

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 15:</b> Eligibility	<b>Effective Date:</b> January 1, 2020
	<b>Section 5:</b> Assistance Group	<b>Version:</b> 3

### STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

The Department of Child Services (DCS) will collect and verify information about the child's household composition, upon removal from the home, in order to determine the child's Title IV-E Foster Care (Title IV-E) assistance group. The assistance group includes members of the removal household whose income, resources, and needs are considered. The relationship between the child and the various household members will determine who should be included in the child's assistance group. More information about mandatory members, excluded members, and optional members may be found in [Practice Guidance](#).

#### Code References

1. [42 USC 672\(a\), \(h\), and \(j\): Removal and foster care placement requirements](#)
2. [45 CFR 233.10: General provisions regarding coverage and eligibility](#)
3. [45 CFR 233.20: Need and amount of assistance](#)
4. [465 IAC 2-7-5: Title IV-E; foster care eligibility](#)

### PROCEDURE

The DCS Central Eligibility Unit (CEU) will:

1. Review the eligibility information in the case management system, and
2. Determine the child's assistance group composition.

### PRACTICE GUIDANCE

#### **Documentation for the child's Assistance Group**

Documentation to support the child's assistance group may include, but is not limited to, copies of the following:

1. Removal petition or case notes documenting persons living in the home at the time of removal and their relationship to the child;
2. [Preliminary Inquiry – available in CHINS Benchbook Forms](#)
3. Statements from reliable persons cognizant of the facts;
4. Documentation of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits in the removal month; and
5. [Title IV-E and Title IV-A/EA Information \(SF 55435\)](#).

#### **Mandatory Members**

The following individuals are mandatory members of the child's assistance group:

1. The child for whom eligibility is being determined;
2. The child's whole, half, or adoptive siblings who are under the age of 18 and deprived (see separate policy, [15.6 Deprivation](#)); and
3. The biological or adoptive parents of any child included in the assistance group.

### **Mandatory Members Excluded**

The following mandatory members should be excluded from the child's assistance group:

1. Recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
2. Recipients of Adoption Assistance periodic payments;
3. Recipients of a Foster Care per diem;
4. Recipients of Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) periodic payments;
5. Unqualified aliens. See separate policy, [2.23 Verifying Citizenship or Immigration Status](#) for more information;
6. The focus child's half sibling who is not deprived of parental support by the non-common parent; and
7. The non-common parent of the excluded half sibling.

### **Optional Members**

The following individuals are optional members of the child's assistance group and should only be included when it is advantageous for Title IV-E eligibility:

1. The spouse of the focus child's physically or mentally incapacitated parent;
2. A relative caretaker, other than a parent; and

**Note:** In instances where a relative caretaker, who has the responsibility for care and control of the child, and the parent live in the same household as the child, both the parent and the relative caretaker may be included in the child's assistance group.

3. The child of a minor parent.

### **FORMS AND TOOLS**

1. [Title IV-E and Title IV-A/EA Information \(SF 55435\)](#)
2. [Preliminary Inquiry – available in CHINS Benchbook Forms](#)

### **RELATED INFORMATION**

#### **Child Residing with a Parent in a Licensed Residential Family-Based Treatment Facility for Substance Abuse**

A child placed with a parent residing in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse may be eligible for Title IV-E regardless of whether the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) criteria are met.