



Eric J. Holcomb, Governor  
Eric Miller, Director

*"Children will live in safe, healthy and supportive families and communities."*

*If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, call the Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline at (800) 800-5556.*

Date: December 2, 2024

To: All DCS Staff

From: Rhonda Allen, Deputy Director of Field Operations

Subject: Administrative Letter – Addendum to DCS-24-4 Unable to Locate Child to Assess Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N)

The following is an addendum to the [Administrative Letter DCS-24-4 Unable to Locate Child to Assess Child Abuse and/or Neglect \(CA/N\)](#) that became effective August 1, 2024:

**Beginning December 2, 2024, a new standard process will be implemented for Family Case Managers (FCMs) and FCM Supervisors when conducting diligent search efforts for an alleged child victim who cannot be found during the course of the assessment.** The policy being developed will reflect the following procedures to be completed once initiation attempts have been made per Policy [4.03 Conducting the Assessment -Overview](#), and the alleged child victim is still unable to be located.

**Note:** An assessment **cannot** be staffed with SafeACT when the FCM cannot locate the alleged child victim.

The FCM will:

1. Conduct a thorough review of the records obtained from outside sources as described in policy [4.01 Reviewing Child Abuse and/or Neglect \(CA/N\) Allegations and Other Records](#) (e.g., law enforcement agency [LEA], schools, and public utility companies);
2. Contact LEA and request immediate assistance to locate the alleged child victim and verify the child's safety if there is evidence indicating the child is at imminent risk of harm;
3. Use the [Diligent Search to Locate Checklist \(SF 57568\)](#) to search for the family's information;

**Note:** The number of reasonable attempts to contact the family listed in the [Diligent Search to Locate Checklist \(SF 57568\)](#) will vary depending on the urgency of the assessment. In general, the FCM should attempt to contact the family's direct phone numbers and visit suspected locations between five (5) to 10 times, unless a contact number and/or location can be ruled out as having no value (i.e., disconnected number or address leads to abandoned parking lot). There should be variation in the day of the week and time of day that attempts are made. The FCM will leave voicemails for all attempts, if applicable. The FCM should give at least five (5) to seven (7) calendar days for contacts to respond to voicemails. The FCM should give the family 10 calendar days from the date of sending mail to respond.

4. Contact the report source again to confirm the information provided in the Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect (310) is correct and ask if there is any new information available;



**Note:** Contact the DCS Hotline via email ([hotlinequestions@dcs.in.gov](mailto:hotlinequestions@dcs.in.gov)) to confirm the report information if the report source is anonymous or is unable to be contacted.

5. Complete a Department of Child Services (DCS) Investigator referral within one (1) business day after determining the child is unable to be located and identify that the family is Unable to Locate (UTL) in the referral. See [Investigation Services](#) on the DCS Community Services website for further information;

**Note:** The assessment must stay open until the requested information from the referral has been received and attempts using the information received have been made.

6. Seek guidance from the FCM Supervisor on any additional diligent search attempts that should be made; and
7. Document the inability to locate the alleged child or children victim(s) and family, along with the efforts made to locate the child or children and family in the case management system.

**Note:** An assessment should not be closed and labeled as UTL prior to 30 calendar days from the date the 310 was received to ensure reasonable efforts to locate the family have been made.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Discuss the FCM's efforts to locate the child or children and family at a minimum of one (1) time a week;
2. Use the [Diligent Search to Locate Checklist \(SF 57568\)](#) to search for the family's information;
3. Confirm the FCM's attempts to locate the child or children and family via public facing websites by conducting a separate randomized search of the public facing websites and compare results;
4. Assist the FCM with creative problem-solving techniques and seek guidance from other FCM Supervisors, Division Managers (DMs), the Local Office Director (LOD), the Regional Manager (RM), and the DCS Staff Attorney, if applicable;

**Note:** The assessment may be presented to the Child Protection Team (CPT), if needed.

5. Verify documentation of all efforts that were completed to locate the child or children and family in the case management system; and
6. Change the assessment name in the case management system to reflect the Unable to Locate "UTL" status, upon determination the assessment is deemed UTL.

### **Definition of Unable to Locate (UTL)**

During the assessment phase, DCS was unsuccessful in determining child safety due to an inability to locate and make contact with the child or children. This could include assessments where initiation was done but additional contact with the child and family was needed due to potential safety threats, but the family could not be found.

Please note, a family unwilling to engage is not the same as a family unable to be located. Please see policy [5.03 Engaging the Family](#).

A new policy is being created to reflect this change.



**The following policies will be updated to reflect these changes:**

- [4.03 Conducting the Assessment - Overview](#)
- [4.09 Interviewing Children](#)
- [4.18 Establishing Initial Child Safety](#)
- [4.22 Making an Assessment Finding](#)
- [4.29 Joint Assessments with Law Enforcement Agency](#)
- [4.38 Assessment Initiation](#)
- [5.23 Diligent Search for Relatives/Kin and Case Participants](#)

Please send any questions regarding this information to [DCS Policy](#).

APPROVED

Date: 11/26/2024

Rhonda Allen

Deputy Director of Field Operations

Indiana Department of Child Services

