

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Services	Effective Date: July 1, 2014
	Section 1: Selecting a Placement Option	Version: 5

POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will consider the following factors when identifying placement options for a child:

1. The noncustodial parent's ability and willingness to care for the child, before considering other out-of-home placements;
2. The possibility of other relatives as a placement, before considering other placement options;
3. The placement recommendation of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment. See separate policy, [4.32 Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths \(CANS\) Assessment](#);
4. The least restrictive environment available to provide for the child's individual needs;
5. Proximity to his or her own community. Whenever possible a child will be placed within his or her own community and school district and within close proximity to his or her parent, guardian, or custodian; and
6. Whether there is a compelling reason that placing siblings together would not be in the best interest of one (1) or more of the children.

The Child and Family Team (CFT) should identify the best placement option for the child, unless an immediate placement decision must be made due to an emergency removal.

[NEW] Note: As soon as possible after the emergency situation, the CFT should determine which placement option will be in the best interest of the child.

The CFT will discuss the identified permanency plan at each meeting, in addition to the concurrent or alternative plan which will be used if the identified permanency plan is not successful, see separate policy [5.15 Concurrent Planning](#).

[REVISED] The Family Case Manager (FCM) and CFT should carefully determine what placement would be in the best interest of the child, then DCS must submit all placement recommendations to the court. See separate policies, [8.4 Emergency Shelter Care & Residential Care Review and Approval](#), and [5.7 Family Team Meetings](#).

Code References

1. [IC 31-34-4: Temporary Placement of Child Taken Into Custody](#)
2. [IC 31-34-6: Detention of Alleged Child in Need of Services](#)
3. [IC 31-34-6-2: Placement with Family Member](#)

PROCEDURE

When pursuing a placement, the FCM will:

1. Conduct a diligent search for any noncustodial parents. See separate policies, [4.0 Diligent Search](#) and [5.6 Locating Absent Parents](#);
2. Conduct a criminal history background check if a noncustodial parent is identified as a potential caretaker and there are concerns regarding the noncustodial parent's ability to keep the child safe. See separate policy, [13.5 Conducting Background Checks for Unlicensed Placements](#);
3. Ask the family if the child is a member of or eligible for membership in an Indian (Native American) tribe;

Note: During the assessment, a [Family Network Diagram](#) is created to identify extended family members. The FCM should use this [Family Network Diagram](#) as a tool to support his or her search for potential relative placements.

4. Determine if the child is part of a sibling group that needs placement or is currently in placement:
 - a. Conduct an exhaustive search to identify a placement option that can accommodate the sibling group. If the FCM is unable to locate an initial placement, an ongoing diligent search will continue to be made,
 - b. Develop a permanency plan and concurrent plan, if applicable, which both include the possibility of siblings being placed together, see separate policy [5.15 Concurrent Planning](#), and
 - c. If siblings will not be placed together initially, develop a Visitation Plan that is agreed upon by all parties. See separate policy, [8.12 Developing the Visitation Plan](#).
5. Determine if the child has any needs that will affect placement. See [Tool 8.B Separation and Loss](#);
6. Facilitate the convening of a CFT Meeting to discuss the needs of the child. Review the [Placement Needs Summary](#) and CANS services and placement recommendations to determine the most appropriate placement type for the child:
 - a. Relative Family, Foster Family Home, or
 - b. Residential treatment center, Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility or State Hospital. This level of placement requires approval of the Residential Placement Committee.
7. Obtain approval by the DCS Local Office Director or designee for children placed in placement types that are different from what the CANS recommends. See separate policy, [4.32 Child and Adolescent Needs \(CANS\) Assessment](#).
8. Submit the recommendation to the court after the recommendation is approved by all required DCS local office staff.
9. Coordinate and facilitate placement of the child. See separate policy, [8.9 Placing the Child in Out-of-Home Care](#);
10. Document the placement in the Management Gateway for Indiana's Kids (MaGIK);
11. Complete the Individual Child Placement Referral (ICPR) for all paid placements in the KidTraks system and ensure the ICPR is delivered to the placement resource; and

