

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

Policy Number: GA-2

Effective Date: January 1, 2013

Version: 2.0

**POLICY TITLE: INTERNSHIPS AND PRACTICUM**

**OVERVIEW:** Internships/Practicums are structured job shadowing programs for college students interested in learning more about Department of Child Services (DCS). Due to the nature of DCS work, internships/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. Additionally, interns may not perform any task or make any decision that may impact the safety and/or well-being of children.

**I. DEFINITIONS**

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

**II. REFERENCES**

[None](#)

**III. STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE**

- A. 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.
- B. A learning contract must be created by the internship or practicum student and the assigned supervisor. The contract must include the following:
  - 1. Clearly stated duties to be completed by the internship or practicum student,
  - 2. Anticipated work schedule, and
  - 3. The desired outcomes of the internship.

**Note:** If the intern is to receive educational credit, the intern's academic advisor should also be invited to participate in the contract development.

- C. The program or Local Office Director (LOD) has the authority to approve/deny all internship/practicum requests.
- D. Internships/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.

- 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 on the removal of a child/children from a home;
  - 2. Making decisions on the placement of a child/children;
  - 3. Making decisions or recommendations on Termination of Parental Rights;
  - 4. Providing reports to the court;
  - 5. Conducting assessments of families/children, including home studies; and
  - 6. Transporting a child/children in either a personal or state-owned vehicle.
- F. Interns shall be educated on the DCS vision, mission and values, policies and procedures. Additionally, an intern must agree in writing that he/she understands 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 engagement.

#### IV. PROCEDURE

The Internship or Practicum student will:

- A. Create a learning contract with his/her supervisor and sign.
- B. Work under the supervision of his/her assigned DCS supervisor.
- C. Not make decisions that affect the safety and/or well-being of children.
- D. Participate in tasks and projects as instructed by his/her DCS supervisor.

The LOD will:

- A. Establish procedures for handling internship and practicum students including how to interview potential interns, assign supervisors, and assess progress.
- B. 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.

The DCS Supervisor will work with the internship or practicum student to create and sign the learning contract.

DATE: January 1, 2013  
John Ryan, Director  
Department of Child Services

A signed copy is on file.