

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Services	Effective Date: March 1, 2011
	Section 8: Preparing Child for Placement	Version: 2

POLICY

Once it is determined that an out-of-home placement or a change in placement is needed, the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will prepare a child to the fullest extent that time permits.

Code References

N/A

PROCEDURE

[REVISED] The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Engage the parent, guardian, or custodian in preparing the child for out-of-home placement or changes in placements whenever possible;
2. Attempt to coordinate one (1) or more preplacement visits to the proposed new home or facility, unless time does not allow (i.e., the removal is an emergency);
3. Ensure that the parent, guardian, custodian, and the child know if and how they will be able to maintain contact with each other;
4. Inform the child where he or she will be going, who will be caring for him or her, and whether any or all siblings will be going with him or her;
5. Assure that the parent, guardian, custodian, and the child(ren) know if and how sibling contact will be maintained, if there are siblings who will not be placed together;
6. Acknowledge the feelings of both the child and the parent, guardian, or custodian;
7. Encourage the child to take familiar objects (e.g., clothes, toys, bottles, cups, music tapes, photos of the parent, guardian, or custodian), unless the home is the site of a meth lab. See separate policy, [16.1 Clothing, Personal Items, and Permitted Per Diem Expenses](#) and refer to the [Indiana Drug Endangered Children Response Protocol](#);
8. Share any additional information with the child, as appropriate, based on the child's age and developmental level, such as informing the child of plans regarding reunification and alternate permanency plan. See separate policy, [5.15 Concurrent Planning](#);
9. Allow the child to say "good-bye" to his or her parent, guardian, custodian, and other household members whenever possible; and
10. If possible, given the circumstances, take any additional steps necessary to help the child prepare emotionally for the placement.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Importance of Preparing for Placement

Placement should never be taken lightly; it may very well represent the most serious emotional trauma that a child will experience, even for a child that has been abused or neglected. Time spent on preplacement activities can reduce trauma and problems that the child may later

experience in placement. By preparing the child for placement, the worker is attending to the child in a very professional and humane manner.

Children have feelings of loss, anxiety, and confusion when removed from familiar surroundings and placed in an unfamiliar environment. Caregivers from whom the child is being removed may experience the same feelings. These feelings often are increased when faced with a lack of information regarding what will happen next and what action they may take relative to the situation. It is important that the FCM acknowledge these feelings. Additionally, efforts should be made as soon as possible to clarify the situation for the parent, guardian, or custodian and, whenever possible, to involve the parent, guardian, or custodian in the placement process in a positive way for the child's well-being.

For more information on this topic, see [Tool 8.B: Separation and Loss](#).

Preplacement Visits

Unless time does not allow (i.e., the removal is an emergency), the FCM should attempt to coordinate one (1) or more preplacement visits to the proposed new home or facility.

Preplacement visits are an especially important element in the ultimate success of placements in out-of-home care. The process gives the child an opportunity to become more familiar with the new setting and routines prior to placement thus enabling the child to cope more successfully with the change. If possible, enlist the cooperation of the parent, guardian, or custodian to assist in this process. This participation may encourage the child to form a positive attachment to the resource parent(s).

The preplacement visit gives the resource parent(s) an opportunity to become acquainted with the child before the child establishes residence. It is also an opportunity for the parent, guardian, custodian, and resource parent(s) to become acquainted and to form the foundation for sound rapport and cooperation in future visitations.

When preplacement visits are not possible, the FCM should consider alternate activities such as driving to the home or facility and talking with the child for a while in the car before going inside; sharing photos or a scrapbook of the resource family; sharing a brochure of the facility where the child will be placed; etc.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Tool 8.B: Separation and Loss](#)
2. [Indiana Drug Endangered Children Response Protocol](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

N/A