

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 5: General Case Management	Effective Date: July 1, 2019
	Section 4: Noncustodial Parents	Version: 4

STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will make diligent efforts beginning in the assessment phase to locate and engage the [noncustodial parent](#). These efforts will continue throughout the life of the case.

DCS will clearly document the efforts made to locate and engage the [noncustodial parent](#) throughout the life of the case. Information gained from the [noncustodial parent](#) will be considered when developing the [Case Plan \(SF 2956\)](#), planning services, and establishing eligibility for federal funding. Engagement with the [noncustodial parent](#) may also assist DCS in identifying relatives that may serve as placement or support for the child.

DCS will provide the [Advisement of Legal Rights Form \(SF 47114\)](#) to the [noncustodial parent](#) and inform the [noncustodial parent](#) of his/her rights which include the right to:

1. Request that the child be placed with him or her;
2. Visit with the child, unless the court orders no visitation; and
3. Participate in case planning for the child through the Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting or Case Plan Conference.

If it is necessary to remove a child from a custodial parent, DCS will give primary consideration to the [noncustodial parent](#) when selecting an out-of-home placement option. See policy [8.1 Selecting a Placement Option](#) for additional information.

If warranted, [background checks](#) may be conducted when moving a child to the care of the [noncustodial parent](#). See [Practice Guidance](#) and policies [13.5 Conducting Background Checks for Unlicensed Placements](#) and [13.6 Evaluation of Background Checks for Unlicensed Placements](#) for further details.

DCS will inform [noncustodial parents](#) of his/her obligation to pay child support, if ordered. If not ordered, DCS will assist [noncustodial parents](#) in establishing child support responsibilities. DCS will also assist in helping [noncustodial parents](#) determine whether an existing child support order needs to be modified due to a change in circumstances (e.g., if the [noncustodial parent](#) now has placement of the child, or the amount of support needs to be adjusted to match current income levels). See policy [2.20 Establishment of Child Support Orders](#) for additional information.

Code References

1. [31-9-2-22.1 Concurrent Planning](#)
2. [IC 31-34-19-7 Placement of child; relative; evaluation; background checks](#)

PROCEDURE

The FCM will:

1. Ask the parent, guardian, custodian, child, and other pertinent individuals the name and location of the [noncustodial parent](#) at the time of the initial assessment and, as necessary, throughout the life of the case;
2. Record the information in the case management system;
3. Complete a diligent search to locate the [noncustodial parent](#) if the parent's location is unknown. See policies [4.0 Diligent Search](#) and [5.06 Locating Absent Parents](#) for additional information.

Note: Consider completing a Permanency and Practice Support (PPS) Investigator referral in KidTraks for assistance in locating the [noncustodial parent](#) if the FCM is not otherwise able to make contact.

4. Create a Permanency and Practice Support (PPS) Investigator;
5. Notify the [noncustodial parent](#) (once identified and located) of his/her rights and responsibilities and all pending court hearings;

Note: In the case of an involuntary removal, notify the [noncustodial parent](#) according to policy [4.28 Removals from Parents, Guardians, or Custodians](#).

6. Provide the [noncustodial parent](#) with the [Advisement of Legal Rights Form \(SF 47114\)](#)
7. Engage with the [noncustodial parent](#) to develop his or her family network diagram. See [5.B Tool Family Network Diagram Instruction Guide](#) for more information.
8. Ensure the [noncustodial parent](#) is informed about the child and included in all aspects of case planning;
9. Request that the court issue or redirect an order for child support, if the child is placed out-of-home. See policy [2.20 Establishment of Child Support Orders](#) for additional guidance;
10. Make copies of all correspondence sent to the [noncustodial parent](#) for the case file; and
11. Document in the case management system the efforts to engage the [noncustodial parent](#). See policy [5.3 Engaging the Family](#) for additional information.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Review all efforts made by the FCM to locate and engage the [noncustodial parent](#); and
2. Provide direction and support to the FCM as needed.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Conducting Background Checks on Noncustodial Parents

Background checks may be conducted on the [noncustodial parent](#) if the FCM has reason to question the safety of the placement or if risk factors are present. Safety or risk factors that would necessitate a criminal history check include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Child raises concern regarding the placement;
2. Custodial parent or members of the CFT have concerns regarding the placement;
3. Custodial parent or members of the CFT report past or current criminal history perpetrated by the [noncustodial parent](#); or
4. [Noncustodial parent](#) does not have regular visitation with the child.

If it is determined that it is in best the interest of the child to complete criminal history checks on a

[noncustodial parent](#), the FCM must document in the case management system that background checks were completed and the outcome of the check as criminal history checks are not required for [noncustodial parents](#). See policies [13.5 Conducting Background Checks for Unlicensed Placements](#) and [13.6 Evaluation of Background Checks for Unlicensed Placements](#) for additional information conducting criminal history checks on [noncustodial parents](#).

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Advisement of Legal Rights Form \(SF 47114\)](#) – Available in the case management system
2. [Case Plan \(SF 2956\)](#) – Available in the case management system
3. [Plan of Safe Care \(SF 56565\)](#)
4. [Incarcerated Parent Letter-Assessment](#)
5. [Incarcerated Parent Letter-Permanency](#)
6. [Incarcerated Parent Demographic \(SF 56538\)](#)
7. [Incarcerated Parent Information \(SF 56539\)](#)
8. [5.B Tool: Family Network Diagram Instruction Guide](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

Noncustodial Parent

A mother, father, or alleged father (biological or adoptive) who does not have legal or primary physical custody of the child.

Reasons for Engaging Noncustodial Parents

Engaging the [noncustodial parent](#) may benefit the child in the following ways:

1. The [noncustodial parent](#) may be a potential caregiver;
2. The [noncustodial parent](#) may be able to provide DCS with unknown medical history;
3. The child may be the recipient of or eligible for certain benefits; such as health insurance, survivor benefits or child support.
4. The [noncustodial parent's](#) extended family may become active team members of the CFT by assisting with helping the family achieve permanency for the child;
5. The [noncustodial parent's](#) extended family may provide support if concurrent planning is pursued. See policy [5.15 Concurrent Planning](#).
6. The [noncustodial parent's](#) extended family may serve as a lifelong connection for the child.

Engagement with the Incarcerated Parent

The [Incarcerated Parent Letter – Assessment](#), [Incarcerated Parent Letter – Permanency](#), [Incarcerated Parent Demographics \(SF 56538\)](#), and [Incarcerated Parent Information \(SF 56539\)](#) have been developed for use as tools for contact with incarcerated parents and for gathering information. These forms do not replace appropriate engagement and regular contact with the parents.

DCS Investigators

DCS Investigators are employees of DCS who are responsible for assisting FCMs in locating absent parents, relatives, and/or other identified persons of interest to the case and/or assessment. FCMs may make a referral for this assistance in situations where all procedural steps have been completed and their efforts have been unsuccessful. Additional information regarding how to make a referral, when to make a referral, and other helpful information can be found on the [Permanency and Practice Support-Investigator](#) website.