

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>	
	<b>Chapter 10:</b> Adoption	<b>Effective Date:</b> February 1, 2014
	<b>Section 10:</b> Unlicensed Relative Adoption	<b>Version:</b> 2

**POLICY [REVISED]**

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) has established the following guidelines for an unlicensed relative who wants to become a prospective adoptive parent for the purpose of adopting a DCS ward in his/her care:

1. Efforts to reunite the child with either parent have not been successful;
2. The child has lived in the home for six (6) continuous months or longer;
3. The permanency plan is adoption and there is a significant emotional attachment between the child and the unlicensed relative as assessed by a counselor, therapist, or other professional specializing in attachment;
4. Completion of pre-service adoption training and six (6) hours of "Adoption" training. See policy [12.5 Pre-Service Training Requirements](#).

**Note:** The pre-service adoption training and six (6) hours of "Adoption" training may be waived with a written exception from the DCS Local Office Director (LOD).

5. Submission of a written adoption summary to the court detailing DCS' recommendation for adoption. See Practice Guidance.

**Note:** A complete home study is not required for unlicensed relative adoptions.

DCS requires background checks on all persons who live in a prospective adoptive home when a DCS ward is being adopted. See separate policies, [13.7 Conducting Background Checks for Adoption](#) and [13.8 Evaluating Background Checks for Adoption](#).

DCS will ensure that the prospective adoptive parent is made aware of the ability to apply for Medicaid, NRAE, and adoption assistance periodic payments. See separate policy [10.14 Indiana Adoption Assistance Program Overview](#).

Code References **[NEW]**

1. [IC 31-19-8-5 Agency report and recommendation; filing requirements; waiver of report](#)
2. [IC 31-19-8-6 Contents of report](#)
3. [IC 31-19-2-7.5 Submission of information, forms, or consents for criminal history check](#)
4. [IC 31-19-26.5: Adoption Subsidies](#)
5. [42 USC 673: Social Security Act](#)

**PROCEDURE [REVISED]**

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Complete the Child Social Summary. See separate policy [10.11 Child Social Summary](#);

2. Explain the adoption process, including the Adoption Assistance Program to the unlicensed relative and the child, if applicable. See separate policies [10.1 Planning for Adoption \(Overview\)](#) and [10.14 Indiana Adoption Assistance Program Overview](#);
3. Initiate the background check process of all individuals living in the home. See separate policy [13.7 Conducting Background Checks for Adoption](#);
4. Conduct an agency staffing to get the unlicensed relative approved as a prospective adoptive parent after the child has been in the home for six (6) months;
5. Complete a written adoption summary for the court within 60 days of the date the adoption petition is filed. The adoption summary should include the following information. See Practice Guidance:
  - a. The former environment of the child,
  - b. The health of the child, and
  - c. The suitability of the proposed home for the child.

**Note:** The report may not contain any information concerning the financial condition of the prospective adoptive parent or a recommendation that a request for subsidy be denied in whole or in part due to the financial condition of the prospective adoptive parent.

6. Ensure that the prospective adoptive parent has contact information for the Regional Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) Specialist to access post adoption services. See Practice Guidance.

**Note:** There are Post Adoption Services brochures and a SNAP Specialists map for the FCM to give to the prospective adoptive parent. This information is also available via the DCS website.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Ensure that the FCM has completed all required background checks in a timely manner. See separate policies [13.7 Conducting Background Checks for Adoption](#) and [13.8 Evaluating Background Checks for Adoption](#);
2. Attend the staffing and provide input as necessary; and
3. Assure that all required information is contained in the child's adoption file. See separate policy [10.14 Indiana Adoption Assistance Program Overview](#).

## PRACTICE GUIDANCE **[NEW]**

### **Adoption Summary**

The adoption summary is submitted to the court and provides the court with the following information:

1. FCM's name;
2. Petitioner's name;
3. Child's name;
4. Adoption Cause Number;
5. Wardship date;
6. TPR/ Consents (Date);

**Note:** It is important to include this information for all identified alleged fathers.

7. DCS Consents for Adoption;
8. Adoption staffing date;
9. Adoptive placement date;
10. Adoptive placement approval (by whom/date);
11. Summary about the child. (talk about the former environment of the child and the child's health in this section);
12. Summary about the child's sibling(s);
13. Summary about the biological parent(s);
14. Summary about the adoptive family. (talk about the suitability of the home for the child in this section):
  - a. Adoptive parent(s),
  - b. Children of adoptive parent(s),
  - c. Parenting and discipline,
  - d. Home and community, and
  - e. Substantiated reports of CA/N of adoptive parent(s).
15. DCS' evaluation and recommendations for placements;
16. FCM's signature;
17. FCM Supervisor's signature; and
18. Local Office Director's (LOD) signature or designee.

### **Post Adoption Services**

The adoptive parent may, at any time, submit a request to DCS for a post adoption service referral on behalf of the adoptive child or family. The adoptive parent(s) must contact the DCS SNAP Specialist in the region of their residence to initiate a referral for services. The SNAP Specialist will complete a referral to an appropriate service provider for purposes of an assessment and creation of a service delivery plan tailored to the particular needs of the adoptive child and family. See [Post Adoption Services](#).

**Note:** A request for post adopt services cannot be submitted prior to the finalization of adoption.

### **FORMS AND TOOLS [NEW]**

[Child Social Summary](#)

### **RELATED INFORMATION [REVISED]**

#### **Changes in Dynamics- When a Unlicensed Relative Resource Parent Adopts**

Adoption means the unlicensed relative:

1. Is making a commitment to provide permanency for the child; and
2. No longer shares decision making responsibility and liability with DCS or the court.

He/she is solely responsible, legally and financially, for the total parenting, care, growth, and development of the child. This includes ensuring that the long-term developmental, therapeutic, social, medical, educational, and emotional needs of the child are met.