurisdiction they have lived in the last five (5) years

4. **National Sex Offender Registry Check**

- All household members age 14 and older
- In every state they have lived in the last five (5) years

Note: If a household member is turning six (6), 14, or 18 years old, the appropriate background check must start 30 calendar days before their birthday.

New Background Checks

If it has been more than 12 months since the last background check, new checks are needed before:

- Placing a child in the home
- Completing an adoption home study or adoption summary
- Submitting the AAP Application
- Filing the petition for adoption

DCS will keep all information found during the background check process confidential, following state and federal laws as well as Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) security protocols (see policy [2.06](#)).

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-9-2-22.5: "Conduct a criminal history check"](#)
- [IC 31-19-2-7.3: Waiver of criminal history check requirements prohibited](#)
- [IC 31-19-2-7.5: Submission of information, forms, or consents for criminal history check](#)
- [IC 31-19-7-1: Prior written approval of placements; criminal history checks](#)
- [IC 31-19-8-5: Agency report and recommendation; filing requirements; waiver of report](#)
- [IC 31-19-11-1: Decree; affidavit; criminal convictions and juvenile adjudications](#)
- [IC 31-34-20-1.5: Placement in household with certain individuals prohibited; criminal history checks; exceptions; considerations](#)
- [465 IAC 2-1.5-3\(e\)\(2\): Qualifications of the foster family; general](#)