

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 4: Assessment</b>	<b>Effective Date:</b> March 1, 2019
	<b>Section 23: Initial Family Risk Assessment</b>	<b>Version:</b> 7

**STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE**

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will conduct an [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) to assess the future probability of Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) on all substantiated assessments.

The [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) will not be used to arrive at a substantiation or unsubstantiation of the allegations of CA/N. See separate policies, [4.18 Initial Safety Assessment](#) and [4.22 Making an Assessment Finding](#) for further guidance.

The [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) should be completed prior to the Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting but no later than 35 days from the date the [Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF114\) \(310\)](#) was received. DCS will discuss the results of the [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) with the CFT to assist in developing a plan to reduce the risk level by thoroughly identifying and considering the family’s strengths, needs, and informal supports.

Code References

[IC 31-9-2-123 “Substantiated”](#)

**PROCEDURE**

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will complete the following after arriving at an assessment finding of “substantiated”:

1. Answer all questions on the [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#);
2. Determine the overall **risk level** based on the highest of either the abuse score or the neglect score; and
3. Discuss the results of the [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) with the CFT to develop a plan to assist in the identification and utilization of the family’s strengths and informal supports to address needs.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Review and discuss the details of the assessment during regular [clinical supervision](#);
2. Review the [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) and decision; and
3. Guide the FCM in assisting the family and CFT to develop a plan, which addresses the family’s needs.

**PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

**Initial Family Risk Assessment**

The [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) is an assessment tool used by the FCM to assess the probability of both abuse and neglect. In addition to the [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#), the

FCM should reference the [Family Functional Assessment \(FFA\) Field Guide](#) when working with self-identified Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Questioning (LGBTBQ) youth. Risk Assessment questions that may be helpful in determining the risk factors for LGBTQ youth are available in the [FFA Field Guide](#).

**Completing the Initial Family Risk Assessment**

Both scales of the [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#), abuse and neglect, are completed regardless of the type of allegation or substantiated type of maltreatment. The FCM must make every effort during the assessment to obtain the information needed to answer every question. However, if the FCM is unable to obtain the information to answer a particular question, that question should be scored as “0.”

**Risk Levels**

The [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) identifies families with low, moderate, high, or very high probabilities of future CA/N. By completing the [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#), the worker obtains an objective appraisal of the likelihood that a family will maltreat their child in the next 18 to 24 months. The difference between risk levels is substantial. Families with high risk have significantly higher rates of subsequent allegations and substantiations than families with low risk, and they are more often involved in serious CA/N incidents.

**Determining Overall Risk Level**

The scores for the abuse scale and the neglect scale are totaled separately. The higher of the two (2) scores is used to determine the risk level as indicated in the chart below:

Neglect Score	Abuse Score	Risk Level*
-1 - 1	-1 - 0	LOW
2 - 5	1 - 3	MODERATE
6 - 8	4 - 6	HIGH
9+	7+	VERY HIGH

\*When unresolved safety threats are present at the end of the assessment, a case should be opened regardless of risk level.

**FORMS AND TOOLS**

1. [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) - available in the case management system
2. [Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF114\) \(310\)](#) – available in the case management system
3. [Family Functional Assessment \(FFA\) Field Guide](#)- available on the Indiana Practice Model SharePoint

**RELATED INFORMATION**

**Purpose of the Initial Family Risk Assessment**

The purpose of the [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) is to assess the probability of CA/N. When risk is clearly defined and objectively quantified, the choice between serving one (1) family or another is simplified. DCS resources are targeted to families with higher risk because of the greater potential to reduce subsequent maltreatment.

The [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) is based on research of cases with substantiated CA/N. The researchers examined the relationships between family characteristics and the outcomes of

subsequent substantiated CA/N. The tool does not predict recurrence but simply assesses whether a family is more or less likely to have a future incident without intervention.

### **Safety vs. Risk Assessment**

It is important to keep in mind the difference between safety and risk when completing the [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#). The Safety Assessment assesses the child's present danger and the interventions currently needed to protect the child. In contrast, the Risk Assessment looks at the likelihood of future maltreatment.

### **Risk of Abuse vs. Risk of Neglect**

Different family dynamics are present in abuse situations than in neglect situations. Therefore, separate scales are used on the [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) to assess the future probability of abuse and neglect.

### **Clinical Supervision**

Clinical Supervision is a process in which an individual with specific knowledge, expertise, or skill provides support while overseeing and facilitating the learning of another individual.

**Example:** The focus of clinical supervision for an FCM is on practice that directly impacts outcomes for families.