

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 5: General Case Management Section 02: Gathering Case Information	
	Effective Date: April 1, 2022	Version: 6

- [Procedure](#)
- [Definitions](#)

- [Forms and Tools](#)
- [Related Policies](#)

- [Legal References](#)
- [Practice Guidance](#)

POLICY OVERVIEW

Family members are experts of their own families and gathering accurate and complete information about the child and family is an important step in identifying the functional strengths, underlying needs, and protective factors of the family.

[Back to Top](#)

PROCEDURE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will gather as much information as possible about the child and family, including identification of child and family supports and connections. This information will be used when identifying and conducting a diligent search for all adult relatives (including adult siblings) and kin, developing the Case Plan/Prevention Plan, planning for services, and establishing eligibility for federal funding.

Note: A referral to the DCS Investigators may be considered for assistance in locating absent parents, relatives and kin, and/or other identified persons of interest to the case and/or assessment. In addition, the Incarcerated Parent Letter-Assessment, Incarcerated Parent Letter-Permanency, Incarcerated Parent Demographics, and Incarcerated Parent Information forms have been developed for use as tools for contact with the incarcerated parent and for gathering information. See policy 5.23 Diligent Search for Relatives/Kin and Case Participants for more information.

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Strive to assess the functional strengths and underlying needs for each family member (including absent and incarcerated parents) in the following areas:
 - a. Safety,
 - b. Well-being,
 - c. Domestic violence (DV),
 - d. Sexual abuse,
 - e. Living conditions, including the location of incarcerated parents,
 - f. Finances and employment,
 - g. Education,
 - h. Formal and informal supports available to caregivers,
 - i. Resources available to caregivers,
 - j. Interaction between caregivers and child,
 - k. Academic or developmental level of the child and the parent, guardian, or custodian, and

- I. Relationship between adult caregivers and child.
2. Collect pertinent information as soon as possible and throughout the life of the case. This includes information needed to assess the functional strengths and underlying needs of each family member (including absent and incarcerated parents) and to complete necessary forms/documentation, including but not limited to:
 - a. Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect (310),
 - b. Assessment of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect Report (311),
 - c. Safety Assessments and Risk Assessment,
 - d. Case Plan/Prevention Plan or Informal Adjustment (IA)/Prevention Plan,
 - e. Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood,
 - f. Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment,
 - g. All assessment information including case notes, photographs, and recordings,
 - h. Educational information,
 - i. Services in which a parent or caregiver participates,
 - j. Provider reports,
 - k. Medical Passport,
 - l. Kinship Connection Diagram; and
 - m. Documentation for determining eligibility for federal funding. See policy 15.01 Title IV-E Eligibility Overview for Field and Legal Staff for additional information.
3. Record all pertinent contacts and information gathered pertaining to the assessment and case in the case management system within three (3) business days of the contact or receipt of the information.

Note: Any new allegations of Child Abuse or Neglect (CA/N) must be reported to the DCS Child Abuse Hotline (Hotline). See policies 4.36 Linking Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) Reports to Open Assessments and 4.38 Assessment Initiation and Practice Guidance for more information.

4. Analyze all information as it pertains to the safety, stability, permanency, and well-being of the child, and discuss the information with the FCM Supervisor during regular case staffing;
5. Update the Safety Plan and/or Plan of Safe Care (POSC), as needed. See policies 4.19 Safety Planning, 4.42 Plan of Safe Care, and 5.21 Safety Planning for further guidance;
6. Provide a summary of all pertinent information to the Child and Family Team (CFT) for the purpose of developing or updating the Case Plan/Prevention or the IA/Prevention Plan to meet the needs of the child and family. See policies 5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings, 5.08 Developing the Case Plan/Prevention Plan and/or 5.09 Informal Adjustment/Prevention Plan (IA) for more information; and
7. Complete needed service referrals in KidTraks and ensure all relevant information is included in the referral. See policy 5.10 Family Services for more information.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Ensure all pertinent information is gathered and entered in the case management system within three (3) business days of receiving the information.
2. Review all information as it pertains to safety, stability, permanency, and well-being during regular case staffing with the FCM;
3. Review the Safety Plan and/or POSC and discuss any changes that may be necessary to ensure the safety of the child; and

4. Ensure the family's service needs are met by reviewing the process toward achieving the goals outlined in the Case Plan/Prevention Plan or the IA/Prevention Plan with the FCM and discussing any changes in services that may be necessary.

