



**Washington State**

**Child and Family  
Services Review**

**Program  
Improvement Plan**

***Third Quarterly Report***  
***April - June 2012***

**Submitted July 31, 2012**

**Washington State**  
**Program Improvement Plan**  
**Quarter 3 Report**  
**July 31, 2012**

- 1.1 New Safety Framework**
  
- 2.1 Practice Model**
  
- 3.1 Family Team Decision-Making Meetings**
  
- 3.2 Awareness and Organizational Support for Fathers**
  
- 4.1 Permanency Roundtables (No Action Steps are due this quarter.)**
  
- 4.2 Unified Family Home Studies**
  
- 5.1 Case Planning Meetings**
  
- 5.2 Filing for Termination of Parental Rights (No Action Steps are due this quarter.)**
  
- 5.3 Notification to Foster Parents of Court Hearings**
  
- 6.1 Inventory of Purchased Services**

**PIP 1.1.4**

**PIP 2.1.6**

## **Child Safety Framework and Case plans**

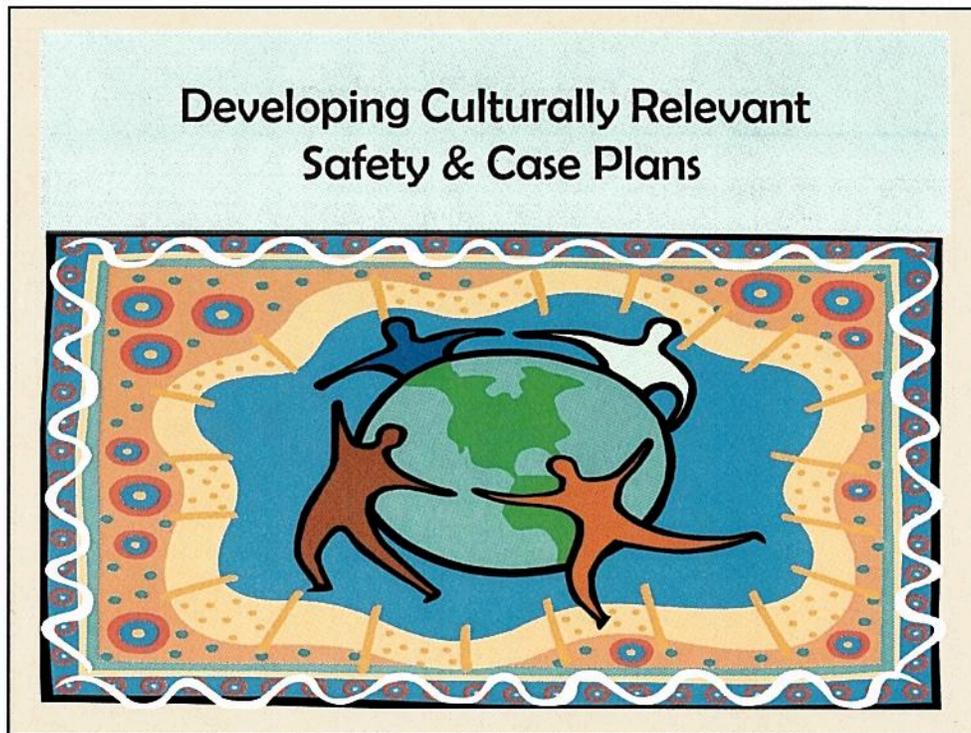
### **Training Curriculum**

**May 2012**

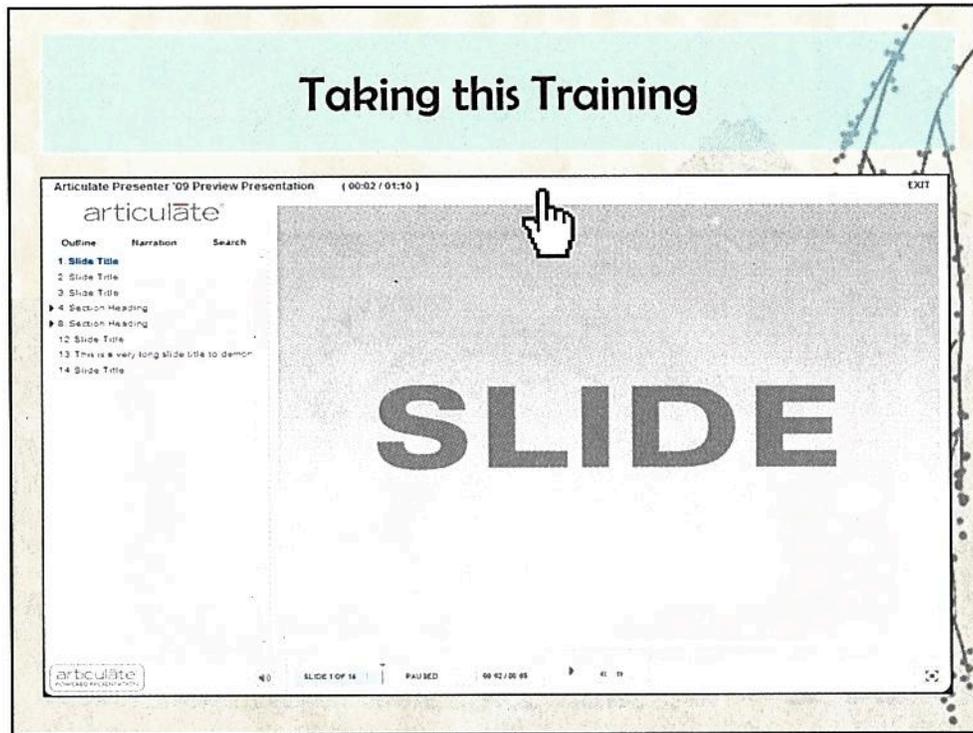
#### **Background**

In November 2011, Children’s Administration implemented a new Child Safety Framework. The framework emphasizes identifying, assessing and controlling safety threats throughout the life of a child welfare case. The Safety Framework and the Practice Model (rooted in Solution Based Casework) are integrated into a congruent foundation for work with families. Children’s Administration provided three days of days of training to Area Administrators, Supervisors, Social Workers and Family Team Decision-Making Supervisors. The curriculum for the initial training was included in the First Quarterly Report.

The following training was developed to provide additional information and support to staff concerning the application of the Child Safety Framework with children and families of all races and ethnicities, including tribal children. The training also addresses the racial disproportionality and compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act. The staff who participated in the initial three day training are required to the this on-line “Developing Culturally Relevant Safety and Case Plans” training as well.



This online training is designed to remind you of the importance of being aware of the ethnic and cultural differences of each particular family we work with and the presence of racial disproportionality in Washington State. It will also provide you with the opportunity to complete a self assessment of your individual cultural competency and provide you suggestions to communicate effectively with families and engage them in the safety and case planning process by including their natural support systems and providing cultural relevant services. We hope you will value how competence in cross-cultural communication requires information you will need to have about people to effectively earn trust with the family. That trust can be transformed into acceptance through your monthly visits with families.



