

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 4: Assessment	Effective Date: June 1, 2011
	Section 23: Initial Family Risk Assessment	Version: 4

POLICY [REVISED]

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will conduct an [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) to assess the future probability of both abuse and neglect on all substantiated assessments.

DCS will not conduct an [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) to help arrive at a finding of substantiated or unsubstantiated. See separate policy [4.18 Initial Safety Assessment](#).

The [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) will be completed prior to the CFTM and no later than 30 days after the date of the assessment.

During a Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting, DCS will discuss the results of the [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) with the CFT to assist in developing a plan to reduce the risk level by thoroughly identifying and considering the family's strengths, needs, and informal supports.

See related policy, [4.22 Making an Assessment Finding](#).

Code References

1. [IC 31-9-2-123 "Substantiated"](#)

PROCEDURE

[REVISED] The Family Case Manager (FCM) will complete the following after arriving at an assessment finding of "substantiated":

1. Answer all questions on the [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) of abuse and/or neglect;
2. Determine the overall **risk level** based on the highest of either the abuse score or the neglect score; and
3. Discuss the results of the [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) with the CFT to develop a plan to assist in the identification and utilization of the families strengths, and informal supports to address needs.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

When risk is clearly defined and objectively quantified, the choice between serving one family or another is simplified: agency resources are targeted to higher risk families because of the greater potential to reduce subsequent maltreatment.

The risk assessment is based on research on cases with substantiated abuse or neglect that examined the relationships between family characteristics and the outcomes of

subsequent substantiated abuse and neglect. The tool does not predict recurrence but simply assesses whether a family is more or less likely to have another incident without intervention by the agency.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. **[NEW]** [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) – Available in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System

RELATED INFORMATION

Purpose of Risk Assessments

The purpose of the Risk assessment is to assess the probability of both abuse and neglect.

Safety vs. Risk Assessment

It is important to keep in mind the difference between safety and risk when completing this form. Safety assessment differs from risk assessment in that it assesses the child’s present danger and the interventions currently needed to protect the child. In contrast, risk assessment looks at the likelihood of future maltreatment.

Risk of Abuse vs. Risk of Neglect

[REVISED] Because different family dynamics are present in abuse situations than in neglect situations, separate scales are used on the [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#) tool to assess the future probability of both abuse and neglect.

Completing the Assessment

[REVISED] Both scales, abuse and neglect, are completed regardless of the type of allegation(s) or substantiated type(s) of maltreatment. The FCM must make every effort during the assessment to obtain the information needed to answer every question. However, if information cannot be obtained to answer a particular question, that question should be scored as “0.”

Determining Overall Risk Level

[REVISED] Scores are totaled separately for the abuse scale and the neglect scale and the higher of the two scores is used to determine the risk level as indicated the chart below:

Neglect Score	Abuse Score	Risk Level*
-1— 1	-1— 0	LOW
2— 5	1— 3	MODERATE
6— 8	4— 6	HIGH
9+	7+	VERY HIGH

*When unresolved safety threats are still present at the end of the assessment, the referral should be promoted to a case regardless of risk level.

Risk Levels

[REVISED] Risk assessment identifies families with low, moderate, high, or very high probabilities of future abuse or neglect. By completing the risk assessment, the worker obtains an objective appraisal of the likelihood that a family will maltreat their child in the next 18 to 24 months. The difference between risk levels is substantial. High risk

families have significantly higher rates of subsequent referral and substantiation than low risk families, and they are more often involved in serious abuse or neglect incidents.

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