

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
Chapter 5: General Case Management Section 22: Missing and Runaway Children		
	Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 7

POLICY OVERVIEW

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) has steps to locate a child involved with DCS who is missing and/or has run away.

POLICY STATEMENT

DCS will keep trying to quickly find any missing child who is involved with DCS, including when the child is:

1. Part of an open assessment;
2. Involved in an Informal Adjustment/Prevention Plan (IA);
3. Living in an out-of-home placement (including a residential facility);
4. In an in-home Child in Need of Services (CHINS) case; or
5. On a Trial Home Visit (THV).

DCS will keep making foster care maintenance payments (FCMPs) to the resource parent for up to five calendar days if a child in out-of-home care goes missing or runs away – as long as the plan is for the child to return to the same home. If the child does not return to the placement within five calendar days, the placement and daily payment (per diem) will stop – unless approved by a DCS Regional Director or Assistant Regional Director. Requests received from a Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA) to continue placement and daily payment (per diem) beyond five days will be reviewed by the Chief Deputy Director of Field Operations.

DCS will make sure the parent, resource parent, or residential provider **immediately** contacts the following if a child goes missing or runs away:

1. The Local Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) in the area the child went missing, and
2. The Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (Hotline) at 1-800-800-5556 or DCSHotlineReports@dcs.in.gov

DCS will ensure the child's information is entered into the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) within 24 hours.

LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 10-13-5-4: "Missing Child"](#)
- [IC 10-13-5-4.4: "Missing endangered child"](#)
- [IC 31-33-18-2 \(25\): Disclosure of unredacted material to certain persons](#)
- [IC 31-34-1-3.5: Victim of human or sexual trafficking](#)
- [IC 31-34-1-8: Missing child](#)
- [IC 31-37-23: Chapter 23. Interstate Compact on Juveniles](#)
- [34 USC 11201-11281: Runaway and Homeless Youth](#)

- [34 USC 11291-11298: Missing Children](#)
- [Interstate Commission for Juveniles \(ICJ\) Rules \(2026\)](#)