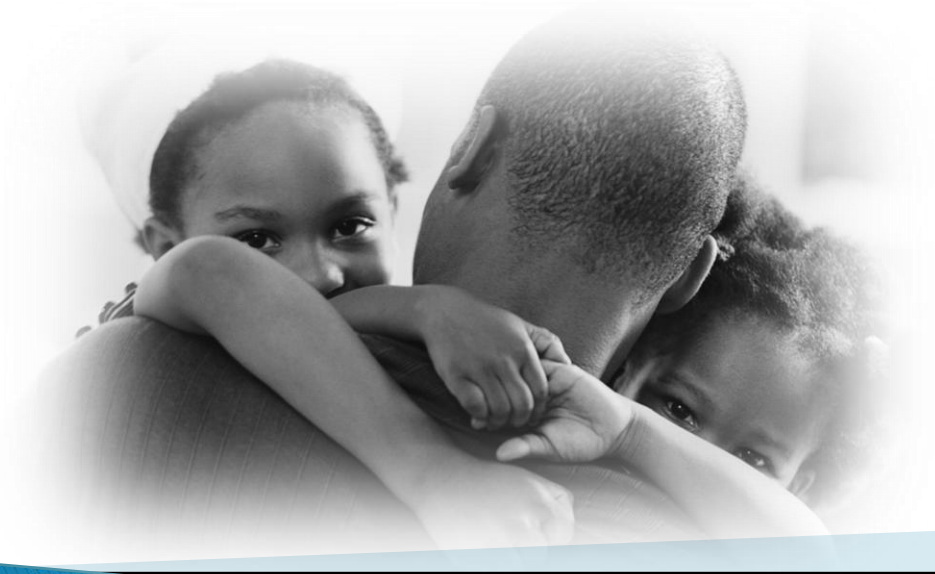
Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

CA Children's Administration

Introduction to Child Safety Framework



"Safety is the primary and essential focus that informs and guides ALL decisions made from Intake through case closure."

Child Safety Framework

- Informs and guides child safety decisions throughout the life of a case.
- Provides precise language and clear definitions.
- Strengthens child safety assessments and planning.
- Will guide appropriate placement decisions.

Tell me More

Safe Child

Children are considered **safe** when there are no present danger or impending danger threats or the caregivers' protective capacities control or manage the existing threats.

Unsafe Child

Children are considered **unsafe** when they are vulnerable to present or impending danger and caregivers are unable or unwilling to provide protection.

Strengthening Child Safety Practice

To determine if a child is safe staff must:

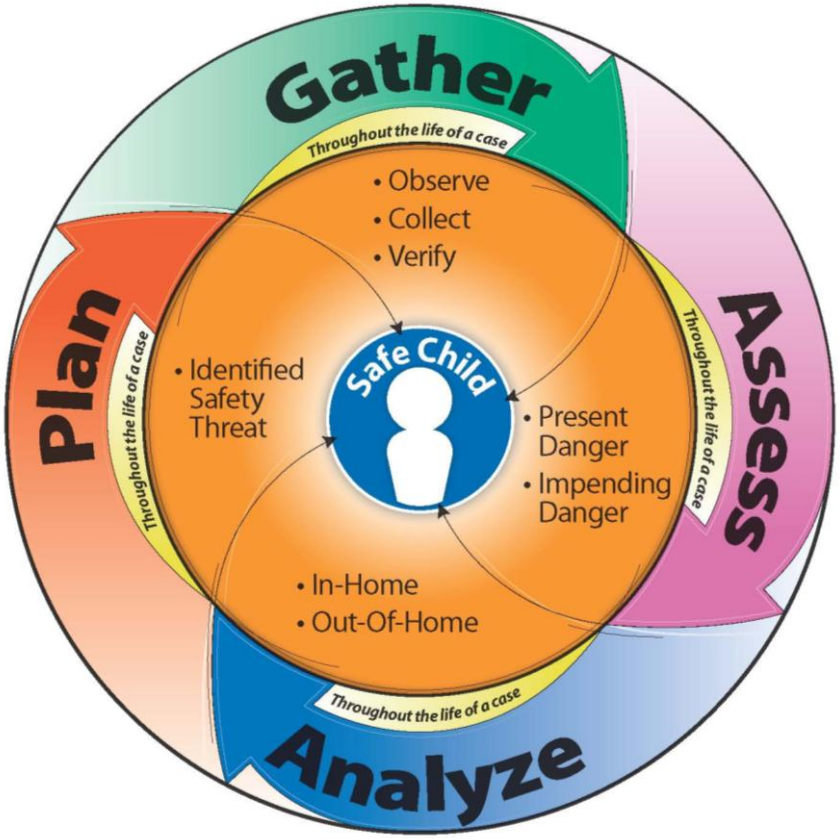
- **G**ather information.
- **A**ssess information gathered.
- **A**nalyze identified child safety threats.
- **P**lan to reduce or eliminate child safety threats.