[Back to Top](#)

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

Case Staffing

Case staffing is a systematic and frequent review of all case information with safety and risk, stability, permanency, and well-being as driving forces for case activities.

Diligent Search

Efforts made to locate or identify the parents, relatives, non-relative kin, and case participants of a child, initiated at the outset of a case, with updates provided in court reports until the permanency goal is achieved or the court excuses further search.

Functional Strengths

Functional strengths are 'the buildable' strengths of our families; they help us build toward goal achievement.

Protective Factors

Protective Factors are conditions or attributes in individuals, families, and communities that promote the safety, stability, permanency, and well-being of children and families.

Safety Plan

A safety plan is a voluntary, non-legally binding written agreement with the family, which identifies interventions to address safety of the child and specifies family support and/or community services that will be utilized.

Underlying Needs

Underlying needs are the root source of an individual and/or family's challenges. An underlying need determines the appropriate use of services or interventions.

Forms and Tools

- [Assessment of Alleged Abuse or Neglect Report \(SF 113\) \(311\)](#)
- Case Plan/Prevention Plan (SF 2956) – Available in the case management system
- DCS Hotline email - DCSHotlineReports@dcs.in.gov
- DCS Hotline phone number: 1-800-800-5556
- [Incarcerated Parent Letter-Assessment](#)
- [Incarcerated Parent Letter-Permanency](#)
- [Incarcerated Parent Demographics \(SF 56538\)](#)
- [Incarcerated Parent Information \(SF 56539\)](#)
- Initial Family Risk Assessment – Available in the case management system
- Initial Safety Assessment – Available in the case management system
- In-Home Risk and Safety Reassessment – Available in the case management system
- [Kinship Connection Diagram](#) 31
- Medical Passport (DCS PAM 036) – Available in hard copy
- Out-of-Home Risk and Safety Reassessment – Available in the case management system

- Plan of Safe Care (SF 56565) – Available in the case management system
- Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect (SF 114) (310) – Available in the case management system
- Program of Informal Adjustment (IA)/Prevention Plan
- Protective Factors
- Safety Plan (SF 53243)

Related Policies

- 2.01 Notice of Assessment Outcome
- 2.02 Administrative Review Process
- 2.05 Administrative Appeal Hearings
- 4.09 Interviewing Children
- 4.19 Safety Planning
- 4.36 Linking and Withdrawing a Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect (310)
- 4.38 Assessment Initiation
- 4.42 Plan of Safe Care
- 5.07 Child and Family Team (CFT) Meetings
- 5.08 Developing the Case Plan/Prevention Plan
- 5.09 Informal Adjustment/Prevention Plan (IA)
- 5.10 Family Services
- 5.19 Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment
- 5.21 Safety Planning
- 5.23 Diligent Search for Relatives/Kin and Case Participants
- 7.01 Child at Imminent Risk of Removal
- 7.03 Minimum Contact
- 8.10 Minimum Contact
- 11.06 Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood
- 15.01 Title IV-E Eligibility Overview for Field and Legal Staff

[Back to Top](#)

LEGAL REFERENCES

- IC 31-34-19-7 Placement of child; relative; evaluation; background checks

[Back to Top](#)

PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 5.02

Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.

Consideration of Protective Factors To Ensure Safety

Protective factors are directly connected to the strengths of the family and may be used as a resource to learn new skills and solve problems. By using a protective factors approach, child welfare professionals and other can help parents find resources and supports that emphasize their strengths while also identifying areas where they need assistance, thereby mitigating the changes of child abuse and neglect. When completing a Safety Plan, consider the protective factors listed on the Protective Capacities and Protective Factors: Common Ground for Protecting Children and Strengthening Families document under the Forms and Tools as part of the evaluation of the family's ability to ensure the safety of the child.

New Allegations of CA/N During a Case

All new allegations of CA/N must be reported to the Hotline, per State reporting statutes, and may not be handled as part of the case. The FCM must specify in the report to the Hotline that the assessment has already been initiated. The exact date and time the FCM became aware of the allegations and initiated the assessment must also be specified. The FCM may report the new allegations to the Hotline by emailing or faxing the completed 310 form, emailing equivalent information (e.g., time initiated, parent names, child victim names, description of concerns, etc.), or by calling to report equivalent information. The 310 or equivalent information may be submitted via the hotline email, via fax to: 317-234-7595 or 317-234-7596, or via phone to: 1-800-800-5556.

[Back to Top](#)