12. Conduct the initial visit with the child and placement resource within three (3) business days of placement.

The FCM will follow these additional steps based on the type of placement being pursued:

1. Relative and foster family home:
 - a. Identify all relatives who may be an appropriate resource for the child utilizing the completed [Family Network Diagram](#),
 - b. Ensure that criminal history background checks are conducted on all unlicensed relative resource homes. See separate policy, [13.5 Conducting Background Checks for Unlicensed Placements](#),
 - c. Identify foster families, if an appropriate relative cannot be located by working with the Regional Foster Care Specialist or Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA), and
 - d. Contact the identified family to discuss the child's needs and the family's ability to care for the child.

Note: Ensure that LCPA staff is included in communications with the foster parent.

2. Residential Placement: Follow all additional steps in separate policy, [8.4 Emergency Shelter Care and Residential Placement Review](#).
3. See separate policy, [9.1 Request to Place an Indiana Child in another State](#) for information that must be submitted to the Central Office Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) Office for out of state placement with a relative, in foster care or in a residential facility.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Assist the FCM in determining the appropriate type of placement for the child; and

Note: Obtain approval by the DCS Local Office Director or designee for children placed in placement types that are different from what the CANS recommends. See separate policy, [4.32 Child and Adolescent Needs \(CANS\) Assessment](#).

2. Provide any additional assistance as needed to ensure the child is placed timely.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Tool 8.B : Separation and Loss](#)
2. [Family Network Diagram](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

DCS Investigators

A referral may be made to a DCS Investigator to assist with locating an absent parent or relatives for placement consideration.

Placement with Family Member

[IC 31-34-6-2](#) requires the court to consider placing a child with an appropriate family member before considering any other placement option.

Out-of-Home Placement Philosophy

Out-of-home care will be used only when there is no other alternative to ensure a child's safety and well-being from abuse or neglect. DCS will diligently work to maintain familial connections through visitation and shared activities while a child is in out-of-home care. The parent of a child in out-of-home care is also afforded an opportunity to build on family strengths and learn essential skills in providing a safe, nurturing environment to which their child may return.

Eligible Placements

DCS will claim federal (Title IV-E Foster Care, Title IV-A Emergency Assistance, Title IV-E Waiver) reimbursement on behalf of eligible children who are placed in DCS licensed, IV-E eligible placements. Eligible placement settings include but are not limited to licensed relative homes, foster family homes, child-caring institutions, emergency shelters, group homes, and private secure facilities. Ineligible placement settings include those outside the scope of foster care, such as but not limited to unlicensed relative care, detention centers, correctional facilities, hospitals, and boot camps.

Child Placed with Non-Custodial Parent

When a child is physically and legally removed from a Custodial Parent and placed directly with a non-custodial Parent without any intervening out-of-home placement and DCS is given placement and care authority, removal has occurred from the Custodial Parent. The noncustodial parent would not be considered a placement.

When a child has been removed from the custodial parent and placed in out-of-home care (e.g. foster family home) at least one (1) day and is then placed with the non-custodial parent, this is considered a Trial Home Visit (THV).

[NEW] Confidentiality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth

FCEs should ensure that confidentiality measures are in place when evaluating placement of an LGBTQ youth. Except for cases where LGBTQ issues are relevant to abuse, neglect, removal, placement, or reunification, confidentiality must be maintained. In these circumstances, the youth's identification as an LGBTQ youth should be discussed with the supervisor. Staff should be mindful confidentiality is important and even more critical when working with youth identifying as LGBTQ. These youth may or may not be out, or only to certain individuals. It is up to a youth to determine to whom and how they come out. FCEs should stress to the proposed resource family that it is critical that confidentiality and respect be honored in the way that an LGBTQ youth requests.