

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>	
	<b>Chapter 2:</b> Administration of Child Welfare	<b>Effective Date:</b> October 1, 2019
	<b>Section 24:</b> Missing and Runaway Children	<b>Version:</b> 2

## POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will make on-going diligent attempts to expeditiously locate any child missing from his or her placement.

**Note:** This includes a child who is placed or remains in-home through an in-home Child in Need of Services (CHINS) determination, Trial Home Visit (THV), or Informal Adjustment (IA) or a child involved in an open assessment.

When a child involved in an open DCS case or assessment runs away or is missing, DCS will:

1. Ensure the appropriate local law enforcement agency (LEA) is contacted immediately (not later than 24 hours) to report the child missing;
2. Verify with the Indiana State Police (ISP) that the child has been entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database;
3. Complete the [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Form](#);
4. Email the [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Form](#) to the DCS Child Abuse Hotline (Hotline) immediately (not later than 24 hours) for reporting to the [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children \(NCMEC\)](#);

**Note:** A current photograph of the child should be attached to the email. Ensure the [Release for Use of Photographs \(SF 54968\)](#) has been signed by the parent, guardian, or custodian (unless Termination of Parental Rights [TPR] has been finalized).

5. Ensure [NCMEC](#) is contacted to:
  - a. Report the child's missing status, and
  - b. Provide requested details regarding the missing child;
6. Ensure the child's parent, guardian, or custodian (unless TPR is finalized) is notified;
7. Ensure the court is notified (if there is an open case); and
8. Update the child's placement and document all actions taken in the case management system.

When the child is located, DCS will:

1. Notify the child's parent, guardian, or custodian; the court (if there is an open case); ISP; local LEA; [NCMEC](#); and all other parties previously contacted to assist in the search for the child;
2. Interview the child concerning the reason(s) the child ran away and where and with whom the child was residing;
3. Complete the [Indiana Human Trafficking Screening Tool](#) in the case management system (see separate policy, [2.21 Human Trafficking](#));

**Note:** A new placement cannot be entered for a child until the [Indiana Human Trafficking Screening Tool](#) has been completed for the child who had a runaway or missing person episode entered as a placement.

4. If recommended by the [Indiana Human Trafficking Screening Tool](#), complete the [Indiana Human Trafficking Assessment Tool](#):
5. Discuss the case and the results of the [Indiana Human Trafficking Assessment Tool](#) to determine next steps regarding:
  - a. Safety needs,
  - b. Placement,
  - c. Service referrals,
  - d. Involvement of LEA, and
  - e. Need for a human trafficking forensic interview;

**Note:** If recommended by the [Indiana Human Trafficking Assessment Tool](#), contact the appropriate LEA (see [Practice Guidance](#)) immediately to plan for a human trafficking forensic interview. For further guidance, see separate policy, [2.21 Human Trafficking](#).

6. Document the results of the [Indiana Human Trafficking Assessment Tool](#) in the case management system; and
7. Convene a Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting within five (5) business days of the child's return, to discuss and respond to the child's needs, circumstances that led to the runaway episode, placement concerns, safety issues, and any additional topics that may affect stability for the child.

DCS will continue to make foster care payments to the resource parent(s) for a maximum of five (5) days when a child in out-of-home placement is missing or runs away if the intent is for the child to return to the same resource parent(s). See separate policy, [8.37 Holding a Placement During a Hospitalization](#) and [Practice Guidance](#) for additional information.

#### Code References

1. [42 USC 671\(a\)34](#)
2. [42 USC 671\(a\)35](#)
3. [IC 5-2-17-1 "High risk missing person"](#)
4. [IC 10-13-5-4 "Missing child"](#)
5. [IC 31-33-18-2 Disclosure of unredacted material to certain persons](#)
6. [IC 31-34-1-3.5 Victim of human or sexual trafficking](#)
7. [IC 31-36 Missing Children](#)

#### PROCEDURE

When notified that a child involved in an open DCS case or assessment has run away or is missing, the Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Advise the resource parent(s), residential provider, or custodial parent to contact the appropriate local LEA to file a runaway/missing person report;
2. Gather pertinent information from the child's caregiver(s) and other household members regarding:
  - a. When and where the child was last seen,
  - b. The child's last known state of mind,
  - c. Any unusual events prior to the child's disappearance, and

