

SAFETY PLANNING

A Safety Plan is a specific and concrete strategy for controlling threats of serious harm to a child(ren) or supplementing protective capacities, which is implemented immediately when a family's protective capacities are not sufficient to manage immediate safety threats for at least one child in the family. There are three types of Safety Plans: In-Home Safety Plan; Out-of-Home Safety Plan; and Legally Authorized Out-of-Home Placement. Once the decision is made that a Safety Plan is necessary, the Safety Plan is immediately developed and implemented.

In-Home and Out-of-Home Safety Plans are voluntary, written agreements between the PCSA and the parent, guardian, or custodian. These types of Safety Plans do not change the legal custody status of the child(ren). The Safety Plan is developed using the JFS 01409, "Comprehensive Assessment and Planning Model – I.S., Safety Plan for Children," and implemented with the cooperation and approval of the parent, guardian, or custodian.

A Legally Authorized Out-of-Home Placement is an option utilized when either the parent, guardian, or custodian will not or cannot agree to an In-Home or Out-of-Home Safety Plan, or there is a lack of services to control the identified threats of serious harm or to supplement protective capacities and removal from the home is the only intervention to ensure child safety. A Legally Authorized Out-of-Home Placement changes the custody of the child(ren) and may or may not be a voluntary agreement. An "Agreement for Temporary Custody of Child" (JFS 01645) is considered a Legally Authorized Out-of-Home Placement Safety Plan. Completion of the JFS 01409 is not required to document safety planning a legally authorized out-of-home placement.

If, through the ongoing assessment of safety (e.g., through home visits and/or family contacts which are not done in conjunction with a child abuse/neglect report,) a threat of serious harm is identified, or protective capacities of the parent, guardian, or custodian change such that a child(ren) is no longer safe in the home without intervention, a Safety Plan must be developed immediately. The Safety Re-Assessment contained in the Case Review tool (Section 2A and B) can be used in lieu of the Safety Assessment tool. However, in this situation, nothing prohibits a caseworker from completing the Safety Assessment instead of the Safety Re-Assessment.

It is understood that because social work practice occurs in the field, the assessment of safety may result in the need to immediately execute a Safety

Plan prior to documenting the assessment of safety on the Safety Assessment or Safety Re-Assessment tools. In these instances, execution of the Safety Plan will precede the completion of the Safety Assessment or Safety Re-Assessment tools. However, the completion of the Safety Assessment or Safety Re-Assessment tools shall be done immediately and based upon the assessment of safety which necessitated the implementation of the Safety Plan.

Safety Plan Guidelines

Ensuring child safety is an ongoing process that begins in intake and continues through case closure. Safety Plans are implemented to immediately control threats of serious harm. In order to determine the degree of intervention necessary to protect the child, the caseworker should consider the threats of serious harm identified in the assessment of safe.

Guidelines to consider when completing a Safety Plan include:

- The Safety Plan is a specific and concrete control strategy implemented immediately when a family's protective capacities are not sufficient to manage the immediate threats of serious harm to a child.
- The parent, guardian, or custodian is an integral part of the Safety Plan and should have a prominent role in its development and implementation.
- The Safety Plan should employ the least restrictive (least disruptive to the children) strategies possible while assuring the child's safety.
- An effective Safety Plan can often be developed and implemented by incorporating the identified protective capacities which have not been previously utilized by the family. Include the community and extended family supports that are available or are already in place.
- The caseworker must assess the parent(s), guardian, or custodian and make a professional judgment as to their willingness and capability to agree to and abide by the terms of the Safety Plan.
- Active participants and responsible persons must be capable of enforcing the terms of the Safety Plan.
- Safety Plans need to be monitored regularly to ensure child safety is being maintained.

- The PCSA must continually evaluate the effectiveness of the Safety Plan. Safety Plans can and should be modified whenever necessary. This may occur either because the plan has been proven to be insufficient or because a less restrictive Safety Plan may now be appropriate.
- CPS cases cannot be terminated with an active Safety Plan absent a court order.

In-Home or Out-of-Home Safety Plan Interventions

The caseworker and the parent, guardian, or custodian shall jointly identify and agree to the specific activities to control threats of serious harm. Interventions may supplement the family's present protective capacities to control the threats of serious harm.

Examples of these controlling activities/interventions may be:

- Voluntary kinship placements
- Restrict access of the alleged perpetrator to the child(ren)
- Alleged perpetrator leaves the home (voluntarily or through court order)
- Civil protection orders
- Protective day care (only if the use of day care is to protect the child)
- Respite care
- Detoxification
- Home health nurse/Parent aide/Homemaker (must be used specifically to ensure child safety)
- A competent adult caretaker moves into the family's home
- Emergency supply of food, supplies, clothing, etc.
- Obtaining medical or psychological intervention
- Crisis intervention services
- Intensive monitoring

Persons who are responsible for the detailed activity(ies) need to be identified and must sign the JFS 01409 to show agreement and a willingness to participate.

