

**INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES  
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Policy Number: EA-3

Effective Date: July 1, 2005

Version: 1.0

**POLICY TITLE: MEDIA CONTACT**

**OVERVIEW:** DCS will be transparent and open when communicating with the media. Media requests for information about general business operations or program overviews will be handled by local directors, program directors, regional managers, and/or deputy directors. The Communications Director shall be consulted on all other inquiries, including, but not limited to media requests for information on specific cases and DCS statistics. Inquiries relating to DCS policy positions or child fatalities must also be referred to the Communications Director.

**I. DEFINITIONS**

- a. Media: Any means of mass communication including, but not limited to, the internet, newspapers, magazines, radio and television. Also used to refer to a group of journalists and others who work in the communications industry.

**II. REFERENCES**

- a. [IC 5-14-4](#)

**III. POLICY**

- a. DCS will be transparent and open when communicating with media.
- b. Program and local directors, regional managers and deputy directors are to respond to media requests for general information about programs, activities, and/or DCS processes.
- c. The Communications Director is to be consulted prior to responding when the request for information goes beyond general operational or programmatic matters. Example: A request for information on specific cases, DCS statistics, etc.
- d. All requests seeking policy positions must be referred to the Communications Director.
- e. All requests relating to a child fatality must be referred to the Communications Director.
- f. All routine media inquiries are to be reported to the Communications Director in writing within the same business day. Email is acceptable.
- g. The Communications Director shall assure compliance with all Public Access reporting requirements of [Indiana Code 5-14-4](#).

**IV. PROCEDURE**

- a. When a program or local director, regional manager or deputy director receives a media call, he/she should gather the basic information, including the reporter's name, organization contact information, what the story is about, what questions the reporter has, and the story deadline.
- b. If the request is for general operational or programmatic information, the program or local director, regional manager or deputy director:
  - i. May respond to the inquiry directly.

- ii. Will notify the Communications Director of the contact in writing and include a summary of the inquiry and the response.
  - iii. Will contact the Communications Director if he/she feels uncomfortable handling the inquiry or cannot provide the information requested.
- c. If the request goes beyond general operational or programmatic information,
  - i. The program/local director, regional manager or the deputy director will consult with the Communications Director immediately, regardless of the time of day.
  - ii. The Communications Director will decide who will respond to the inquiry and develop any necessary talking points.
- d. In the event that a program/local director, regional manager, or deputy director inadvertently responds to a media request that should have been escalated to the Communications Director, he/she is to notify the Communications Director that same business day.
- e. If the request relates to a policy position or a child fatality, all the information will be forwarded to the Communications Director immediately, regardless of the time of day.

DATE: 06/08/05

James W. Payne, Director  
Department of Child Services

A signed copy is on file.

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