

First Regular Session of the 122nd General Assembly (2021)

PRINTING CODE. Amendments: Whenever an existing statute (or a section of the Indiana Constitution) is being amended, the text of the existing provision will appear in this style type, additions will appear in **this style type**, and deletions will appear in ~~this style type~~.

Additions: Whenever a new statutory provision is being enacted (or a new constitutional provision adopted), the text of the new provision will appear in **this style type**. Also, the word **NEW** will appear in that style type in the introductory clause of each SECTION that adds a new provision to the Indiana Code or the Indiana Constitution.

Conflict reconciliation: Text in a statute in *this style type* or ~~this style type~~ reconciles conflicts between statutes enacted by the 2020 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

HOUSE ENROLLED ACT No. 1531

AN ACT to amend the Indiana Code concerning family law and juvenile law.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana:

SECTION 1. IC 31-9-2-44.1 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE AS A **NEW SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS** [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2021]: **Sec. 44.1. (a) "Exigent circumstances", as applied to an action by the department with regard to a child, means that:**

(1) the department has definite and articulable evidence giving rise to a reasonable suspicion that the child or a child residing in the home with the child:

(A) has been or is in imminent danger of being physically or sexually abused; or

(B) has been or is in imminent danger of being neglected in a manner that would lead a reasonable person to believe the child's physical safety is seriously endangered;

(2) there is no less intrusive alternative to the department's action that would reasonably and sufficiently protect the child's imminent health or safety; and

(3) one (1) or more of the following applies:

(A) The parent, guardian, or custodian of the child:

(i) is the alleged perpetrator of the abuse or neglect of the child; or

(ii) is allegedly aware of the abuse or neglect of the child and has allegedly not ensured the child's safety.

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(B) There is reason to believe that:

- (i) the safety of the child might be jeopardized; or**
- (ii) essential evidence regarding signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect under subdivision (1) on or in the child's body might not be available;**

if the department's action is delayed or the child's parent, guardian, or custodian is notified before the department's action.

(C) The child is a homeless unaccompanied minor and is voluntarily receiving services at an emergency shelter or shelter care facility without the presence or consent of the child's parent, guardian, or custodian.

(b) An allegation of educational neglect does not qualify as an exigent circumstance.

SECTION 2. IC 31-33-8-7, AS AMENDED BY P.L.183-2017, SECTION 37, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2021]: Sec. 7. (a) The department's assessment, to the extent that is reasonably possible, must include the following:

- (1) The nature, extent, and cause of the known or suspected child abuse or neglect.
- (2) The identity of the person allegedly responsible for the child abuse or neglect.
- (3) The names and conditions of other children in the home.
- (4) An evaluation of the parent, guardian, custodian, or person responsible for the care of the child.
- (5) The home environment and the relationship of the child to the parent, guardian, or custodian or other persons responsible for the child's care.
- (6) All other data considered pertinent.

(b) The assessment may include the following:

- (1) A visit to the child's home.
- (2) An interview with the subject child:
 - (A) upon receiving parental consent;**
 - (B) upon receiving a court order; or**
 - (C) if there are exigent circumstances as defined by IC 31-9-2-44.1.**

(3) A physical, psychological, or psychiatric examination of any child in the home.

(c) If:

- (1) admission to the home, the school, or any other place that the child may be; or
- (2) permission of the parent, guardian, custodian, or other persons



responsible for the child for the physical, psychological, or psychiatric examination;
 under subsection (b) cannot be obtained, the juvenile court, upon good cause shown, shall follow the procedures under IC 31-32-12.

(d) If a custodial parent, a guardian, or a custodian of a child refuses to allow the department to interview the child after the caseworker has attempted to obtain the consent of the custodial parent, guardian, or custodian to interview the child, the department may petition a court to order the custodial parent, guardian, or custodian to make the child available to be interviewed by the caseworker.

(e) If the court finds that:

- (1) a custodial parent, a guardian, or a custodian has been informed of the hearing on a petition described under subsection (d); and
- (2) the department has made reasonable and unsuccessful efforts to obtain the consent of the custodial parent, guardian, or custodian to interview the child;

the court shall specify in the order the efforts the department made to obtain the consent of the custodial parent, guardian, or custodian and may grant the motion to interview the child, either with or without the custodial parent, guardian, or custodian being present.

