

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 3: Intake	Effective Date: July 1, 2008
	Section 1: Receiving Calls (Overview)	Version: 2

POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will be available to receive reports of child abuse and/or neglect (CA/N) 24 hours per day, seven (7) days per week. DCS will operate a statewide, toll-free child abuse hotline (800-800-5556) as well as [local child abuse hotlines](#).

DCS will receive oral and written (hard copy and electronic) reports and requests.

DCS will record the date, time, and purpose of every hotline call received.

Code References

1. [IC 31-33-5: Duty to Report Child Abuse or Neglect](#)
2. [IC 31-33-7: Receipt of Reports of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect](#)
3. [IC 31-33-18: Disclosure of Reports; Confidentiality Requirements](#)
4. [IC 20-50-1: Homeless Children and Foster Care Children](#)
5. [IC 31-36-3: Homeless Children](#)

PROCEDURE

The intake worker will complete the following steps for all calls received:

1. Record the date and time of the call;
2. Engage with the caller in a courteous and professional manner;
3. Actively listen to the reporter and take detailed notes;
4. Make an initial determination about the nature of the call to be one of the following, record the purpose of the call, and take appropriate actions:
 - a. **CA/N allegations**
Proceed with creating a [Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF 114/CW0310\)](#) (Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) intake report). See separate policy, [3.2 Creating a Child Abuse and/or Neglect \(CA/N\) Intake Report](#).
 - b. **Service Requests**
Proceed with creating a [Service Request Intake Report \(SF 49548/CW0310SR\)](#). See separate policy, [3.3 Service Request Intake Reports](#).
 - c. **Other calls**
 - 1) **Out of State CA/N allegations:** Reports where the alleged CA/N occurred in another state will be transferred to the appropriate child welfare agency in that state. No further action required unless courtesy interviews are requested by the agency,
 - 2) **Information only** (i.e., requesting the phone number of a local childcare provider): Provide the caller with the requested information. No further action required,

- 3) **Collateral information** for an open assessment or case: Transfer the caller to the Family Case Manager (FCM) who is assigned to the assessment or case,
- 4) **Inquiries** about the status of CA/N report, assessment or case. See procedures in separate policy, [2.6 Sharing of Confidential Information](#),
- 5) **[NEW] Homeless Unaccompanied Minor**: Proceed with completing a CA/N intake report regardless of whether abuse and/or neglect is alleged,
- 6) **Complaints**: Refer the caller to the appropriate person by following the chain of command at the DCS local office, escalating only if previous complaints went unresolved (FCM), Supervisor, DCS Local Office Director, Regional Manager),
- 7) **Resource parenting inquiries**: Refer the caller to the person who handles licensing at the DCS local office or the [Indiana Foster Care and Adoption Association \(IFCAA\)](#), phone: 800-468-4228,
- 8) **Adoptive parenting inquiries**: Refer the caller to the [Indiana Foster Care and Adoption Association \(IFCAA\)](#), phone: 800-468-4228, and
- 9) **Wrong numbers**: No further action required.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

The Quality of the CA/N Intake Report Impacts Child Safety

Receipt of a call made to the child abuse hotline is the critical first step in the State's process of assuring the alleged victim's safety and due process. The importance of this step cannot be overemphasized. How the call is handled and documented can have a significant impact on the next steps in the process. The quality of the information gathered impacts the ability of DCS to make a decision about whether or not the report will be assigned for assessment. The quality of the information gathered will also impact the ability of DCS to conduct an effective assessment.

Excellent Customer Service is Imperative

Calls placed to the child abuse hotline are often the only contact the community has with DCS. To the community, the intake worker provides the first impression of the level of public service available through DCS. A bad customer service experience may cause a caller to hesitate to make future CA/N reports. Therefore, the intake worker should always communicate with callers in a courteous and helpful manner.

Routing Collateral Information

If FCM assigned to the assessment or case is not available and the caller is unwilling to leave voice mail or the call is of an urgent nature, record the caller's message as a contact or temporary contact in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System (ICWIS) and use an appropriate method to alert the FCM to the message (send an e-mail to the FCM, call the FCM, etc.).

Transferring CA/N Intake Reports to Other States

The following page on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services web site may be helpful to locate contact information for child welfare agencies in other states:

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/slo.htm

[NEW] Homeless Unaccompanied Minor

When a child enters a homeless or emergency shelter without the presence or consent of a parent, guardian, or custodian the shelter must notify DCS within 24 hours with the name of the child, the location of the shelter, and if the child alleges that he or she was abused and/or

neglected. DCS must conduct an assessment no later than 48 hours after receiving notification from the emergency shelter or shelter care facility.

[NEW] Children in Homeless Shelter with a Parent, Guardian, or Custodian

When allegations of CA/N are reported for children who are residing in or receiving services from a homeless shelter with their parent, guardian, or custodian; standard intake and assessment procedures should be followed.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF 114/CW0310\)](#) – Available in ICWIS
2. [Service Request Intake Report \(SF 49548/CW0310SR\)](#) – Available in ICWIS

RELATED INFORMATION

Mandated Reporters

[IC 31-33-5-1](#)

Any individual who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect has the duty to make a report; therefore, everyone in Indiana is considered a “mandated reporter.”

Professional Reporters

[IC 31-33-5-2.3](#)

Professional reporters, as defined by Indiana Law, are members of the staff of a medical or other public or private institution, school, facility, or agency. These reporters are legally obligated to report the alleged CA/N to the person in charge of the organization for which they work and to make a report to DCS (unless they have assurances that a report has already been made to DCS).

Immunity of Persons Making CA/N Reports

[IC 31-33-6](#)

A person who makes a CA/N report is immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be imposed because of such actions.

[NEW] Homeless Child (as defined by the Department of Education)

[IC 20-50-1](#)

"Homeless Child" is defined as a child who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. It includes:

1. Child who shares another person's housing of due to loss of child's housing or economics; lives in a hotel, motel or campground because of economic hardship; lives in an emergency or transitional shelter; is abandoned in a hospital or other place not intended for general habitation; is awaiting foster care placement;
2. A child whose primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not ordinarily used to accommodate human beings;
3. A child who lives in a car, a park, a public space, an abandoned building, a bus station, a train station, substandard housing, or a similar setting is homeless; and
4. A child of a migratory worker who also fits in categories 1-3 above is homeless.