

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 4: Assessment	Effective Date: January 1, 2015
	Section 2: Preparing for the Assessment	Version: 5

POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will take all foreseeable and necessary precautions to protect the safety of the alleged child victim(s), the Family Case Manager (FCM) and/or other responders during the assessment.

To the extent possible, FCMs will take the necessary steps for adequate preparation prior to initiating any interviews or assessment of home conditions.

DCS will begin identifying the appropriateness of utilizing the Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting process with families in which DCS serves during the assessment preparation stage.

Code References

1. [IC 5-26.5-1-3: "Domestic violence"](#)
2. [IC 34-6-2-34.5: "Domestic or family violence"](#)
3. [IC 35-42-3.5: Human and Sexual Trafficking](#)

PROCEDURE

Before initiating any interviews and assessment of home conditions, the FCM will:

1. Be familiar with all policies related to interviewing, including, but not limited to:
 - a. [2.21 Human Trafficking](#),
 - b. [4.4 Required Interviews](#),
 - c. [4.5 Consent to Interview Child](#),
 - d. [4.6 Exigent Circumstances](#),
 - e. [4.8 Entry into Home or Facility](#),
 - f. [4.09 Interviewing Children](#),
 - g. [4.10 Interviewing the Parent, Guardian, or Custodian](#),
 - h. [4.11 Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator](#),
 - i. [4.13 Assessing Home Conditions](#),
 - j. [4.14 Examining a Child](#), and
 - k. [4.30 Institutional Child Protection Services \(ICPS\) Unit Assessments](#).
2. Arrange interpreter services if the parties to the assessment are non-English speaking (see separate policy, [GA-3 Interpreter Services](#));
3. Develop an interview plan. Decide whether, in an optimal situation, it is best for family members to be interviewed separately or together. Determine the best order for the interviews to occur;
4. Assess the appropriateness of the utilization of a CFT meeting;
5. If domestic violence was identified during the Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) intake, prior to contacting the family:

- a. Contact Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) to determine if the family has had previous domestic violence contacts and/or police runs to their home for violence;
- b. Determine if a detective has already been assigned to the case. If a detective has been assigned, discuss working together during the assessment with the detective; and

Note: DCS will not delay the initiation or completion of any assessment, regardless of LEA involvement. See separate policy, [4.29 Joint Assessments](#).

- c. Consider the safety of all family members prior to scheduling interviews.
6. If human trafficking was identified during the CA/N intake, prior to contacting the family:
 - a. Contact the appropriate agency to request assistance. See Practice Guidance for further information.
 - b. Consider the safety of the alleged victims of human trafficking prior to scheduling interviews. For further guidance, see separate policy [2.21 Human Trafficking](#).

Note: It is important that the suspected trafficker not be present during the interview, as the trafficker may intimidate the victim or not allow him or her to speak for himself/herself. The child's parent, guardian, or custodian may be the child's trafficker or the trafficker may be dishonest and identify himself/herself as the child's parent, guardian, or custodian.

7. Plan interviews with law enforcement if the CA/N allegations are of a criminal nature. See separate policy, [4.29 Joint Assessments](#);
8. To the extent possible and practical, plan the location of each interview with the goal of optimizing the safety of the child, the FCM, and any other responders;
9. For each location where an interview will occur, consider any known or suspected safety risks and determine appropriate safety precautions (e.g., law enforcement assistance. Seek supervisory input when necessary);
10. Gather necessary maps and driving directions;
11. Confirm that all equipment is in working order (e.g., cell phones, cameras, video recorders, audio recorders, etc.); and
12. Start the assessment. See separate policy, [4.03 Conducting the Assessment](#).

The Supervisor will:

1. Review all information pertaining to the risk of the situation and assist the FCM in planning and preparing for the assessment as needed; and
2. Ensure that all FCMs have access to appropriate, functioning assessment (interview) equipment (e.g., cell phones, cameras, video recorders, audio recorders, etc.)

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

[REVISED] Emergency Contacts to Request an Interviewer

Contact the appropriate number 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.

County	Agency	Contact
Lake, St. Joseph, Porter, or LaPorte	U.S Dept. of Homeland Security	1-800-973-2867 <i>Ask for Duty Agent on Call</i>
Marion	Marion County Hotline	1-888-373-7888 <i>Hotline will contact IMPD to notify Det. on duty</i>
All Counties except Lake, St. Joseph, Porter, LaPorte, and Marion	US Dept. of Homeland Security	1-800-973-2867 <i>Ask for Special Agent Assigned to Human Trafficking</i>
All Counties- <i>business hours only- attempt other contact first</i>	US Attorney's Office	(317)226-6333 <i>Ask for Co-Chair of IPAA</i>

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

FORMS AND TOOLS

N/A

RELATED INFORMATION

Interpreter Services

All DCS local offices should have a plan for the availability of interpreter services when needed both for persons who are non-English speaking and for those who communicate using American Sign Language, see Administrative Policy [GA Interpreter Services](#).

Note: In cases of suspected human trafficking, it is not appropriate to use a neighbor, friend, or family member to serve as the interpreter, as the interpreter may be allied with the trafficker and/or involved in the trafficking.

Considering the Risk of the Situation

What environmental factors might pose a danger to child safety and FCM safety? Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. History of domestic violence;
2. Locations that are extremely isolated or in high-crime areas;
3. Indications of mental illness, substance abuse, human trafficking, or volatile behavior;
4. Firearms or other weapons in the home;
5. Indications of illegal drug manufacturing in the home (see related document, [Indiana Drug Endangered Child Response Protocol](#));
6. Family members that are criminal suspects and have outstanding arrest warrants; and
7. Dangerous pets and/or animals.

Assistance from Law Enforcement

Request assistance when any risk factors have been identified that could threaten the safety of the child(ren), the FCM and/or other responders. See separate policy, [4.29 Joint Assessments](#).