

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 5: General Case Management	Effective Date: July 1, 2017
	Section 13: Transferring a Case Between DCS Local Offices	Version: 2

STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will ensure that when any case is transferred from one county to another, a child’s safety will be maintained. Decisions to transfer cases will be guided by principles of child safety, permanency, and well-being while focusing on meeting the needs of the family. In order to provide the most consistent service possible, cases for families moving less than 50 miles away from the DCS local office will not be transferred; rather, the original Family Case Manager (FCM) will continue to manage the case.

Exception: If the family moves less than 50 miles away from the DCS local office and the court decides to transfer the court case, the DCS case may also be transferred.

DCS will facilitate a Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting or Case Conference any time a transfer request is received or DCS learns that a family has moved out of the jurisdiction of a DCS local office.

DCS will consider transferring a case when:

1. A family with an Informal Adjustment (IA) moves out of the jurisdiction of a DCS local office;
2. The family of an in-home Child in Need of Services (CHINS) moves out of the jurisdiction of a DCS local office; or
3. The family of an out-of-home CHINS moves out of the jurisdiction of a DCS local office.

DCS will not recommend that the court transfer a case if the safety and well-being of the child cannot be assured. All decisions regarding recommendations to accept or deny a request for case transfer must be approved by the DCS Local Office Director (LOD). DCS will not transfer any cases unless the court transfers its case as well. If the court does not accept the request to transfer, the original FCM will continue to manage the case.

Code References

1. [IC 31-32-7-1: Venue of proceedings](#)
2. [IC 31-32-7-2: Change of Venue](#)
3. [IC 31-32-7-3: Assignment of case or supervision of child to county of child’s residence](#)
4. [IC 31-9-2-22.1 Concurrent planning](#)

PROCEDURE

In-Home CHINS or IA Case

Upon receiving notification from a parent, guardian, or custodian that they are planning to move; receiving a request from the parent, guardian, or custodian to transfer a case; or learning that the family has moved out of the jurisdiction of the local court; the FCM will:

1. Confirm with the family the date of the planned move and the new address where the family will be residing or present address if they have already moved. If the family has already moved, inspect the condition of the new residence. See policy [4.13 Assessing Home Conditions](#) for additional guidance.

Note: If the family's new residence is less than 50 miles away from the DCS local office, the case may not be transferred between local offices and the original FCM will be required to continue to provide case management unless the court transfers the case. Cases where a family is moving more than 50 miles away from the DCS local office may be transferred, if doing so would be in the best interests of the child and family.

2. Notify the DCS Staff Attorney and child's Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) / Guardian ad Litem (GAL) (if applicable) of the request to transfer;
3. Thoroughly review the [Case Plan](#) family progress, all assessment information, and the most recent [Risk Assessment](#) and [Safety Assessment](#);
4. Staff the case with his or her FCM Supervisor to determine if a transfer of the case is appropriate;
5. Convene a CFT meeting or Case Conference (if applicable) to determine the appropriateness of a case transfer and develop a plan for a smooth transition; and
6. Work with the DCS Staff Attorney to submit a request to the court with jurisdiction to contact the court in the family's new county of residence to determine if the case can be transferred by the agreement of the courts.

Note: The final decision to transfer jurisdiction of a case must be made by the agreement of the two juvenile court judges. The juvenile court of origin will facilitate all contact with the court in the family's new county of residence.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Staff with FCM to determine if case transfer is appropriate for the family;
2. Work with the DCS LOD to contact the DCS LOD or designee in receiving county to determine if case transfer is in the best interest of the family and If a case transfer is appropriate;

Note: The LOD will determine whether or not to request that the court with jurisdiction consider the transfer.

3. Seek approval from the DCS LOD prior to recommending to others that the case not be transferred If case transfer is not appropriate, seek approval;
4. Assist DCS Staff Attorney and FCM in communicating with the court regarding the possible case transfer; and
5. Ensure continuity of DCS case management services.

If the juvenile court approves the case transfer:

The FCM in the original county of residence will:

1. Ensure that the [case file](#) in the case management system is current;
2. Complete and fax a [Case Transfer Summary Form \(SF 54340\)](#) to the DCS Local Office Director of the receiving county;
3. Confirm the family's new residence address via phone or email with the new FCM within five (5) business days of court's approval of the transfer; and
4. Attend the CFT or transfer meeting in the family's new county of residence whenever possible to ensure a smooth transition of the case and required services.

