

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
Chapter 4: Assessment Section 03: Conducting the Assessment		
	Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 17

POLICY OVERVIEW

For Institutional Investigations, see policy 4.30.

When there is a report of possible child abuse or neglect (CA/N), the Department of Child Services (DCS) completes an assessment to ensure the child's safety and well-being.

POLICY STATEMENT

DCS will conduct an assessment of all assigned reports of alleged CA/N. This includes:

1. Completing all required interviews;
2. Checking the safety and condition of the home;
3. Assessing the child's risks and safety concerns; and
4. Making sure the child's medical and mental health needs are assessed.

DCS will:

1. Thoroughly assess all assigned reports of alleged child abuse and neglect (CA/N);
2. Work diligently to ensure that each assessment prioritizes the safety and well-being of the child; and
3. Send the report to the local office to decide if an assessment is needed if the report comes from:
 - a. Medical staff,
 - b. School,
 - c. Social workers,
 - d. Law enforcement agency (LEA), or
 - e. The court.

Assessment Timelines

DCS will follow these timelines when initiating an assessment within:

1. 2 hours if the child is in immediate danger;
2. 24 hours, if the report is about alleged child abuse; or
3. 5 days, if the report is about alleged child neglect.

Note: If the report alleges the child lives with someone convicted of neglect, battery, or is a registered sex or violent offender, DCS will start the assessment within 5 days.

Emergency Shelter or Shelter Care Facility

After DCS is notified that a child is in an emergency shelter or shelter care facility, DCS must:

1. Conduct an assessment within 48 hours of being notified; and
2. Notify the parent, guardian, or custodian that the child is at the shelter or within 72 hours.

Note: However, notification is not required if DCS has reason to believe the child's

parent, guardian, or custodian is the alleged perpetrator.

What the Assessment Includes

When completing an assessment, DCS will:

1. Investigate the nature and cause of the abuse and/or neglect;
2. Identify the person responsible; and
3. Check on other children in the home.

DCS may:

1. Visit the child's home;
2. Interview the child (with consent or a court order); and
3. Conduct physical or mental exams if needed.

Note: If DCS cannot get permission to enter a home or interview a child, they can request a court order.

Working with LEA

DCS will contact LEA if:

1. A report has a two (2) hour response time and on additional reports, as needed; and
2. The police if they receive a report of child abuse.

Note: If the report involves a child care ministry that doesn't require a license, DCS and law enforcement will investigate together.

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-9-2-9: "Alleged father"](#)
- [IC 31-9-2-16.6: "Child care worker"](#)
- [IC 31-33-8-1: Investigations by the department of child services; time of initiation; investigations of child care ministries](#)
- [IC 31-33-8-2: Investigations by law enforcement agencies](#)
- [IC 31-33-8-7: Scope of assessment by department of child services; order for access to home, school, or other place, or for mental or physical examinations; petition to interview child; order; requirements](#)
- [IC 31-36-3-3: Notification to department; investigation of a child; notification to parents](#)