



Series: 100: Case management

Policy Name: Safety Planning

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Policy:

A safety plan is established in order for the agency to assume responsibility for protecting a child when a parent is unavailable, unable or unwilling to protect their child. A safety plan will be established in response to present or impending danger. A safety plan will be based upon a specific parent/legal guardian's behavior, emotion, or condition that results in a child being unsafe using the least intrusive means appropriate. A safety plan will be in effect as long as a case remains open with a case plan goal of "strengthen and maintain" or "reunification", and parents do not have the protective capacity necessary to protect the child from identified danger threats.

Management of the impending danger safety plan becomes the responsibility of the case manager when the case is transferred from investigations. Regardless of the type of safety plan, the case manager will continuously monitor and assess the family's condition and dynamics in order to ensure a "big picture" understanding that will progressively inform on-going safety planning. The assessment includes any critical junctures that are anticipated or currently occurring that may destabilize conditions in the home, such as the birth of a new child or other significant change in household composition.

Throughout the life of the case, the case manager is responsible for monitoring the safety plan to ensure that the least intrusive actions necessary to protect the child(ren) are in place, consistent with the diminished caregiver protective capacities and danger threat(s). This includes due diligence in assessing and assisting the parents with conditions of return to achieve reunification. Monitoring the safety plan to continuously assess its sufficiency and effectiveness also includes whether the level of intrusiveness should be adjusted. This guideline further describes responsibilities of the case manager around safety plans established in accordance with the "Safety Planning Practice Guideline for All Staff."

General Safety Plan Requirements:

1. Requirements pertaining to any safety plan, whether created in response to present or impending danger, will meet the following requirements.
 - a. The child welfare professional creating, monitoring or modifying the safety plan will ensure that:
 - The safety plan controls the behavior, emotion or condition that results in the child being unsafe
 - The effect of a safety plan is immediate, and/or continues to protect the child every day
 - b. To the fullest extent possible, the parent(s) will be engaged in developing the safety plan and identifying members of their resource network who might be willing and able to participate as safety service providers. The child welfare professional will assess such individuals to determine if they are:
 - Willing, able to care for the child, and responsible; and



- Understand and believe the danger threats, and
 - Are aligned with the plan
- c. A safety plan may be exclusively an in-home plan, an out-of-home plan, or a combination of both.
- d. A safety plan will not include promissory commitments by the parent who is currently not able to protect the child. Examples of inappropriate safety plan actions may include:
- *Mom will not spank*
 - *Parents will remain sober*
 - *Mom will file an injunction and will not let the batterer back in the home*
 - *Dad will not use drugs*
- e. Separate safety plans will be developed with the perpetrator of domestic violence and the parent who is a survivor of domestic violence.
- f. Child welfare professionals will partner with the survivor of domestic violence in order to determine:
- What actions might be necessary to include in the perpetrator's plan
 - What information in the child safety plan developed with the survivor may and may not be included in the safety plan with the perpetrator. Considerations should include:
 - Identification of safety plan actions and/or providers
 - Visitation arrangements
 - Child and survivor locations
 - The safety plan developed with the parent who is a survivor of domestic violence may not be shared with the perpetrator and other precautions will be taken to ensure confidentiality of the plan
- g. The safety plan developed with the perpetrator will identify actions that the department and/or other safety plan providers will take to protect the children from the perpetrator's violence.
2. Safety plans in response to present danger are short-term (no more than 14 days) until more information about the family dynamics, caregiver protective capacities and child vulnerability are known. Given the many unknowns at the time present danger is established, a present danger plan is generally more restrictive than an impending danger plan.
- a. When present danger is identified, the child welfare professional must take protective actions prior to leaving the home in order to keep the child from being harmed. Examples of present danger include, but are not limited to:
- *Unexplained injuries to the face and/or head*
 - *Premeditated maltreatments*
 - *Life-threatening living environment*
 - *Bizarre cruelty toward a child*
 - *Children requiring immediate adult supervision*
 - *Child needing immediate medical care*
 - *Parent or legal guardian unable to provide basic care*
 - *Caregiver out of control or under the influence of substances posing an immediate threat to the child*
- b. If the perpetrator of domestic violence is not the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the child, the investigator shall seek issuance of an injunction authorized by s. 39.504, F.S. to implement a safety plan for the perpetrator and impose any other conditions to protect the child.

