

---

# HOUSE BILL No. 1257

AM125701 has been incorporated into introduced printing.

---

**Synopsis:** Child services matters.

M  
e  
r  
g  
e  
d

2026

IN 1257—LS 6776/DI 119



DOCUMENT HAS NOT BEEN CHECKED FOR ACCURACY

Introduced

Second Regular Session of the 124th General Assembly (2026)

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 2025 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

## HOUSE BILL No. 1257

A BILL FOR 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:*

1 SECTION 1. IC 16-49-4-2, AS AMENDED BY P.L.171-2025,  
2 SECTION 16, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE  
3 JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 2. The statewide child fatality review committee  
4 consists of the following members:

5 (1) **The following members** appointed by the governor:  
6 (A) A coroner or deputy coroner.  
7 (B) A representative from the state department who:  
8 (i) is a licensed physician; or  
9 (ii) specializes in injury prevention.  
10 (C) A representative of a:  
11 (i) local health department established under  
12 IC 16-20-2; or  
13 (ii) multiple county health department established  
14 under IC 16-20-3.  
15 (D) A pediatrician.

2026

IN 1257—LS 6776/DI 119



DOCUMENT HAS NOT BEEN CHECKED FOR ACCURACY

(5) (E) A representative of law enforcement who has experience in investigating child deaths.

(6) (F) A representative from an emergency medical services provider.

(7) (G) The director or a representative of the department of child services.

(8) (H) A representative of a prosecuting attorney who has experience in prosecuting child abuse.

(θ) (I) A pathologist who is:

(A) (i) certified by the American Board of Pathology in forensic pathology; and

(B) (ii) licensed to practice medicine in Indiana.

(10) (J) A mental health provider.

(11) (K) A representative of a child abuse prevention program.

(+2) (L) A representative of the department of education.

(13) (M) An epidemiologist.

(14) (N) The state child fatality review coordinator.

(+) (O) At the discretion of the department of child services ombudsman, a representative of the office of the department of child services ombudsman established by IC 4-13-19-3.

(2) One (1) member appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives.

**(3) One (1) member appointed by the president pro tempore of the senate.**

**(4) One (1) member appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives.**

**(5) One (1) member appointed by the minority leader of the senate.**

SECTION 2. IC 31-9-2-19.3, AS ADDED BY P.L.138-2007, SECTION 11, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 19.3. "Child welfare agency", for purposes of IC 31-25-2-20.4 and IC 31-33-18-1.6, means:

(1) the department of child services; and

(2) a person (as defined in IC 24-4-14-5) that, directly or indirectly, provides:

(A) services to a child or family of a child, for which payment is made, in whole or in part, by the department of child services or a local office of the department of child services;





1                   SECTION 4. IC 31-9-2-113.6 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA  
2                   CODE AS A NEW SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS  
3                   [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 113.6. "Screeened out", with  
4                   **regard to a report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect**  
5                   **under IC 31-33, means that the department:**

6                   (1) **received the report under IC 31-33-7; and**  
7                   (2) **did not refer the report for investigation under**  
8                   **IC 31-33-9 based on the department's determination that the**  
9                   **report:**  
10                  (A) **lacked sufficient information;**  
11                  (B) **did not contain allegations of child abuse or neglect;**  
12                  (C) **contained duplicative allegations that were**  
13                  **previously assessed by the department; or**  
14                  (D) **did not contain information indicating a current risk**  
15                  **to a child.**

16                  SECTION 5. IC 31-19-16-2, AS AMENDED BY P.L.128-2012,  
17                  SECTION 57, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE  
18                  JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 2. A court may grant postadoption contact  
19                  privileges if:

