Rapid Safety Feedback & Secondary Case Review Instrument

This document contains the case review items, core concepts, instructions and considerations, and rating criterion which critical child safety teams will use to assess open investigations of children under four years of age meeting the criteria described on page 3.

This document has been updated to align with the Safety Practice Guidelines.
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Introduction

The child welfare practice model for child protection is a continuum of interventions that begin when a child abuse or neglect report is received by the agency and concludes when a case closes and children are in a safe and permanent home. The effectiveness of this system of services is contingent on all stages of service working together to achieve these outcomes. As a family proceeds through certain steps or decision making points across stages of service, the safety of the child remains paramount.

The single most critical function of child welfare case reviewers is the complex process of assessing investigation decision making related to child safety at every stage. The reviewer’s assessment and case consultation is crucial to addressing a child’s immediate safety through a thorough understanding of the CPI safety analysis and Safety Plan. The role of the reviewer is to critically assess the investigative activities to ensure the CPI is assessing the safety of children. These reviews must be completed with a sense of urgency to reduce and prevent child deaths, serious injuries or egregious incidents related to maltreatment or insufficient child welfare case practice.

Case reviews are stratified as follows:

Tier One
QA Managers should pull the cases meeting criteria. Consideration should be given to having Field Support Consultants (FSCs) work along the CPI on these cases. Consultations on Tier 1 cases should include the Operations Manager and/or Program Administrator, Supervisor and the Child Protective Investigator
1. Youngest victim aged 0-3, AND
2. Allegations of Family Violence Threatens Child, AND
3. Allegations of any type of Substance Misuse (Substance Misuse, Substance Misuse-Alcohol, Substance Misuse-Illlicit Drugs, Substance Misuse-Prescription Drugs), AND at least one of the following:
   (a) Bone Fracture, or
   (b) Burns, or
   (c) Internal Injuries, or
   (d) Sexual Abuse, any form (Sexual Abuse, Sexual Abuse-Sexual Battery, Sexual Abuse-Sexual Exploitation by Parent, Sexual Abuse-Sexual Molestation).

Tier Two
The sample will be selected using the business objects report entitled “Daily Child Investigations and Special Conditions Listing” and is available within the FSFN Public Florida >Child Investigation Folder.
1. There is at least one prior report on the child victim, another child victim in the home, or the alleged caregiver responsible AND (this is consistent with our current guideline)
2. Youngest victim aged 0-3, AND
3. Allegations of Family Violence Threatens Child, AND
4. Allegations of any type of Substance Misuse (Substance Misuse, Substance Misuse-Alcohol, Substance Misuse-Illlicit Drugs, Substance Misuse-Prescription Drugs)

Tier Three
1. There is at least one prior report on the child victim, another child victim in the home, or the alleged caregiver responsible AND
2. Youngest victim is under 12 months of age AND
3. Allegations of any type of Substance Misuse (Substance Misuse, Substance Misuse-Alcohol, Substance Misuse-Illlicit Drugs, Substance Misuse-Prescription Drugs), AND
4. Allegations of physical injury maltreatment.

Refer to Windows into Practice for additional Tiers.
Item 1

ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTS, PRIOR SERVICES, AND CRIMINAL HISTORY

1.0 Are the prior child abuse and neglect reports, prior services, and criminal histories accurately summarized and used to assess patterns, potential danger threats, and the impact on child safety?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Core Concepts: In every investigation, the investigator must assess the immediate safety and short and long-term risks to each child and identify the safety service needs for each child and family. One of the most important activities involves assessing household members’ and frequent visitors’ criminal histories and prior involvement with the child welfare system and using this information to assess patterns, potential danger threats, and the impact on child safety.

Instructions and Considerations:
The reviewer’s task is to determine how effectively the background information is used to assess patterns, potential danger threats, and the impact on child safety. Reviewers should carefully consider background checks to determine if the results were included in the assessment. The reviewer must assess if the investigator did or did not recognize an increase over time in the seriousness or frequency of the criminal history and prior abuse and neglect reports. Information may be obtained from FSFN within the Family Functioning Assessment, Present Danger Assessment, and case notes.

Reviewers must determine if the investigator is using the information to assess for safety.

- The reviewer should also consider how the investigator used the background history of frequent visitors to assess safety and safety service needs. Reviewers should carefully consider if the supervisor consultation provided guidance to the investigator and was it considered in the assessment.

- The reviewer must assess if the information obtained through these checks appropriately drove proper identification of danger threats, parent protective capacities, and child vulnerability.

- Some factors that should affect decisions related to assessment of child safety and danger threats include violent criminal acts, multiple reports of abuse and neglect involving the same perpetrator, or same type of maltreatment, reports documenting prior or current domestic violence, ongoing substance abuse and/or mental health concerns, or any combination thereof.

The following information is provided to give additional guidance to the reviewer when there are additional household members and/or frequent visitors.

