



Eric J. Holcomb, Governor  
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**Gov. Holcomb ceremonially signs bills reforming child welfare**

*Stigdon outlines significant DCS progress one year after CWG report*

**INDIANAPOLIS** (June 13, 2019)—Today, Governor Eric J. Holcomb hosted ceremonial bill signings for child welfare reform among a group of legislators, Indiana Department of Child Services Director Terry Stigdon, agency partners and DCS staff.

Gov. Holcomb ceremonially signed Senate Enrolled Act 1, a bill authored by Sen. Erin Houchin – a former DCS family caseworker – which provides better in-home placement to keep children in the most family-like settings possible and provides greater support for foster care families.

He also ceremonially signed House Enrolled Act 1006, authored by Rep. Greg Steuerwald, which details several key changes to improve child welfare throughout Indiana by:

- Extending the age older foster youth can receive collaborative care services from age 20 to age 21;
- Updating the DCS caseload standard to align with Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) best practices;
- Extending the deadline for DCS to send assessment updates to certain reporters from 30 to 45 days to allow for more complete reporting;
- Amending the 1-hour response time to 2 hours;
- Amending the definition of neglect to exclude poverty as a sole justification.

“I am grateful to Director Stigdon and her staff, as well as lawmakers who supported meaningful policy and operational changes that help protect vulnerable Hoosier children,” Gov. Holcomb said. “Under Terry’s leadership, the Department of Child Services has taken action to improve in several key areas, garnered positive results and most importantly, served children in need of services and their families.”



*Indiana children will live in safe, healthy and supportive families and communities.*

The legislation is in response to the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group (CWG) evaluation commissioned by Gov. Holcomb last year. The CWG report released June 18, 2018, kicked off a year of significant improvements at DCS for children in need of services including:

- Improved workplace culture;
- Executive-level hires and promotions;
- A nearly 19 percent reduction in family case manager staff turnover rate;
- Improved supervisor-to-FCM ratio from 1:7.34 to 1:5.62;
- 99% compliance with the 12/17 caseload standard;
- Creation of two advisory councils that are staff-driven and staff-focused;
- Hiring of three new provider relations advocates to improve relationships with DCS providers;
- Piloted foster parent-focused web portal;
- Reduced caseloads for agency attorneys to align with new standard range of 60-75 cases per attorney;
- Improved attorney training program with emphasis on litigation/trial advocacy skills.

“DCS has been working tirelessly to make significant changes across the state to continue improving the lives of those we are honored to serve,” DCS director Terry Stigdon said. “We want all Hoosiers to know we are doing everything we can to help promote positive outcomes and deliver on our mission by helping the right child at the right time in the right way.”

In the last year, DCS has also collaborated with the Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary, the Commission on Improving the Status of Children and other state agencies to improve outcomes for Hoosier families and children. An updated [progress report](#) and [infographic](#) regarding the agency’s work toward [CWG report recommendations](#) are available on the DCS website. Photos from today’s event are posted on Twitter [@IndianaDCS](#) and [@tstigdon](#).

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***About Indiana DCS:*** *The Indiana Department of Child Services engages with families and collaborates with state, local and community partners to protect children from abuse and neglect and to provide child support services. Indiana Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline: 800.800.5556. Child Support Customer Service Kidsline: 800.840.8757 or 317.233.5437. [www.in.gov/dcs](http://www.in.gov/dcs)*



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