

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 4: Assessment	Effective Date: May 1, 2009
	Section 2: Preparing for the Assessment	Version: 2

POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will take all foreseeable, necessary precautions to protect the safety of the alleged child victim(s), the Family Case Manager (FCM) and/or other responders during the assessment.

To the extent possible given required response times, FCMs will take the necessary steps for adequate preparation prior to initiating any interviews or assessment of home conditions.

Code References

N/A

PROCEDURE

Before initiating any interviews and assessment of home conditions, the FCM will:

1. Be familiar with all policies related to interviewing, including:
 - a. [4.4 Required Interviews](#),
 - b. [4.5 Consent to Interview Child](#),
 - c. [4.6 Exigent Circumstances](#),
 - d. [4.8 Entry into Home or Facility](#),
 - e. [4.9 Interviewing Children](#),
 - f. [4.10 Interviewing the Parent, Guardian, or Custodian](#),
 - g. [4.11 Interviewing the Alleged Perpetrator](#),
 - h. [4.13 Assessing Home Conditions](#),
 - i. [4.14 Examining a Child](#), and
 - j. [4.30 Institutional Assessments](#)
2. Arrange interpreter services if the parties to the assessment are non-English speaking;
3. Develop an interview plan. Decide whether, in an optimal situation, it is best for family members to be interviewed separately or together. Determine the best order for the interviews to occur;
4. **[NEW]** If domestic violence was identified during the Child Abuse and/or Neglect (CA/N) intake, prior to contacting the family:
 - a. Contact Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) to determine if the family has had previous domestic violence contacts and/or police runs to their home for violence;
 - b. Determine if a detective has already been assigned to the case. If a detective has been assigned, discuss working together during the assessment with the detective; and

Note: DCS will not delay the initiation or completion of any assessment, regardless of LEA involvement. See separate policy, [4.29 Joint Assessments](#).

- c. Consider the safety of all family members prior to scheduling interviews.
- 5. Plan interviews with law enforcement if the CA/N allegations are of a criminal nature. See separate policy, [4.29 Joint Assessments](#);
- 6. To the extent possible and practical, plan the location of each interview with the goal of optimizing the safety of the child, the FCM, and any other responders;
- 7. For each location where an interview will occur, consider any known or suspected safety risks and determine appropriate safety precautions, e.g. - law enforcement assistance. Seek supervisory input when necessary;
- 8. Gather necessary maps and driving directions;
- 9. Confirm that all equipment is in working order (e.g. - cell phones, cameras, video recorders, audio recorders, etc.); and
- 10. Start the assessment. See separate policy, [4.3 Conducting the Assessment - Overview](#).

The Supervisor will:

- 1. Review all information pertaining to the risk of the situation and assist the FCM in planning and preparing for the assessment as needed; and
- 2. Assure that all FCMs have access to appropriate, functioning assessment (interview) equipment (e.g. - cell phones, cameras, video recorders, audio recorders, etc.)

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

N/A

FORMS AND TOOLS

N/A

RELATED INFORMATION

Interpreter Services

All DCS local offices should have a plan for the availability of interpreter services when needed both for persons who are non-English speaking and for those who communicate using American Sign Language.

Considering the Risk of the Situation

What environmental factors might pose a danger to child safety and FCM safety? Examples include, but are not limited to:

- 1. History of domestic violence;
- 2. Locations that are extremely isolated or in high-crime areas;
- 3. Indications of mental illness, substance abuse, or volatile behavior;
- 4. Firearms or other weapons in the home;
- 5. Indications of illegal drug manufacturing in the home (See related document, [Indiana Drug Endangered Child Response Protocol](#));
- 6. Family members that are criminal suspects and have outstanding arrest warrants; and
- 7. Dangerous pets and/or animals.

Assistance from Law Enforcement

Request assistance when any risk factors have been identified that could threaten the safety of the child(ren), the FCM and/or other responders. See separate policy, [4.29 Joint Assessments](#).

Archived