20                  (1) the court determines that the best interests of the child would  
21                  be served by granting postadoption contact privileges;  
22                  (2) the child is at least ~~two (2) years~~ **one (1) year** of age and the  
23                  court finds that there is a significant emotional attachment  
24                  between the child and the birth parent;  
25                  (3) each adoptive parent consents to the granting of postadoption  
26                  contact privileges;  
27                  (4) the adoptive parents and the birth parents:  
28                   (A) execute a postadoption contact agreement; and  
29                   (B) file the agreement with the court;  
30                  (5) the licensed child placing agency sponsoring the adoption  
31                  and the child's court appointed special advocate or guardian ad  
32                  litem appointed under IC 31-32-3 recommends to the court the  
33                  postadoption contact agreement, or if there is no licensed child  
34                  placing agency sponsoring the adoption, the local office or other  
35                  agency that prepared an adoption report under IC 31-19-8-5 is  
36                  informed of the contents of the postadoption contact agreement  
37                  and comments on the agreement in the agency's report to the  
38                  court;  
39                  (6) consent to postadoption contact is obtained from the child if  
40                  the child is at least twelve (12) years of age; and  
41                  (7) the postadoption contact agreement is approved by the court.

42                  SECTION 6. IC 31-25-2-24, AS AMENDED BY P.L.11-2023,



1 SECTION 99, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE  
 2 JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 24. (a) Before December 31 of each year, the  
 3 department shall annually prepare a report concerning all child  
 4 fatalities in Indiana that are the result of child abuse or neglect in the  
 5 preceding calendar year. The report must include the following  
 6 information:

7 (1) A summary of the information gathered concerning child  
 8 fatalities resulting from abuse or neglect.  
 9 (2) Demographic information regarding victims, perpetrators,  
 10 and households involved in child fatalities resulting from abuse  
 11 or neglect.  
 12 (3) An analysis of the primary risk factors involved in child  
 13 fatalities resulting from abuse or neglect.  
 14 (4) A summary of the most frequent causes of child fatalities  
 15 resulting from abuse or neglect.  
 16 (5) A description of the manner in which the information was  
 17 assembled.

18 The department shall post the report prepared under this section on the  
 19 department's website.

20 (b) As part of the summary of information described in subsection  
 21 (a)(1), the report must include **the following information for each**  
 22 **child fatality:**

23 (1) Whether, **at the time of the child's death or at any time**  
 24 **before the child's death**, the child was alleged or adjudicated to  
 25 be a child in need of services under IC 31-34-1 ~~in a child in need~~  
 26 ~~of services proceeding that had not been closed at the time of the~~  
 27 ~~event that led to the child's death; and or was the subject of a~~  
 28 ~~program of informal adjustment.~~  
 29 (2) Whether, at the time of the event that led to the child's death,  
 30 the child:

31 (A) had been ordered to remain in the child's home;  
 32 (B) was on a trial home visit;  
 33 (C) was placed in foster care; **or**  
 34 (D) was residing in a residential treatment facility. **or**  
 35 ~~(E) was the subject of a program of informal adjustment.~~

36 (3) **The following information regarding each report of**  
 37 **known or suspected child abuse or neglect that the**  
 38 **department received regarding the child and screened out:**

39 (A) **The date on which the report was received.**  
 40 (B) **The documented reason or reasons for:**  
 41 (i) **the recommendation of the department's intake**  
 42 **personnel that the report be screened out; and**



- (ii) the approval of the recommendation under item (i) by each department supervisor, director, or other official that reviewed the recommendation.

Names or other identifying information of department employees may be omitted or redacted from the information reported under this subdivision.

(4) A detailed description of the actions taken by the department concerning the child, including the following:

(A) A summary of any investigation of alleged child abuse and neglect concerning the child, including any relevant risk and safety assessment concerning the child, that was conducted by the department before the child's death or that was ongoing at the time of the child's death.

(B) With regard to an investigation reported under clause (A) that resulted in a determination that the allegation of child abuse or neglect was unsubstantiated:

gation of child abuse or neglect was unsubstantiated:

- (i) a narrative, chronological summary of the investigation; and
- (ii) the department's reasoning for determining that the allegation was unsubstantiated.