The FCM Supervisor in the original county of residence will:

1. Transfer the [case file](#) in the case management system; and
2. Transfer the hard [case file](#) to the new county of residence within 10 business days of case transfer.

The FCM for the new county of residence will:

1. Confirm, in person, the family's new residence within five (5) business days of the assignment of the new case number by the receiving court. Utilize the [Face-To-Face Contact \(SF 53557\)](#) when meeting with the parent, guardian, custodian, or child. See policy [7.3 Minimum Contact](#) and [5.C Tool: Face-to-Face Contact Guide](#) for more information.
2. Inform the DCS Staff Attorney who may then request that the court appoint a new CASA/GAL (if applicable) for the child;
3. Notify the original FCM of the date, time, and location of the CFT or transfer meeting;
4. Coordinate the CFT or transfer meeting within 10 business days of the case transfer; and
5. Ensure that DCS continues to meet the identified needs of the family in the new county of residence.

If the juvenile court does not approve the transfer:

The FCM in the original county of residence will:

1. Work together with the FCM Supervisor, the child's family, and CFT to continue to meet the family's needs and assure that the family has access to needed interventions, supports, and services; and
2. Continue to provide case management even if the family has moved further than 50 miles away from the DCS local office.

Out-of-Home CHINS

Upon receiving notification from a parent, guardian, or custodian that they are planning to move; receiving a request from the parent, guardian, or custodian to transfer a case; or learning that a family has moved out of the jurisdiction of the local court; the FCM will:

1. Confirm with the parent(s) the date of the planned move and the new address where the parent(s) will be residing or present address if they have already moved. If the family has already moved, inspect the condition of the new residence. See policy [4.13 Assessing Home Conditions](#) for additional guidance.

Note: If the new residence is less than 50 miles away from the DCS local office, the case may not be transferred between local offices and the original FCM will be required to continue to provide case management unless the court transfers the case. Cases where a family is moving more than 50 miles away from the DCS local office may be transferred, if doing so would be in the best interest of the child and family.

2. Notify the DCS Staff Attorney and child's CASA/ GAL (if applicable) of the request to transfer;
3. Thoroughly review the [Case Plan](#) family progress, all assessment information, and the most recent [Risk Assessment](#) and [Safety Assessment](#);
4. Staff the case with his or her Supervisor to determine if a transfer of the case is appropriate;
5. Convene a CFT meeting or Case Conference to determine the appropriateness of a case transfer and develop a plan for a smooth transition; and

Note: If both parents or custodians are participating in services with DCS, but only one (1) is moving, the CFT should carefully consider whether it is in the best interest of the child to transfer the case. See [Related Information](#) for further guidance.

6. Work with the DCS Staff Attorney to submit a request to the court to contact the court in the family's new county of residence to determine if the case can be transferred by the agreement of the courts.

Note: The final decision to transfer jurisdiction of a case must be made by the agreement of the two (2) juvenile court judges. The juvenile court of origin will facilitate all contact with the court in the family's new county of residence.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Staff with FCM to determine if case transfer is appropriate for the family;
2. Work with the DCS Local Office Director to contact the DCS LOD in receiving county to determine if case transfer is in the best interest of the family If case transfer is appropriate;

Note: DCS LOD will determine whether or not to request that the court with jurisdiction consider the transfer.

3. Seek approval from the DCS LOD prior to recommending to the court that the case not be transferred If case transfer is not appropriate; and
4. Assist the DCS Staff Attorney and FCM in communicating with the court regarding the possible case transfer.

If the juvenile court approves the case transfer:

The FCM in the original county of residence will:

1. Ensure that the [case file](#) in the case management system is current;
2. Complete and fax a [Case Transfer Summary Form \(SF 54340\)](#) to the DCS LOD of the receiving county;
3. Confirm via phone or email with the new FCM the family's new residence within five (5) business days of the family's move or the court's approval of the transfer; and
4. Attend the CFT or transfer meeting in the family's new county of residence whenever possible to ensure a smooth transition of the case and required services.