(f) If the department requests to interview a child at the child's school, the school, except a nonaccredited nonpublic school that has less than one (1) employee, shall grant access to the department to interview the child alone, if the department employee presents:

- (1) their credentials as a department case worker, or other proof of employment with the department, for inspection upon arrival at the school; and**
- (2) a written statement that the department "has parental consent or a court order, or exigent circumstances exist as defined by IC 31-9-2-44.1 to interview [insert child's name]".**
The written statement under this subdivision shall not disclose any of the facts of the allegations or evidence and may be transmitted to the school electronically.

(g) If the department provides a written statement under subsection (f)(2), the school shall:

- (1) not maintain the written statement in the child's file; and**
- (2) protect the child and the child's family's confidentiality regarding the written statement and the interview.**

(h) If a parent, guardian, or custodian of a child who is the subject of a substantiated investigation of abuse or neglect is an active duty member of the military, the department shall notify the United



States Department of Defense Family Advocacy Program of the assessment concerning the child of the active duty member of the military upon request.

SECTION 3. IC 31-34-15-4, AS AMENDED BY P.L.258-2019, SECTION 1, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2021]: Sec. 4. A child's case plan must be set out in a form prescribed by the department that meets the specifications set by 45 CFR 1356.21. The case plan must include a description and discussion of the following:

- (1) A permanent plan, or two (2) permanent plans if concurrent planning, for the child and an estimated date for achieving the goal of the plan or plans.
- (2) The appropriate placement for the child based on the child's special needs and best interests.
- (3) The least restrictive family-like setting that is close to the home of the child's parent, custodian, or guardian if out-of-home placement is recommended. If an out-of-home placement is appropriate, the local office or department shall consider whether a child in need of services should be placed with the child's suitable and willing blood or adoptive relative caretaker, including a grandparent, an aunt, an uncle, or an adult sibling, before considering other out-of-home placements for the child.
- (4) Family services recommended for the child, parent, guardian, or custodian.
- (5) Efforts already made to provide family services to the child, parent, guardian, or custodian.
- (6) Efforts that will be made to provide family services that are ordered by the court.
- (7) If the parent of a child is incarcerated:
 - (A) the services and treatment available to the parent at the facility at which the parent is incarcerated; and
 - (B) how the parent and the child may be afforded visitation opportunities, unless visitation with the parent is not in the best interests of the child.
- (8) A plan for ensuring the educational stability of the child while in foster care that includes assurances that the:
 - (A) placement of the child in foster care considers the appropriateness of the current educational setting of the child and the proximity to the school where the child is presently enrolled; ~~and~~
 - (B) department has coordinated with local educational agencies to ensure:



- (i) the child remains in the school where the child is enrolled at the time of removal; or
 - (ii) immediate, appropriate enrollment of the child in a different school, including arrangements for the transfer of the child's school records to the new school, if remaining in the same school is not in the best interests of the child; **and**
- (C) child's school has been invited, by the department, to provide information and participate in the case plan process. The school may be invited through its principal or other representative identified by law.**
- (9) Any age appropriate activities that the child is interested in pursuing.
- (10) If the case plan is for a child in foster care who is at least fourteen (14) years of age, the following:
- (A) A document that describes the rights of the child with respect to:
 - (i) education, health, visitation, and court participation;
 - (ii) the right to be provided with the child's medical documents and other medical information; and
 - (iii) the right to stay safe and avoid exploitation.
 - (B) A signed acknowledgment by the child that the:
 - (i) child has been provided with a copy of the document described in clause (A); and
 - (ii) rights contained in the document have been explained to the individual in an age appropriate manner.
- (11) Any efforts made by the department to enable the child's school to provide appropriate support to and protect the safety of the child, if, in developing the case plan, the department coordinates with officials in the child's school to enable the school to provide appropriate support to and protect the safety of the child.



Speaker of the House of Representatives

President of the Senate

President Pro Tempore

Governor of the State of Indiana

Date: _____ Time: _____

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