Authorization for Participation in an In-Home or Out-of-Home Safety Plan

The caseworker shall receive authorization for a written Safety Plan to be implemented from the ACV's parent(s), guardian, or custodian. Authorization is obtained by their signing the JFS 01409.

Authorization by Verbal Agreement

A Safety Plan may be implemented if a parent, guardian, or custodian who is unavailable to sign the Safety Plan grants verbal authorization, a five (5) working day extension must be obtained. If the caseworker does not obtain the signature of the parent, guardian, or custodian during the 5 day extension period, the Safety Plan cannot be continued and the PCSA shall explore alternative safety interventions. Only one (1) extension can be granted.

Overall, if the caseworker cannot obtain a signature or verbal authorization of at least one (1) parent, guardian, or custodian prior to implementation of the Safety Plan, the Safety Plan cannot be implemented and the PCSA shall explore alternative safety interventions.

Authorization by One Parent

If the ACV's parents are married or if a court has issued an order of shared parenting, both parents must authorize the Safety Plan.

If one parent is unavailable (e.g., traveling or working out of town) to authorize the Safety Plan, the caseworker may accept the available parent's authorization to implement a Safety Plan. Attempts shall be made to contact the unavailable parent to obtain agreement. The caseworker shall obtain the signature of the unavailable parent within 24 hours of availability.

Monitoring the Safety Plan

The PCSA is responsible for monitoring Safety Plans to ensure that the action steps are controlling the identified threats of serious harm to any child.

In-Home Safety Plans

If an In-Home Safety Plan is active, the caseworker must make, at a minimum, weekly home visits with the family to monitor the Safety Plan. During the home visits, the caseworker will make face-to-face contact with each child and parent, guardian, or custodian involved in the Safety Plan.

Out-of-Home Safety Plans

To monitor an Out-of-Home Safety Plan, weekly contact with the children or the persons responsible for the action steps by either telephone or face-to-face contact is required. Additionally, face-to-face contact with each child involved is required every other week to monitor an Out-of-Home Safety Plan.

Legally Authorized Out-of-Home Placement

If the Safety Plan for the child(ren) is a Legally Authorized Out-of-Home Placement, including custody to a relative or an Agreement for Temporary Custody of Child, the caseworker would follow the guidelines for contact with the child(ren) as outlined in the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC).

Monitoring by Others

Can assist in monitoring the Safety Plan, however, the caseworker must maintain frequent contact with Safety Plan participants to ensure compliance with Safety Plan activities. Participation by others in monitoring the Safety Plan does not relieve the caseworker from the required contacts for monitoring Safety Plans.

Modifying the Safety Plan

Regardless of Safety Plan duration, modifications to a Safety Plan should occur if safety interventions need to be changed or amended to ensure child protection. Safety Plans may also be modified if the parent, guardian, or custodian is no longer willing to participate in the Safety Plan and threats of serious harm still exist. In this case, the caseworker may need to take more restrictive actions to ensure child safety.

If an existing Safety Plan requires modification outside the formal review of safety, completion of the Safety Assessment or Safety Re-Assessment (Section 2A and B) is not required, although nothing prohibits one from completing either of these tools. If a Safety Assessment or Safety Re-Assessment is not completed, the justification for modifying an existing Safety Plan will be documented at the time of the Family Assessment or next Case Review.

If a Safety Plan is modified, all parties shall be notified. Their signature on the modified Safety Plan documents notification. If a responsible party and/or his/her action step are being discontinued in the modified Safety Plan, this individual should be notified in writing of the modification of the Safety Plan and the discontinuation of the action step.

Discontinuing the Safety Plan

Safety Plans should be discontinued when the threat of serious harm no longer exists or when control of the threat of serious harm within the family is probable and can be maintained without PCSA safety focused intervention or active monitoring.

If an existing Safety Plan is being discontinued outside the formal review of safety, completion of the Safety Assessment or Safety Re-Assessment (Section 2A and B) is not required, although nothing prohibits one from completing either of these tools. If a Safety Assessment or Safety Re-Assessment is not completed, the justification for discontinuing an existing Safety Plan will be documented at the time of the Family Assessment or next Case Review.

All parties, including the parent, guardian, or custodian, of the Safety Plan shall be notified in writing of the Safety Plan discontinuation within one (1) working day of the Safety Plan being discontinued. These parties may be notified verbally if the decision to discontinue the Safety Plan occurs during the face-to-face contact with the parent, guardian, or custodian, however written notification within one (1) working day is still required.