

Safety Assessment Factors

Handout 9

1. Child has inflicted physical injuries. Examples of Evidence to Support Yes Response for Safety Factor:	Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cuts requiring stitches Broken bones and/or Dislocations Positive toxicology with harm to infant identified. Burns (e.g., cigarette, scalding, submersion) Internal injuries (e.g., damage to internal organs or tissues) Head injuries (e.g., concussion, retinal hemorrhage, skull fractures) Serious injury to sensitive body areas (e.g., genital, eyes or ear drums) Brain damage Injuries resulting in permanent sight, hearing or mental impairment Extensive or multiple bruising and/or other injury which may cover more than one area of the body Extensive and multiple bruises or broken bones in various stages of healing which indicate a pattern of abuse Non-accidental injuries to an infant (ages 0-12 months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What happened? 2. Show me how it happened? 3. Did anyone see it happen? 4. Where did it happen? 5. Has anything like this happened to you before? 6. When was the child's injury first noticed? 7. When did the child first appear to be sick or injured? 8. Where was the child? 9. Who was with the child? 10. How did the injury occur? 11. What types of discipline do you routinely use? 12. Who disciplines the child? 13. Where is the child's current location? 14. Does the child need medical care? 15. Is it known who inflicted the harm to the child? 16. If yes, where is the individual and what is his/her access to the child?
2. Caretaker has not, cannot, or will not protect the child from potential serious harm, including harm from other persons having familial access to the child. Examples of Evidence to Support Yes Response for Safety Factor:	Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caretaker does not recognize need to protect child. Caretaker denies the abuse/neglect and refuses to acknowledge any problem. Caretaker vacillates in commitment to protect the child. Adult rationalizes lack of intervention or blames the child for the abuse and/or neglect (e.g., she had it coming... he needed a whipping; she wouldn't have touched her if she hadn't been flirting). Due to cognitive, emotional or physical limitations, the caretaker is unable to protect the child from the perpetrator. Adult knowingly places child at risk (e.g., leaves child with known perpetrator). Caretaker verbalizes a need to protect child, but remains supportive of the alleged perpetrator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you believe your child? 2. Who cares for your child? How often? 3. From whom/what does your child need your protection? 4. How do you protect your child? 5. What would you do if your child came to you and confided that he/she had been harmed by someone? 6. Give examples of times when you protected your child. 7. Who would you tell if something bad happened to you? 8. Do you feel safe with your mother/father? 9. Who do you feel safe with? Why? 10. Do you think the child would report being abused or neglected to someone? 11. Was the caretaker present when the child was harmed? Why or why not? 12. Is the child in the care of an adult who is protecting him?
3. Caretaker or other person having access to the child has made a plausible threat which would result in serious harm to a child. Examples of Evidence to Support Yes Response for Safety Factor:	Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caretaker directly, or indirectly, threatens to cause serious harm to the child in a believable manner (e.g., kill the child, not feed the child, lock the child out of the home.) Caretaker plans to retaliate against the child for CPS involvement. Caretaker threatens the child with extreme or vague but sinister punishment. Caretaker uses extreme gestures to intimidate the child. Caretaker committed an act that placed the child at risk of significant/serious pain or which could have resulted in impairment or loss of bodily function. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are you aware of any direct or indirect threats to hurt your child? If so, what was said? 2. Are you concerned about your child being harmed? 3. Has anyone followed through with any threats made to your child? If so, what? 4. Has your caretaker ever made any threats to harm you? 5. Do you feel safe? Why? 6. Has anyone in the home threatened to kill or seriously injure the child? 7. Who made the credible threat? 8. What makes the threat credible (i.e. past history with the family)? 9. Is the individual making the threat emotionally stable? 10. What access does the individual have to the child?