We recommend using headphones to get the most out of this training.

If you are unable to listen to the sound, you may click the narration tab that is above the table of contents located on the left hand panel of your screen.

To navigate through this training, please use the forward and back buttons located at the bottom of this screen. You can stop this presentation at any time by clicking the pause button at the bottom of the screen.

You will need to remove the pop-up blocker in order to view the links on the page. If you get a notice that you are unable to read, the pop-up blocker has not been removed.

For more information on how to use the pop up blocker, please refer to the tip sheet located on the Children's Administration training website.

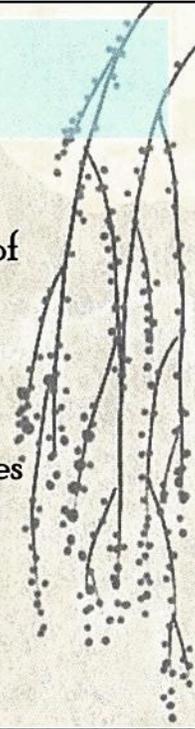
## What is Disproportionality?

### **Disproportionality**

Over-or-under-representation of children of color in foster care compared to their representation in the general population

### **Disparity**

Inequitable treatment, services and outcomes for children of color as compared to those provided and experienced by similarly situated Caucasian children



According to the Race Matters Consortium:

### Findings from State & National Research

- ❖ Children of color are more likely to be reported to CPS than Caucasian children
- ❖ Your perception that the family is non-compliant may result in higher assessment of safety and risk
- ❖ Children of color are more likely to be placed with relatives
- ❖ Relatives receive fewer services than foster parents
- ❖ Caucasian foster parents are offered more services than other ethnic or racial groups

More research indicates, children of color are more likely to be reported to CPS than white children even when they have equally severe injuries. Worker's perception that the family is non-compliant may result in higher assessment of safety, despite otherwise similar facts. Children of color are more likely to be placed with kin (relatives). Kinship care providers often receive fewer services than non-related foster parents do. While state and national research both support these findings, the following video from King County Collation on Disproportionality has done some work that shows that such disproportionality is also evident at the county level.