The FCM Supervisor in the original county of residence will:

1. Transfer the case in case management system; and
2. Transfer the hard case file to the new county of residence within 10 business days of the case transfer.

The FCM in the new county of residence will:

1. Confirm, in person, the parent, guardian, or custodian's new residence within five (5) business days of the transfer. Utilize the [Face-To-Face Contact \(SF 53557\)](#) when meeting with parent, guardian, custodian or child. See policy [8.10 Minimum Contact](#) for more information.
2. Inform the DCS Staff Attorney who may then request the court appoint a new CASA/GAL (if applicable) for the child;
3. Notify the original FCM of the parent, guardian, or custodian's new residence and date, time, and location of the CFT or case [transfer meeting](#);

4. Coordinate the CFT or transfer meeting within 10 business days of the case transfer; and
5. Ensure that DCS continues to meet the identified needs of the family in the new county of residence.

If the juvenile court does not approve the transfer:

The FCM in the original county of residence will:

1. Work together with the FCM Supervisor, the child's family, and CFT to continue to meet the family's needs and assure that the family has access to needed interventions, supports, and services; and
2. Continue to provide case management even if the family has moved further than 50 miles away from the DCS local office.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Cases Appropriate for Transfer

When determining whether a family is appropriate for a case transfer the FCM and FCM Supervisor should consider:

1. Level of service need of the family. See policy, [4.26 Determining Service Levels and Transitioning to Ongoing Services](#) for more information.
2. The opinion of the CFT about the transfer;

Note: There may be cases where a family is moving more than 50 miles away from the DCS local office, and the CFT feels it is more appropriate for the FCM in the original county of residence to continue providing supervision.

3. The compliance level of the family throughout the life of the case;
4. The amount of time remaining in the case, if an IA (if there are 1-2 months remaining, consider if transfer would be a disservice to the family); and
5. Whether the family will have access to the same or comparable interventions, supports, services, and resources after moving.

Preparing a Family for Case Transfer

In any case transfer, ensuring a child's safety is given the highest priority. The best way to ensure this safety is to maintain consistent services for the family. Through the transfer meeting, the family will begin developing a relationship with their new FCM and will begin to identify informal supports in their new community. Immediately after transferring a case, a family may need a higher level of support from the FCM because they will be adjusting to his/her new surroundings and may not have access to the same services, formal and informal support system(s) as before.

Concerns when Considering a Case Transfer

It is not intended that a case will be transferred multiple times during a family's involvement with DCS. Case transfer requests should only be considered when a family's move will ultimately facilitate permanency. DCS staff should carefully consider the potential positive and negative effects of transferring a case before making a decision regarding the transfer.

Special Circumstances in Out-of-Home CHINS Case Transfers

In some instances, both parents may be engaged with DCS, and only one may be moving. The CFT will play a crucial role in determining whether to make a recommendation to the court to

consider transferring the case to another county. For example, the children were removed from their custodial parent. The noncustodial parent becomes engaged with DCS after the removal. Now, the custodial parent is planning on moving more than 50 miles away. The CFT should consider the involvement of both parents throughout the life of the case and determine which parent is most likely to receive custody of the child when the CHINS case is closed.

When an out-of-home CHINS case is transferred, the placement of the child is not expected to be disrupted unless all parties agree that it would be in the best interest of the child and the placement change will facilitate permanency. When making a decision about changing a child's placement, the CFT should take into account the child's permanency goal(s), as well as, the level of parental involvement with DCS prior to the transfer, and the child's opinion (if age appropriate). The county in which the parent resides will have jurisdiction over the case and the new FCM will be responsible for ensuring that minimum contacts with the child and parent, guardian, or custodian occur. The FCM will also be responsible for assuring that the visitation plan continues to be implemented. See policy [8.10 Minimum Contact](#) for additional information.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Case Transfer Summary Form \(SF 54340\)](#)
2. [5.C Tool: Face-to-Face Contact Guide](#)
3. [Face-To-Face Contact \(SF 53557\)](#)
4. [Risk Assessment](#) – Available in the case management system
5. [Safety Assessment](#) – Available in the case management system
6. [Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF 114\) \(310\)](#) – Available in the case management system
7. [Case Plan \(SF 2956\)](#) – Available in the case management system
8. [Assessment of Alleged Child Abuse and Neglect \(SF 113\) \(311\)](#) – Available in the case management system
9. [Affidavit of Diligent Inquiry \(SF 54778\)](#) – Available in the case management system

RELATED INFORMATION

Underlying Needs

Underlying needs are the root source of an individual and/or family's challenges, which determines the appropriate use of services or interventions. In order to identify the underlying need, the question of what the family needs or what needs to change in order to achieve the family's outcomes should be answered. The FCM will assist the family and the team to identify these needs.

