• Mission: The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) protects children from abuse and neglect. DCS does this by partnering with families and communities to provide safe, nurturing, and stable homes.

• Vision: Children thrive in safe, caring, supportive communities and families.
DCS Values:

• We believe every child has the right to be free from abuse and neglect.

• We believe every child has the right to appropriate care and a permanent home.

• We believe parents have the primary responsibility for the care and safety of their children.

• We believe the most desirable place for children to grow up is with their own families, when these families are able to provide safe, nurturing and stable homes.
Safely Home, Families First

What is Safely Home – Families First?

• Renewed and heightened effort to keep kids safely at home or with appropriate relatives

• Natural evolution of the DCS Practice Model:
  – Provide for the well-being of our children;
  – Identify those protective factors that will help keep a child at home safely;
  – Help family members find resources and their own informal supports; and
  – Quickly locate relatives in the event a child is not able to remain in the home.
Safely Home, Families First

What is Safely Home, Families First? (cont).

Our Goal:

1. Children are safely home with resources available and in place to support the family; or

2. They are with appropriate relatives who can lessen the effects of removal and increase their likelihood of achieving the permanency they deserve.
Why Safely Home – Families First?

• DCS mission is to protect children from abuse and neglect: currently
  – 14,102 CHINS cases
  – 9,921 in out-of-home care
  – 5,235 in foster care
  – 3,507 in relative care
  – 967 in residential placements
  – 223 in other placements
Why Safely Home – Families First? (cont.)

- Research shows children do better when they remain in their home or have connection with relatives.
- Younger children who enter care experience more physical, mental and educational challenges than children remaining in their own home.
- Studies demonstrate that children thrive in the least-restrictive, most home-like setting.
- Community-based interventions provide a more appropriate alternative to placing children in residential facilities.
Why Safely Home – Families First? (cont.)

- Comparing national relative placement versus foster care statistics:
  - More children were with the same placement for one year (82% vs. 65%)
  - Fewer children changed schools (63% vs. 80%, with that number increasing to 93% for group care)
  - More children liked those with whom they lived (93% vs. 79%, 51%)
  - More children wanted their current placement to be their permanent home (61% vs. 27%, 2%)
  - More children felt they “were always loved” (94% vs. 82%)
What does Safely Home – Families First look like?

- Utilizing the Practice Model DCS staff partner with families and the community to achieve positive outcomes for the children and families in care
- Family Case Managers (FCMs) team with families to establish a relationship focused on addressing the issues that brought DCS in the family’s life
- FCMs then engage the family to help them determine their strengths and needs
- Comprehensive assessment tools are used to determine the safety of the child on an on-going basis throughout the life of the case
What does Safely Home – Families First look like? (cont.)

- FCMs plan to address the concerns raised and work with the team to determine how those concerns will be addressed.

- If at any time the child is unable to remain at home, the FCMs will intervene and the team will work together to locate appropriate relatives.

- Case closure is achieved when all parties agree the child’s on-going safety, well-being and permanency can be met without further involvement by DCS.
FCMs draw on the DCS Practice Model skills to help families develop Protective Factors:

- Nurturing and Attachment Conditions
- Knowledge of Parenting Skills and Youth Development
- Family Resilience
- Social Connections
- Concrete Supports
Safely Home – Families First

What does Safely Home – Families First look like?

Current DCS Initiatives in Place to Support Staff

- Child and Adolescent Strength and Needs (CANS)
- Integrated Services Pilot (ISP)
- Northern Indiana Team CHoices (NITCH)
- Wraparound, Systems of Care, Cross Systems of Care and CA-PRTF
- HomeBuilders
- Crisis Intervention
- Medicaid Rehab Option
Safely Home – Families First

Questions?