



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY

Chapter 05: General Case Management

Section 12: Closing a CHINS Case

Effective Date: December 1, 2023

Version: 8

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POLICY OVERVIEW

It is essential to develop a plan for safe, sustainable case closure when progress is being made towards achieving permanency and it is determined that the intervention of the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) is no longer necessary.

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PROCEDURE

The determination to close a case should be discussed jointly between DCS, the Child and Family Team (CFT), and the child's permanent caregiver who will be responsible for the care, custody, and control of the child upon the closure of the case (i.e., parent, adoptive parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian).

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Thoroughly review the progress toward achieving child safety, Case Plan/Prevention Plan goals, and all assessment and case information;

Note: In cases where Domestic Violence (DV) was presumed, review the 2.D Tool: Considerations When Domestic Violence is identified and policy 2.30 Domestic Violence.

2. Complete and review the results of the current In-Home Risk and Safety Reassessment or the Structured Decision Making (SDM) Reunification Assessment less than 30 calendar days prior to the anticipated date of case closure when the child is being reunified with a parent, guardian, or custodian. See policies 7.11 In-Home Risk and Safety Reassessments and 8.44 Out-of-Home Risk and Safety Reassessment for additional information;

Note: These assessments should be completed for the biological family if Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) has not been finalized.

3. Facilitate a CFT Meeting to determine the appropriateness of case closure and develop an aftercare plan by obtaining recommendations from the permanent caregiver, the child (if age and developmentally appropriate), service providers, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), and other child and/or family supports. See policy 5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings for additional information;
4. Discuss the appropriateness of case closure with the FCM Supervisor and the DCS Staff Attorney;

5. Use the Inventory of Personal Items to identify personal items the child has accumulated during placement in out-of-home care and ensure those items are returned to the child and/or permanent caregiver;
6. Ensure any applicable benefits (e.g., Medicaid, Social Security Income [SSI]) have been transferred to the permanent caregiver;
7. Ensure the permanent caregiver (if the child is under 18 years of age) is provided with necessary documentation (see policy 8.41 Transitioning from Out-of-Home Care), including, but not limited to:
 - a. A copy of the child's Medical Passport and/or medical records,
 - b. A copy of the child's birth certificate (if available),
 - c. Child's social security card,
 - d. Child's insurance records, and
 - e. Child's driver's license or state identification card, if applicable.

Note: A youth 16 years of age and older at the time of case closure must be provided with all documents listed on the Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood, including the Foster Care Verification form and youth's medical records. See policy 11.06 Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood for more information.

8. Seek approval from the FCM Supervisor prior to discontinuing any services;
9. Conduct a final visit with the child and the permanent caregiver to provide closure, reinforce the family's ability and responsibility to keep the child safe, remind the permanent caregiver of available aftercare resources, and discuss plans to handle new situations as they arise;
10. Continue monitoring the case and meeting minimum contact requirements until the CHINS case is dismissed or closed by the court;

Note: The court may specify in the court order who must receive notification of case closure and may send a copy of the order to the persons specified.

11. Submit a referral to the Education Services Team to complete the School Notification and Best Interest Determination form; and
12. Review and, if necessary, update the child's placement, Case Plan/Prevention Plan, Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS), court hearings, income, and resources in the case management system prior to case closure. See policy 5.19 Child and Adolescent Needs Assessment (CANS) and the Casebook Help site for information on Closing/Ending Removal Episode and Closing an Involvement Type for additional information.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Consult with the FCM regarding discontinuation of services, case closure, and the aftercare plan;
2. Support the FCM in providing closure between the child and/or permanent caregiver and DCS;
3. Confirm any relevant court orders on custody (e.g., change of custody, orders on guardianship, adoption decree) have been received;
4. Review and confirm case documentation and referrals are complete prior to case closure; and
5. Close the case in the case management system.

The DCS Staff Attorney will:

1. Discuss case closure with the FCM and/or FCM Supervisor when appropriate;
2. Provide legal advice regarding the appropriateness of a determination to request case closure;
3. Confirm any relevant court orders on custody (e.g., change of custody, orders on guardianship, adoption decrees) have been received;
4. Advise the FCM on any documentation that may be needed to move the court for case closure;
5. File any necessary motions for case closure or move for case closure with the court; and
6. Ensure the order on case closure is received and provided to the FCM.

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RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

Aftercare Plan

An aftercare plan is a plan which recognizes that services may continue to be needed to further support the child and/or permanent caregiver during the transition to case closure.