Child safety is CA's first priority and must be assessed continuously throughout the life of a case.

Child Safety Framework Graphic

This graphic provides a high level overview of how professionals in all program areas continually

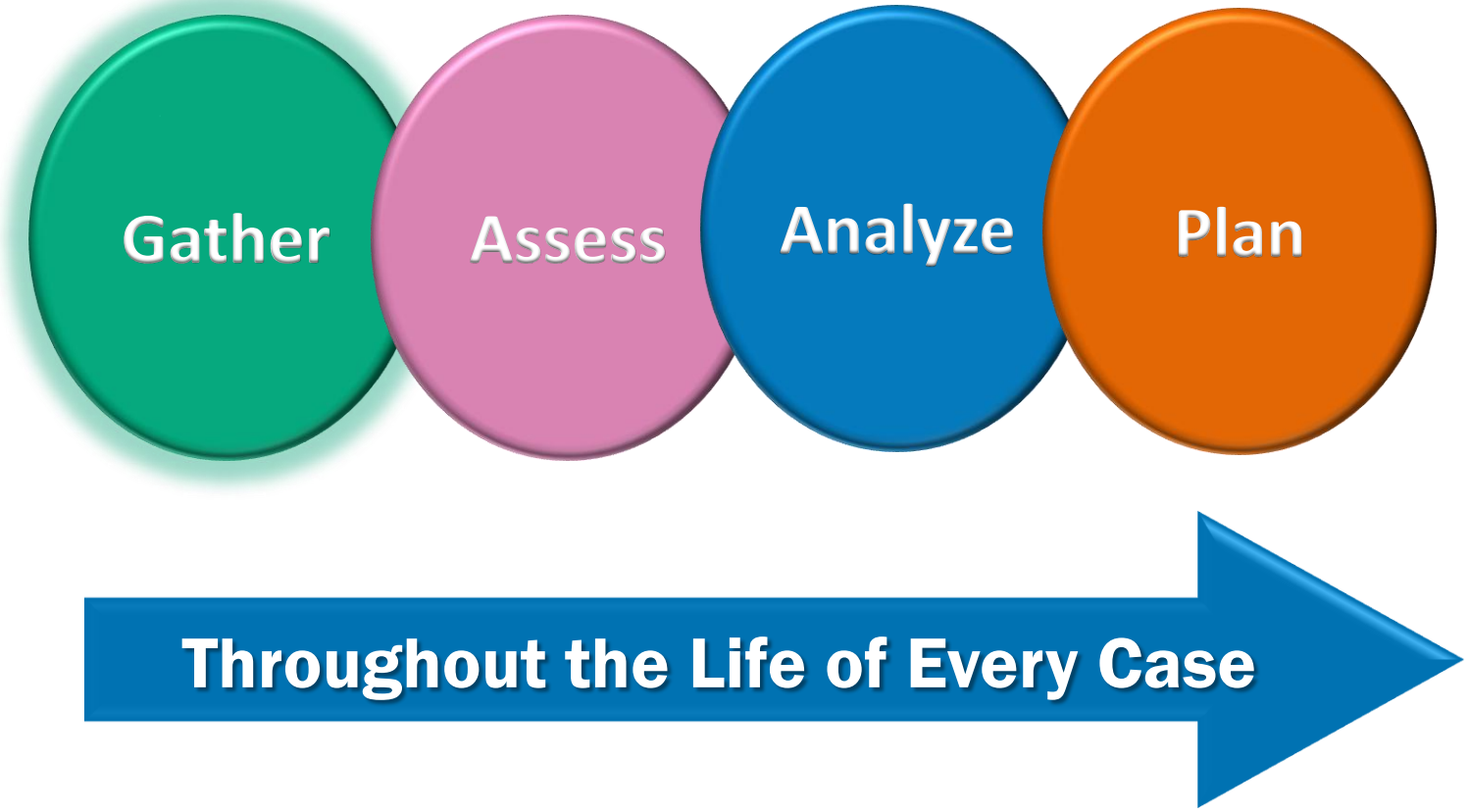
