

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Services	Effective Date: December 1, 2021
	Section 46: Resource Parent Complaint Resolution Process	Version: 3

POLICY OVERVIEW

This policy does not pertain to concerns regarding licensing, per diems, or adoption assistance. For concerns regarding licensing, see Chapter 12 Foster Family Home Licensing. For concerns regarding per diems, see policy 8.50 Determining and Reviewing Category of Supervision. For concerns regarding adoption assistance, see policy 14.11 Administrative Review for Adoption Assistance.

The Resource Parent Complaint Resolution Process offers resource parents recourse when there is a disagreement with a decision made regarding an issue or complaint in a specific case.

PROCEDURE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) recognizes the rights of each resource parent. DCS will respect and support resource parents and recognize them as a partner in keeping children safe and helping families achieve permanency. DCS and resource parents, working together, may build and support a safe environment in which appropriate information will be shared and valued. In the event of a disagreement with the assigned DCS employee that cannot be resolved, resource parents may initiate the complaint resolution process.

The complaint resolution process is as follows:

1. The resource parent contacts the Family Case Manager (FCM), Regional Foster Care Specialist (RFCS), or Kinship Navigator (KN) (formerly known as the Relative Support Specialist [RSS]) to discuss concerns with the decisions made regarding the child’s case;

Exception: If the resource parent is licensed through a Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA), the resource parent must begin the complaint resolution process by contacting the DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison (email address below). The DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison will provide further guidance in regards to any next steps.

2. The resource parent then contacts the FCM’s, RFCS’, or KN’s immediate supervisor if the resource parent continues to have concerns after the discussion with the FCM, RFCS, or KN. It is recommended the resource parent contact the immediate supervisor within five (5) calendar days of the discussion with the FCM, RFCS, or KN;
3. The resource parent then contacts the DCS Local Office Director (LOD) or designee if concerns were not able to be addressed by the immediate supervisor. It is recommended the resource parent contact the LOD or designee within five (5) calendar days of the response from the FCM’s, RFCS’, or KN’s immediate supervisor; and

4. When the complaint resolution process has been exhausted and concerns remain unresolved, the resource parent may submit the Resource Parent Complaint Resolution Form online (link provided below).

Note: Court orders and rulings will take precedence over any attempt to resolve the complaint.

The FCM, RFCS, or KN will:

1. Provide all notifications to the resource parent in a timely manner;
2. Discuss any concerns with the resource parent as they arise;
3. Inform the FCM's, RFCS', or KN's immediate supervisor of any discussions that occurred regarding the resource parent's concerns and subsequently document the conversation in the case management system; and
4. Ensure other DCS staff working with the child are aware of the identified concerns and actions taken.

The FCM's, RFCS' or KN's immediate supervisor will:

1. Discuss the concerns raised by the resource parent, either by telephone or in person, as requested;
2. Determine if the original decision was made in the best interest of the child and recognized the rights of each resource parent;
3. Notify the resource parent via e-mail or written correspondence and notify the FCM, RFCS, or KN within five (5) business days of the decision; and
4. Notify the LOD of the discussion held with the resource parent and the decision reached, and subsequently document the conversation in the case management system.

Note: If the original decision is changed or modified, the FCM's, RFCS', or KN's immediate supervisor should notify the FCM, RFCS, or KN with instructions for further action.

The LOD or designee will:

1. Discuss concerns the resource parent has about the decision reached by the FCM's, RFCS', or KN's immediate supervisor, either in-person or by phone, upon request of the resource parent;
2. Determine if the decision made was in the best interest of the child and recognized the rights of each resource parent;
3. Discuss the concerns and determination with the RM; and
4. Notify the resource parent via e-mail or written correspondence and notify the FCM, RFCS, or KN and the FCM's, RFCS', or KN's immediate supervisor within five (5) business days of the decision.

Note: If the original decision is changed or modified, the LOD will notify the FCM's, RFCS', or KN's immediate supervisor with instructions for further action by the FCM, RFCS, or KN.

The DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison will:

1. Review the Resource Parent Complaint Resolution Form submitted online by the resource parent;

Note: If the complaint is from an LCPA, the DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison will review the submitted email referenced in the complaint resolution process “Exception” above and will respond with further guidance.

2. Clarify information with the appropriate parties involved, if necessary;
3. Collaborate with the LOD and RM to coordinate a meeting with the appropriate parties;
4. Collaborate with all appropriate parties to attempt to resolve the complaint while recognizing the rights of each resource parent; and
5. Notify the resource parent via e-mail or written correspondence of the final decision made within 10 business days of receiving the request or completion of the meeting, whichever occurs later.

Note: The LOD and RM will be copied on this correspondence.

LEGAL REFERENCES

N/A

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison

The DCS Foster Parent and Communication Liaison helps to facilitate grievances from the resource parent as related to the FCM, RFCS, or KN.

Resource Parent

For purposes of DCS policy, a resource parent includes a foster/adoptive parent, foster parent, and licensed or unlicensed relative or kinship caregiver.

Forms and Tools

- DCS Foster Parent Support and Communication Liaison email-
fostercare-support@dcs.in.gov
- [Resource Parent Complaint Resolution Form](#)

Related Policies

- [8.50 Determining and Reviewing Category of Supervision](#)
- [14.11 Administrative Review for Adoption Assistance](#)
- [Chapter 12 Foster Family Home Licensing](#)