**(5) The name of the judge who presided over any detention hearing concerning the child under IC 31-34-5 the result of which was release of the child to the child's parent, guardian, or custodian.**

**(6) If the child was the subject of one (1) or more petitions alleging that the child was a child in need of services:**

**(A) for each child in need of services petition:**

(i) the allegations that prompted the filing of the child in need of services petition;

(ii) a narrative, chronological summary of the child in need of services proceeding;

- (iii) any judicial findings that were issued by the court in the child in need of services proceeding; and

(iv) a description of the disposition of the petition, including a description of the dispositional decree, if any, entered by the court; and

(B) the name of the judge who presided over the most recent child in need of services proceeding concerning the child.

(7) A summary of any child abuse and neglect investigation



**(A) the nature and extent of the child's present and past injuries;**

**(B) medical information pertaining to the child's death; and**

**(C) information regarding any criminal charges brought in connection with the investigation, including the name of any individual convicted of criminal charges brought in connection with the investigation.**

11 (c) As part of the annual report required by subsection (a), before  
12 December 31 of each year, the department shall report the following:

(1) The number of children who died in Indiana in the preceding calendar year for whom abuse or neglect was suspected to be a factor in the child's death.

16 (2) The:

(A) number of children described in subdivision (1) whose cause of death was determined to be related to abuse or neglect; and

(B) number of children described in subdivision (1) whose cause of death was determined to be unrelated to abuse or neglect.

(3) The number of children described in subdivision (2)(A) who were the subject of a department assessment based on an allegation of abuse or neglect.

(4) The number of children described in subdivision (3) who were the subject of a department assessment based on an allegation of abuse or neglect that was determined to be substantiated.

(5) The number of children described in subdivision (3) who were the subject of a department assessment based on an allegation of abuse or neglect that was determined to be unsubstantiated.

(6) For each child described in subdivision (3), the following information:

(A) The cause and manner of the child's death.

(B) The:

(i) number of department assessments of the child that were based on an allegation of abuse or neglect that was determined to be substantiated; and

(ii) number of department assessments of the child that were based on an allegation of abuse or neglect that



was determined to be unsubstantiated.

(C) The child's relationship to the perpetrator or perpetrators of the abuse or neglect to which the child's death was determined to be related.

(D) For each perpetrator described in clause (C):

(i) whether, prior to the allegation of abuse or neglect to which the death of the child described in subdivision (3) was related, a substantiated allegation of abuse or neglect resulted in the perpetrator being determined to have abused or neglected the child or another child; and

(ii) the number of substantiated reports of abuse or neglect described in item (i);

(iii) whether, prior to the allegation of abuse or neglect to which the death of the child described in subdivision (3) was related, an investigation of an allegation of abuse or neglect of the child or of another child resulted in the allegation being determined to be unsubstantiated; and

(iv) the number of unsubstantiated reports of abuse or neglect described in item (iii).

22 (d) Not later than January 31 of each year, the department shall  
23 provide to the executive director of the legislative services agency, for  
24 distribution to the interim study committee on child services, a copy of  
25 the most recent annual report prepared by the department under this  
26 section. The report provided to the executive director of the legislative  
27 services agency under this subsection must be in an electronic format  
28 under JC 5-14-6.

SECTION 7. IC 31-33-8-1, AS AMENDED BY P.L.198-2019, SECTION 7, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 1. (a) The department shall initiate an appropriately thorough child protection assessment of every report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect the department receives, whether in accordance with this article or otherwise, **unless the report is screened out and referred to a law enforcement agency.**

40 (c) If a report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect is  
41 received from:

42 (1) medical personnel;

2026

IN 1257—LS 6776/DI 119



**DOCUMENT HAS NOT BEEN CHECKED FOR ACCURACY**

6 the department shall forward the report to the local office to determine  
7 if the department will initiate an assessment in accordance with this  
8 section.