- Additional family or household members. Upon learning there are additional family or household members, the investigator must request criminal background checks be conducted on those people and include the findings in the overall assessment. If there are criminal histories, prior reports of abuse or neglect or prior case management services provided to the child and family, the investigator must consider the entirety of this history during the course of the investigation.
• **Frequent Visitor.** Abuse history and criminal records checks shall be requested by the child protective investigator on all adult household members not screened by the Florida Abuse Hotline at the time the report was accepted. The criminal records check shall be initiated within 24 hours of the individual’s identity and presence in the home becoming known to the investigator. Records checks shall also be completed on any adult visitor to the home who provides care or supervision of the child outside the parent’s immediate presence while visiting the home. If the family has lived in another state within the past five (5) years, the child protective investigator shall contact the appropriate law enforcement and child protection agencies in the state where the family resided and request a criminal, including local, and abuse history check on all subjects and household members of the report (reference FAC 65C-29.003(1)(e)).

Reviewers must determine if there is evidence or a determination is made that an individual provides care or supervision of the child outside the parent’s immediate presence while visiting the home. Information to consider when deciding if an individual is a frequent visitor:
- Does the visitor spend any unsupervised time in the home with the child?
- Is the visitor ever left in a caregiver role?
- How does the child define the frequent visitor?
- How do collaterals define the frequent visitor? In relation to the information provided by the family?

*Rating Criterion:*

• The reviewer will answer yes if,
  1) The investigator provided a justification as to why the prior abuse and criminal history does not pose a threat of harm to the child.
  2) The investigator linked observed behaviors to the individuals’ prior abuse and criminal history.
  3) The investigator assessed how prior reports and criminal history affects parental behaviors.
  4) The investigator assessed for current /future patterns in behaviors based on abuse priors and criminal history to help identify danger threats, caregiver protective capacities and child vulnerability.
  5) The investigator engaged the family on various occasions in order to understand the individuals’ behaviors.
  6) The investigator has taken action to ensure the safety of the child while continuing the assessment of the family.

• The reviewer will answer no if,
  1) A note is in the file indicating only a review of prior abuse and criminal history.
  2) Prior abuse and criminal history being contained in the file with no indication of review by the investigator.
  3) There is no indication that the background screening information drove the proper identification of danger threats, parent protective capacities, and child vulnerability.
  4) A safety plan was made with someone whose criminal history and priors could affect child safety.
Item 2

PRESENT DANGER ASSESSMENT

2.0 Does the present danger assessment support present danger or the absences of present danger?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Core Concepts. Present danger is most often identified at the onset of an investigation, but can occur at any point in time. Present danger refers to immediate, significant and clearly observable harm or threat of harm occurring to a child in the present time, requiring immediate protective actions on the part of the CPI. Assessing for present danger is an on-going process as family and individual circumstances are dynamic and not static in nature. Even when there is a safety plan in place, at any point during an investigation or an on-going services case, a new danger threat may be occurring.

Instructions and Considerations:
The reviewer must be very knowledgeable of the 11 danger threats and examples outlined in Appendix 1 and in the Safety Methodology Practice Guide. Information can be obtained within the Present Danger Assessment. The reviewer must document in their notes why the present danger assessment accurately supports present danger or the absence of present danger.

Present Danger shall be assessed on the household in which the abuse is alleged to have occurred. If the CPI does not focus the investigation on the correct household, the focus of the Family Functioning Assessment will be lost. For additional information refer to page 9 of the Practice Guidelines which defines an “In-Home” investigation. This definition states “an in-home investigation is an intake in which the child’s parent, legal guardian, paramour (residing or frequenting the home) and/or other adult household member with significant caregiver responsibility for care and protection of the child is the alleged person responsible for the maltreatment. The child victim may reside in the household on a full or part-time basis. If the child’s parents or legal guardians have established separate households through divorce or separation, only the household in which the abuse is alleged to have occurred is assessed for danger threats and family functioning”.

The reviewer must assess the Present Danger Assessment to determine it the investigator appropriately identified which danger threat is occurring. While the general definition for each danger threat is specific in nature, it is critical that an investigator use the full definitions and descriptions provided in the Safety Methodology Desk Reference Guide in determining whether the information collected meets the threshold criteria for each threat. Present danger can be identified by one or more of the eleven danger threats listed below and included in the Safety Methodology Desk Reference Guide. Except as noted, nine of these threats can also represent impending danger in the home but within a different context from present danger.

Careful consideration when determining present danger should be made when assessing domestic violence and family violence. Parent/legal guardian or caregiver may not be “actively” violent in the presence of the worker; however, the domestic violence dynamics within the household could be active. In addition, there should be consideration of information that indicates that a child and spouse are being mistreated. Concerns are heightened when abuse of a child and spouse are both occurring.
Refer to the full description of Danger Threats in Appendix 1.

