

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 4: Assessment Section 40: Drug Screening in Assessments	
	Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 3

POLICY OVERVIEW

Drug use or abuse may be a factor in an Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) assessment of alleged Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) when there is:

1. Alleged drug use during a pregnancy, resulting in the live birth of a child; or
2. Alleged drug use by the parent, guardian, or custodian, resulting in a child's physical or mental condition being seriously impaired or seriously endangered.

When child maltreatment appears to be directly caused by or connected to drug use, drug screening may be used to gather evidence of CA/N.

POLICY STATEMENT

DCS will consider drug screening as part of a full assessment of the family when there is an allegation or indication of substance abuse in the CA/N report.

Note: Except for IC 31-34-1-10, the decision to substantiate or unsubstantiate a CA/N allegation should not be based solely on the existence or absence of drug use. Drug screen results alone should not determine the assessment outcome. There must be credible evidence showing a link between the drug use and harm to the child.

Any sign of drug use or misuse (self-disclosure or drug screening results) will be evaluated to see if it contributed to child maltreatment. The child's safety and the family's strengths, needs, and protective capacities will also be considered.

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-34-1-1: Inability, refusal, or neglect of parent, guardian, or custodian to supply child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, or supervision](#)
- [IC 31-34-1-2: Act or omission of parent, guardian, or custodian seriously endangering child's physical or mental health; victim of specified offense](#)
- [IC 31-34-1-10: Child born with fetal alcohol syndrome, neonatal abstinence syndrome, or drugs in the child's body](#)
- [IC 31-34-1-11: Risks or injuries arising from use of alcohol, controlled substance, or legend drug by child's mother during pregnancy](#)