



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES  
CHILD WELFARE POLICY

Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Services

Effective Date: June 1, 2021

Section 48: Relative or Kinship Placements

Version: 6

POLICY OVERVIEW

Removal of a child from the child’s parent, guardian, or custodian may be necessary to ensure the child’s safety and well-being. Placement in a relative or kinship home allows the child to maintain family connections and traditions. Placement with a relative or kin also provides the child with familiarity and routines that are important to the child’s overall well-being.

PROCEDURE

Placement with a suitable and willing relative or kinship caregiver will be considered when placement with a suitable and willing noncustodial parent is not a possibility (see policies 8.01 Selecting a Placement Option and 5.04 Locating and Engaging Noncustodial Parents).

**Note:** When a child is a member of an American Indian/Alaska Native tribe and eligible under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), be mindful that the ICWA placement preferences apply (see policy 2.12 Indian Child Welfare Act [ICWA]).

For all relative or kinship placements, the FCM will:

1. Conduct a diligent search, including assisting the parent, guardian, or custodian in identifying possible suitable and willing relative or kinship placement options (18 years of age and older):
  - a. Adult siblings including step and half-siblings;
  - b. Maternal or paternal grandparents;
  - c. Adult aunts or uncles;
  - d. Adult cousins;
  - e. Parents and extended family of siblings or half-siblings (i.e., adult siblings, grandparents, adult aunts or uncles, and adult cousins);
  - f. Former step-parents and extended family of former step-parents (i.e., adult siblings, grandparents, adult aunts or uncles, and adult cousins);
  - g. Other adult relatives suggested by either parent of a child including, but not limited to, extended cousins or great aunts or uncles (great or great-greats); or
  - h. **Any other individual with whom a child has an established and significant relationship.**

**Note:** A significant relationship with an unrelated individual (also known as a fictive kin relationship) is considered an “other relative”. The relationship with the child must:

- a. Have the characteristics of a family relationship. The relationship should have the same characteristics or be similar to the relationship that the child has with an individual related to them by blood, marriage, or adoption,
- b. Have existed prior to the agency’s current involvement with the child or family, and

- c. Be verified through interviews or attested by the written Statement of Attestation Regarding Relationship or oral designation of the child or of another person, including other relatives related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption.

Former long-term resource parents may be considered as relative placements in cases where the child is the victim of repeat maltreatment or returning to out-of-home care. FCMs should staff with the FCM Supervisor and Local Office Director (LOD) to determine which type of placement is appropriate, Foster Care or Relative Placement. Consideration should be given to the child's report of the relationship and the potential for permanency.

2. Ensure the Statement of Attestation Regarding Relationship is completed by the relative requesting placement to affirm the relationship between the relative caregiver and child;

**Note:** When placing a child with an individual who is not related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption, the FCM must choose **other relative** to document the individual's relationship with the child in the case management system.

3. Complete the required emergency or non-emergency background check procedures for unlicensed placements (see policies 13.05 Conducting Background Checks for Nonemergency Unlicensed Placements, 13.06 Evaluating Background Checks for Nonemergency Unlicensed Placements, 13.11 Conducting Background Checks for Emergency Unlicensed Placements, and 13.12 Evaluating Background Checks for Emergency Unlicensed Placements);

**Note:** FCMs may complete background checks on more than one (1) relative or kinship home, if necessary, to improve the chances of the child's placement in relative or kinship care.

4. Complete a home visit at the home where the child will be placed to:
  - a. Complete the Kinship Home Environment Check List, and

**Note:** The Kinship Home Environment Check List should be completed, either prior to or at the time of placement, to ensure the physical environment of the home is safe and appropriate for the child. The Kinship Home Environment Check List is not meant to be used for licensing purposes.

- b. Assess the relative or kin's suitability for placement by addressing any child or case specific concerns as well as any additional factors that are specific to the child or situation. The following is a list of factors the FCM should consider when determining if a relative or kin is suitable and willing to accept placement of the child:
  - i. Child's wishes and/or concerns (if age appropriate);
  - ii. Ability of the caregiver to meet the child's needs (e.g., educational, cultural, and language needs);
  - iii. Home size and environment (e.g., suitable sleeping arrangements for the child);
  - iv. Results of background checks;
  - v. Frequency of contact between the child and potential caregiver prior to placement;
  - vi. Sustainability of placement (i.e., the placement is a permanency option);
  - vii. Ability of the caregiver to provide adequate supervision of the child;

- viii. Willingness of the caregiver to work with DCS, child, and family toward the selected permanency plan; and
- ix. Medical/mental health issues or concerns regarding the caregiver or child.

**Note:** This is not an exhaustive list. There may be other factors to consider depending on the needs of the child and/or family.

- 5. Obtain supervisory approval and document in the case management system any plans implemented to meet the requirements on the Kinship Home Environment Check List;
- 6. Ensure the caregiver is provided the Financial Assistance Options for Relative Caregivers Brochure and advised of support services available to them at the time of placement.
- 7. Ensure the caregiver has read and signed the Resource Parent Role Acknowledgment;
- 8. Provide the caregiver with the Authorization for Health Care (form) or Authorization for Health Care (card);
- 9. Ensure any necessary service referrals are made for the child and caregiver to support the placement, including an Individual Child Placement Referral (ICPR), if appropriate;
- 10. Ensure a plan is in place for school-aged children to maintain educational stability. See policies 8.20 Educational Services and 8.22 School Notifications and Legal Settlement for additional requirements including transportation needs and when to submit a referral to the Education Services Team;
- 11. Advise the caregiver that either a Regional Foster Care Specialist (RFCS) or a Relative Support Specialist (RSS) will be in contact with the caregiver regarding further information such as licensing and support services available within five (5) calendar days;

**Note:** For non-emergency relative placements, the FCM, RFCS, or RSS will have more time to prepare the caregiver by explaining financial obligations and assistance, licensing requirements, safe sleep, water and fire safety, visitation, service referrals for the children, medical care, immediate and ongoing assistance available, and to develop a plan for school transportation if needed.