16 (f) If reports of child neglect are received, the assessment shall be  
17 initiated within a reasonably prompt time, but not later than five (5)  
18 days, with the primary consideration being the well-being of the child  
19 who is the subject of the report.

20 (g) If the report alleges that a child lives with a parent, guardian,  
21 or custodian who is married to or lives with a person who:

22 (1) has been convicted of:

23 (A) neglect of a dependent under IC 35-46-1-4; or  
24 (B) a battery offense under IC 35-42-4; or

25 (2) is required to register as a sex or violent offender under  
26 IC 11-8-8;

27 the department shall initiate an assessment within a reasonably prompt  
28 time, but not later than five (5) days after the department receives the  
29 report, with the primary consideration being the well-being of the child  
30 who is the subject of the report.

39 SECTION 8. IC 31-33-18-1, AS AMENDED BY P.L.77-2023,  
40 SECTION 8, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE  
41 JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 1. (a) Except as provided in ~~seetion~~ ~~sections~~ 1.5



1       **and 1.6** of this chapter, the following are confidential:

2           (1) Reports made under this article (or IC 31-6-11 before its  
3           repeal).

4           (2) Any other information, documents, reports, pictures, videos,  
5           images, or recordings obtained, possessed, produced, or created  
6           by:

7               (A) the division of family resources;

8               (B) the local office;

9               (C) the department; or

10              (D) the department of child services ombudsman  
11              established by IC 4-13-19-3;

12              concerning a child or family with whom the department has  
13              received a report or referral or has been involved with during any  
14              stage of the department's investigation, including  
15              post-assessment or post-adoption activity.

16              (b) Except as provided in ~~section~~ **sections 1.5 and 1.6** of this  
17              chapter, all records held by:

18               (1) the division of family resources;

19               (2) a local office;

20               (3) the department;

21               (4) a local child fatality review team established under  
22              IC 16-49-2;

23               (5) the statewide child fatality review committee established  
24              under IC 16-49-4; or

25               (6) the department of child services ombudsman established by  
26              IC 4-13-19-3;

27              regarding the death of a child determined to be a result of abuse,  
28              abandonment, or neglect are confidential and may not be disclosed.

29              SECTION 9. IC 31-33-18-1.6 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA  
30              CODE AS A **NEW SECTION** TO READ AS FOLLOWS  
31              [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: **Sec. 1.6. (a) As used in this section,**  
32              **"state legislator" means:**

33               **(1) a member of the United States Congress representing**  
34               **Indiana; or**

35               **(2) a member of the general assembly;**  
36              **acting in the member's official capacity.**

37               **(b) The department shall disclose information that:**

38               **(1) concerns alleged or actual child abuse or neglect; and**

39               **(2) is requested by a state legislator;**

40              **to the state legislator not later than twenty (20) business days after**  
41              **receiving the state legislator's request for the information.**

42               **(c) If requested by a state legislator under subsection (b), or as**



1       **necessary to provide information responsive to the request of a**  
2       **state legislator under subsection (b), the department shall disclose**  
3       **to the state legislator:**

4           **(1) unredacted department records regarding the alleged or**  
5           **actual child abuse or neglect; and**

6           **(2) information regarding actions taken by other entities,**  
7           **including:**

8              **(A) child welfare agencies;**

9              **(B) guardians ad litem;**

10             **(C) court appointed special advocates; and**

11             **(D) court officers;**

12             **with regard to the alleged or actual child abuse or neglect;**  
13             **including records or information that predate July 1, 2026.**

14           **(d) A state legislator to whom an unredacted record is**  
15           **disclosed under this section may not permit disclosure of the**  
16           **record to a third party except in the interest of a legitimate**  
17           **government purpose in protecting children from child abuse or**  
18           **neglect.**

19           **(e) The director or the director's designee may disclose**  
20           **information to the news media to confirm, clarify, correct, or**  
21           **supplement information concerning an alleged or actual**  
22           **occurrence of child abuse or neglect that has been made public by**  
23           **a source other than the department, if the disclosure is limited to**  
24           **factual information regarding the department's investigation of the**  
25           **alleged or actual occurrence of child abuse or neglect.**

