



POLICY TITLE:		Safety Plans	
 		CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY	
Approved By:	Date Approved:	Original Effective Date:	Last Revision:
Brenda Donald	May 29, 2019		

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 and the LaShawn A. v. Bowser Implementation and Exit Plan (December 17, 2010).</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 the safety of the children. An effective tool to facilitate and promote the family's efforts to keep children safe is a formal, signed safety plan. A safety plan clearly describes immediate threats to the child(ren)'s safety and details how those threats will be managed to mitigate, or eliminate altogether, the child's risk of being unsafe. They are time-limited, and require consistent re-evaluation among 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 for the family 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 caregiver) without necessitating a court-ordered removal from the home.</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 by when they will be completed or achieved. Every participant in the safety plan is to understand his or her role and responsibilities.</p> <p>The action steps outlined in the safety plan should be designed to be completed within 30 days (or sooner) of its enactment. If, after that time 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 the enactment of 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>In instances in which the safety plan calls for the child's temporary (and non-foster care) living arrangement with an adult relative or friend, referred to as a "diversion" arrangement, the Agency is to follow a set of specific practice protocols outlined herein.</p> <p>In instances in which the Agency is exploring a long term or permanent living arrangement with a non-custodial parent, the guidance provided in CFSA's Administrative Issuance on Living Arrangements with Non-Custodial Parents is to be followed.</p>
V. CONTENTS	<p>A. Circumstances Warranting a Safety Plan B. Content Requirements of the Safety Plan C. Safety Plan Monitoring, Review, and Resolution D. Diversion Arrangements</p>
VI. SECTIONS	<p>Section A: Circumstances Warranting a Safety Plan</p> <p>A safety plan may be developed and executed with the parent or legal custodian and other family members of a child who is in danger of harm, and the following conditions exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The specific danger or safety issue can be immediately addressed and ameliorated with family's agreement, cooperation, and action such that the child need not be removed 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 specific actions outlined in a safety plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key family decision-makers must exhibit unimpaired judgment in order for CFSA to effectuate a safety plan with them. CFSA is not to enter into a safety plan with parent who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or is otherwise impaired.
	<p>Section B: Content Requirements of the Safety Plan</p> <p>The assigned social worker is to review the safety plan at least once per week with all of the participants to measure progress and address barriers.</p> <p>A safety plan may be dynamic and customized to address the particular safety needs of the family, but at a minimum, it must contain the following elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A narrative description of the specific issue(s) that caused the child to be unsafe that must be addressed. 2. The safety condition(s) that must be established, and the participant who is primarily responsible for meeting (and ensuring the continuity of) the condition(s) for the duration of the plan.

POLICY TITLE	PAGE NUMBER
Safety Plans	Page 2 of 4

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The specific action(s) that will be carried out, by whom and by when, in order to keep the child safe. 4. The name and contact information of each safety plan participant. 5. A schedule for review and follow-up of the specific action steps and a timeframe for the anticipated resolution of the safety plan. 6. A signed acknowledgment by the participants and the assigned social worker that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The safety plan has been developed jointly; b. All action steps addressed in the safety plan have been agreed upon; and c. Failure to abide by the requirements of the safety plan may result in CFSA action to remove the child from the home and place him or her into foster care if the child cannot be kept safe. 7. The safety plan may not include language requiring any of the participants to go to the Domestic Relations Court to obtain legal custody.
	<p>Section C: Safety Plan Monitoring, 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 of the plan and to monitor and direct progress on all aspects of it. 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: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The investigation or case is to remain open, CFSA is to engage the participants in the intervention plan, which addresses the key actions to support and sustain the parent's protective capacities and the child's ongoing safety, or the family case plan, to address causal factors around risk and safety issues. b. The investigation is to be closed without a recommendation to open an ongoing case, then the assigned social worker is to convene a team meeting with the family and the community-based service provider to which the family has been referred, wherein the attendees are to review the action steps agreed upon at the FTM. c. The ongoing case is to be closed, then the assigned social worker is to follow the protocols in the Safe Case Closure policy.

POLICY TITLE	PAGE NUMBER
Safety Plans	Page 3 of 4

Section D: Diversion Arrangements

In instances in which the safety plan includes a provision for a “diversion arrangement”, in which an adult relative or friend temporarily cares for the child 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:

1. 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:
 - a. A visit to the home of the adult relative or friend to ensure that it is appropriate for the child.
 - b. Research of the FACES.net information system and the sex offender registry to determine whether the adult relative or friend, or any other adult in the home, has a history as a maltreater that would prohibit the diversion arrangement.
2. Provide a brochure to the adult relative or friend outlining the options to support the child, including becoming a licensed foster care provider.
3. Encourage the child’s caregiver to provide the adult relative or friend with the child’s birth certificate, medical insurance card, and social security card to ensure continuity of services during the diversion arrangement.
4. Encourage the child’s caregiver to sign a Custodial Power of Attorney (CPA) granting the adult relative or friend the authority to make decisions on the child’s behalf while the child is living in the diversion arrangement.
 - The social worker must also inform the caregiver that the CPA is revocable at any time.
5. Complete a referral to the appropriate Healthy Families/Thriving Community Collaborative to provide ongoing support during the diversion arrangement.

POLICY TITLE	PAGE NUMBER
Safety Plans	Page 4 of 4