<p>4. The behavior of any member of the family or other person having access to the child is violent and/or out of control. Examples of Evidence to Support Yes Response for Safety Factor:</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>Caretaker(s) who are impulsive, exhibiting physical aggression, temper outbursts or unanticipated and harmful physical reactions, such as smashing or throwing furnishings, breaking furniture, kicking, etc.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Adult in the home has visible injuries resulting from being hit/beaten.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Use of guns, knives or other weapons to threaten or harm another person.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Behavior that seems to indicate a serious lack of self-control.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Individual displays extreme actions or reactions such as physical attacks, violent shaking, or choking.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Caretaker uses brutal or bizarre punishment such as scalding, burning with cigarettes, forced feedings, killing or torturing pets.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Bizarre cruelty (locking up children, torture, etc.).</td></tr> </table>		Caretaker(s) who are impulsive, exhibiting physical aggression, temper outbursts or unanticipated and harmful physical reactions, such as smashing or throwing furnishings, breaking furniture, kicking, etc.		Adult in the home has visible injuries resulting from being hit/beaten.		Use of guns, knives or other weapons to threaten or harm another person.		Behavior that seems to indicate a serious lack of self-control.		Individual displays extreme actions or reactions such as physical attacks, violent shaking, or choking.		Caretaker uses brutal or bizarre punishment such as scalding, burning with cigarettes, forced feedings, killing or torturing pets.		Bizarre cruelty (locking up children, torture, etc.).	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Does anyone having access to the child exhibit extreme reactions to simple statements? Are their behaviors impulsive and out of control? Do home conditions indicate evidence of out of control behavior? (e.g. holes in walls, broken furniture, broken windows, broken doors). What frustrates or angers you? What do you do to calm yourself when frustrated or angry? Has anyone been involved in a fight where someone was physically injured? Does anyone have access to weapons? What type? Where are weapons kept in the home? Do you feel safe? Why? Who protects you? How?
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<p>5. Acts of family violence pose an immediate and serious physical and/or emotional danger to the child. Examples of Evidence to Support Yes Response for Safety Factor:</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>Family violence involving physical assault on a caretaker in the presence of a child.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Family violence when assaults on a child occur or in which a child may be attempting to intervene.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Family violence when a child could be inadvertently harmed even though they may not be the target of the violence.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Due to family violence caretaker is unable to provide basic care and/or supervision for the child because of injury, incapacitation, forced isolation, or other controlling behavior.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Abusive behavior includes frequent use of weapons or threats of homicide/suicide towards the adult or children.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>The family violence is escalating in behaviors.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Family violence is occurring in which child witnesses and is fearful.</td></tr> </table>		Family violence involving physical assault on a caretaker in the presence of a child.		Family violence when assaults on a child occur or in which a child may be attempting to intervene.		Family violence when a child could be inadvertently harmed even though they may not be the target of the violence.		Due to family violence caretaker is unable to provide basic care and/or supervision for the child because of injury, incapacitation, forced isolation, or other controlling behavior.		Abusive behavior includes frequent use of weapons or threats of homicide/suicide towards the adult or children.		The family violence is escalating in behaviors.		Family violence is occurring in which child witnesses and is fearful.	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Does your partner ever prevent you from leaving home? Does your partner destroy items of value to you? Has your partner ever hit, slapped, pushed or kicked you? Has your partner ever caused serious harm to you? Has your partner verbally threatened you? Have the police ever been called for assistance? What happened? Have you ever pressed charges or filed a restraining order? Has anyone else in the household acted in a violent manner? Has the child ever witnessed the event? Has your partner ever injured the child during an episode of family violence? Was the child the target of this violence? Has the child ever tried to intervene during an event of family violence? What do your parents argue about? Have you ever witnessed your parents/caretakers hit each other? How often do your parents fight? Do you ever try to stop your parents from fighting? How? What do you do when your parents fight?
