



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES

CHILD WELFARE POLICY

Chapter 5: General Case Management

Section 05: Establishment of Paternity

Effective Date: March 1, 2025

Version: 5

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POLICY OVERVIEW

Genetic testing should **not** be completed for cases in which paternity has already been established. See policy 2.20 Establishment of Child Support Orders and the DCS Paternity website for additional information.

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) facilitates genetic testing to establish paternity in cases where there is one (1) or more alleged fathers and when paternity has yet to be established. Determining whether paternity has been established for a child to ensure that genetic testing is utilized appropriately.

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PROCEDURE

DCS will make efforts to determine paternity status for a child when paternity has not been established.

DCS will contract with a designated vendor for processing genetic tests. If a parent or alleged parent lives outside of Indiana, a Long Arm Draw (see Definitions) is required, DCS will assist the parent and/or alleged father (see Definitions) in locating the nearest designated vendor testing site.

DCS will offer services to alleged fathers while awaiting the establishment of paternity.

When determining paternity status, the FCM will:

1. Determine whether two (2) legal parents have been identified for the child. This will include determining whether the child has been adopted or whether the child's biological mother was married at the time of the child's birth. Consult with DCS Staff Attorney for further guidance;
2. Review the birth certificate to determine if two (2) parents have been identified. If the child was born in another state, ensure the child's birth certificate is obtained. Discuss with the DCS Staff Attorney regarding the paternity status of a child born out of state;

Note: Discuss paternity status and identification of alleged fathers with the FCM Supervisor and DCS Staff Attorney prior to entering multiple alleged fathers in the case management system.

3. Conduct a search using the Indiana Support Enforcement Tracking System (ISETS)

Note: Information for accessing, navigating and searching for ISETS is located within the ISETS Case Inquire Website Guide.

4. Request that the DCS Staff Attorney review the paternity status in Database Registration of Indiana's Vital Events (DRIVE) (see Definitions) and/or Panoptic, if paternity has not been established;

Note: DRIVE can only verify children that were born in the state of Indiana. If the child was not born in Indiana, consult with the DCS Staff Attorney on additional steps.

5. Request the DCS Staff Attorney submit a request to check the Indiana Putative Father Registry;
6. Request the Child Support Bureau (CSB) to review paternity status by emailing the Indiana Central Registry Unit (ICRU). This request should include the following information about the child:
 - a. Full name,
 - b. Date of birth (DOB),
 - c. Place of birth (if known),
 - d. Mother's name (current and former names), and
 - e. Alleged father's name.
7. Discuss the appropriate next steps with the DCS Staff Attorney. See policy 2.20 Establishment of Child Support Orders, and
8. Document all efforts to determine paternity in the case management system.

Note: If paternity has been established but other names are provided as potential biological fathers of the child, the FCM must consult with the FCM Supervisor and the DSC Staff Attorney to discuss what information, if any, needs to be entered into the case management system.

If paternity has not been established, the FCM will:

1. Request the child's mother provide:
 - a. First and last name of each alleged father,
 - b. Last known address or location for each alleged father, and
 - c. Details of the child's birth (e.g. child's name at birth, place of birth) during the Detention/Initial hearing;
2. Complete the Authorization/Request for Genetic Testing Services form by:
 - a. Selecting the case management system case type and entering the applicable case number when paternity is not established and there is no IV-D funding available to cover the cost of genetic testing, or paternity information is not listed, or
 - b. Selecting the ISETS case type and entering the applicable ISETS case number for cases when paternity has not been established and IV-D funding is available to cover the cost of genetic testing.

Note: DCS will request the child's mother and each alleged father to voluntarily submit to genetic testing. For those who refuse or those who are incarcerated, DCS will petition the

court to order the mother, alleged father, and child to submit to genetic testing. If the child's mother is not available, a single-parent test for an identified alleged father may be offered to the alleged father.

3. Use the Specimen Collection Chain of Custody Procedure document (located within the Genetic Testing Kit) to complete all requirements for the following genetic testing process:
 - a. Paperwork and ID Procedure,

Note: If an adult other than the child's mother or legal guardian signs the consent, a written statement indicating that person's relationship to the child is required. If the FCM must sign the consent form, the FCM must write a statement on DCS letterhead indicating the child is a ward of DCS. If anyone refuses to be included in the group picture, the FCM will take a picture of the child's mother and the child together and a separate picture of each alleged father. All pictures will be submitted to the designated vendor with the genetic testing kit.

- b. Specimen Collection using Universal Precautions (see Definitions) while collecting, handling, and transporting samples. See Specimen Collection Training Video and State of Indiana-DCS Offices List of Specimen Collector Points to Remember for additional information, and
 - c. Shipping Procedure.

Note: Return the original copy of the Authorization/Request for Genetic Testing Services form to the genetic testing provider with the genetic test kit.

Re-ordering Genetic Test Kits

Each region will assign one (1) or two (2) staff members to track inventory and to place orders for additional test kits as needed.

Paternity Test Results

If the paternity test results are conclusive, the FCM will:

1. Inform all parties of the test results;
2. Ensure the child's father is offered the opportunity to participate in services or referred to services; and
3. Include the child's father in the case planning process.