- d. Whether any of the child's possessions are missing from his or her placement;
- 3. Ensure the child has been reported as missing to ISP and local LEA (within 24 hours) to:
  - a. Request that the child is entered into the NCIC database, if not already done, and
  - b. Request ISP and local LEA reports;
- 4. Complete the [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Form](#) with pertinent information;
- 5. Utilize the "Email" button within the [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Form](#) to generate an email to the Hotline and ensure supporting documents and a current photograph of the child are attached to the email prior to sending;

**Note:** Ensure the [Release for Use of Photographs \(SF 54968\)](#) has been signed by the parent, guardian, or custodian (unless TPR has been finalized).

- 6. Verify with the Hotline that [NCMEC](#) is contacted immediately (not later than 24 hours) after the youth has gone missing or runaway;
- 7. Notify the FCM Supervisor of the child's absence from care;
- 8. Notify the parent, guardian, or custodian (unless TPR is finalized) of the child's runaway or missing status and inquire about the child's whereabouts and any recent contact with the child;
- 9. Notify the court of the child's runaway or missing status (if there is an open case);
- 10. Attempt to contact the child on his or her cell phone or social media, if applicable;

**Note:** Consider completing a referral to the DCS Investigators for assistance.

- 11. Visit locations the child frequents (e.g., school, park, and movie theatre);
- 12. Contact the child's family, friends, school staff, employer, and other individuals who have a close relationship to the child to inquire about the child's whereabouts and any recent contact with the child;
- 13. Report new relevant information to ISP and local LEA, if applicable; and
- 14. Document the runaway/missing person episode, corresponding documents, and efforts to locate the child in case management system.

**Note:** The FCM should continue regular attempts to contact the child, visits to locations the child frequents, and contact with the above individuals throughout the child's absence from care. Any new information gained should be reported to ISP and local LEA. All efforts and information gathered should be discussed with the FCM Supervisor and documented in the case management system.

When the child is located, the FCM will:

- 1. Ensure the FCM Supervisor is aware that the child has been located;
- 2. Notify ISP; local LEA; [NCMEC](#); the parent, guardian, or custodian (unless TPR is finalized); and the court (if there is an open case);
- 3. Interview the child as soon as possible (within 48 hours) and complete the [Indiana Human Trafficking Screening Tool](#) in the case management system;
- 4. If recommended by the [Indiana Human Trafficking Screening Tool](#), complete the [Indiana Human Trafficking Assessment Tool](#);
- 5. Discuss the case and the results of the [Indiana Human Trafficking Assessment Tool](#) with the FCM Supervisor to determine next steps regarding:
  - a. Safety needs,

- b. Placement,
- c. Service referrals,
- d. Involvement of LEA, and
- e. Need for a human trafficking forensic interview;

**Note:** If recommended by the [Indiana Human Trafficking Assessment Tool](#), contact the appropriate LEA (see [Practice Guidance](#)) immediately to plan for a human trafficking forensic interview. For further guidance, see separate policy, [2.21 Human Trafficking](#).

- 6. Contact the Hotline to make a new report if a child discloses Human Trafficking;
- 7. Convene a CFT meeting within five (5) business days of the child's return, to discuss and plan to meet the child's needs, with a focus on safety, and respond to the needs of current and subsequent placements (see separate policy, [5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings](#));
- 8. Update the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment, in accordance with the critical case juncture of returning from a runaway or missing person episode; and
- 9. Document all decisions and actions in the case management system.

The FCM Supervisor will:

- 1. Discuss the case and the [Indiana Human Trafficking Assessment Tool](#) with the FCM; and
- 2. Utilize the [Human Trafficking Assessment Scoring Guide](#) to provide guidance on next steps.

The DCS Hotline Intake Specialist (IS) will:

- 1. Complete an Intake Report from the [Missing and Runaway Youth Information Form](#); and
- 2. Notify [NCMEC](#) of the missing/runaway child by completing a report at <http://cmfc.missingkids.org/ReportHere>.