26           **(f) Not later than five (5) business days, or ten (10) business**  
27           **days for complex cases, after receiving a request from the news**  
28           **media regarding the death of a child whose death is suspected to be**  
29           **the result of child abuse or neglect, the department shall release to**  
30           **the news media the following information, to the extent the**  
31           **information is known:**

32              **(1) The child's age.**

33              **(2) The child's gender.**

34              **(3) A summary of:**

35               **(A) the actions taken by the department concerning the**  
36               **child, including any investigation of alleged child abuse**  
37               **and neglect concerning the child that was conducted by**  
38               **the department before the child's death or that was**  
39               **ongoing at the time of the child's death; and**

40               **(B) any petition that was filed alleging that the child was**  
41               **a child in need of services, including the disposition of**  
42               **the petition.**



1                   **(g) A record released under this section that has been redacted**  
 2                   **to exclude the information described in section 1.5(g) of this**  
 3                   **chapter is not confidential.**

4                   **(h) This section shall be construed as broadly as possible**  
 5                   **consistent with other Indiana and federal law.**

6                   SECTION 10. IC 31-33-18-2, AS AMENDED BY P.L.54-2024,  
 7                   SECTION 4, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE  
 8                   JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 2. Except as otherwise prohibited by federal law,  
 9                   the reports and other material described in section 1(a) of this chapter  
 10                  and the unredacted reports and other material described in section 1(b)  
 11                  of this chapter shall be made available only to the following:

12                  (1) Persons authorized by this article.

13                  (2) A legally mandated public or private child protective agency  
 14                  investigating a report of child abuse or neglect or treating a child  
 15                  or family that is the subject of a report or record.

16                  (3) Any of the following who are investigating a report of a child  
 17                  who may be a victim of child abuse or neglect:

18                   (A) A police officer or other law enforcement agency.

19                   (B) A prosecuting attorney.

20                   (C) A coroner, in the case of the death of a child.

21                  (4) A physician who has before the physician a child whom the  
 22                  physician reasonably suspects may be a victim of child abuse or  
 23                  neglect.

24                  (5) An individual legally authorized to place a child in protective  
 25                  custody if:

26                   (A) the individual has before the individual a child whom  
 27                  the individual reasonably suspects may be a victim of abuse  
 28                  or neglect; and

29                   (B) the individual requires the information in the report or  
 30                  record to determine whether to place the child in protective  
 31                  custody.

32                  (6) **An agency A person** having the legal responsibility or  
 33                  authorization to care for, treat, or supervise a child who is the  
 34                  subject of a report or record, **or a including a service provider**  
 35                  **that requires access to the unredacted reports or material to**  
 36                  **assess:**

37                   **(A) the suitability of the provider or the provider's**  
 38                   **services for the child; or**

39                   **(B) the suitability of the child for the provider or for the**  
 40                   **provider's services;**

41                  **before providing care, treatment, or supervision for the**  
 42                  **child.**



(7) A parent, guardian, custodian, or other person who is responsible for the child's welfare.

(7) (8) An individual named in the report or record who is alleged to be abused or neglected or, if the individual named in the report is a child or is otherwise incompetent, the individual's guardian ad litem or the individual's court appointed special advocate, or both.

(8) (9) Each parent, guardian, custodian, or other person responsible for the welfare of a child named in a report or record and an attorney of the person described under this subdivision, with protection for the identity of reporters and other appropriate individuals.

(9) (10) A court, for redaction of the record in accordance with section 1.5 of this chapter, or upon the court's finding that access to the records may be necessary for determination of an issue before the court. However, except for disclosure of a redacted record in accordance with section 1.5 of this chapter, access is limited to in camera inspection unless the court determines that public disclosure of the information contained in the records is necessary for the resolution of an issue then pending before the court.