If the paternity test results not conclusive for an alleged father, the FCM will:

1. Inform all parties of the test results;
2. Consider continuing services if the individual chooses to remain involved in the child's life as an informal support;
3. Notify the court of the test results and whether the individual chooses to remain involved in the case;
4. Work with the DCS Staff Attorney to determine whether any motions, amendments, or requests for additional findings need to be made; and
5. Allow the individual to participate in case planning if the individual chooses to be involved and has the consent of the child's mother.

The DCS Staff Attorney will:

1. Search the DRIVE and/or Panoptic databases for a paternity affidavit and print a copy of the affidavit if paternity has been established;

2. Check the Indiana Putative Father Registry by submitting a ticket to the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) Vital Records Help Desk;
3. Discuss with the FCM the next steps to establish paternity when paternity has not been established; and
4. Submit a copy of the genetic test results to the court (including the IV-D Prosecutor, if it is a IV-D case) within five (5) business days of receipt of the test results and request that the court make a ruling regarding paternity; or
5. Seek adjudication of paternity through the Child in Need of Services (CHINS).

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RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

Alleged/Putative Father

An alleged (putative) father is a male who has asserted to be the father of a child, or who claims to be the father of a child but has not been adjudicated the father through a paternity action filed in court having jurisdiction, has not signed a paternity affidavit, and is not presumed to be a child's father under IC 31-14-7 (1) or IC 31-14-7-1(2).

Long Arm Draw

A Long Arm Draw is a process used for a parent or alleged father that lives outside of Indiana and is unable to come to the DCS local office to submit to genetic testing. When using a Long Arm Draw, the FCM arranges for the person to submit to genetic testing at the designated vendor testing site in the area where the individual lives.

Database Registration of Indiana's Vital Events (DRIVE)

DRIVE is a search tool used by the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) to access paternity affidavits and is available for use by DCS legal staff.

Universal Precautions

Universal precautions are designed to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms from both recognized and unrecognized sources of infection. Universal precautions include the use of hand washing and appropriate personal protective equipment such as gloves, gowns, and masks whenever touching or exposure to client's body fluids (e.g., blood; body fluids, secretions, and excretions; non-intact skin; and mucous membranes) is anticipated.

Forms and Tools

- [Authorization/Request for Genetic Testing Services \(SF 54716\)](#)
- Client Identification and Consent Form/Chain of Custody – available via genetic test kit
- [Establishing Paternity Brochure](#)
- Indiana Central Registry Unit (ICRU) email - Indiana.ICRU@dcs.in.gov
- [Indiana Child Support Bureau Field Consultant Region Map](#)
- [Indiana Department of Child Services-Paternity Information](#)
- [Indiana State Department of Health \(ISDH\) Vital Records Help Desk](#)
- [Indiana Support Enforcement Tracking System \(ISETS\): Child Support Case Inquiry Web Tool](#)
- [ISETS Case Inquiry Website Guide](#)
- [ISETS Register](#) (Request New Account) – secure.in.gov/dcs/isets/Register.aspx
- DRIVE/Panoptic Web Tool – available to DCS legal staff

- Specimen Collection Instructions – available via genetic test kit
- [Specimen Collection Training Video](#)
- [State of Indiana- DCS Offices List of Specimen Collector Points to Remember](#)
- Statement of Consent and Release – available via genetic test kit
- [Tips for Preparing the Team for the Initial CFT Meeting](#)
- [Universal Precautions](#)

Related Policies

- [2.20 Establishment of Child Support Orders](#)

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LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 16-37-2-2: Birth Certificate and paternity affidavit; person responsible for filing or preparation; release of paternity affidavit](#)
- [IC 31-9-2-9: “Alleged father”](#)
- [IC 31-9-2-88: “Parent”](#)
- [IC 31-9-2-100: “Putative father”](#)
- [IC 31-14-2: Methods of Establishing Paternity](#)
- [IC 31-14-5-7: Registration with putative father registry](#)
- [IC 31-14-7-1: Presumptions of Paternity](#)
- [IC 31-19-5-1: Application of chapter](#)
- [IC 31-34-15-6: Filing of paternity action by local prosecuting attorney's office](#)

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PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 5.05

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.

Considerations when Sharing Paternity Information

Paternity information should be shared with each person involved with genuineness, empathy, respect, and professionalism. Paternity results that would change the course of services offered or alter current relationships, may best be addressed with the parent and service providers during the preparation of a Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting for each impacted individual. See [Tips for Preparing the Team for the Initial CFTM document](#) and the [Establishing Paternity Brochure](#) for additional assistance.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

If the child is placed with a specified relative and this specified relative opts to receive TANF benefits for the child instead of the foster care per diem, the child support is redirected. Federal law requires that as a condition of eligibility for TANF benefits, applicants are required to assign their rights to child support to the State of Indiana and to participate in the Title IV-D Child Support Program. This Federal law supersedes the Indiana law. The child's TANF benefits will automatically be assigned through the [Indiana Eligibility Determination Services System \(IEDSS\)](#) upon application for TANF, and any support paid on behalf of this child will go toward the repayment of TANF benefits received by the child.

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