3. When a safety plan is established in response to impending danger, the child welfare professional will determine feasibility of an in-home safety plan given household conditions and dynamics using the following standardized Safety Analysis criteria:
- The parent/legal guardians are willing for an in-home safety plan to be developed and implemented and have demonstrated that they will cooperate with all identified safety service providers.
 - The home environment is calm and consistent enough for an in-home safety plan to be implemented and for safety service providers to be in the home safely.
 - Safety services are available at a sufficient level and to the degree necessary in order to manage the way in which impending danger is manifested in the home.
 - An in-home safety plan and the use of in-home safety services can sufficiently manage impending danger without the results of scheduled professional evaluations.
 - The parent/legal guardians have a physical location in which to implement an in-home safety plan.
4. In response to impending danger, the investigator will conduct a safety planning conference with the parent, members of the parent's resource network, and other safety service providers to establish a safety plan (see Case Transfer Process). Use of a family team meeting model is one method for conducting a safety planning conference. When the dynamics of domestic violence are present:
- The perpetrator responsible for the domestic violence should not attend the conference if the other parent has decided to leave an abusive situation and/or determines that it is not safe for the perpetrator to attend.
 - The person responsible for facilitating the safety plan conference should be trained in domestic violence, particularly issues of power and control in abusive relationships.
 - Consideration and logistical planning should be given to the safety of participants and facilitators.
 - An advocate employed by a certified domestic violence center should be present if available at the family team meeting if the adult victim of domestic violence agrees that the advocate's presence would be beneficial.
 - If based on the results of the standardized Safety Analysis criteria it is determined that the child's safety can only be managed by having the child reside in a different setting, the least intrusive options will be considered.
 - Before a child is released to or sheltered with a non-maltreating parent, an Other Parent Home Assessment will be completed.
 - When a safety plan involves the need for the child to reside in another setting, regardless of who has legal custody, the safety plan will include as appropriate, the visitation plan with the child's parent/legal guardian and siblings.
 - The child welfare professional that has the lead responsibility for managing the safety plan will, during the first 30 days of any safety plan at least weekly:
 - Observe and interview each child
 - Contact each safety service provider to discuss how the plan is working
 - Conditions for Return per practice guideline requirements in "Establishing, Managing and Modifying Conditions for Return" will be modified as soon as possible when the case manager determines that a modification is necessary and documented in the FFA.



Case Management Specific Guidelines:

1. Within five business days after the case is transferred, the case manager and supervisor will confirm that the ongoing safety plan is sufficient.
2. In order to assess the sufficiency of a safety plan, the case manager must be familiar with the impending danger threat(s) that the safety plan was designed to control and:
 - a. For an in-home plan, how the safety services in the plan are expected to work (who is responsible for what and when
 - b. For an out-of-home plan, have the conditions for return been met
3. The case manager must complete the following actions to confirm the sufficiency of any safety plan. These actions will be a combination of in-home visits, parent contacts for the child in an out of plan, and on-going communication with any current safety plan providers.
 - a. Have face to face contact with household members, including if there are alternate caregivers that are being used to control for safety.
 - b. Assess whether there have been any changes in parent conditions, attitude, ability or willingness to support the current in-home plan, or to create an in-home plan to achieve reunification.
 - c. Determine that the parent continues to be cooperative, or would now be cooperative, with safety services necessary for an in-home safety plan as evidenced by:
 - Agreeable to the safety services necessary for an in-home safety plan
 - Cooperative with all participants in the safety plan
 - Participating in the actions and the time requirements of the ongoing safety plan
 - Meets the expectations detailed in the ongoing safety plan.
 - Whether the home environment continues to be, or has become, stable enough for safety service providers to be in the home and be safe.
 - d. Determine whether the condition of the child is satisfactory and danger threats to the child are being actively managed.
 - Have a conversation with a verbal child; the focus of the conversation should be the child's feelings regarding his or her safety in the home.
 - Gather information from other persons who see the child frequently.
 - e. Address requirements for the on-going assessment of an out-of-home safety plan as provided in the practice guideline for all staff for "Establish, Monitor and Modify Conditions for Return (Reunification)."
4. Ensure that adequate lines of communication are established and are in place so that any safety plan provider, whether a family member or a formal service provider, knows who to notify immediately if problems arise with safety plan implementation.
5. The case manager will continuously assess the family's condition and dynamics in order to ensure that the safety plan is dependable, sufficient and reflects the least intrusive actions necessary to protect the child.
6. When least intrusive actions are appropriate, the case manager should modify the safety plan accordingly (e.g. parent is now considered able to pick child up from child care and drive child home rather than the aunt continuing this safety plan service.)



7. The case manager should identify any critical junctures that are anticipated or currently occurring that may destabilize conditions in the home, such as the birth of a new child, an incarcerated parent returns home or other significant change in household composition. As soon as such information is known, the case manager should convene a safety plan conference with the parent and other persons including providers as appropriate to discuss:
 - a. The potential effect the addition of the new child or household member may have on the family's current functioning including their ability to handle stress
 - b. Whether additional safety services will be needed in the home or whether the new child will require an out of home safety plan
 - c. Any needed changes to the current case plan.
8. The case manager will include in contact notes any assessment action related to safety plan sufficiency.
9. The case manager will formally document an updated safety analysis when completing the FFA-Ongoing and any Progress Updates.
10. The child welfare professional and their supervisor are responsible for ensuring that the safety plan in FSFN is the current, active version of the safety plan in place.
11. Supervisory case consultations about safety plans will be recorded by the supervisor or case manager using supervisory case consultation functionality in FSFN.
12. All participants, monitors, etc. that are part of a safety plan should be given a copy of the signed safety plan by the child welfare professional with whom the plan was designed. The signed safety planned is to be scanned into the FSFN filing cabinet attached to the FSFN built safety plan.

Approved: Carol Deloach
Carol Deloach, CEO