<sup>1</sup> Katz, M., R. Hampton, et al. (1986). *Returning children home: clinical decision making in cases of child abuse and neglect*. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 56 (2):2530262

<sup>2</sup> English, D.M., Brummel, S., and Orme, M. (19) *similarities and differences in the assessment of risk for different ethnic groups*. Olympia, Washington, Office of Children's Administration Research, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services: 18.95 *A preliminary examination of similarities and differences in the assessment of risk for different ethnic groups*. Olympia, Washington, Office of Children's Administration Research, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services: 18.



Disproportionality has been found to be the result of institutional racism and systemic bias. Therefore, our inability to understand the diverse cultures with which we work can lead to greater disproportionality within our child welfare system. This video was designed for community partners and is about 4 minutes long, but the first 2 minutes has relevant disproportionality information and how prevalent it is in our state.

## DSHS Cultural Competence

- ❖ A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals which enables individuals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations
- ❖ It promotes respect and understanding of diverse cultures and social groups and recognized each individual's unique attributes
- ❖ Administrative Policy 7.22

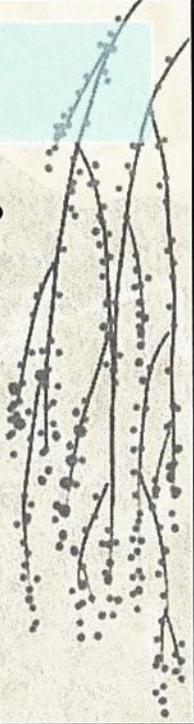


We as an agency have adopted some definitions and guidelines for cultural competence. If you want more detail to the policy please refer to Administrative Policy 7.22 here on this link or on the CA internet under DSHS Administrative Policies.



## What is Culture?

- ❖ Beliefs are a basic understanding of a group of people about what the world is like or what is true or false
- ❖ Values refer to what a group of people defines as good or bad or what it regards as important
- ❖ Norms refer to rules for appropriate behavior which provide the expectations people have of one another and of themselves



Different cultures interpret the same event differently. We often misinterpret other cultures if we try and evaluate them in terms of our own values.

Remember when working with families that safety threats alone do NOT predict outcomes; there are many protective factors that intervene in people's lives. We as social workers must explore a family's protective factors.

Protective factors ARE the strength of the social fabric surrounding a family. For example: The family's access to state-of-the-art medical technology, or the opportunity for developing social skills (such as controlling emotions and affect), the sense of self-esteem, protective shields in the family's life (family, friends, church), and the ability to turn traumatic helplessness to learned helpfulness.

## What is Cultural Responsiveness?

The capacity to respond to the cultural differences and issues of a diverse work group, especially within an organization

Those differences may include such subtle items as communication style, problem-solving, values, conflict resolution styles, etc



Take a moment to click on the link and review the What is Culture video. Having a sense of what culture is will assist you in understanding how your own culture influences the way you view others.

## Barriers to Effective Intercultural Communication

- ❖ **Frame of Reference** ~ Values & experiences color your perceptions of what is right and wrong or acceptable
- ❖ **Ethnocentrism** ~ A preferred way to respond to the world; cultural superiority
- ❖ **Stereotyping** ~ Generalizations about some group of people
- ❖ **Prejudice** ~ Negative attitudes & irrational feelings about people that are based on faulty or inflexible stereotypes



## Barriers to Effective Intercultural Communication

- ❖ **Discrimination**- Behavioral manifestation of prejudice
- ❖ **Racism**- Exclusion of a racial group & denial of that group as having value
- ❖ **Values Differences**- differences in what is considered good and bad and acceptable



We have to be aware of our interpretations of others' nonverbal behavior and realize that wrong assumptions can lead us to misinterpretation and miscommunication.