The ability to identify an underlying need is a crucial step in engaging a family and promoting safety, permanency, and well-being. Addressing underlying needs allows DCS and the CFT understand the root of the problem and provide accurate/effective services to address the needs. This method supports safe sustainable case closure.

Transfer Meetings

A CFT Meeting should be used to accomplish a transfer meeting, and both the original and new FCMs must be present¹. If the original FCM is no longer employed by DCS, a Supervisor should attend the transfer meeting in their place. The purpose of the transfer meeting is to provide all

¹ If still employed by DCS.

parties with as much information as possible about the status of the case, and partner with the family in the process to ensure a smooth transfer of services.

The original FCM must participate in the CFT or transfer meeting held immediately after the family moves. If attending the meeting in person is not possible, the FCM may participate via phone. It is essential that both FCMs work together to ensure that the family's service plan remains intact and child safety is being assured throughout the case transfer process.

Examples of information that should be shared and discussed at the transfer meeting include but are not limited to:

1. The family's identified strengths and [underlying needs](#);
2. Needs that may arrive in the near future, especially with the family's move;
3. What efforts have been taken to meet those needs;
4. Clarify expectations about what happens next;
5. The name and contact information of the new FCM and FCM Supervisor;
6. The family's new address and contact information;
7. Formal and informal supports for the family that will be utilized after moving (this may include supports that were present prior to moving);
8. Information about membership in the CFT (membership may or may not remain the same after relocating); and
9. Visitation arrangements (specifically if the child's placement has changed).

IA Extensions

Each IA may be granted one three (3) month extension. If this extension is granted prior to case transfer an additional extension may not be granted after case transfer. If an FCM decides to request an extension from the court, the petition must be filed in the county which has jurisdiction over the case. An IA may not be extended as a direct result of the family's move or request to transfer.

Filing a CHINS Petition After Transferring an IA

If a family has moved, the IA was transferred, and a CHINS petition needs to be filed, the FCM in the new county of residence should file the petition in the county which has jurisdiction over the case (the county in which the family currently resides). A CHINS petition should only be filed if safety concerns arise because the parent, guardian or custodian has not complied with the terms of the IA or the best interests of the child requires additional services for which court intervention is needed.

If a CHINS petition needs to be filed and a family has moved or the IA was not transferred, staff from the original county of residence and new county of residence will need to communicate to ensure that there is no break in services for the family. Each family situation will need to be carefully evaluated by the FCM and Supervisor to determine which county should file the CHINS petition.

If new allegations of abuse or neglect arise and a family has moved and the IA was not transferred, a [Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF 114\)\(310\)](#) should be filed in the family's new county of residence. The original county should close their IA and the new county should file the CHINS petition if appropriate. Two (2) cases should not be open in two (2) different counties at the same time.

Case File

Prior to transferring the hard case file or the case management system, the FCM is responsible for ensuring that all information is current and accurate. The county where the family originally resided is not required to keep a copy of the case file. The data entry must be complete for each of the following:

1. Hearings;
2. Placement;
3. Services;
4. Visitation Plan;
5. [Assessment of Alleged Child Abuse and Neglect \(SF 113\) \(311\)](#);
6. [Case Plan](#);
7. Demographic information;
8. Contacts;
9. School information and other related education information (e.g. Individualized Education Plan);
10. Medicaid number;
11. Health Information (e.g. medical and dental health issues, current treatment);
12. Indiana Support Enforcement Tracking System (ISETS) interface;
13. [Affidavit of Diligent Inquiry \(SF 54778\)](#);
14. Court Reports;
15. Notices;
16. Mental Health Screen; and
17. Immunization records.