

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 6: Court Section 10: Permanency Plan	
	Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 15

POLICY OVERVIEW

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) believes children deserve a permanent home. A Permanency Plan is created for every child adjudicated as a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) to make sure a permanent or long-term arrangement is found for the child.

POLICY STATEMENT

All decisions made by DCS shall be made in consideration of the child's best interests. A second Permanency Plan will be identified if concurrent planning is appropriate.

The initial Permanency Plan will be reviewed with the Child and Family Team (CFT) and/or at the Case Plan Conference and identified in the Case Plan/Prevention Plan within **45 calendar days** after the child's removal or the date of disposition, whichever comes first.

DCS will make reasonable efforts to reunify the child with their family unless the court finds that it is not required.

Note: If the court determines no reasonable efforts are required, a Permanency Hearing must be held within **30 calendar days** of the finding.

For a child who has been removed from the home, reunification services will be provided for:

1. 15 months if the child was removed after June 30, 2025 and before July 1, 2026, or
2. 12 months if the child was removed after June 30, 2026.

Exception: A court may allow more time for reunification services if the parent, guardian, or custodian was not given a chance to participate in the process. A court may also extend reunification services for:

- a. **90 days** if the parent, guardian, or custodian has followed the dispositional decree and the extension is in the child's best interest, and
- b. **An additional 90 days** if the parent, guardian, or custodian continues to comply with the dispositional decree and the extension remains in the child's best interest.

When reunification is not possible, DCS will make and recommend an alternate Permanency Plan to the court in a timely manner. All Permanency Plans and changes require court approval.

Note: When the child has been removed from their parent for at least 12 months out of the most recent 22 months, the recommended Permanency Plan **must** include at least one (1) intended Permanency Plan goal that is not reunification.

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-9-2-22.1: "Concurrent planning"](#)
- [IC 31-10-2-2: Consideration of the best interests of the child](#)
- [IC 31-10-2-3: Rights of persons with a disability](#)
- [IC 31-17-2-8.1: "Disability"; custody](#)
- [IC 31-34-20-1.6 Limitation on provision of reunification services to parent, guardian, or custodian following removal of a child](#)
- [IC 31-34-21-5.6: Exceptions to requirement to make reasonable efforts to preserve and reunify families](#)
- [IC 31-34-21-5.7: Permanency plan; requirement; approval; reports and orders not required](#)
- [IC 31-34-21-5.8: Certain reasonable efforts required if preservation and reunification inconsistent with permanency plan; progress reports, case reviews, and postdispositional hearings not required](#)
- [IC 31-34-21-7: Permanency hearing](#)
- [IC 31-34-21-7.5: Placement prohibited in residence of individual who has committed certain acts or offenses; criminal history check, contents of permanency plans](#)
- [IC 31-34-21-7.7: Permanency plan; guardianship; requirements and terms and conditions in order; jurisdiction](#)