## Communication Patterns and Assumptions

### To consider:

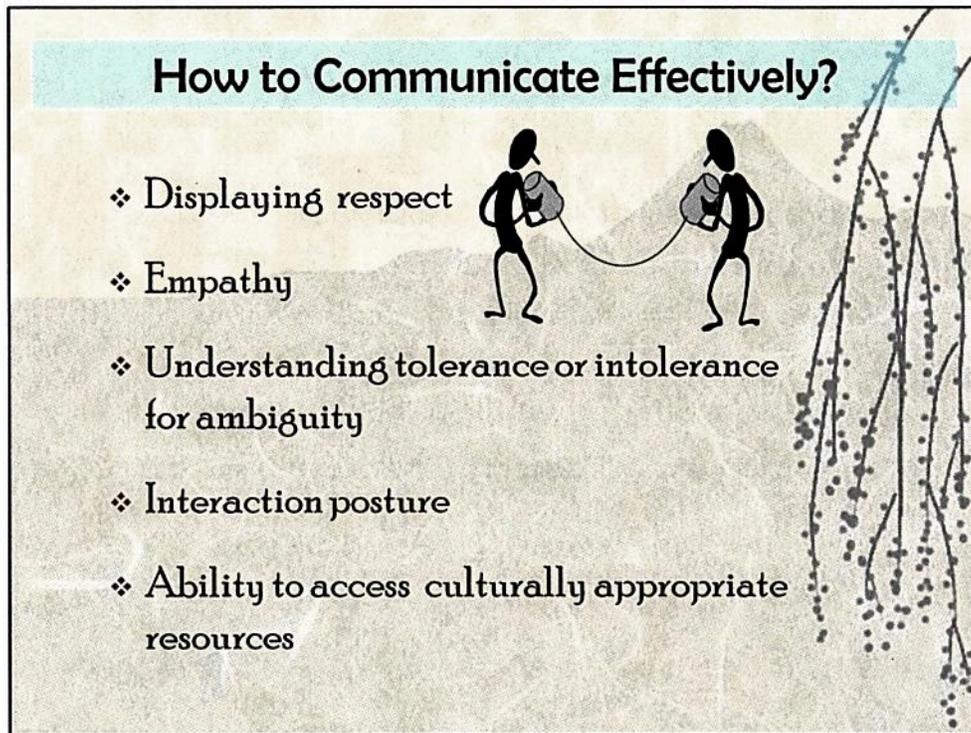
- ❖ Directness & Indirectness
- ❖ Animation & Emotion
- ❖ Eye contact & Gestures

Communication and Assumption  
Patterns Toolkit



The purpose of understanding cultural communication styles and values is to identify areas of difference between ethnic groups. Communication differences can hurt trust and respect when unknown to one or both parties.

Unknown or invisible differences in communication style and values create difficulties because they may be presumed to be individual personality or ethical issues. Click on the link at the bottom of the page and see how different cultures communicate.

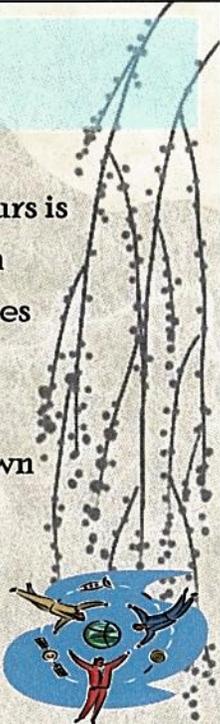


Along with excitement and curiosity, apprehension and lack of confidence are common when dealing with other cultures. How do we communicate effectively when working with clients of other cultures – You may be thinking this is easy, but sometimes as workers we get lost in the case and lose sight of our ultimate goal of permanency for our children in care. Let's review some of ways to communicate effectively.

- **Display of Respect** – this can be verbal or non-verbal communication. Many people communicate non-verbally through smiling, silence, gestures, eye contact, body language, touching, etc.
- **Empathy** – can you relate to the client? If not how can you use your skills in seeking empathy?
- **Understanding of Tolerance or Intolerance for Ambiguity** - Approximately 70% of our communication is affected by nonverbal cues, which involve a subtle set of non-linguistic behavior that we do unconsciously.
- **Look for the family interaction posture** – is it descriptive or non-judgmental? If not find out why.
- One of the challenges of communication is having the **ability to access culturally appropriate resources for families**. Culturally appropriate services will include the families way of communicating that best suit their culture.

