

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 10:</b> Adoption and Guardianship	<b>Effective Date:</b> July 1, 2021
<b>Section 08:</b> Families Recommended for the Indiana Adoption Program (IAP)	<b>Version:</b> 3	

**POLICY OVERVIEW**

The Indiana Adoption Program (IAP) seeks to prepare families interested in adopting Indiana’s Waiting Children.

**PROCEDURE**

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will facilitate Indiana Adoption Council meetings monthly to review home studies and interview families seeking to adopt Indiana’s Waiting Children. The Indiana Adoption Council comprised of DCS staff, will make recommendations on families’ seeking to adopt.

**Note:** Indiana Adoption Program Council members vote on recommending a family for adoption. DCS will not discriminate against an applicant based on a disability. Reasonable accommodations will be considered when determining the qualification and suitability of the individual with a disability.

Upon completion of a Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE) adoption only home study, the home study preparer will send the SAFE home study, a signed adoption recommendation form, verification of adoption training, and appropriate home study collateral information to the Indiana Adoption Program. Upon receipt of the information, the family will be scheduled to meet with the Indiana Adoption Council.

Following the Adoption Council meeting and decision, the family will be notified of the recommendation. If approved, the family will be given a status of *Recommended to Adopt* and access to the Indiana Adoption Program parent portal for adoption recommended families. This recommendation is valid for two (2) years. After two (2) years, a home study update must be completed.

**Note:** Denials will be retained for a minimum of one (1) year. It is the responsibility of the family to demonstrate that reasons for the denial have been remedied and request reconsideration and an updated home study.

Licensed foster parents do not have to meet with the Indiana Adoption Council. Upon receipt of the SAFE home study prepared by foster care licensing staff, proof of Resource and Adoptive Parent Training (RAPT) IV, and a signed Adoption Recommendation form by the foster care licensing staff, the Indiana Adoption Program will give licensed foster families a status of *Recommended to Adopt* and access to the Indiana Adoption Program parent portal for adoption recommended families. This recommendation is valid for one (1) year and must be resubmitted with the annual SAFE update to ensure that foster families remain in good licensing status. The Adoption Consultant will:

1. Review all SAFE adoption home studies prior to the Adoption Council meeting and prepare questions designed to understand the family's desire and preparedness to adopt Indiana's Waiting Children;
2. Notify the family and home study preparer of the date and time of the meeting with the Adoption Council;
3. Read the SAFE home study and prepare questions to be asked during the Adoption Council meeting;

**Note:** All questions must be submitted at least two (2) business days before the adoption council meeting.

4. Support and engage the family to help them prepare for the interview with the Adoption Council;

**Note:** Adoption Council Meetings are limited to four (4) families per meeting date. Each family will be allotted 30 minutes.

The Adoption Program Manager (or designee) will:

1. Schedule a minimum of two (2) Adoption Council meetings per month and provide the dates to the Adoption Consultants for scheduling purposes;
2. Review the SAFE home studies and prepare questions to be asked during the Adoption Council meeting;
3. Select individuals to participate in the Adoption Council meetings. The council members may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Adoption Program leadership staff,
  - b. Adoption Consultant assigned to the family being presented to the Adoption Council, and
  - c. Other DCS staff.
4. Assign a meeting facilitator to conduct the Adoption Council meeting;
5. Notify the families and home study preparer of the Adoption Council recommendations within 10 business days; and
6. Update and sign the Adoption Recommendation form and ensure that the information for the families is uploaded into the adoption recruitment database.

The Adoption Council participants will:

1. Review all family SAFE adoption home studies prior to the Adoption Council Meeting and prepare questions designed to understand the family's desire and preparedness to adopt Indiana's Waiting Children;

**Note:** All questions must be submitted at least two (2) business days before the adoption council meeting.

2. Participate in Adoption Council meetings as scheduled to meet with families and address any questions regarding the home study or collateral documentation;
3. Debrief and discuss recommendations regarding each family. The Adoption Council may vote with the following recommendations:
  - a. Approved to adopt,
  - b. Pending Approval with a recommendation for additional training, or
  - c. Deny the recommendation to adopt.

<b>LEGAL REFERENCES</b>
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- [465 IAC 2-7-2 Special needs child; criteria](#)
- [42 USC 12102: Definition of disability](#)

<b>RELEVANT INFORMATION</b>
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**Definitions**

- N/A

**Forms and Tools**

- [Adoption Consultants Map](#)
- [Indiana's Waiting Children](#)

**Related Policies**

- [10.09 Preplacement Visits/Adoption Transition Plan](#)