

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES		
Policy Number: GA-2	Effective Date: March 1, 2023	Version: 3.0
POLICY TITLE: INTERNSHIPS AND PRACTICUM		
<p>OVERVIEW: Internships and practicums are structured job shadowing programs for college students interested in learning more about the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS). Due to the nature of DCS work, internships and practicums are only available to students who have completed at least one (1) year of post-secondary education and are actively pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree.</p>		

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. Internship: A structured job shadowing experience that serves as a bridge between classroom studies and professional work.
- B. Practicum: A school or college course in a specialized field of study that is designed to give students supervised practical application of previously studied theory.

II. REFERENCES

N/A

III. STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

- A. Internship and practicum experiences are only available to students who have completed at least one (1) year of post-secondary education and are actively pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree.
- B. Internships/practicums must not have an adverse effect on DCS operations. The educational needs of the student must be met without compromising the business needs of the work unit.
- C. A learning contract must be created by the internship or practicum student and the assigned supervisor.

Note: If the student is to receive educational credit, the student’s academic advisor should also be invited to participate in the development of the learning contract.

- D. The program manager or Local Office Director (LOD) has the authority to approve or deny all internship and practicum requests.
- E. Internship and practicum students are prohibited from making any decision that may affect the safety and/or well-being of children. Examples of prohibited activities include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Making decisions regarding:
 - a. The removal of a child from a home,
 - b. The placement of a child, and
 - c. Termination of Parental Rights (TPR).
 - 2. Providing reports to the court;
 - 3. Conducting assessments of families and children, including home studies; and

4. Transporting a child in either a personal or state-owned vehicle.
- F. Internship and practicum students shall be educated on the DCS vision, mission, and values; policies; procedures; and Practice Model. Additionally, internship and practicum students must agree in writing that they understand and will follow all DCS policies, particularly those relating to confidentiality, ethics, and personal safety.
- G. A prospective internship or practicum student must pass applicable background checks, including a Criminal History check, prior to the start of the internship or practicum.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. The internship or practicum student will:
 1. Work under the supervision of an assigned DCS supervisor;
 2. Create and sign a learning contract with the internship or practicum student's assigned supervisor. The contract must include the following:
 - a. Clearly stated duties to be completed by the internship or practicum student;
 - b. Anticipated work schedule; and
 - c. The desired outcomes of the internship.
 3. Have no independent authority in making decisions that affect the safety and/or well-being of children; and
 4. Participate in tasks and projects as instructed by the assigned DCS supervisor.
- B. The program manager or LOD will:
 1. Establish procedures for handling internship and practicum students including, but not limited to:
 - a. How to interview potential internship and practicum students;
 - b. Assign supervisors to provide supervision to internship and practicum students; and
 - c. Assess progress of internship and practicum students.
 2. Assign a supervisor who will have the primary responsibility for overseeing the internship or practicum student's work.

Note: The internship or practicum student should have the opportunity to meet and be encouraged to consult with other supervisors and experienced workers.
- C. The assigned DCS supervisor will work with the internship or practicum student to create and sign the learning contract.

DATE: 1/26/23

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