Risk Reassessment

The Risk Reassessment is an assessment tool used by the FCM throughout the life of the case to determine the presence of risk factors that indicate the likelihood of future child maltreatment. The Risk Reassessment also assists FCMs in evaluating whether risk levels have increased, decreased, or remained the same since the completion of the Initial Family Risk Assessment.

Forms and Tools

- [2.D Tool: Considerations When Domestic Violence is Identified](#)
- Case Plan/Prevention Plan (SF 2956) - Available in the case management system
- Closing an Involvement Type- Casebook Help site
- Closing/Ending Removal Episode- Casebook Help site
- Family Functional Assessment (FFA) Field Guide – [Available on the Indiana Practice Model SharePoint](#)
- [Foster Care Verification \(SF 56571\)](#)
- In-Home Risk and Safety Reassessment- Available in the case management system
- Initial Family Risk Assessment – Available in the case management system
- [Inventory of Personal Items \(SF 54315\)](#)
- [Medical Passport \(DCS Pamphlet 036\)](#)
- Out-of-Home Risk and Safety Reassessment - Available from forms section of the case management system
- Plan of Safe Care (SF 56565)- Available in the case management system
- [Protective Factors to Promote Well-Being and Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
- Safety Plan (SF 53243)- Available in the case management system
- [School Notification and Best Interest Determination \(SF 47412\)](#)
- [Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood \(SF 55166\)](#)

Related Policies

- [2.30 Domestic Violence](#)
- [5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings](#)
- [5.19 Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths \(CANS\) Assessment](#)

- [7.11 In-Home Risk and Safety Reassessments](#)
- [8.41 Transitioning from Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [8.44 Out-of-Home Risk and Safety Reassessment](#)
- [11.06 Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood](#)

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LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-28-2-4: Copies to foster parents and certain foster care recipients](#)
- [IC 31-28-3-3: Issuance and maintenance of passport](#)
- [IC 31-34-21-7.6: Documents provided to individual leaving foster care](#)
- [IC 31-34-21-11: Discharge of child](#)
- [42 USC 675 \(5\)\(D\) Definitions](#)
- [42 USC 675 \(5\)\(I\) Definitions](#)

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PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 5.12

Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.

Indicators for Sustainable Safe Case Closure

When the permanency plan is reunification, the following are indicators which may be relevant in assisting the FCM and CFT in making a decision to close a CHINS case:

1. The parent, guardian, or custodian has a good understanding of the child's safety needs and has demonstrated their ability to provide for their child's safety once the case is closed;
2. The parent, guardian or custodian has developed a plan and identified resources, formal, and informal supports to assist them in managing the child's safety;
3. The FCM and CFT has observed positive changes in the parent, guardian, or custodian's protective capacities, behavior, and circumstances, as verified by progress reports from service providers and visitations with the child and family;
4. The FCM has received input from the CFT and service providers indicating that the family has made sustainable improvements that alleviate DCS involvement;
5. Identified safety concerns are no longer occurring or are consistently managed by the parent, guardian, or custodian;
6. The Risk and Safety Reassessment indicates the child is "safe" and the Risk and Safety Reassessment indicates a low or moderate level of risk for abuse or neglect;
7. The family has achieved case goal outcomes; and
8. Family functioning has improved to a minimally acceptable level. This is evidenced by the presence of effective protective behaviors within the family and the ability of the parent, guardian, or custodian and other family members to demonstrate a commitment to protect the child and ensure the child's health, safety, and wellbeing.

Utilizing the CFT in the Case Closure Process

When permanency planning with the CFT, consider the specific changes that must occur in order for the family to function successfully without DCS involvement. This may include, but is not limited to:

1. Developing protective provisions that must be put into place to keep children in the home safe;
2. Specifying behavioral patterns that must be acquired, and adequately and consistently demonstrated by the caregiver to preserve or reunify a family and to maintain family stability and daily functioning;
3. Developing recovery plans, relapse prevention plans, and Safety Plans and or Plans of Safe Care with response capacities that must be put in place and will work reliably. See policies 4.42 Plan of Safe Care and/or 5.21 Safety Planning;
4. Identifying or develop sustainable family supports (e.g., housing, health care, and adequate supervision) that will preserve and sustain the family following case closure;
5. Seeking resolution of legal issues and court requirements (e.g., court orders, guardianship, and adoption) that must be achieved before case closure can occur; and
6. Reviewing previously established measures for determining progress, outcomes, and satisfaction of case closure requirements. These elements define for the family, practitioners, and providers, "how we will know what's working and when we're done."

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