- 12. Complete and email the Relative Placement Entry form to the RFCS or RSS within 24 hours at the appropriate regional placement email address listed on the back of the form; and

**Note:** FCMs should NOT create a relative resource home in the case management system.

- 13. Provide the RFCS or RSS with a copy of the Kinship Home Environment Check List if follow-up is needed from the RFCS or RSS on identified items. Follow-up that will exceed the 48 hour timeframe requires an FCM, RFCS, or RSS Supervisor's approval.

When considering whether to seek court approval for a biological parent to reside in a relative or kinship placement home, the FCM will:

- 1. Discuss in detail the proposed living arrangement with the caregiver and the biological parent;
- 2. Discuss the proposed living arrangement with the RFCS or RSS, if involved, and note any concerns the RFCS or RSS may have;
- 3. Convene a Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting to discuss the proposed living arrangement and plan for any additional service needs;

4. Discuss the proposed living arrangement with the child (if age and developmentally appropriate);
5. Discuss the proposed living arrangement; the feelings of the relative or kinship caregiver, child, and biological parent; the recommendation of the CFT; and any concerns expressed by the RFCS or RSS with the FCM Supervisor; and
6. Notify the court of the request and the recommendation of DCS, including the reasons for the recommendation.

A child placed with relative or kinship caregivers who already have obtained licensure will have a completed ICPR consistent with the child's established level of care.

**Note:** A biological parent must complete background checks as required for all household members, in addition to having DCS and court approval, prior to residing in the home of a licensed relative or kinship placement. The biological parent must seek a waiver if necessary (see policy 13.09 Conducting Background Checks for Foster Family Home Licensing).

The RFCS or RSS will:

1. Assist the FCM, if needed, by following up on items that exceed 48 hours or other supervisory approved timeframes for items checked for follow-up on the Kinship Home Environment Check List;
2. Contact the caregiver within 48 hours of receiving the Relative Placement Entry form;
3. Advise the caregiver that new fingerprint and background checks are required if the caregiver decides to pursue licensure. This includes applying for new waivers for child protection and criminal history; and
4. Provide the caregiver with the Relative Resource Guide and discuss all financial assistance available to the caregiver and answer any questions the caregiver may have regarding obtaining the financial assistance (see policy 16.02 Assistance for Unlicensed Relative Placements).

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Discuss case specifics and any concerns with the FCM during regular staffing and clinical supervision;
2. Approve the appropriate relative or kinship placement; and
3. Ensure the placement is documented in the case management system.

The RFCS or RSS Supervisor or designee will:

1. Discuss case specifics and any concerns with the RFCS or RSS during regular staffing and clinical supervision; and
2. Create the relative or kinship resource home in the case management system and assign to the RSS within 24 hours.

## LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 31-34-6-2: Placement with a Family Member](#)
- [IC 31-9-2-117.3: Sibling](#)
- [IC 31-9-2-107: Relative](#)
- [IC 31-9-2-76.5: "Long-Term Foster Parent"](#)
- [IC 31-32-2.5: Right to Intervene in Child in Need of Services Proceedings and Termination of Parent-Child Relationship Proceedings](#)
- [IC 31-34-21: Review of Dispositional Decrees; Formal Review Hearings](#)

- [IC 31-34-18-2: Predispositional report: participation by parent, guardian, or custodian; out-of-home placement with blood or adoptive relative caregiver](#)
- [42 USC 671 \(a\)\(29\) Notification of Parents of Siblings](#)

## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### Definitions

#### Clinical Supervision

Clinical Supervision is a process in which an individual with specific knowledge, expertise, or skill provides support while overseeing and facilitating the learning of another individual.

#### Long-Term Foster Parent

Long-term foster parent is a resource parent who has provided care and supervision for a child for at least:

1. The 12 most recent months;
2. Fifteen (15) of the most recent 22 months; or
3. Six (6) months, if the child is less than twelve (12) months of age.

#### Resource Parent

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

### Forms and Tools

- [Authorization for Health Care \(SF45093\)](#) (card)
- [Authorization for Health Care \(SF 54247\)](#) (form)
- [Financial Assistance Options for Relative Caregivers Brochure](#)
- [Relative Home Environment Check List \(SF 55106\)](#)
- [Relative Placement Entry \(SF 57025\)](#)
- [Resource Parent Role Acknowledgment \(SF 54642\)](#)
- [Relative Resource Guide](#)
- [Statement of Attestation Regarding Relationship \(SF 52727\)](#)

### Related Policies

- [2.12 Indian Child Welfare Act \(ICWA\)](#)
- [5.04 Locating and Engaging Noncustodial Parents](#)
- [8.01 Selecting a Placement Option](#)
- [8.20 Educational Services](#)
- [8.22 School Notifications and Legal Settlement](#)
- [13.05 Conducting Background Checks for Nonemergency Unlicensed Placements](#)
- [13.06 Evaluating Background Checks for Nonemergency Unlicensed Placements](#)
- [13.09 Conducting Background Checks for Foster Family Home Licensing](#)
- [13.11 Conducting Background Checks for Emergency Unlicensed Placements](#)
- [13.12 Evaluating Background Checks for Emergency Unlicensed Placements](#)
- [14.01 Guardianship Assistance Program \(GAP\)](#)
- [16.02 Assistance for Unlicensed Relative Placements](#)