The reviewer must understand that In present danger, the dangerous situation is in the process of occurring which means it is happening right in the presence of the investigator (e.g., an infant is left unattended in a parked car) or it might have just happened (e.g., a child presents at an emergency room with a serious unexplained injury) or it happens “all the time” (e.g., young children were left alone last night and are likely to be left home alone again tonight).

- The child welfare professional is in the midst of the danger the child is subject to. The threatening family condition is happening now and requires an immediate response.

- The threatening family condition may be readily apparent, or it may be an allegation of significant harm that if true requires protective actions. Examples may include:
  - Serious injuries to an infant with no plausible explanation and/or the perpetrator is unknown
  - Allegations of child sexual abuse

- The family condition is dramatic, graphic or notable in its damaging and harmful effect on the child.

During the case consultation, the reviewer must be prepared to probe in the following areas:

1. The investigator is required to assess present danger in accordance with Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines for Investigations, “Assess Present Danger and Take Immediate Actions.”

2. Present danger threats are usually identified at initial contact by an investigator, however can occur during the course of an investigation or while the family is receiving case management services. Serious harm will result to the child without prompt response and interventions.

3. The investigator will identify present danger using the following criteria:

   a. “Immediate” for present danger means that danger in the family is happening during the time that the CPI is in the home. The dangerous family condition, child condition, individual behavior or act, or family circumstances are active and operating. What might result from the danger for a child could be happening or occur at any moment. What is endangering the child is happening in the present, it is actively in the process of placing a child in peril.

   b. “Significant” for present danger qualifies the family condition, child condition, individual behavior or acts, or family circumstances as exaggerated, out of control, extreme. The danger is recognizable because what is happening is onerous, vivid, impressive, and notable. Significant is anticipated harm that can result in pain, serious injury, disablement, grave or debilitating physical health conditions, acute or grievous suffering, impairment or death. What the CPI or case manager encounters becomes the dominant matter that must be addressed immediately.

   c. “Clearly observable” as what is happening or in the process of happening is very transparent. The case manager will see and experience it in obvious ways. There is no guesswork; if the worker has to interpret what is going on to be present danger it is not present danger. Usually, when Present Danger exists because of extreme family conditions, a child’s condition, individual behavior or acts, or family circumstances the CPI will know even without conducting interviews. There are clearly
observable actions, behaviors, emotions or out-of-control conditions in the home that can be specifically and explicitly described which directly harm the child or are highly likely to result in immediate harm to the child.

4. When present danger is not immediately apparent, special consideration needs to be given to the following:
   a. If what is alleged could be true, does it equate to present danger (e.g., serious unexplained injuries or sexual abuse allegations)?
   b. Is any child in the home vulnerable to the identified threat? (In essence, a threat only exists in tandem with a vulnerable child).
   c. Does the investigator need to respond to the threat immediately?

5. A CPI will not leave a home when a child is in present danger without establishing a safety plan that goes into effect immediately.

FSFN Documentation. The investigator will utilize the Present Danger Assessment in FSFN to document their assessment. The supervisor will document their consultation with the child welfare professional of the Present Danger Assessment.

Rating Criterion:

- The reviewer will answer yes if,
  1) The investigator described the present danger threat in detail.
  2) The investigator linked how the family condition is dangerous to the child and how it immediately affects the child’s safety.
  3) The investigator describes how the danger threat has crossed the threshold criteria for present danger.
  4) The investigator has taken action to ensure the safety of the child while continuing the assessment of the family.

- The reviewer will answer no if,
  1) The investigator did not identify present danger upon assessment with the family when the family conditions indicated present danger. A REQUEST FOR ACTION IS REQUIRED.
  2) The investigator did not apply the threshold criteria accurately.
  3) The reviewer does not agree with the present danger assessment.

References: Assess for Present Danger: Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines, Investigations Pg. 34-38, Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines, All Staff Pg. 9-11.
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**Item 3**

**INITIATION OF A PRESENT DANGER SAFETY PLAN**

3.0 Did the CPI implement a present danger safety plan that was sufficient to control the present danger threats identified?

- Yes
- No
- NA a present danger safety plan was not needed and reviewer concurs.

**Core Concepts.** Where there is present danger, a protective response is developed in detail and implemented with the family through a Present Danger Safety Plan. Because family and individual circumstances are dynamic and not static in nature, present danger can be manifested at any point throughout the investigation. Development and implementation of a Present Danger Safety Plan during this initial, very early involvement with the family creates a “safety bubble” around the children in the home. This allows the investigator enough time to collect sufficient information on the family to inform the safety decision; however, the present danger plan shall not be in effect for more than 14 days without a staffing being held to assess the safety plans ongoing effectiveness to protect the child and to discuss and remove any barriers to completing the FFA-investigation.