Gather
Assess
Analyze
Plan



Throughout the life of a case

Tell me More

Child Safety Framework



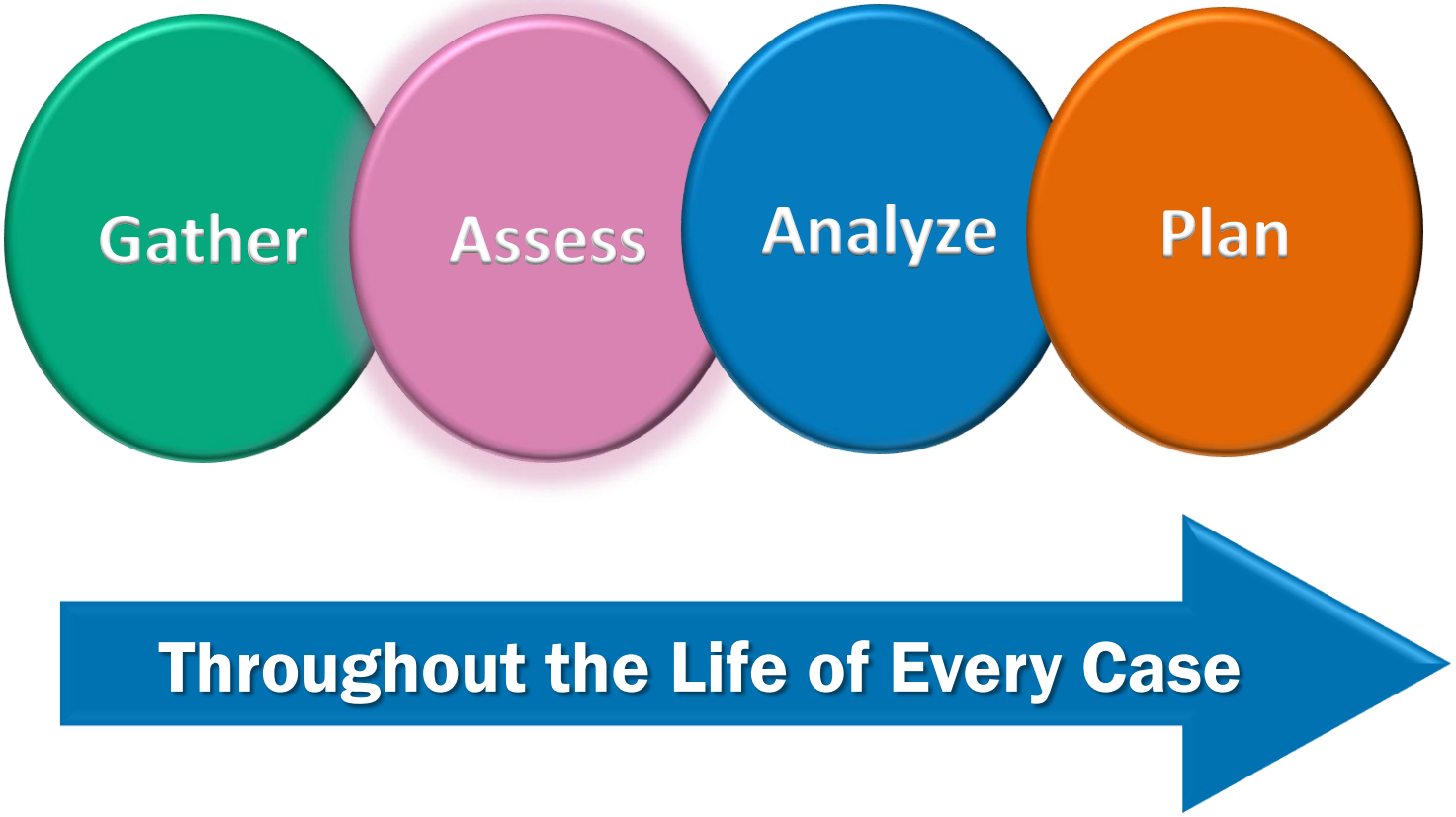
Gathering Information

The Child Safety Framework uses six areas of focus when gathering information.