(10) (11) A grand jury upon the grand jury's determination that access to the records is necessary in the conduct of the grand jury's official business.

(11) (12) An appropriate state or local official responsible for child protection services or legislation, **including a member of the general assembly**, carrying out the official's official functions.

(12) (13) The community child protection team appointed under IC 31-33-3 (or IC 31-6-11-14 before its repeal), upon request, to enable the team to carry out the team's purpose under IC 31-33-3.

(13) (14) A person about whom a report has been made, with protection for the identity of:

35 (A) any person reporting known or suspected child abuse or  
36 neglect; and

37 (B) any other person if the person or agency making the  
38 information available finds that disclosure of the  
39 information would be likely to endanger the life or safety of  
40 the person.

41 (14) (15) An employee of the department, a caseworker, or a

2026

IN 1257—LS 6776/DI 119



**DOCUMENT HAS NOT BEEN CHECKED FOR ACCURACY**

1 juvenile probation officer conducting a criminal history check  
2 under IC 31-26-5, IC 31-34, or IC 31-37 to determine the  
3 appropriateness of an out-of-home placement for a:

4 (A) child at imminent risk of placement;  
5 (B) child in need of services; or  
6 (C) delinquent child.

7 The results of a criminal history check conducted under this  
8 subdivision must be disclosed to a court determining the  
9 placement of a child described in clauses (A) through (C).

10 ~~(15)~~ **(16)** A local child fatality review team established under  
11 IC 16-49-2.

12 ~~(16)~~ **(17)** The statewide child fatality review committee  
13 established by IC 16-49-4.

14 ~~(17)~~ **(18)** The department.

15 ~~(18)~~ **(19)** The division of family resources, if the investigation  
16 report:

17 (A) is classified as substantiated; and  
18 (B) concerns:

19 (i) an applicant for a license to operate;  
20 (ii) a person licensed to operate;  
21 (iii) an employee of; or  
22 (iv) a volunteer providing services at;

23 a child care center licensed under IC 12-17.2-4 or a child care  
24 home licensed under IC 12-17.2-5.

25 ~~(19)~~ **(20)** A citizen review panel established under  
26 IC 31-25-2-20.4.

27 ~~(20)~~ **(21)** The department of child services ombudsman  
28 established by IC 4-13-19-3.

29 ~~(21)~~ **(22)** The secretary of education with protection for the  
30 identity of:

31 (A) any person reporting known or suspected child abuse or  
32 neglect; and  
33 (B) any other person if the person or agency making the  
34 information available finds that disclosure of the  
35 information would be likely to endanger the life or safety of  
36 the person.

37 ~~(22)~~ **(23)** The state child fatality review coordinator employed by  
38 the Indiana department of health under IC 16-49-5-1.

39 ~~(23)~~ **(24)** A person who operates a child caring institution, group  
40 home, or secure private facility if all the following apply:

41 (A) The child caring institution, group home, or secure

M

e

r

g

e

d



1                   private facility is licensed under IC 31-27.  
2                   (B) The report or other materials concern:  
3                   (i) an employee of;  
4                   (ii) a volunteer providing services at; or  
5                   (iii) a child placed at;  
6                   the child caring institution, group home, or secure private  
7                   facility.  
8                   (C) The allegation in the report occurred at the child caring  
9                   institution, group home, or secure private facility.  
10                  (24) (25) A person who operates a child placing agency if all the  
11                  following apply:  
12                  (A) The child placing agency is licensed under IC 31-27.  
13                  (B) The report or other materials concern:  
14                  (i) a child placed in a foster home licensed by the child  
15                  placing agency;  
16                  (ii) a person licensed by the child placing agency to  
17                  operate a foster family home;  
18                  (iii) an employee of the child placing agency or a foster  
19                  family home licensed by the child placing agency; or  
20                  (iv) a volunteer providing services at the child placing  
21                  agency or a foster family home licensed by the child  
22                  placing agency.  
23                  (C) The allegations in the report occurred in the foster  
24                  family home or in the course of employment or volunteering  
25                  at the child placing agency or foster family home.  
26                  (25) (26) The National Center for Missing and Exploited  
27                  Children.  
28                  (26) (27) A local domestic violence fatality review team  
29                  established under IC 12-18-8, as determined by the department  
30                  to be relevant to the death or near fatality that the local domestic  
31                  violence fatality review team is reviewing.  
32                  (27) (28) The statewide domestic violence fatality review  
33                  committee established under IC 12-18-9-3, as determined by the  
34                  department to be relevant to the death or near fatality that the  
35                  statewide domestic violence fatality review committee is  
36                  reviewing.  
37                  (28) (29) The statewide maternal mortality review committee  
38                  established under IC 16-50-1-3, as determined by the department  
39                  to be relevant to the case of maternal morbidity or maternal  
40                  mortality that the statewide maternal mortality review committee  
41                  is reviewing.

M

e

r

g

e

d



(29) (30) A local fetal-infant mortality review team established under IC 16-49-6, as determined by the department to be relevant to the case of fetal or infant fatality that the local fetal-infant mortality review team is reviewing.

22 (36) The office of the attorney general or a prosecutor for  
23 purposes of a criminal investigation by the office of the  
24 attorney general or prosecutor.

25 SECTION 11. IC 31-34-7-4, AS AMENDED BY P.L.46-2016,  
26 SECTION 9, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE  
27 JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 4. A person who is accused of committing child  
28 abuse or neglect is entitled under ~~IC 31-33-18-2(13)~~ **IC 31-33-18-2(14)**  
29 to access to a report relevant to an alleged accusation.

30 SECTION 12. IC 31-34-20-1.6, AS ADDED BY P.L.179-2025,  
31 SECTION 17, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE  
32 JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 1.6. (a) This section applies to **a parent,**  
33 **guardian, or custodian of a child:**

(1) who (A) is the subject of a proceeding regarding a petition alleging that the child is a child in need of services, petition that is filed after the child is removed from the care or custody of the child's parent, guardian, or custodian under IC 31-34-2-3, regardless of whether:

2026

IN 1257—LS 67/6/DI 119



**DOCUMENT HAS NOT BEEN CHECKED FOR ACCURACY**

2026

IN 1257—LS 6776/DI 119



**DOCUMENT HAS NOT BEEN CHECKED FOR ACCURACY**

findings under clause (A); and

(ii) the time period within which it is likely that reunification of the child with the parent will occur.

(d) A court may extend the provision of reunification services to a child's parent, guardian, or custodian if the court finds after an evidentiary hearing that the child's parent, guardian, or custodian, by no fault of the parent, guardian, or custodian, was not afforded an adequate opportunity to substantially participate in the reunification services.

(e) The following are not a basis for an extension under subsection

(c) or (d):

(1) Delay or failure by the parent, guardian, or custodian to establish paternity or seek custody of the child.

(2) Failure of the parent, guardian, or custodian to substantially participate in the reunification services due to the conduct of the parent, guardian, or custodian.

(f) In determining whether to extend the provision of reunification services to a child's parent under subsection (c) or (d), a court shall take into consideration the status of any minor siblings of the child.

SECTION 13. IC 31-34-21-5, AS AMENDED BY P.L.179-2025, SECTION 18, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 5. (a) Subject to subsection (c), the court shall determine:

(1) whether the child's case plan, services, and placement meet the special needs and best interests of the child;

(2) whether the department has made reasonable efforts to provide family services, unless a finding has been made under section 5.6 of this chapter that reasonable efforts for family preservation or reunification are not required; and

preservation or reunification are not required; and  
**(3) if the child was removed from the care or custody of the child's parent, guardian, or custodian, a projected date for the child's return home; and**

**(4) a projected date for** the child's adoption placement, the child's emancipation, or the appointment of a legal guardian for the child under section 7.5(c)(1)(D) of this chapter.