**Instructions and Considerations:**

Requirements pertaining to the development of the safety plan must meet the following:

1) The safety plan controls the behavior, emotion or condition that results in the child being unsafe
2) The effect of a safety plan is immediate, and/or continues to protect the child every day

**ANYTIME THE REVIEWER IDENTIFIES PRESENT DANGER AND A PRESENT DANGER SAFETY PLAN HAS NOT BEEN DONE, A REQUEST FOR ACTION (RFA) MUST BE DONE.**

**Use of the Practice Guidelines for Investigators**

The reviewer must be knowledgeable of the Practice Guidelines.

1) When an investigator encounters a child in present danger, **the investigator must implement a present danger plan prior to leaving the child.**
2) Initial Supervisory Consultation that affirms:
   a) The investigator has clearly described the child, caregiver(s) and home condition(s) observed during the initial contact with the family.
   b) The investigator identified present danger and the danger is described to be immediate, significant, and clearly observable.
   c) The present danger plan is effective in managing the present danger threat.
   d) The investigator’s decision to take action immediately to assure the protection of the child.
   e) Supervisors are required to review present danger safety plans within 24 hours of the CPI developing the plan.
   f) Supervisors are required to request a 2nd Tier Consultation for all present danger safety plans in which the child either remains in the home or a Family Arrangement is used.

**FSFN Documentation**

1) 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.
2) When a survivor safety plan is developed in cases where a perpetrator is responsible for domestic violence, the survivor plan will be uploaded to the file cabinet and identified as “Survivor Safety Plan.”
Rating Criterion:
When applying the rating criterion the reviewer is looking at the sufficiency of the present danger plan to control the present danger threats identified.

- The reviewer will answer yes if,
  1) The investigator identified the appropriate safety services to control and manage the threats of safety with the home.
  2) The investigator identified the appropriate safety service providers to help manage the plan.
  3) The family was engaged in development of the safety plan.
  4) The investigator is sufficiently managing the safety plan.

- The reviewer will answer no if,
  1) The Investigator did not implement a safety plan.
  2) The investigator did not implement a safety plan timely.
  3) The development of the safety plan did not include the family.
  4) The safety services identified were promissory in nature.
  5) The investigator is not managing the safety plan.

References: Safety Planning: ss. 39.301(9)(a) 6.a., F.S., Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines, All Staff Pg. 28-32; Identification and Selection of Least Intrusive Safety Action: Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines, All Staff Pg. 26-27; Release and/or Placement of a Child with Non Maltreating Parent: Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines, All Staff Pg. 33-34; Safety Plan Involving Family Arrangements: Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines, All Staff Pg.35-38, Approval of Informal Safety Service Providers: Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines, All Staff Pg.39-40; Assess for Present Danger: Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines, Investigations Pg. 34-38, Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines, All Staff Pg. 9-11.
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Item 5

SUFINCIENCY OF INFORMATION COLLECTION

5.0 The CPI collected sufficient information to inform the decision making process related to the presence of impending danger threats, child vulnerability, and caregiver protective capacities as documented in 5.1-5.6.

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Core Concepts. The six information domains provide the substantive basis for the components which comprise the safety decision making process: (1) the presence of impending danger threats; (2) if a child is vulnerable to the identified threat; and (3) whether there is a non-maltreating parent or legal guardian in the household who has sufficient protective capacities to manage the identified danger threat in the home. The sufficiency of this information and interaction of these components are the critical elements in the determination of a child being safe or unsafe. Information gathered and assessed in the domains is essential in order to understand what is occurring in the family day in and day out and to effectively assess child safety and family risk.

Information collection and analysis, including information validation and reconciliation, occurs best by implementing a systematic and structured approach to interviews. During pre-commencement planning, the investigator shall plan the sequencing of interviews and consider the following factors to facilitate the collection of information. Establishing a working relationship with the family to facilitate information gathering requires the investigator spend sufficient time establishing and building rapport with the child’s parents/caregivers.

Instructions and Considerations:
Refer to the full description of the six information domains in Appendix 2. The information documented in the domains will be considered sufficient when the information:

a. Fully describes what has or is happening in each domain, providing a clear picture and accurate understanding of the domain without having to refer to additional material (e.g., FSFN notes, CPT report, completed assessments, etc.)

b. Is relevant to that domain only (for example, aspects of child functioning are not described in the adult functioning domain, etc.)

c. Is essential to gaining a full understanding or complete picture of the domain (e.g., “child has numerous healthy peer relationships” is relevant; providing names of friends is not relevant)

d. Covers the core issues associated with the domain (e.g., Extent of Maltreatment – there is information on severity, maltreatment history, description of specific events, behaviors, emotional and physical symptoms, and identification of maltreating parent, etc.)

e. Adequately describes the role of other persons in the home or the family resource network in the context of their relationship with the parent/legal guardian

f. Provides a clear rationale for the decision and provides confidence that the correct conclusion was reached

g. Supports the impending danger threshold criteria

h. Supports protective capacity assessment
Rating Criterion:

