



Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr., Governor
James W. Payne, Director

Indiana Department of Child Services
Room W392 – MS47
302 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2739

317-232-4705
FAX: 317-232-4490

www.in.gov/dcs

Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 800-800-5556

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To: Regional Managers
Directors, Local Offices, Department of Child Services

From: James W. Payne, Director
Dave Judkins, Deputy Director of Field Operations
Angela Green, Deputy Director of Practice Support
Department of Child Services

Subject: Locating Absent Parents – Updated Procedures
DCS-08-11

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) would like to thank you for your continued commitment to ensuring the safety of Indiana's children. In fulfilling the values that "We believe parents have the primary responsibility for the care and safety of their children" and "We believe the most desirable place for children to grow up is with their own families," some modifications have been made to the procedures for locating absent parents. This administrative letter outlines these changes that are effective September 1, 2008.

Per policy 5.6, DCS will make diligent efforts beginning in the assessment phase and throughout the life of the case to locate absent parents of all children in the care and custody of DCS. FCMs will be expected to present their findings with respect to absent parents at the time of the initial hearing whenever possible.

The following tools are available to assist FCMs in locating absent parent(s) of children under the care and custody of DCS. These tools must be utilized in the order listed below until a parent is located.

1. Search the databases available to the FCM including the Indiana Support Enforcement Tracking System (ISETS); Indiana Child Welfare Information System (ICWIS) and the Indiana Client Eligibility System (ICES);



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2. Search the white pages website at <http://www.whitepages.com/>;
3. Search the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) at <http://www.in.gov/bmv/>;
4. Contact the county jail to see if the absent parent is being held;
5. Search the Department of Corrections (DOC) at <http://www.in.gov/idoc/>. Click on Offender Locator on the right side of the screen; and
6. Use <http://www.ussearch.com/> to locate parent.

Note: The FCM must be prepared to present his/her findings with respect to the absent parent to the court at the time of the initial hearing.

These updated procedures are not intended to replace the DCS practice of engaging families to assist in obtaining further information about the absent parent(s).

Updates will be made to Chapter 5-Section 6: Locating Absent Parents, Chapter 6-Section 1: Detention Hearing, Chapter 6-Section 3: Initial Fact Finding Hearing, and Chapter 4-Section 1: Reviewing the CA/N Intake Report and Other Records of the DCS Policy Manual to reflect these recent changes. If you have any questions regarding this change, please address them to the DCS policy mailbox at DCSPolicy@dcs.in.gov.

Sincerely,

James W. Payne, Director
Department of Child Services