(b) The determination of the court under subsection (a) must be based on findings written after consideration of the following:

(1) Whether the department, the child, or the child's parent, guardian, or custodian has complied with the child's case plan.

(2) Written documentation containing descriptions of:

(A) the family services that have been offered or provided

2026

IN 1257—LS 6776/DI 119



DOCUMENT HAS NOT BEEN CHECKED FOR ACCURACY

1 to the child or the child's parent, guardian, or custodian;  
 2 (B) the dates during which the family services were offered  
 3 or provided; and  
 4 (C) the outcome arising from offering or providing the  
 5 family services.  
 6 (3) The extent of the efforts made by the department to offer and  
 7 provide family services.  
 8 (4) The extent to which the parent, guardian, or custodian has  
 9 enhanced the ability to fulfill parental obligations.  
 10 (5) The extent to which the parent, guardian, or custodian has  
 11 visited the child, including the reasons for infrequent visitation.  
 12 (6) The extent to which the parent, guardian, or custodian has  
 13 cooperated with the department.  
 14 (7) The child's recovery from any injuries suffered before  
 15 removal.  
 16 (8) Whether any additional services are required for the child or  
 17 the child's parent, guardian, or custodian and, if so, the nature of  
 18 those services.  
 19 (9) The extent to which the child has been rehabilitated.  
 20 (10) If the child is placed out-of-home, whether the child is in  
 21 the least restrictive, most family-like setting, and whether the  
 22 child is placed close to the home of the child's parent, guardian,  
 23 or custodian.  
 24 (11) The extent to which the causes for the child's out-of-home  
 25 placement or supervision have been alleviated.  
 26 (12) Whether current placement or supervision by the  
 27 department should be continued.  
 28 (13) The extent to which the child's parent, guardian, or  
 29 custodian has participated or has been given the opportunity to  
 30 participate in case planning, periodic case reviews, dispositional  
 31 reviews, placement of the child, and visitation.  
 32 (14) Whether the department has made reasonable efforts to  
 33 reunify or preserve a child's family unless reasonable efforts are  
 34 not required under section 5.6 of this chapter.  
 35 (15) Subject to subsection (c), whether it is an appropriate time  
 36 to prepare or implement a permanency plan for the child under  
 37 section 7.5 of this chapter.  
 38 (16) If:  
 39 (A) the child has been in an out-of-home placement at any  
 40 time during the child in need of services proceeding; and  
 41 (B) the child's dispositional decree includes an order under

M

e

r

g

e

d



1                   IC 31-34-20-1(a)(6) requiring the child's parent, guardian,  
2                   or custodian to receive reunification services;

3                   the amount of time remaining for the parent, guardian, or  
4                   custodian to complete the reunification services under  
5                   IC 31-34-20-1.6.

6                   (c) The permanency plan for a child who has, at the time of a  
7                   periodic case review or permanency hearing, been removed from the  
8                   child's parent for at least twelve (12) months of the most recent  
9                   twenty-two (22) months, must include at least one (1) intended  
10                  permanent or long term arrangement for care and custody of the child  
11                  under section 7.5(c) of this chapter other than reunification of the child  
12                  with the child's parent, guardian, or custodian.

13                  SECTION 14. IC 31-39-2-6, AS AMENDED BY P.L.128-2012,  
14                  SECTION 176, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS  
15                  [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 6. The records of the juvenile court  
16                  are available without a court order to:

17                  (1) the attorney for the department of child services; **or**  
18                  (2) any authorized staff member of:  
19                          (A) the local office;  
20                          (B) the department of child services;  
21                          (C) the department of correction; or  
22                          (D) the department of child services ombudsman  
23                          established by IC 4-13-19-3; **or**  
24                  (3) **a state legislator (as defined in IC 31-33-18-1.6) as**  
25                  **provided in IC 31-33-18-1.6.**