Overall Rating:
- The reviewer will answer yes if,
  1. There is clear evidence that the CPI analyzed the information contained in each of the domains and this analysis guided the determination of a child being safe or unsafe.
  2. The investigator provided a clear rationale for the decision and provides confidence that the correct conclusion was reached.
  3. Information in the domains was validated by the investigators observations and/or corroboration from additional sources.
  4. Covers the core issues associated with that domain only.
  5. The investigator provided multiple sources to validate and reconcile information provided by the family.
  6. The investigator analyzed information obtained with observed behaviors, past abuse priors, and past criminal history.
  7. The investigator successfully engaged the family at various levels of contact.
  8. The investigator teamed with other experts.
  9. Information allows for the development of an appropriate safety plan.
 10. Information assists in the determination of maltreatment findings

- The reviewer will answer no if,
  1) Information obtained was all self-reports.
  2) The investigator identified negative family condition but did not expand upon these areas to identify how they impact the child/family.
  3) Information is insufficient

For Drill Downs:

Nature of Maltreatment/Circumstances Surrounding:
- The reviewer will answer yes if,
  1) Information collected allowed the reviewer to assess/identify potential danger threats and understand the family condition.
  2) Information collected informs:
     - Type of maltreatment,
     - Severity,
     - Description of specific events,
     - Child’s emotional and physical symptoms,
     - Identification of victim and maltreating caregiver.
     - Condition of child/parent after the maltreatment.
  3) Information collected informs:
     - Duration of maltreatment
     - History of Maltreatment
     - Pattern of caregiver functioning leading to or explaining the maltreatment
     - Caregivers explanation for maltreatment and family conditions
     - Unique aspects of maltreatment
     - Caregiver Intent, acknowledgement, and attitude about the maltreatment.

- The reviewer will answer no if,
  1) Information collected does not explain what occurred around or leading up to the maltreatment.
  2) Information is insufficient.
Child Functioning:
- The reviewer will answer yes if information collected allowed the reviewer to identify/assess the child’s vulnerability.
- The reviewer will answer no if,
  1) Information domains where not developed separately for each child.
  2) The child was not interviewed timely.
  3) Information is insufficient.

Adult Functioning:
- The reviewer will answer yes if,
  1) Information collected allowed the reviewer to assess/identify potential danger threats and understand the family condition.
  2) The reviewer can identify who that adult is outside of being a parent.
- The reviewer will answer no if,
  1) Information domains where not developed separately for each parent caregiver.
  2) The adults were not interviewed within a reasonable time to allow for an accurate assessment of danger threats.
  3) Information is insufficient.

Parenting General/Parenting Discipline:
- The reviewer will answer yes if information collected allowed the reviewer to assess/identify parenting beliefs and behavior management techniques within the home.
- The reviewer will answer no if,
  1) Information domains where not developed separately for each parent caregiver.
  2) Information is insufficient.

References: Sufficient Information; Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines, All Staff Pg. 15-19; Determining the Findings: Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines, Investigations Pg. 69-70.
### Item 6

**IDENTIFICATION OF DANGER THREATS RELATED TO IMPENDING DANGER**

6.0 Did the CPI correctly identify impending danger threats at the conclusion of the Family Functioning Assessment?

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**Core Concepts.** “Impending danger” refers to a child being in a continuous state of danger due to caregiver behaviors, attitudes, motives, emotions and/or situations posing a specific threat of severe harm to a child. Impending danger is often not immediately apparent and may not be active and threatening child safety upon initial contact with a family. Impending danger is often subtle and can be more challenging to detect without sufficient contact with families.

Impending danger threats can best be described as a pervasive “state of danger.” Impending danger threats result from persistent and on-going out-of-control negative family conditions in the home. Impending danger places a child in a continual, imminent, but not present position of being seriously or severely maltreated.

The danger threshold criteria must be considered and applied to identify impending danger. All five aspects of the threshold criteria must be present for impending danger to exist:

- A family condition is out of control.
- A family condition is likely to result in a severe effect.
- The severe effect is imminent.
- The family condition is observable and can be clearly described and documented.
- There is a vulnerable child.

**Instructions and Considerations:**

Refer to the full description of Danger Threats in Appendix 1. The reviewer must determine if the CPI correctly identified the danger threat at the conclusion of the Family Functioning Assessment.

**Rating Criterion:**

- The reviewer will answer yes if,
  1) The investigator identified the correct danger threat and described the threat in detail.
  2) The investigator linked how the family condition is dangerous to the child and how it has or will likely impact the child in the near future.
  3) The investigator identified how the danger threat has crossed the threshold criteria for Impending danger.

- The reviewer will answer no if,
  1) The investigator did not clearly identify impending danger threats occurring within the home at the completion of the FFA.
  2) The investigator did not identify impending danger threat correctly.
  3) The investigator did not apply the threshold criteria accurately.
  4) The investigator did not accurately identify the person in the household who provide
significant care and protection for the child to include them in the Family Functioning Assessment.