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<p>6. Drug and/or alcohol use by any member of the family or any person having access to the child places the child in immediate danger of serious harm. Examples of Evidence to Support Yes Response for Safety Factor:</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>Adult has had multiple periods of incapacitating intoxication (e.g., passing out, emotional collapse) when child(ren) are present.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Adult is abusing legal or illegal substances or alcohol to the extent that control of his/her actions is significantly impaired.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Adult becomes threatening or aggressive while in the presence of the children during periods of substance use.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Due to drug and/or alcohol abuse, the caretaker is unable, or will likely be unable, to care for the child.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Due to drug and/or alcohol abuse, the caretaker has harmed, or is likely to harm, the child.</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>Adult is currently being arrested and/or incarcerated due to substance abuse, use, and/or trafficking.</td></tr> </table>		Adult has had multiple periods of incapacitating intoxication (e.g., passing out, emotional collapse) when child(ren) are present.		Adult is abusing legal or illegal substances or alcohol to the extent that control of his/her actions is significantly impaired.		Adult becomes threatening or aggressive while in the presence of the children during periods of substance use.		Due to drug and/or alcohol abuse, the caretaker is unable, or will likely be unable, to care for the child.		Due to drug and/or alcohol abuse, the caretaker has harmed, or is likely to harm, the child.		Adult is currently being arrested and/or incarcerated due to substance abuse, use, and/or trafficking.	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What do you and your friends do together? What medication do you take (prescription or over the counter)? How often/much do you drink? Smoke? Have you ever used any illegal drugs? How frequently do you use? Where is your child when you use? Would you be willing to take a random drug test? Does anyone caring for the child consume alcohol or drugs while caring for the child? How often? Does anyone in your home use alcohol or drugs? When do people in your house usually sleep? Get up? Have you ever seen any drugs, powder, or needles in your home? If so, where? 		
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<p>7. Behavior(s) of any member of the family or any person having access to the child is symptomatic of mental or physical illness or disability that places the child in immediate danger of serious harm.</p> <p>Examples of Evidence to Support Yes Response for Safety Factor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caretaker or individual living with the child is delusional; experiencing hallucinations. Mental health professional has identified need for the caretaker to receive treatment and identified concern for the child's safety if not treated. Caretaker(s) or "others" have a disorder that reduces their ability to control their behavior in ways that threaten safety. Caretaker(s) act out or exhibits distorted perception that seriously impedes ability to parent the child(ren.) Physical or psychological illness or disability is present and negatively impacts the caretaker's ability to meet the basic needs of the child. Physical or psychological condition requires lengthy and/or frequent periods of hospitalization in which the caretaker is unable to care for child. Intellectually impaired adult places child in physical danger and/or adult is unable to recognize and provide for child's basic needs. Motivation of the caretaker was to harm the child and does not show remorse. Inability to understand and/or provide child's basic needs due to mental/physical illness or disability. 	<p><u>Questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are behaviors impulsive and out of control? Do home conditions indicate evidence of out of control behavior? (e.g. holes in walls, broken furniture, broken windows, broken doors). What frustrates or angers you? What do you do to calm yourself when you are frustrated or angry? Do you have any physical or medical diagnosis? Who is the doctor treating? Do you take any medications? Are you attending counseling? Who is your counselor? Does anyone in the household have any emotional or physical problems? If so, who? Do you feel safe? Who protects you? How? How often do you eat? Who fixes your meals?
<p>8. Caretaker is unwilling or unable to meet the child's immediate needs for sufficient supervision, food, clothing, and/or shelter to protect child from immediate danger of serious harm.</p> <p>Examples of Evidence to Support Yes Response for Safety Factor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caretaker leaves an infant, toddler or pre-schooler (a vulnerable child) at home alone. Caretaker leaves a vulnerable child alone for days, or overnight (e.g. child expresses fear of being alone, child unable to meet own basic needs, child has unruly/delinquent behaviors). Caretaker allows child to be left for extended periods in the care of a person who is unable to care for the child. Caretaker provides no supervision to developmentally disabled or special needs child. Caretaker does not intervene when a child freely plays with dangerous objects or in dangerous places. Caretaker does not respond to or ignores child's basic needs. Caretaker denies food or water for an extended period of time. Child is not fed food consistently. Child lacks adequate clothing for any environmental situation. Infant has bleeding and/or painful rash that is not being treated as a result of being left for extended periods of time in soiled diapers. Family lacks shelter and they do not access any resources to provide shelter. There is no heat in the home during winter. Child has strong odor and suffers from a skin condition or loss of hair or teeth due to poor hygiene. 	<p><u>Questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How do you meet your children's basic needs? Who helps you when you are unable to provide for basic needs? Does your child ever stay home alone? How often? How long? How far away from home is your child allowed to go? What time must your child be home at night? What time do you usually go to bed? When do you get up in the morning? Who is up when you get up? What do you do after you get up? How many meals do you eat a day? What do you eat? Who makes the meals? Who watches you when caretaker is not here? Do the children beg/ask for food? How often? Do the children play unsupervised outside? How long? How often?
