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Date: September 26, 2022
To: All DCS Staff
From: Sarah Sailors, Deputy Director of Field Operations
Subject: Linking and Withdrawing
DCS-22-4

As a result of a Rapid Improvement Event (RIE) regarding Linking and Withdrawing Assessments in May 2022, guidance was created to clarify the linking and withdrawing process. This updated guidance does not apply to a fatality/near fatality assessment.

Effective October 3rd, 2022, upon receipt of a new Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse and/or Neglect (310), the FCM Supervisor will use discretion when determining the most appropriate option (e.g., link, withdraw, screen out, create new assessment). It is the responsibility of DCS to take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of each child.

Note: The 310 should be screened out by the DCS local office when the allegations were previously assessed and closed or if the allegations do not meet the statutory definition of Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N).

Linking

DCS may electronically link a 310 to an open assessment, regardless of the maltreatment type, when the new 310 includes:

1. Allegations that meet the statutory definition of CA/N;
2. The same alleged perpetrator;
3. The same alleged child victim; and/or
4. A household member that was not listed in the open assessment.

A 310 should **not** be linked when:

1. Individuals listed in the new 310 are not entitled to information contained in the open assessment; and/or
2. The assessments are initially assigned to separate counties.

If the new 310 has a different allegation and/or maltreatment type that was not previously addressed in the open assessment, a face-to-face interview with the alleged child victim must be completed. Linking a new 310 to an open assessment does not eliminate initiation timeframe requirements. Decisions as to whether a linked 310 requires an additional face-to-face contact will be determined at the supervisory level.

Note: Upon receipt of a new 310, additional consent to speak to the child must be obtained unless exigent circumstances exist.



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

Initial and subsequent child safety for each linked 310 must be ensured and documented in the open assessment. If it is determined that face-to-face contact is not required, the reason must be documented in the case management system. The parent, guardian, or custodian must be notified of all allegations for each linked 310.

If the same incident is alleged in multiple linked 310s, those allegations must have a consistent decision outcome (i.e., unsubstantiated or substantiated). The decision outcome of each allegation must be documented for each 310 in the conclusion statement of the 311.

Withdrawing

DCS may electronically withdraw a 310 when:

1. The 310 was approved for assessment in error; or
2. “Unknown” profiles listed on the 310 become known and are identified in an open assessment and there is no ability to link.

Note: The assessment with “unknown” profiles should be “withdrawn due to duplicate” and the 310 should be uploaded to the original assessment.

APPROVED: August 30, 2022

Sarah Sailors
Deputy Director of Field Operations



Protecting our children, families, and future