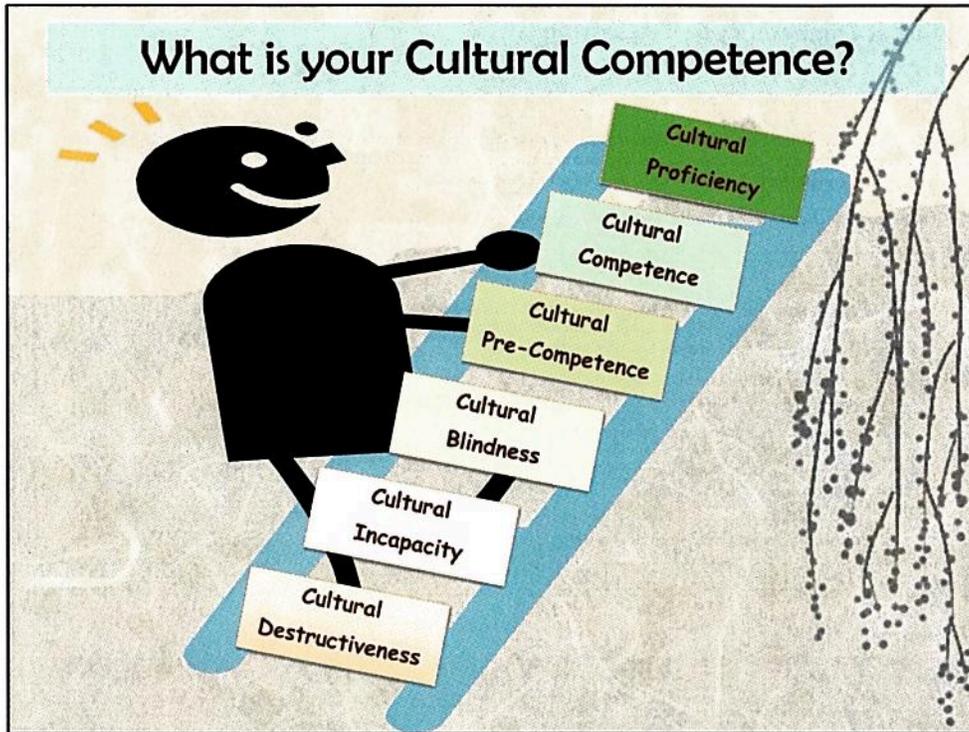
## Understanding Culture

- ❖ Everyone has a bias, and recognizing yours is valuable while working with families on safety assessments, case plans and services
- ❖ Embracing differences of people whose cultural context is different than your own

An illustration on the right side of the slide shows a globe with a person standing on it, surrounded by various symbols of culture and nature. Above the globe, there are several thin, dark lines representing tree branches or roots, some ending in small circular nodes. The background of the slide is a textured, light brown color with a faint mountain range in the distance.

“Cultural competence” is often defined as the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, disabilities, religions, genders, sexual orientation and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities, and protects and preserves the dignity of each.

We hope going through culture competence and disproportionality topics today allow you embrace an understanding as a child welfare worker how the meaning of a particular cultural behavior, miscommunication or misinterpretation can affect your ability to effectively work with families in co-developing case plans.



Can you identify where you think you are in this continuum? Let's review some of these.

Cultural Destructiveness is the most negative approach. It is the attitudes that are destructive to cultures and the individuals within these cultures.

Cultural Incapacity occurs when you do not intentionally seek to be culturally destructive, but rather have no capacity to help people from other cultures.

Cultural Blindness is usually well intended; however, the consequence of such a belief can often camouflage the reality of ethnocentrism.

Cultural Pre-competence implies movement towards reaching out to other cultures.

Cultural Competence is characterized by acceptance of and respect for differences, continuing self assessment regarding culture, careful attention to the dynamics of differences, and continuous expansion of cultural knowledge and resources.

And finally, Cultural Proficiency is the culmination point on the continuum and is characterized by holding culture in high esteem. We have prepared a short Cultural Self Awareness Assessment on the next slide to give you the opportunity to further assess your individual cultural strengths and areas for growth. You can also see where you can identify actions you can take to increase your skills.

### Cultural Competency Self Assessment

Question 1 of 2

As an employee of Children's Administration, the knowledge you have of yourself and others is important and reflected in the ways you communicate and interact. This assessment should assist you in reflecting on your level of cultural competency to increase and improve service delivery.

