



POLICY TITLE:	Safety Plans		
 	CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY		
Approved By:	Date Approved:	Original Effective Date:	Last Revision:
Robert L. Matthews - Director	July 18, 2022	May 29, 2019	June 22, 2022

I. AUTHORITY	<p>The Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA or Agency) adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency’s mission, and applicable federal and District of Columbia laws and regulations including provisions in Titles 4 and 16 of the DC Official Code.</p>
II. APPLICABILITY	<p>All Agency employees and contracted personnel, and contracted providers.</p>
III. RATIONALE	<p>CFSA’s first priority toward families and their children is working to ensure their safety. A signed safety plan is an effective tool to facilitate and promote the family’s efforts to keep children safe. A safety plan clearly describes immediate threats to the child(ren)’s safety and details how the family will manage, mitigate, or eliminate the threats to the child’s safety. Safety plans are time-limited and require consistent re-evaluation, monitoring and management with the participants in the plans.</p> <p>The safety plan must be developed collaboratively with the family with realistic actions that are feasible and sustainable over time; it can frame and facilitate ongoing engagement between the family members and help keep children safe.</p>
IV. POLICY	<p>If it is clinically appropriate to do so, as delineated in Section A below, CFSA shall develop a formal, written safety plan with the parent or legal custodian of the child to address immediate safety threats and to allow the child to remain safe with the family (or other designated caretaker) without necessitating a court-ordered separation from the home. <i>Safety plans are not appropriate when it has been clinically assessed that the child is no longer safe in the care of their parent.</i></p> <p>The safety-related action steps outlined in the safety plan must have an immediate effect and be immediately available and accessible. Actions and activities outlined in the safety plan are to be designed to control threats to the child’s safety using the least intrusive means possible.</p> <p>The safety plan will clearly outline what these actions and activities are, who is responsible for undertaking them, under what conditions they will take place, and when they will be completed or achieved. Every participant in the safety plan is to understand and agree on their role and responsibilities.</p> <p>Since no case circumstance is exactly alike, the safety plan shall be tailored to the individual situations. Generally, the action steps outlined in the safety plan should be designed to be completed within 30 days of its enactment. If the circumstances call for it, safety plans may be enacted for more than 30 days. If, after that period, there is a continuing need to address the immediate threats to child safety and one or more custodians remain unable to provide for the child’s safety without the plan being in place, the Agency is to explore other means beyond the safety plan to ensure the child’s safety.</p>

	<p>Within 24 hours of enacting a safety plan with a family involved in a Child Protective Services investigation, the family shall be referred for an expedited at-risk Family Team Meeting (FTM).</p> <p>Following the enactment of a safety plan with a family with an open CFSA in-home case, a social worker facilitated family conference shall be convened immediately, or the family may be referred to an expedited at-risk FTM.</p> <p>When the safety plan calls for the child's temporary (and non-foster care) living arrangement with an adult relative or friend, the Agency is to follow a set of specific practice protocols outlined in <i>Section B: Development of the Safety Plan</i>. Note: For any court-involved families in which a safety plan is enacted, the assigned assistant attorney general (AAG) must be notified within 24 hours of enacting the safety plan.</p>
<p>V. CONTENTS</p>	<p>A. Circumstances Warranting a Safety Plan B. Development of the Safety Plan C. Safety Plan Management, Review, and Resolution</p>
<p>VI. SECTIONS</p>	<p>Section A: Circumstances Warranting a Safety Plan</p> <p>A safety plan may be developed and executed with the parent or legal custodian of a child who is in danger of harm, and the following conditions exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The danger or safety issue can be immediately addressed and ameliorated with the family's agreement, cooperation, and action such that the child need not be separated from the home through a court order. 2. The safety plan participants have the protective capacity, resources, and support to carry out and follow-through on the actions outlined in the safety plan.
	<p>Section B: Development of the Safety Plan</p> <p>A safety plan must, be dynamic and customized to address the identified safety needs of the family. The social worker shall document the agreed upon safety planning elements in the Safety Plan Form and provide a copy of the signed document to the family and other participants. The signed original shall be placed in the hard case record and the information from the form entered into FACES.net.</p> <p><u>Safety Plan Content Requirements</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At a minimum, the safety plan must contain the following elements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A narrative description of the specific issue(s) that caused the child to be unsafe that must be addressed. b. The safety condition(s) that must be established, and the participant who is primarily responsible for the conditions being met throughout the duration of the plan.

- c. The specific action(s) that will be carried out, by whom and by when, to keep the child safe.
- d. The name and contact information of each safety plan participant.
- e. A schedule for review and follow-up of the specific action steps and a timeframe for the anticipated resolution of the safety plan.
- f. A signed acknowledgment (or email or verbal acknowledgements during periods of adjusted operations) by the participants and the assigned social worker that:
 - i. The safety plan has been developed jointly by the family;
 - ii. All action steps addressed in the safety plan have been agreed upon; and
 - iii. Failure to abide by the requirements of the safety plan may result in CFSA action to separate the child from the home and place them into foster care if the child cannot be kept safe.

Note: Social workers must make all decisions whether to community paper or separate in consultation with their supervisor and approval by their program manager and administrator.

- 2. The safety plan may not include language requiring any of the participants to go to the Domestic Relations Court to obtain legal custody.

Resource Options

- 3. The social worker must talk with families about the options available in the [Kinship Care Guide](#) and document this discussion in the Contact Notes screen of FACES.net.

Participant Considerations

- 4. Key family decision-makers (including the parent or proposed caretaker) who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs (or other impairment) cannot participate in safety planning.

Safety Plans with Temporary Living Arrangements

- 5. In instances in which the safety plan includes a provision for the child's temporary living arrangement with an adult relative or friend, while safety issues involving the child's caregiver are addressed and resolved, the assigned social worker is responsible for ensuring that the following action steps occur as soon as possible:
 - a. Complete an assessment of the adult relative or friend to determine whether the child will be safe in their care. The assessment is to include:
 - i. Research of the FACES.net to review any history of Agency involvement.
 - ii. A visit to the home of the adult relative or friend to ensure that it is a safe environment for the child.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Provide and explain the elements in the Kinship Care Guide to the adult relative or friend outlining the options to support the child, including becoming a licensed foster care provider. c. Work with the parent and proposed caretaker to ensure continuity of medical, educational, and other services.
	<p>Section C: Safety Plan Management, Review, and Resolution</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The action steps of the safety plan are family-driven, but it is the responsibility of the assigned social worker to establish the schedule for review and monitoring of the plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The assigned social worker is to review the safety plan at least once per week with all the participants to measure progress and address barriers. b. Review and follow-up of action steps may occur at the FTM or family conference. 2. The safety plan may be resolved and closed if the action steps have been completed and if, following a safety assessment, the family demonstrates the protective capacity to ensure the child’s safety without it. 3. If immediate safety issues addressed in the safety plan have been resolved and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The investigation or case is to remain open, CFSA is to engage the participants and identify the key actions that support and sustain the parent’s protective capacities and the child’s ongoing safety. b. The investigation is to be closed without a recommendation to open an ongoing case. When that occurs, the assigned social worker is to convene a team meeting with the family to review the action steps agreed upon at the FTM, and discuss any recommendations for community-based referrals prior to investigation closure. c. The ongoing case is to be closed, then the assigned social worker is to follow the protocols in the Standards of Safe Case Closure policy.