

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 3: Intake	Effective Date: November 1, 2005
	Section 12: Linking Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) Reports to Open Assessments	Version: 1

POLICY

When appropriate, the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will electronically link new [Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF 114/CW0310\)](#) (Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) intake report) to assessments that have been open 30 days or less **and** involve the same perpetrator **and** the same victim **and** the same or similar allegations.

When a CA/N intake report is linked to an existing assessment, a separate assessment will not be conducted, although appropriate steps will be taken within the current assessment to assure the safety and well-being of the child.

DCS will not link CA/N intake reports to existing assessments when it is necessary to conduct a separate, thorough assessment in order to assure the safety and well-being of a child.

Code References

[IC 31-33-7-4: Written Reports](#)

PROCEDURE

Upon receiving a report of CA/N that involves a family for which there is an open assessment, the intake worker will:

1. Check the Indiana Child Welfare Information System (ICWIS) to see if the assessment has been open 30 days or less and the new report involves the same alleged perpetrator, same victim, and same or similar allegations; and
2. Using critical thinking skills, make a recommendation about whether it is in the **best interest of the alleged child victim's safety and well-being** to link the new report with the open assessment.

The intake Supervisor will:

1. Make a final decision about whether the report will be linked;
2. If determined that the report **will not** be linked, follow the remaining procedures in separate policy, [3.5 Supervisory Review of Child Abuse and/or Neglect \(CA/N\) Intake Reports](#);
3. If the report **will** be linked, and if the a CA/N intake report has already been created in ICWIS, follow the appropriate steps to link the intake report to the open assessment;
4. If a CA/N intake report has not yet been created in ICWIS (i.e., the report exists in hard copy only), direct the intake worker to create a temporary contact within the open assessment to document the details of the CA/N intake report; and

Note: An ICWIS CA/N intake report must then be created and linked within 24 hours of the conclusion of the initial call from the reporter.

5. Confirm receipt of the linked report by the Family Case Manager (FCM) assigned to the assessment. Ideally, this will be done by making direct contact with the FCM either in-person or via phone. In situations where this is not practical, ensure receipt through a standardized delivery process such as a high-priority in-box etc.

Note: If a temporary contact was created, the FCM must be alerted.

Upon receipt of a linked CA/N intake report, the FCM assigned to the assessment will:

1. Carefully review the information on the linked CA/N intake report. Give the utmost consideration to the safety and well-being of the alleged child victim. Seek supervisory input as necessary to determine appropriate actions; and
2. Take all appropriate actions, which could include, but are not limited to, contacting the family to discuss the new information and conducting a new [Safety Assessment](#) and/or [Risk Assessment](#).

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

When it is Appropriate to Link a New CA/N Report

A new CA/N report may be linked when it is not necessary to conduct a separate, thorough assessment (including all required interviews) to assure the safety and well-being of the child. Example: DCS receives a new report of a “dirty house.” The family has been involved for the past 20 days in an assessment for similar allegations. All interviews have been completed by the FCM, as well as a home visit, [Safety Assessment](#), [Risk Assessment](#), and [Strengths and Needs Assessment](#). Rather than start over with a new assessment and re-do all interviews, etc., the FCM and his or her Supervisor should discuss the specifics of the situation as they relate to the safety of the child. It may be determined that the most appropriate action would be for the FCM to speak with the parents, make face-to-face contact with the child, and visit the home to assess the environment. It may not be necessary to interview anyone else. When used appropriately, linking can avoid duplication of effort. However, linking should never occur at the expense of child safety and well-being. When in doubt, do not link.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF 114/CW0310\)](#) – Available in ICWIS
2. [Safety Assessment](#) – Available in ICWIS
3. [Risk Assessment](#) – Available in ICWIS
4. [Strengths and Needs Assessment](#) – Available in ICWIS

RELATED INFORMATION

Collateral Contacts

The above policy does not apply to collateral contacts who call DCS with additional information about an open assessment. See practice guidance in separate policy, [3.1 Receiving Calls \(Overview\)](#) for details on routing and documenting collateral information.