5) Did not identify impending danger when impending danger exists. AN IMMEDIATE REQUEST FOR ACTION IS REQUIRED.

Item 7

ASSESSING CAREGIVER PROTECTIVE CAPACITIES

7.0 Is the assessment of caregiver protective capacities supported by information?

☑ Yes ☐ No

Core Concepts. Caregiver protective capacities are personal behavioral, cognitive and emotional characteristics that can be specifically and directly associated with being protective of one’s child. Caregiver protective capacities are personal qualities or characteristics that contribute to vigilant child protection. Caregiver protective capacity is a concept that applies specifically to the adult who lives with a child and is responsible for the primary care of a child. This does not include people who care for a child temporarily such as relatives caring for a child from time to time, day care providers, other institution providers, babysitters, etc. A caregiver protective capacity is a specific quality that can be observed and understood to be part of the way a parent thinks, feels and acts that makes him or her protective. This includes demonstrated behavior over time.

There is also cognitive, behavioral, and emotional caregiver protective capacities related to adult functioning. This refers to personal characteristics that are apparent about a person regardless of whether he or she is a parent. These are characteristics that are typical of how the person (as an adult) functions on a daily basis.

- **Cognitive Protective Capacities Related to Parenting** - Caregivers are more likely to be protective when they understand their protective role. They recognize when their child’s safety is threatened. They have an accurate perception of their child. They accurately recognize their child’s needs. They possess adequate knowledge about child development, parenting, and protection, and have realistic expectations for their child.

- **Emotional Protective Capacities Related to Parenting** - Caregivers are more likely or motivated to be protective when they demonstrate love toward their child. They are sensitive toward their child. They have empathy for their child. They are emotionally bonded to their child. They feel a positive attachment to their child.

- **Behavioral Protective Capacities Related to Parenting** - Caregivers are more likely to be protective when they have a history of being protective. They control their impulses in parenting situations. They are successful at setting aside their own needs.

Instructions and Considerations:

Caregiver protective capacities are to be assessed only for the parent(s)/legal guardians and other persons in the household with significant responsibility for the care and protection of child(ren). The investigator will determine, based on information gathered, if the parent or legal guardian can and will protect a child based on an assessment of specific caregiver protective capacities. These capacities may be behavioral, cognitive, or emotional attributes that demonstrate the individual’s degree of adequacy in fulfilling caregiving responsibilities, using resources necessary to meet the child’s basic needs, or setting aside personal needs in favor of a child.

Protective capacities are personal and caregiving behavioral, cognitive and emotional characteristics that specifically and directly can be associated with being protective to one’s children. Protective capacities are personal qualities or characteristics that contribute to vigilant child protection.
1) Criteria for Determining Caregiver Protective Capacities
   a. The characteristic prepares the person to be protective
   b. The characteristic enables or empowers the person to be protective
   c. The characteristic is necessary or fundamental to being protective
   d. The characteristic must exist prior to being protective

2) When the dynamics of domestic violence are present, the protective capacity assessment will be completed by the child welfare professional as follows:
   a. The survivor and the alleged perpetrator, when the alleged perpetrator is a significant caregiver, will both be assessed when they are members of the household that is the focus of the investigation.
   b. When the alleged perpetrator is a parent in a different household than the child, only that household will be assessed for protective capacities unless it is learned during the course of the investigation that the parent is also responsible for acts of maltreatment in the home where the child resides.
      a. In all cases, information from the parent who is the survivor (not the perpetrator) will be gathered and will inform all of the information domains as well as the final safety summary and analysis.

3) The investigator will determine whether each of the caregiver protective capacities exists.

All 19 protective capacities contained in the FFA-Investigation need to be assessed by the investigator in light of overall functioning, independent of the maltreatment incident itself and actual maltreatment findings.

The investigator must make a decision about a caregiver’s ability to protect his or her child from a danger threat in the home. The parent either does or does not have sufficient protective capacity to protect the child. Vulnerability and protectiveness are not measured by degree, but by determining the variable being considered is present or absent.

A full description of Caregiver Protective Capacities is included in Appendix 4. Also, refer to the Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines, Desk Reference Guide Pg. 35-53

Rating Criterion:

1) The reviewer will answer yes if information within the domains clearly describes the adequate or inadequate functioning associated with each protective capacity.

2) The reviewer will answer no if information within the domains did not clearly describe the adequate or inadequate functioning associated with each protective capacity.

Reference: Assessment and Present Danger and Protective Capacity: s. 39.301 (9) 5 & 6, Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines Investigations Pg. 34-38; Impending Danger: Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines Investigations Pg. 59-65; Caregiver Protective Capacities: Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines All Staff pg. 20-
**Item 8**

**FAMILY FUNCTIONING ASSESSMENT AND SAFETY DECISIONS**

8.0 Does the Family Functioning Assessment (FFA) drive the correct safety decision of safe or unsafe?

- Yes
- No

Core Concepts: The Family Functioning Assessment (FFA) is a comprehensive assessment conducted by the investigator using information from all six information domains to identify impending danger based on three fundamental safety constructs: danger threats, child vulnerability, and the absence of caregiver protective capacity to manage danger threats. The interplay of these three critical safety constructs results in an overall determination of safe or unsafe, and in the case of unsafe, the need for an impending danger safety plan to manage the identified threats while allowing case management services to initiate.

