

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 5: General Case Management Section 09: Informal Adjustment/Prevention Plan (IA)	
	Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 11

POLICY OVERVIEW

The Informal Adjustment/Prevention Plan (IA) is a written agreement that goes to the court. The IA lists the steps the parent, guardian, or custodian needs to do to keep the child safe and healthy. An IA may be offered to a family to help them keep the child safe in the home when there is probable cause to believe Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) exists.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will offer an IA when:

1. An allegation of CA/N is substantiated;
2. Voluntary participation in services is the best way to protect the safety and well-being of the child;
3. The parent, guardian, or custodian agrees to an IA; and
4. The juvenile court approves the IA.

Exception: The IA is automatically approved if the court does not approve, deny, or set a hearing within 10 calendar days of filing the IA. The IA is also approved if the hearing is set within 10 calendar days, but not held, and no action is not taken within 30 calendar days of submission to the court.

The start date of the IA is the date of court approves it. If the court does not approve or deny it, the IA starts 10 calendar days after it is filed with the court. The IA may last up to six (6) months. If needed, an extension may be requested for no longer than three (3) months.

DCS will use the Progress Report on Program of Informal Adjustment/Prevention Plan (IA) form to:

1. End the IA if the family has met the terms of the IA;
2. Extend the IA for three [3] months if needed;
3. End the IA if:
 - a. The family has not followed the rules of the IA and DCS is not requesting an extension (e.g.; the family is moving out of state, DCS is involved due to truancy issues and probation is now involved, and/or custody changes and the child is no longer living in the home where the IA started.

Note: DCS may file a petition for compliance if a parent, guardian, or custodian does not comply with the services outlined in the IA.

- b. DCS has obtained court approval to file a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) petition.

4. Notify the court that DCS will be filing a subsequent report because:
 - a. The family has not complied with the terms of the IA, and DCS is reviewing the situation to suggest next steps, or
 - b. Services have not worked to keep the child to safely in their home, and a petition requesting court approval to file a CHINS has been filed.

Note: DCS may file a CHINS petition if the family does not follow the terms of the IA or the child needs additional help that requires court intervention. If the child turns 18 years of age during the term of the IA, the 18-year-old cannot be considered a CHINS.

If the parent, guardian, or custodian has initiated an Administrative Appeal of the substantiation determination, consideration of the appeal will be delayed until after completion of the IA (see policies [2.01](#) and [2.05](#)).

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-34-8-1 Implementation of program; statement by court of reasons for denial; program considered approved in certain circumstances](#)
- [42 USC 672: Foster care maintenance payments program](#)
- [42 USC 12102: Definition of disability](#)