	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES **CHILD WELFARE POLICY**
	Chapter 10: Guardianship and Adoption **Section 05:** Maintaining Sibling Connections
	Effective Date: July 1, 2026 — **Version:** 7

POLICY OVERVIEW

Sibling relationships are often the longest, most important in a person's life. Being placed together helps children feel less alone and gives them a sense of familiarity. When siblings cannot be placed together, staying in contact with each other may help reduce emotional stress.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will seek to place siblings in the same permanent home, including:

1. Any siblings taken into care at a later date; or
2. Any siblings already in a permanent home who have re-entered care or need a new permanent placement.

Exceptions

Exceptions to placing siblings together may include:

1. There is documentation from a Qualified Mental Health Provider (QMHP), therapist, or counselor explaining why placement together would not be in the best interest of one (1) or more of the children, and why services cannot address the issue;
2. A court ordered separation of the siblings; or
3. A sibling is in residential treatment, hospitalized, or in a juvenile detention center.

LEGAL REFERENCES

- IC 31-9-2.1-228: "Sibling"
- IC 31-28-5-3: Persons who may request sibling visitations; department establishment of sibling visitation; department's notice of findings
- IC 31-28-5-4: Department denial of sibling visitation; petitions to juvenile courts; juvenile court orders