*Rate yourself - Use rating scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).*

	1	2	3	4	5
I reflect on and examine my own cultural background, biases and prejudices related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion and other factors that may influence my behavior at work.	<input type="radio"/>				
I look at my own attitudes and behaviors to determine how I am processing information and delivering services to diverse staff, clients and customers.	<input type="radio"/>				
I educate myself about the culture and experience of other races/religions/ethnic groups/economic classes/sexual minorities/gender/ and disability groups by attending classes, workshops, cultural events, reading, interacting, etc.	<input type="radio"/>				
I intervene, in an appropriate manner, when I observe others engaging in behaviors that appear culturally insensitive or reflect prejudice.	<input type="radio"/>				

**PROPERTIES**

On passing, 'Finish' button:

On failing, 'Finish' button:

Allow user to leave quiz:

User may view slides after quiz:

User may attempt quiz:

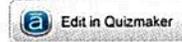
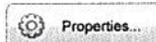
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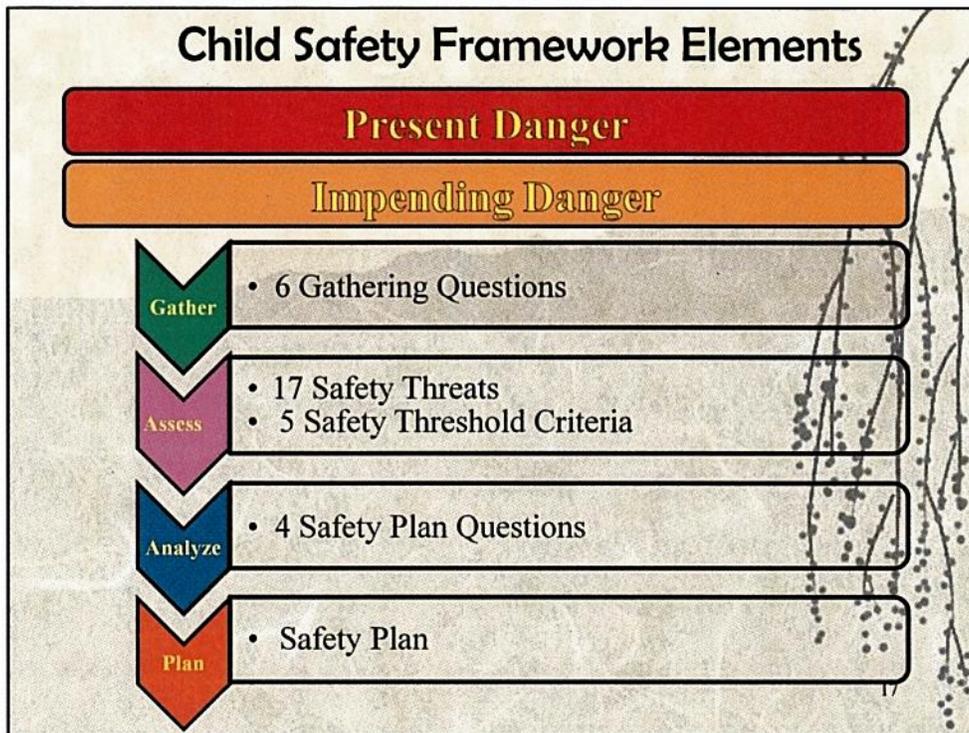
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After user has completed quiz