1. Extent of maltreatment
2. Circumstances accompanying the maltreatment
3. Child functioning
4. Parenting disciplines
5. Parenting practices
6. Parents daily functions (outside of the role of parental unit)

Tell me More

Child Safety Framework



Assess

- Weigh all gathered information.
- Assign significance of information.
- Determine if safety threats exist.

Tell me More

Safety Threat

Family behavior, conditions or circumstances that create present or impending danger resulting in severe impacts on the child.

Present Danger

Present danger is immediate, significant and clearly observable severe harm or threat of severe harm occurring in the present.

Present Danger

- Can occur at anytime throughout the life of a case.
- Is happening now.
- When identified must have protective action(s) taken immediately to protect the child's safety.
- Must be assessed on a continual basis – never stop assessing for present danger during the case.

Tell me More

Impending Danger

Parenting behavior that is harmful and destructive to a child's cognitive, social, emotional or physical development that is likely to occur in the immediate or near future that could result in one or more of the following outcomes:

- Serious or severe harm
- Injury requiring medical attention
- Life endangering illness
- Death

Tell me More

Impending Danger

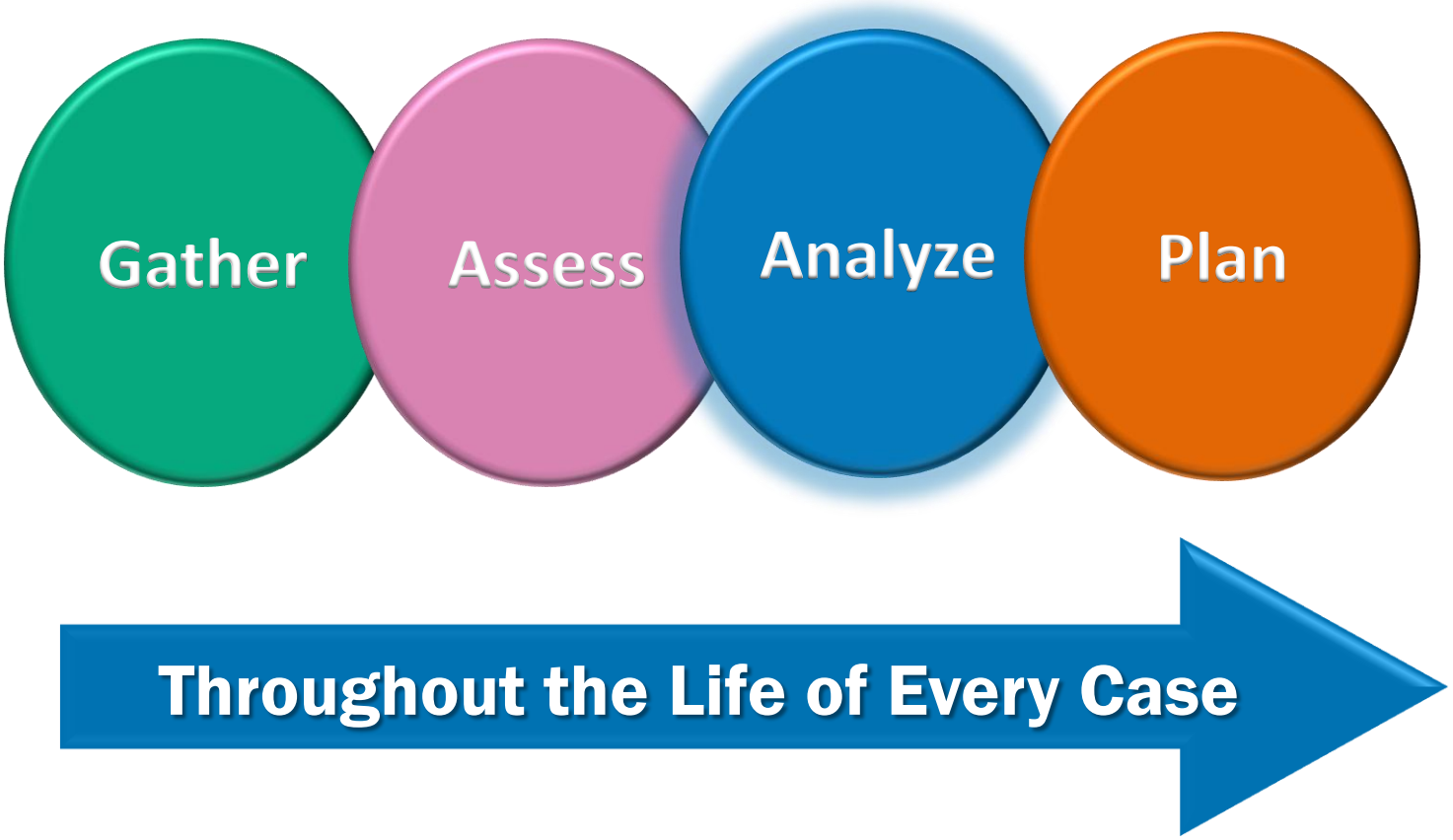
- Threats to a child's safety that are not immediate, obvious, or occurring at the onset of CPS intervention.
- Threats are identified and understood upon a full evaluation and understanding individual and family conditions and functioning.
- Without safety intervention one could reasonably judge the potential for severe harm.

