

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 4: Assessment</b>	<b>Effective Date:</b> July 1, 2019
	<b>Section 36: Linking Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) Reports to Open Assessments</b>	<b>Version:</b> 5

<b>STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE</b>
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**When appropriate**, the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) may electronically link a new [Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF 114\) \(310\)](#), henceforth referred to as a [310](#), to an assessment that:

1. Has been open 14 days or less;

**Note:** A new [310](#) shall not be linked to a closed assessment.

2. Involves the same alleged perpetrator **and** the same alleged child victim; and

**Exception:** The new [310](#) may include new household member(s) (including an alleged perpetrator or alleged child victim) that were not listed in the open assessment. These household members will need to be added to the open assessment.

3. Has a similar allegation type (i.e., Neglect, Physical Abuse, and Sexual Abuse).

**Note:** If a new [310](#) is received with the same allegation and no additional information than what is currently being assessed is reported, the new assessment generated from the [310](#) may be withdrawn for duplicate.

When a new [310](#) is linked to an existing assessment, the linked [310](#) may still have an initiation timeframe. A separate assessment may not be conducted, but appropriate steps must be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the child (see [Practice Guidance](#)).

DCS will not link a [310](#) to an existing assessment when it is necessary to conduct a separate, thorough assessment in order to ensure the safety and well-being of a child. In the event a [310](#) is linked to an existing assessment with different allegations, DCS will ensure all allegations are assessed which may require opening a new assessment.

**Note:** Once a new [310](#) is linked to an existing assessment it may not be unlinked.

Code References

1. [IC 31-33-7-4: Written Reports](#)
2. [IC 31-33-8-1 Investigations by the department of child services; time of initiation; investigations of child care ministries](#)

## PROCEDURE

Upon receipt of a new [310](#) involving a family for which there is an open assessment, the Family Case Manager (FCM) Supervisor will:

1. Check the case management system to see if the existing assessment has been open 14 days or less, if the new [310](#) involves the same alleged perpetrator and the same alleged child victim with the same, similar, or unrelated allegations;
2. Staff any new [310](#) with the FCM assigned the existing assessment to review the progress of the existing assessment, the information provided in the new [310](#), and the safety and well-being of the alleged child victim;
3. Make a final decision as to whether linking the new [310](#) with the existing assessment is in the best interest of the alleged child victim, and determine what appropriate actions must be taken; (see [Practice Guidance](#))
4. Complete the supervisory approval to screen in and assign the assessment. If linking the assessment is determined to be appropriate, complete the approval process to link the new [310](#) to the existing assessment;
5. Notify the FCM of the linked [310](#), if approved to link, and confirm receipt of the linked report; and

**Note:** If the [310](#) is not approved to link to an existing assessment, the [310](#) should be assigned, when possible, to the FCM completing the existing assessment.

6. Ensure the FCM takes all appropriate actions, including but not limited to, contacting the family, conducting a new [Safety Assessment](#), [Risk Assessment](#), [Safety Plan \(SF 53243\)](#), and [Plan of Safe Care \(SF56565\)](#) when appropriate.

Upon receipt of the linked report, the FCM will:

1. Review the response time and the allegation(s) in the linked report;
2. Ensure all allegations are assessed within the appropriate timeframe; (see policy, [4.38 Assessment Initiation](#));
3. Document whether each linked report was initiated timely, the method of initiation, and any extenuating circumstances for each linked report in the Assessment Initiation Tracking Tool;
4. Staff any concerns with the FCM Supervisor; and
5. Ensure all allegations are addressed in the [Assessment of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(311\) \(SF113\)](#). (see policy, [4.25 Completing the Assessment Report](#)).

## PRACTICE GUIDANCE

### Linking a New CA/N Report

A new [310](#) may be linked when DCS is able to address the allegations via the existing assessment to ensure the safety and well-being of the child. When used appropriately, duplication of effort may be avoided through linking. However, linking should **never** occur at the expense of child safety and well-being. When in doubt, do not link.

Linking an assessment to an existing assessment may eliminate the ability to automatically generate each [Forty-five \(45\) Day Report of Assessment \(SF 54854\)](#) in case management system. If more than one (1) report is received by DCS from the agencies listed in policy [4.21 Forty-five \(45\) Day Report of Assessment](#), it is the responsibility of the FCM to generate a [Forty-five \(45\) Day Report of Assessment \(SF 54854\)](#) for each applicable report source and include

the statutorily required information outlined in policy [4.21 Forty-five \(45\) Day Report of Assessment](#).

### **Linking Criteria**

When determining whether to link a new [310](#) to an existing assessment, first determine if all the following criteria has been met.

1. The existing assessment has been open 14 days or less;
2. The new [310](#) involves the same alleged perpetrator **and** the same alleged child victim identifies in the existing assessment; and

**Note:** The new [310](#) may include new household member(s) an alleged perpetrator or alleged child victim that were not listed in the open assessment. These household members will need to be added to the open assessment.

3. The new [310](#) has similar allegation as the existing assessment.

If the [310](#) has the same allegations as an existing assessment, and a decision has been made to link the assessments, the FCM Supervisor and FCM should review all the information gathered during the existing assessment to determine if additional face-to-face contact or other assessments are needed to ensure child safety and/or make an assessment finding. When it is determined that a face-to-face contact is not required, the FCM should contact the family to notify them of the receipt of a new [310](#).

If the [310](#) has similar allegations as an existing assessment, and a decision has been made to link the assessment because the existing assessment has not been initiated, the FCM Supervisor and FCM should review the initiation timeframes and determine the appropriate action to take to ensure the safety of the child.

**Note:** The method of initiation for all linked reports must be documented in the Assessment Initiation Tracking Tool.

If the [310](#) has similar allegations as an existing assessment, but the existing assessment has been open more than 14 days, the FCM Supervisor should not link the new [310](#) to the existing assessment. The new [310](#) should be assigned, when possible, to the same FCM completing the existing assessment.

If the [310](#) has unrelated allegations as an existing assessment, the FCM Supervisor should not link the new [310](#) to the existing assessment. The new [310](#) should be assigned, when possible, to the same FCM completing the existing assessment.

### **Withdrawals**

The DCS Local Office may withdraw assessments after receipt from the DCS Hotline for the following reasons:

1. Withdrawal for Screen-out: The information provided in the [310](#) does not meet statutory requirements; or
2. Withdrawal for Duplicate: The [310](#), which generated the new assessment has the same allegation with no additional information than what has already been reported in an open assessment.

## FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Preliminary Report of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF 114\) \(310\)](#) – Available in the case management system
2. [Initial Safety Assessment](#)- Available in the case management system
3. [Initial Family Risk Assessment](#)- Available in the case management system
4. [Safety Plan \(SF 53243\)](#)- Available in the case management system
5. [Plan of Safe Care \(SF56565\)](#) – Available in the case management system
6. [Assessment of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF 113\)\(311\)](#)
7. [Forty-five \(45\) Day Report of Assessment \(SF 54854\)](#)- Available in the case management system

## RELATED INFORMATION

N/A

ARCHIVED- 8/31/23- Included info from Linking and Withdrawing Admin Letter