Instructions and Considerations:

Safety Practice Guidelines require that the investigator provide sufficient information in each information domain in order to adequately identify and establish the existence of impending danger and inform caregiver protective capacities. The investigator must establish that there is impending danger based upon the identification of all threshold criteria.

The reviewer should seek to understand the following:
- How long has the family condition been concerning or problematic?
- How often is the negative condition actively a problem or affecting caregiver performance?
- What is the extent or intensity of the problem and how consuming is it to caregiver functioning and overall family functioning?
- What stimulates or causes the threat to child safety to become active?
- How is the child vulnerable to the threat?

The reviewer must determine the sufficiency of the safety analysis:

1) Does the documentation associated with the six assessment areas in the FFA sufficiently answer the six assessment questions?
   a. Are there “gaps” in information?
   b. Is there need for further clarification regarding documented information?
   c. Are family, caregiver, and child functioning sufficiently understood?

2) Do you understand how impending danger is occurring in the family?
   a. Does documentation in the FFA support the identification of impending danger?
   b. Is it obvious how threats to child safety are operating in the family?
   c. Is impending danger justified, clearly and precisely described in the FFA and safety analysis?
   d. Is further information needed to understand the safety determination?

3) Can the family adequately control and manage for the child’s safety without direct assistance from Department ongoing intervention?
   a. Does documentation support the decision that the family can sufficiently manage safety on its own? Sustainability?
   b. Is there an adequate basis for determining that a non-maltreating caregiver has the capacity and willingness to protect?
   c. Is further clarification indicated?
4) Is there a need for further clarification and supervisory consultation?
   a. Does the safety plan analysis confirm the need for children to remain in placement outside of the home?
   b. Is there a need for further clarification regarding the decision to place?
   c. Have you summarized the conditions for return if children are out of home placement? What needs to change related to the five criteria for in home safety plan; what needs to change related to behavior, associated DANGER threats, and associated diminished CPCs for kids to go home with in-home safety plan?

5) Identification of Caregiver Protective Capacities
   a. Does documentation identify specific strengths associated with the caregiver role?
   b. Is there need for clarification regarding caregiver protective capacities?
   c. Consider what possibilities may exist for discussing and using caregiver protective capacities during the ongoing family functioning assessment process.

**Rating Criterion:**
- The reviewer will answer yes if,
  - Information domain areas are sufficiently described in order to identify family conditions and danger threats to inform the safety decision.
  - Safety analysis summary presents why the child is determined to be safe, or unsafe.

- The reviewer will answer no if,
  - The safety decision was inaccurate. A REQUEST FOR ACTION IS REQUIRED.
  - Child was deemed safe due to the caregiver protective capacities of a caregiver who resides within another household.
  - Information domain areas not are sufficiently described in order to identify family conditions and danger threats.
  - Safety analysis summary does not justify why the child is determined to be safe, or unsafe.

**References:** Determining If There Is Impending Danger: Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines, Investigations Pg. 59-65, Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines, All Staff Pg. 24-25;
**Item 9**

**INITIATION A SAFETY PLAN** *(note: This item refers to the impending danger safety plan)*

9.1 Does safety planning analysis and justification clearly support the type of safety plan developed?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable – child is safe and reviewer concurs with the assessment

9.2 Is the safety plan sufficient to control for the identified danger threat?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable – child is safe and reviewer concurs with the assessment

*Core Concepts.* 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 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.

*Instructions and Considerations:*

It is essential for all individuals to know and understand how the safety actions will manage the identified danger threats in the home. While the development of the plan is collaborative in nature, it is not a democratic process ruled by the majority. The investigator is responsible for determining the elements required in the plan to ensure child safety. Caregivers have a right to reject a protective action but must be helped to understand their decision to reject protective action, as an option, will require the investigator to seek legal intervention. Caregivers do not have to agree the protective action is necessary, but must be willing to accept the protective action when the investigator determines the action is required to ensure child safety.

Section 39.604(3), F.S. requires that when a child is enrolled in an early education or childcare program regulated by the department, the child’s attendance in the program must be a required action in the safety plan or the case plan.

The reviewer must determine the sufficiency of the safety analysis. Can an in-home safety plan sufficiently manage impending danger?

a. Does the safety planning analysis documentation clearly support the decision to use an in-home safety plan?

b. Do identified safety plan actions match up with how impending danger is manifested in the family to control the danger while treatment services are initiated for behavior change?

c. Does the in-home safety plan provide a detailed and sufficient level of effort to control threats and augment parent/caregiver protective capacities?

d. Is it clear who is responsible for providing what safety action?

e. Is the CPI/case manager clear on what safety management will entail with each safety service provider (natural supports, informal or formal provider)?

f. Are there gaps in the safety plan information and safety actions that require immediate follow-up?