Safety Threshold

In order to determine that a threat exists the following **five** criteria must be met:

1. Potential severe impacts on the child
2. Occurring immediately or in the near future
3. Out of control
4. Vulnerable child
5. Observable and specific

Child Safety Framework



Analyze

- Evaluate the identified safety threat(s).
- Understand how safety threat(s) are occurring and how they can be managed and controlled.
- Breaks down the safety threat to gain greater understanding of how it is occurring.

Analyze

THREAT

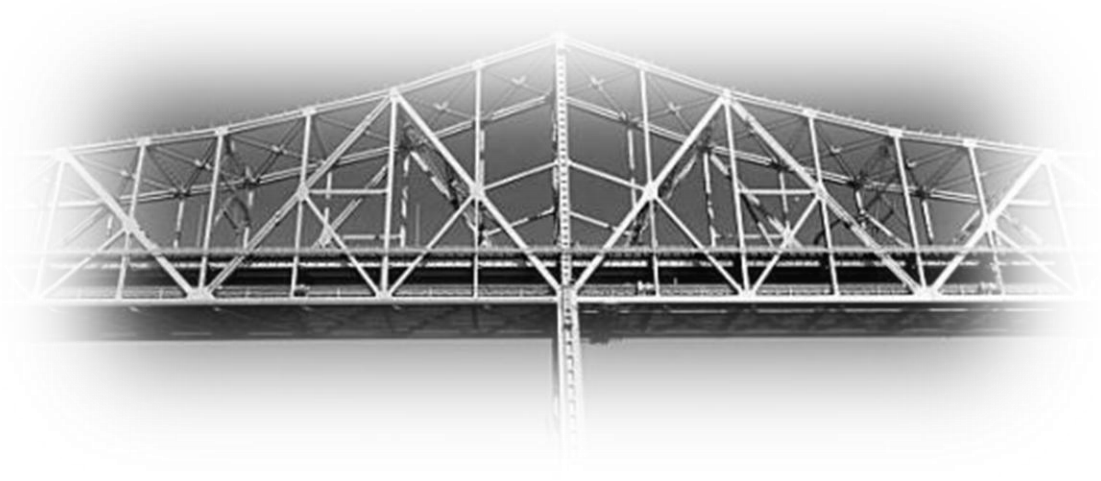
What?

Who?

When?

Where?

How?



PLAN

What?