## PRACTICE GUIDANCE

### **Bed Holds**

A bed hold may be utilized for a maximum of five (5) days. A bed hold will end prior to five (5) days if there is no intent for the child to return to the resource home. If the child does not return to the placement within five (5) consecutive days of absence, then the placement and per diem charge will be terminated for that child, unless otherwise approved by the DCS Regional Manager (RM).

**Note:** Placement and per diem payment for a bed hold in excess of five (5) days may only be made to a Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA) with written approval of the DCS Deputy Director of Services.

### **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)**

1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST)

[www.Missingkids.com](http://www.Missingkids.com)

### **Human Trafficking Expertise and Consultation**

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Federal Department of Homeland Security may investigate labor trafficking and sex trafficking for international and domestic victims. Due to the complexities of human trafficking, these federal agencies are available to consult and/or provide

assistance on cases in which human trafficking is present or suspected and the need for special expertise warrants federal involvement.

Contact an agency listed below to request an interviewer if human trafficking is identified during the CA/N intake or the FCM observes [indicators of human trafficking](#) and it is determined a human trafficking forensic interview is appropriate and should be completed by federal agency partners.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) 317-595-4000, select option 2  
Homeland Security: 1-800-973-2867

**Note:** For non-emergencies, contact the Office of the Attorney General's tip-line at [humantraffickingtip@atg.in.gov](mailto:humantraffickingtip@atg.in.gov).

### **Indicators of Human Trafficking<sup>1</sup>**

If any of the following indicators or a combination of several indicators of human trafficking are observed during the course of an assessment, the FCM should complete the [Indiana Human Trafficking Screening Tool](#) (See Policy [2.21 Human Trafficking](#) for additional information) and staff with his or her supervisor:

#### **Child Indicators:**

1. Child may not be able or willing to speak on his or her own behalf;
2. Child may not be able to speak English;
3. Child may not be allowed to speak to the FCM alone;
4. Child may not have access to identification and/or travel documents;
5. Child may work long hours and receive little or no pay;
6. Child may not cooperate with the FCM during the interview (e.g., provide wrong information about identity and living situation);
7. Child may not attend school or has large gaps in his or her education history;
8. Child may live at his or her workplace or with his or her employer and many other people in a small area;
9. Child may have a **heightened** sense of fear and distrust of authority;
10. Child may have engaged in prostitution or commercial sex acts;
11. Child may have a significantly older boyfriend or girlfriend;
12. Child may be a runaway; and/or
13. Child may be in a public place (e.g., hotel) and found in possession of drugs/alcohol.

#### **Indicators in the Home:**

During each home visit, the FCM will observe for the following potential signs of human trafficking. If the FCM believes that human trafficking may be occurring, the FCM will complete the [Indiana Human Trafficking Screening Tool](#) (See Policy [2.21 Human Trafficking](#) for additional information) and staff with his or her supervisor:

1. The child's home lacks personal effects (e.g., no toys) or the child has a small room that is different from the rest of the house;
2. The yard may be fenced and access to phones is denied;
3. The child may live in the same place he or she works (e.g., behind a restaurant, in a motel with other workers, etc.);

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<sup>1</sup> State of Florida Department of Children and Families (2009). *Human Trafficking of Child Indicator Tool*. Retrieved from <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/humantrafficking/docs/HumanTraffickingOfChildrenIndicatorTool0109.pdf>.

4. The child may be unaware of the location of his or her home due to multiple moves or the human trafficker may lie to the child about his or her whereabouts;
5. The child may be isolated and have no relationships outside of the home (e.g., the child does not attend school or play with other children in the neighborhood); and/or
6. There may be multiple, unrelated people living in the home.

#### **FORMS AND TOOLS**

1. [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Form](#) – Located in the case management system
2. [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Instruction Tool](#) – Located in the case management system
3. [Release for Use of Photographs \(SF54968\)](#)
4. [Human Trafficking Screening Tool](#) – Located in the case management system
5. [Human Trafficking Assessment Tool](#) – Available in the case management system “forms” section
6. [Human Trafficking Assessment Score Guide](#)

#### **RELATED INFORMATION**

**Indiana Clearinghouse for Information on Missing Children and Missing Endangered Adults**

1-800-831-8953

**National Runaway Safeline**

1-800-RUNAWAY

[www.1800runaway.org](http://www.1800runaway.org)