



Indiana Department of Child Services Indiana Birth Parent Advisory Board FAQ- Frequently Asked Questions

1) What is the Purpose of the Indiana Birth Parent Advisory Board?

- ❖ The Indiana Birth Parent Advisory Board (BPAB) is designed to be an integral component of the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate policies, practices, and services impacting children and families
- ❖ DCS is committed to partnering with the BPAB to:
 - Strengthen and support families
 - Engage the community in child maltreatment prevention strategies and activities
 - Reduce the need for out-of-home placement of children
 - Decrease the rate of child maltreatment reports
- ❖ The BPAB serves as a strategic partner with DCS to provide guidance about practices, a greater understanding of family needs, and opportunities of growth for service delivery.

2) What is the Role of the Indiana Birth Parent Advisory Board?

- ❖ The role of the Birth Parent Advisory Board (BPAB) is to provide guidance to the Indiana DCS about making improvements to child welfare services from the perspective of a birth parent. This BPAB is designed to ensure strong parent voices are involved in shaping programs, policies and practices resulting in better outcomes for children, families, and communities.
- ❖ Members will serve in various roles based on the emerging needs of DCS in the following ways:
 - Help shape policies, practices and services in a culturally appropriate and strengths-based way
 - Increase understanding and awareness of the needs of individual family members as well as the whole family
 - Educate about and advocate for DCS's programs and services to address specific needs of parents, child and youth
 - Serve as mentors and/or trainers on leadership skill development and opportunities for other parents who have been or are currently involved as consumers with the child welfare system

3) What types of activities does the Indiana Birth Parent Advisory Board participate in?

- ❖ Some of the activities that board members will carry out collectively or as individuals when serving are as follows:
 - Review and help develop requests for proposals, policies, written publications/brochures, needs assessments, etc.
 - Represent the birth parent perspective on other agency committees, task forces, advisory boards, workgroups, etc. as needed
 - Share their families' stories about the agency's services
 - Mentor, coach, or train other parents to take on leadership roles within the BPAB and the agency
 - Promote awareness about the agency's services and resources available to families

- Utilize parent board members as co-trainers with organizational leaders and staff (e.g., orientation of new parent entering the system etc.)
- Partner with other community organizations and systems to promote events for families

4) What is unique about the Indiana Birth Parent Advisory Board?

- ❖ As parents, we are being asked by DCS staff to:
 - Share our ideas and recommendations in policies and practices and in creating new resources and tools
 - Provide our perspectives in meetings, trainings, workshops and conferences.
 - Assist DCS staff in creating supportive, strengths-based strategies in their work with parents and families.

5) Who are we recruiting?

- ❖ We are seeking parents with past DCS involvement who are interested in working as team members and committed to strengthening Indiana families and preventing child abuse and neglect.
- ❖ We are seeking parents with diverse backgrounds and experiences from all across the state to help inform DCS about the needs and service gaps for families.
- ❖ We are seeking real authentic parents who can share with DCS what it is like to raise families in today's society.

6) What requirements does an individual have to meet to become a member of the Birth Parent Advisory Board?

- ❖ Interested birth parents should meet the following criteria:
 - Must have a closed case with DCS at least 12 months prior to commitment
 - Have the willingness to participate in regular meetings in person or via conference call
 - Be willing to share their ideas and collaborate with others to help promote positive change within DCS
- ❖ Parents in recovery from substance use should have completed a treatment program at least 12 months prior to commitment. Additionally, parents with mental health, domestic violence or other life changing situations should have time to heal and address their needs prior to commitment.
- ❖ Individuals who meet the membership criteria will be invited to participate in an interview to determine if they are a good fit for membership in the group.

7) What are the Benefits of Serving on this Birth Parent Advisory Board?

- ❖ This is an opportunity for you as a parent to partner with DCS staff to help improve the lives of children and families in Indiana Communities
- ❖ We will work as a team and will be learning and growing together as parents and as leaders in our communities and in our state.

8) How often does the Birth Parent Advisory Board meet?

- ❖ The Birth Parent Advisory Board meets monthly.

9) How do interested Birth Parents become a part of the Indiana Birth Parent Advisory Board?

- ❖ All candidates must complete an application form. The application can be found online at the following link: <https://www.in.gov/dcs/permanency/birth-parent-advisory-board/bpab-application/>

10) Who do I contact if I have additional Questions?

- ❖ If you have any questions about the application process, please contact the contact the DCS Permanency Initiatives Team at PermanencyInitiatives@dcs.IN.gov.