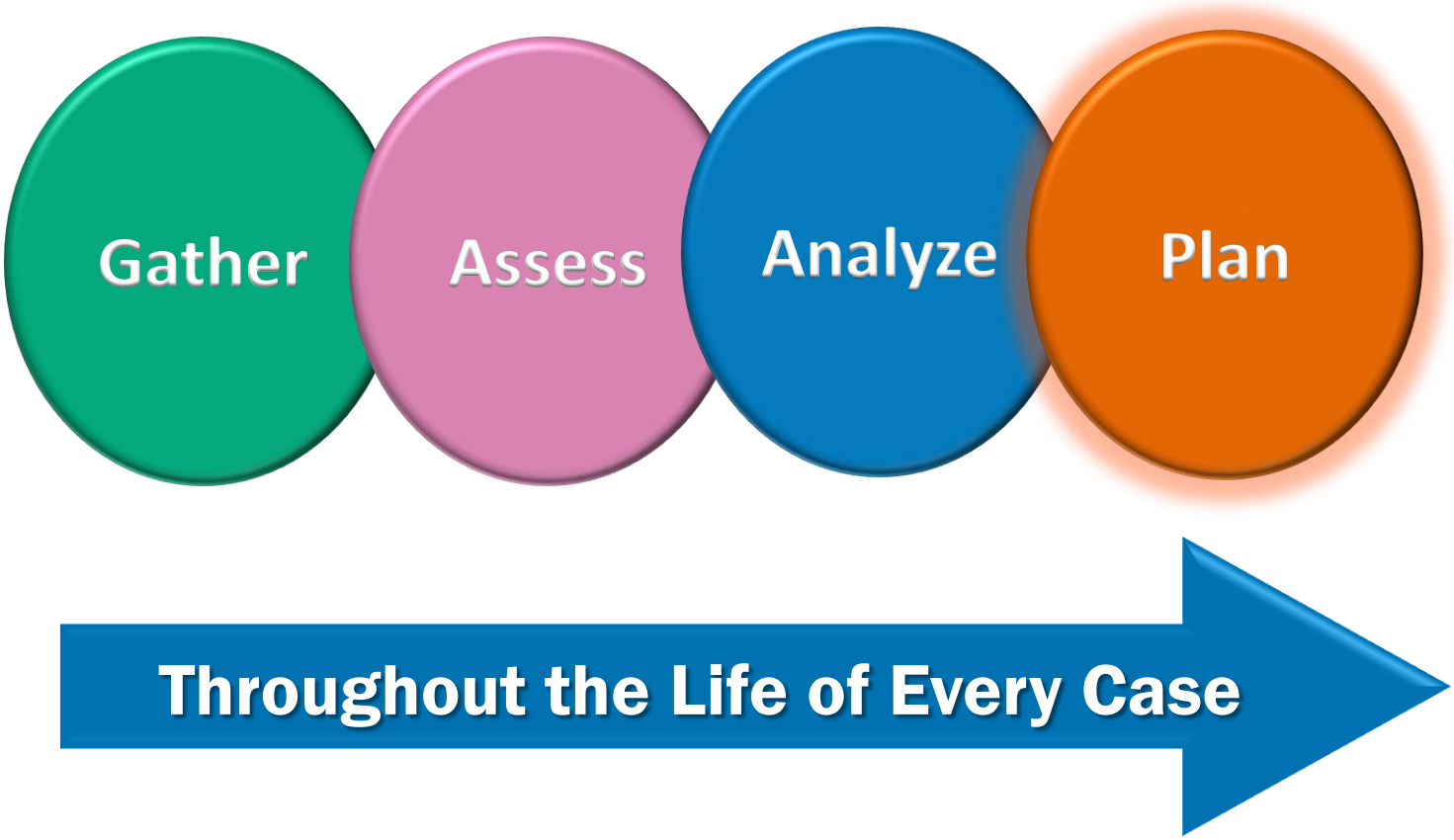
Who?

When?

Where?

How?

Child Safety Framework



Plan

All children identified as **unsafe** will have a safety plan that controls and manages the identified safety threats.

Safety Plans

- Have an immediate effect, are accessible, and contain safety services and actions only.
- Will not be based on promissory commitment.
- Are developed with the family and are objective, clear, and understood by everyone.
- Control or manage impending danger threats to the child.
- Can be in-home or out-of-home.

Tell me More

Tools

Updated - Coming Soon

- Safety Assessment & Safety Plan
- Family Assessment
- Case Plan
- Assessment of Progress

Elimination of:

- Reunification Assessment
- Transition & Safety Plan

Tell me More

A new way of thinking about child safety

The Child Safety Framework consists of:

- Collecting information about the family to assess child safety.
- Identifying and understanding present and impending danger threats.
- Evaluating parent/caregiver protective capacities.
- Determining if a child is safe or unsafe.
- Taking necessary action to protect an unsafe child.