<p>9. Household environmental hazards place the child in immediate danger of serious harm.</p> <p>Examples of Evidence to Support Yes Response for Safety Factor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing is unsanitary, filthy, infested, a health hazard. Excessive garbage or rotted or spoiled food which threatens health. Room covered with human feces, urine or animal feces freely accessible to children. The physical structure of the house is decaying, falling down. Exposed electrical wiring within reach of children. Medications, hazardous chemicals, alcohol/drugs, or loaded weapons accessible to children. Gas leak. Children have access to potentially dangerous pets in the home. Excessive cockroaches, mice, rats, etc., present in the home. 	<p><u>Questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Is there anything dangerous in your house that you think might hurt the child? Is there anything you would like to see changed about your housing situation? Does anything in your home scare you? Do you have access to needles in your home? Where do you put your dirty clothes? Where do you put your trash? Do you have roaches, insects, mice, or rats in your home? Where do you use the toilet in your home? If you could change something about the living conditions what would it be?

<p>10. Any member of the family or other person having access to the child describes or acts toward child in predominantly or extremely negative terms and/or has extremely unrealistic expectations of the child.</p> <p>Examples of Evidence to Support Yes Response for Safety Factor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caretaker's only interaction with the child is to threaten or intimidate. Caretaker uses extreme gestures to intimidate child. Caretaker repeatedly describes child in a demeaning or degrading manner. Caretaker transfers their feelings toward someone they hate onto the child. Caretaker believes the child is demonic, possessed, the devil, etc. Scapegoating that results in dangerous behaviors to self. (e.g., suicidal gestures, runaway, alcoholism/drug use/abuse) Caretaker chooses not to assume the parental role and shows no interest in the child for extended periods of time. (abandonment) Child is given responsibilities beyond his/her capabilities that are dangerous. (e.g., young child cooking, ironing, doing carpentry, climbing ladders, caring for infant) Behavior indicates that child is assuming a parental role within the family. Child is consistently and actively excluded from family activities, blamed for everything negative that happens and physically punished for events beyond his/her control resulting in the need for psychiatric help. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How would you describe each child? Are the rules different for each child? Does the child laugh and/or smile often? Is your child sad frequently? Does the child get along well with peers at school? How do you reward your child? Do any of the child's behaviors concern you? If so, what? What are your child's chores? What are the family rules you must follow? Are the rules the same for all your brothers/sisters? What are your jobs/chores? Whom do you go to when you have a problem and need to talk? What are the rules with respect to this particular child? How is the child's peer relationships? What is his/her school behavior and performance like?
<p>11. The family refuses access to the child or there is reason to believe the family will flee.</p> <p>Examples of Evidence to Support Yes Response for Safety Factor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caretaker hides the child or denies access to the child. Caretaker refuses access to the home. Caretaker refuses to speak to CPS. Family has a history of moving frequently in response to CPS intervention. Family has <u>no</u> ties to the community such as a job, home, extended family, etc. Caretaker constantly deceives in respect to the child: the child's condition, home conditions, events and circumstances related to the report and CPS intervention. Family has a history of avoidance with CPS workers and/or law enforcement. Caretaker refuses other community resources to have access into the home that could help the family/child: community action, early intervention, help me grow, home health nurse, medical personnel, etc... 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is your understanding of why I am here? What concerns do you have for your child? What are you most afraid of happening? What do you need/want to permit me access to your child? How can I help you and your family?
<p>12. Caretaker has an unconvincing or insufficient explanation for the child's serious injury or physical condition.</p> <p>Examples of Evidence to Support Yes Response for Safety Factor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caretaker(s) acknowledges the presence of the serious injury or condition, but cannot explain how it occurred. Caretaker's explanation for the serious injury is inconsistent with the type of injury. Medical evaluation indicates the serious injury is a result of abuse, but the caretaker denies or attributes the injury to accidental causes. Facts related to the conditions, the injury or the incident as observed by the CPS worker and/or documented by other professionals contradict caretakers' explanation. Caretaker's description of the injury or cause of the injury minimizes the extent of harm to the child. Caretaker(s) has no explanation or deny any knowledge as to how the serious injury or condition occurred. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What happened? Show me how it happened? Did anyone see it happen? Where did it happen? Has anything like this happened to you before? When was the injury first noticed and how did it appear? When did the child first appear to be sick or injured? Where was the child? Who was with the child? How did the injury occur? What types of discipline do you routinely use? Who disciplines the child? If others discipline the child, what types of discipline do they use? Do the explanations provided correspond to other information (e.g., medical reports, police reports) gathered? Are the explanations believable or are they far-fetched? Is there information to corroborate the caretaker's(s') explanation?

