

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 4: Assessment Section 05: Consent to Interview Child	
	Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 8

POLICY OVERVIEW

Before the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) interviews a child about possible abuse or neglect, they usually must get permission from the child's parent, guardian, or custodian.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will get permission from the child's parent, guardian, or custodian before interviewing a child who is:

1. An alleged victim of CA/N;
 2. An alleged child perpetrator;
 3. A potential witness; or
 4. Someone who can give extra information to support the assessment.
- (See policy [4.04](#))

If parents share joint legal custody and one parent says "no", DCS cannot get permission from the other parent. In that case, DCS must either:

1. Get a court order; or
2. Decide there is an urgent reason (called *exigent circumstances*) to talk to the child without permission.

DCS can talk to a child without permission if:

1. There is an urgent concern (exigent circumstances) for the child's safety and well-being;
2. DCS tried but could not reach the parent, guardian, or custodian after a reasonable number of attempts;
3. The child is in DCS care and custody and the parent's rights have been terminated; or
4. The child is in a Department of Corrections (DOC) facility.

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-9-2-31: "Custodian"](#)
- [IC 31-9-2-44.1: "Exigent circumstances"](#)
- [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](#)