

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 3: Hotline Section 02: Evaluating Child Abuse and Neglect (CA/N) Intake Reports	
	Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 11

POLICY OVERVIEW

All reports of child abuse or neglect (CA/N) must go to the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (Hotline) so an intake report can be created. The quality of the information the Hotline gets affects DCS' ability to decide whether a report should be assigned for assessment.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Hotline reviews every intake report and recommends:

1. If the allegations meet the legal definition of Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) and if the report should be assessed;

Note: DCS may assess allegations of CA/N, no matter how long ago the alleged incident occurred.

2. If the report includes enough information to identify or find the child and begin an assessment; and
3. The response time needed.

Anonymous Reporters

People may report CA/N allegations without giving their name. However, DCS encourages all reporters to share their contact information in case follow-up is needed.

Audio Recordings

Hotline audio recordings of reports are confidential. They may only be released by a court order. A prosecutor may request a recording to investigate charges of false reporting. If this occurs, the DCS Staff Attorney should be consulted (see policy [4.22](#)).

Special Circumstances

All intake reports involving:

1. A child who voluntarily enters an emergency shelter care or a shelter care facility, without the presence or consent of a parent, guardian, or custodian will be sent to the appropriate DCS local office for assessment;
2. Emancipated minors will not be recommended for assessment, unless CA/N is alleged; and
3. A new child in the home of a parent, guardian, or custodian with an open DCS case will be sent to the county where the parent or caregiver lives (see policy [4.50](#)).

Note: A "new child" may include:

- a. A newborn,
- b. A child that has moved into the home, or
- c. A child who regularly or continually visits the home.

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 20-50: ARTICLE 50. HOMELESS CHILDREN AND FOSTER CARE CHILDREN](#)
- [IC 31-9-2: Chapter 2. Definitions](#)
- [IC 31-33-7-4: Written reports; contents](#)
- [IC 31-33-18-5: Confidentiality of recordings of calls to child abuse hotline](#)
- [IC 31-34-1: Chapter 1. Circumstances Under Which a Child Is a Child in Need of Services](#)
- [IC 31-36-3: Chapter 3. Homeless Children](#)
- [IC 31-36-3-3: Notification to department; investigation of a child; notification to parents](#)
- [IC 35-31.5-2-76: "Crime involving domestic or family violence"](#)