

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 8:</b> Out-of-Home Services	<b>Effective Date:</b> September 1, 2021
	<b>Section 36:</b> Expectant Youth and Youth with Children	<b>Version:</b> 5

**POLICY OVERVIEW**

It is important that all expectant youth and/or parenting youth in out-of-home care receive appropriate psychological, medical, legal, and financial services to ensure the safety and well-being for the expectant youth or minor parent and their child.

**PROCEDURE**

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will ensure a youth who is a parent and the youth’s child are placed together in the same home, unless extenuating circumstances exist (e.g., medical needs, psychological needs, and home environment) that prevents the parenting youth from caring for the child.

DCS should not file a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) case on or remove the child of a parenting youth who is in out-of-home care, unless there is endangerment that warrants DCS to file proceedings with the court for the safety of the child. If the parenting youth’s child is determined to be a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) and DCS is granted wardship of the child, DCS will create a separate case in the case management system. DCS will also complete a separate Title IV-E eligibility determination (see policy 4.28 Removals from Parents, Guardians, or Custodians).

**Note:** DCS recognizes that parenting youth, both male and female, have the same rights and responsibilities as all parents; therefore, all expecting and parenting youth in out-of-home care may be referred for services that may assist in developing the youth’s parenting skills (e.g., fatherhood classes, counseling, and parenting classes).

**Pregnant Youth**

For all pregnant or expecting youth in out-of-home care, the Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Ensure the parent, guardian, or custodian of a pregnant youth who is entering out-of-home care is aware the youth is pregnant, or inform the parent, guardian, or custodian of the pregnancy if the youth becomes pregnant while in out-of-home care;
2. Notify the court if a youth is pregnant when the youth enters out-of-home care or becomes pregnant while in out-of-home care, to ensure the appointment of a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) to represent the pregnant youth’s interests to the court;
3. Ensure that a pregnant youth has access to prenatal care and is connected to pregnancy options counseling services.

**Note:** Youth 16 years of age or older may consent to the youth’s own health care concerning pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum care for 60 days after the birth of the child. A health care provider must make a reasonable effort to contact the parent of a youth, who is 16 years of age and older, before providing treatment concerning

pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum care. If the youth's parent cannot be reached, the youth may consent to treatment; however, the health care provider must act in a manner that is in the best interests of the youth and the fetus. The youth may not consent to the provision of abortion.

4. Hold a Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting to assist the youth with critical decisions regarding the youth's pregnancy, and develop an action plan to address prevention services, placement and/or concurrent planning (see policies 5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings and 5.15 Concurrent Planning);
5. Contact the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) Maternal and Child Health (MCH) MOMS Helpline to connect the pregnant youth to an appropriate home visiting program (e.g., Healthy Families Indiana, Nurse Family Partnership, My Healthy Baby, Early Head Start, etc.);
6. Ensure the expectant youth's Case Plan/Prevention Plan includes information regarding services being offered to prevent removal of the minor parent's child;
7. Consult with the Staff Attorney in regards to connecting the expectant youth with assistance for any necessary paperwork relating to decisions regarding relinquishment of parental rights, if applicable; and
8. Offer family services to the expectant youth and the expectant youth's parent, guardian, or custodian to address any issues related to the pregnancy (see policy 5.10 Family Services).

### **Expectant Fathers**

For all expectant fathers in out-of-home care, the FCM will:

1. Ensure the youth's parent, guardian, or custodian is aware the youth is an expectant father;
2. Notify the court if a youth is an expectant father when the youth enters out-of-home care or becomes an expectant father while in out-of-home care, to ensure the appointment of a GAL or CASA to represent the expectant father's interests to the court;
3. Hold a CFT meeting to assist the youth with critical decisions regarding the expectant father's child, and develop an action plan to address prevention services, placement and concurrent planning (if applicable) (see policy 5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings);
4. Ensure the expectant father's Case Plan/Prevention Plan includes information regarding services being offered to prevent removal of the minor parent's child;
5. Consult with the Staff Attorney in regards to connecting the expectant father with assistance for any necessary paperwork relating to decisions regarding relinquishment of parental rights, if applicable; and
6. Offer family support services to the expectant father and the expectant father's parent, guardian, or custodian to address any issues related to the youth becoming a father (see policy 5.10 Family Services).

### **Parenting Youth**

For parenting youth in out-of-home care, the FCM will:

1. Notify the court that the youth has a child;
2. Discuss with the parenting youth whether the youth desires to involve the CFT in decisions about the youth's child (see policy 5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings for further guidance);

**Note:** If the youth does not want to involve the CFT in decisions regarding the youth's child, guide the youth in forming a separate CFT.

3. Allow the parenting youth to make informed decisions about the youth's child, free from undue influences and/or coercion;
4. Coordinate prevention or family services for the parenting youth including, but not limited to, parenting classes, if the youth will be involved in parenting the child (see policy 5.10 Family Services for further guidance);
5. Ensure the parenting youth has information about child support, Medicaid, and childcare;
6. Contact the IDOH MCH MOMS Helpline to connect the parenting youth to an appropriate home visiting program (e.g., Healthy Families Indiana, Nurse Family Partnership, My Healthy Baby, Early Head Start, etc.);
7. Create a new Visitation Plan if the parenting youth and child will not be living together, and the youth plans to remain involved in the child's life; and
8. Ensure the parenting youth's Case Plan/Prevention Plan includes information regarding services being offered to prevent removal of the youth's child;

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Ensure the FCM has informed the court and the parent, guardian, or custodian that the youth is expecting a child and/or that the youth has a child;
2. Staff any concerns for the expecting or parenting youth; and
3. Assist and/or attend any CFT Meetings and/or court hearings, when necessary.

The DCS Staff Attorney will consult with the FCM and/or FCM Supervisor as requested to discuss any issues which arise, including but not limited to, connecting the youth with assistance for any necessary paperwork relating to decisions regarding relinquishment of parental rights, if applicable.

## LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 16-36-1-3.5: Consent by pregnant minor for pregnancy health care: contacting minor's parent or guardian](#)
- [42 USC 672: Foster care maintenance payments program](#)

## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### Definitions

N/A

### Forms and Tools

- Case Plan/Prevention Plan- available in the case management system
- [Healthy Families Indiana](#)
- [IDOH Maternal and Child Health \(MCH\) MOMS Helpline: 1-844-624-6667](#)
- [My Healthy Baby](#)
- Visitation Plan - Available in the case management system

### Related Policies

- [4.28 Removals from Parents, Guardians, or Custodians](#)
- [5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings](#)
- [5.10 Family Services](#)
- [5.15 Concurrent Planning](#)