The reviewer should refer to the Safety Practice Guidelines, pages 54-56.
Rating Criterion:

- The reviewer will answer yes if,
  1) The investigator identified the appropriate safety services to control and manage the threats of safety with the home.
  2) The family was engaged in development of the safety plan.
  3) The safety plan was sufficiently managed by the CPI.

- The reviewer will answer no if,
  1) The investigator did not implement a safety plan when needed. A REQUEST FOR ACTION IS REQUIRED.
  2) The investigator did not implement a safety plan timely.
  3) The development of the safety plan did not include the family.
  4) The safety services identified were promissory in nature.
  5) The investigator did not use the information gathered to help manage and modify the existing safety plan.
  6) The safety plan was not managed by the CPI.

Item 10

SUPERVISORY CONSULTATION AND GUIDANCE

10.0 Is the CPI supervisor providing consultation, support, and guidance to ensure sufficient information is collected to support a quality assessment and appropriate decision making?

- Yes
- No
- Reviewer cannot determine due to insufficient information

Core Concepts: Quality and sufficiency refer to enough depth and breadth in all information collection to: 
a) provide a reasonable understanding of family members and their functioning, and 
b) support and justify decision-making. Information is specific, behaviorally stated, precise, relevant and comprehensive. There is evidence of sufficient supervisory support and guidance throughout the investigation.

Instructions and Considerations:
The supervisor and investigator must both be aware of the information needed and why. The investigator must consult with the supervisor to review the observed family condition and discuss what was observed and why the child was assessed to be safe, there is evidence of Impending Danger, or there is evidence to support Present Danger. The supervisory consultation should focus on whether the investigator’s information and observations are sufficient to support the investigator’s conclusion. When the investigator determines there is present or “impending danger”, the supervisor must explore all aspects of the family condition and ensure the information obtained is reconciled with the core concepts of each. The supervisory consultation should not reflect a list of actions the investigator was directed to complete.

The reviewer should look for evidence the investigator was encouraged to critically analyze the information obtained, observations made, and what is known and unknown about the family. The follow-up planned should address those factors known and unknown and the actions planned by the investigator to address the present or “impending danger” concerns when applicable.

When “present danger” is assessed, is the assessment, decision making, and supervision consistent with:

1. An understanding of the implications of the prior abuse history of reports and investigations.
2. Information collected from completed contacts.
3. Conditions believed to endanger the child.
4. Child’s condition and whether it is consistent with the definition of “present danger”.
5. Caregiver’s condition and whether it is consistent with the definition of “present danger”.
6. An active current danger based on the investigator’s description.
7. An active threat to child safety based on the investigator’s description of the family’s circumstance or an aspect of the caregiver’s functioning.
8. A need to take action immediately to assure the child’s protection.
9. A “present danger” Safety Plan that includes a sufficient strategy to control danger threats and a specific plan for ensuring accountability for how all safety actions will be monitored, by whom, for how long, and the process for reporting challenges or changes.

When “impending danger” is assessed, is the assessment, decision making and supervision consistent with a state of danger in which family behaviors, attitudes, motive, emotions, and/or situations pose a threat that is not currently active, but can be anticipated to have severe effects on a child at any time?
Rating Criterion:

Supervisors are required to record the essential elements of the initial supervisory consultation discussion within two business days from the point of completion and any follow up supervisory consultations related to on-going case review discussion within two business days of completion emphasizing elements of the safety methodology decision-making process.

- The reviewer will answer yes if,
  1) Guidance was clear and facilitated critical thinking.
  2) Guidance occurred at critical junctures within the case.
  3) Guidance was appropriate.
  4) Guidance encouraged reconciliation and validation.
  5) Guidance explored the sufficiency of information.
  6) Guidance explored family strengths and weaknesses through review of information sufficiency.
  7) Guidance explored the sufficiency of the safety plan if a danger threat was identified.

- The reviewer will answer no if,
  1) Guidance was not provided to the investigator.
  2) Guidance was checklist oriented.
  3) Guidance was insufficient and did not identify safety threats.
  4) Guidance did not occur at critical case junctures.
  5) Guidance did not occur timely within the investigation.
  6) Guidance was maltreatment focused.

Reference: Initial consultation: s. 39.301(4), F.S.; & 65C-29.003 (6) (b), F.A.C., Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines Investigations Pg. 82, CFSR Systemic Factor #31; Assessing Impending Danger: Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines All Staff Pg. 25; Caregiver Protective Capacities: Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines All Staff Pg. 21-23; Sufficient Information: Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines All Staff Pg. 18-19; Safety Planning: Safety Methodology Practice Guidelines All Staff Pg. 31-32