

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 4: Assessment</b>	<b>Effective Date:</b> December 1, 2021
	<b>Section 12: Courtesy Interviews Between DCS Local Offices</b>	<b>Version:</b> 3

### POLICY OVERVIEW

*Information regarding out-of-state courtesy interviews may be found in policy 4.48 Professional Service Request (PSR).*

A courtesy interview may occur between the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) local offices when:

1. There is excessive distance between the DCS local office and the family's home (i.e., travel of more than one [1] hour); and/or
2. There is a conflict of interest.

### PROCEDURE

The DCS local office with jurisdiction over an Assessment of Alleged Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) is responsible for conducting the required interviews. Upon approval by the Local Office Director (LOD), it may be determined a DCS local office without jurisdiction would be more appropriate to conduct the required interviews.

**Note:** Courtesy assessments of home conditions should be handled on a case-by-case basis. It is beneficial for the assigned FCM in the DCS local office that has jurisdiction over the assessment to observe the home conditions in order to have first-hand knowledge about the conditions of the home. This is especially important if the FCM must later make recommendations to the court. See policy 4.13 Assessing Home Conditions for additional guidance.

The assessing FCM in the DCS local office that has jurisdiction over the assessment will:

1. Contact the FCM Supervisor if the FCM believes a courtesy interview is appropriate, explaining why a courtesy interview is the most efficient and effective method for conducting the interview; and
2. Document the decision in the case management system, upon determination by the LOD.

The assessing FCM Supervisor in the DCS local office that has jurisdiction over the assessment will:

1. Consult with the LOD to obtain approval for the courtesy interview; and
2. Notify the FCM of the LOD's decision.

The LOD that has jurisdiction over the assessment will approve or deny the courtesy interview request. If the LOD approves the courtesy interview request, the LOD will contact the LOD in the receiving county where the interview will take place, discuss the specific circumstances that make a courtesy interview desirable, and collectively make a determination.

Upon approval of the courtesy interview, the LOD in the receiving county where the interview will take place will:

1. Include the FCM Supervisor in the discussion to relay and document in the case management system the details of the assessment, including the allegations and information that is pertinent to the safety of the FCM who will conduct the courtesy interview; and
2. Discuss and agree upon a completion date for the requested interviews to be conducted and for the documentation to be mailed or otherwise submitted.

The FCM Supervisor in the receiving county where the interview will take place will:

1. Assign the courtesy interview to an FCM;
2. Ensure all requested interviews are completed by the agreed upon deadline; and
3. Ensure all notes and any audio and/or video recordings from the interview are provided to the requesting DCS local office within the agreed upon deadline and are also documented in the case management system.

**Note:** DCS will make every effort to use audio and/or video equipment to record the courtesy interview.

The FCM conducting the courtesy interview will:

1. Review policies 4.09 Interviewing Children, 4.10 Interviewing the Parent, Guardian, or Custodian and 4.11 Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator for additional guidance prior to conducting the interview;
2. Explain to each person interviewed the county for which the interview is being completed and the FCM assigned to the assessment; and
3. Document all information in the case management system.

#### LEGAL REFERENCES

N/A

#### RELEVANT INFORMATION

##### Definitions

- N/A

##### Forms and Tools

- N/A

##### Related Policies

- [4.09 Interviewing Children](#)
- [4.10 Interviewing the Parent, Guardian, or Custodian](#)
- [4.11 Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator](#)
- [4.13 Assessing Home Conditions](#)
- [4.48 Professional Service Request](#)