13. Caretaker is unwilling or unable to meet the child's serious physical or mental health needs. Examples of Evidence to Support Yes Response for Safety Factor:		Questions
Care is not provided for a medical condition that could cause permanent disability if not treated.		1. Does your child have any behavioral problems?
Emergency medical treatment not provided for a potentially life-threatening condition (injury, illness.)		2. Does your child have any medical ailments or conditions?
Unreasonable delay in obtaining medical services, which endanger child's life or place child at risk of permanent disability.		3. How is your child's general health?
Failure to give prescribed medication when such failure places child's health or functioning in danger of serious harm.		4. When was the last time your child was seen by the doctor/mental health therapist?
Child medically diagnosed as failure to thrive for non-organic reasons.		5. Have you followed through with the provided physical/mental health advice?
Child has a serious mental illness (e.g., suicidal or homicidal) which is untreated.		6. Is your child on any medications for physical and/or mental health reasons?
Caretaker does not recognize or comprehend the physical or mental health need or views the malady as less serious than it is.		7. Is the medication taken according to the directions?
		8. What is your understanding of your child's serious physical or mental health needs?
		9. Does anyone else assist you in meeting these needs?
		10. What makes you feel sad? How often do you feel sad?
		11. Have you ever thought about hurting or harming yourself?
		12. Have you ever attempted to hurt or harm yourself?
		13. If so, did you or your caretaker seek mental health counseling?
		14. Did you follow through with recommendations?
		15. When was the last time you went to the doctor?
		16. Who takes you to the doctor?
		17. Do you receive medication as prescribed?
		18. How do you feel physically?
		19. Do you feel sick often?
		20. What happens when you feel sick?
14. Child sexual abuse/sexual exploitation is suspected and circumstances suggest that child may be in immediate danger of serious harm. Examples of Evidence to Support Yes Response for Safety Factor:		Questions
Child was engaged in sexual conduct or contact.		1. What changes have you observed with your child recently, such as sleeping or eating or play habits?
Caretaker makes no effort to prevent and/or forces or encourages child to observe sexual behavior of others. (e.g., parents, pornographic movies)		2. Have you seen the child regress to old habits again, such as thumb-sucking, bed-wetting, baby-talk, etc.?
Adult engages in behaviors that are sexually stimulating to either party.		3. Have you noticed the child touching him/herself or others?
Access by confirmed perpetrator to child continues to exist.		4. Does the child have bad dreams, nightmares?
Child was engaged in sexual conduct or contact.		5. What kind of interest has the child shown in private parts, sexual activity, sexual talk, etc.?
Caretaker makes no effort to prevent and/or forces or encourages child to observe sexual behavior of others. (e.g., parents, pornographic movies)		6. What is nap-time (bedtime) like?
Adult engages in behaviors that are sexually stimulating to either party.		7. What is bath-time like? Who bathes the child, how often, child's reactions, any special routines, etc.?
		8. What does the child like to do?
		9. Is there anything in particular which seems to upset the child?
		10. Can you name the parts of your body? If the child does not name his or her buttocks, genitals, breasts, etc., the child should be asked to name the parts of the body covered by a bathing suit.
		11. Have you ever hurt your body?
		12. Who helps you take care of your body?
		13. Who helps you put on your clothes; use the toilet; take a bath?
		14. Do you know what safe touches and unsafe touches are?
		15. Has anyone ever given you a safe touch? An unsafe touch?
		16. Do you know what secret touches are?
		17. Can you give me an example of a secret touch? Has anyone ever given you a secret touch? If someone touched you, who could you tell?