At any time

Unlimited times

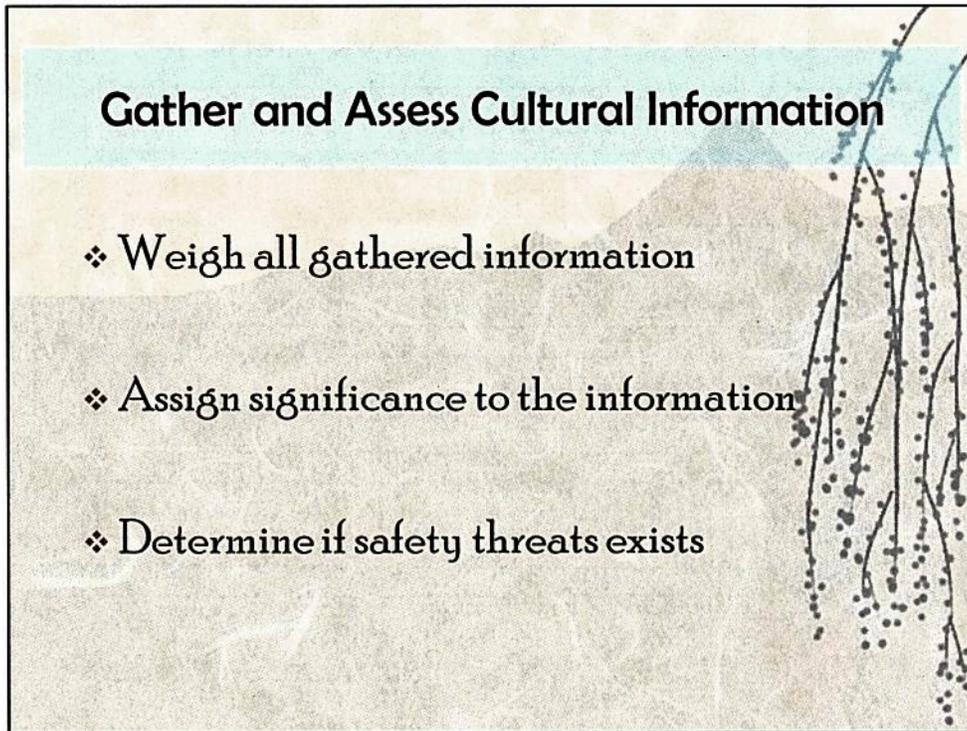




Before we discuss how to incorporate the families cultural needs into assessments & case plans, let's review the Child Safety Framework Elements.

This process is an ongoing process that will happen throughout the life of the case. When staff make contact with a child they will be assessing present and impending danger, no matter where the contact is happening: During an investigation, a monthly visit with the family and child, transporting a child to a visit or medical appointment.

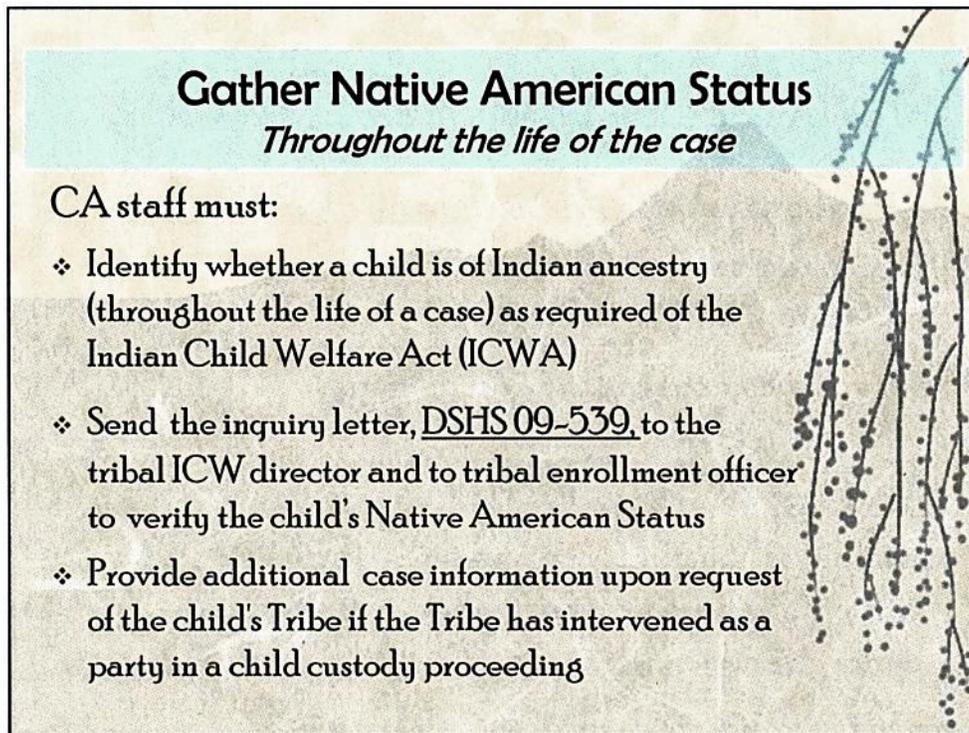
Assessing impending danger is a longer process and more time is needed in the 4 principle areas of gather, assess, analyze and plan.



The Child Safety Framework has 6 questions to use when gathering information with a focus on child safety. The answers to these questions will help guide the other steps of this process. The six questions also help guide the co-developed family assessment and case plans. The six questions are a great opportunity to be curious about the family's culture.

The questions are:

1. What is the nature and extent of maltreatment?
2. What surrounding circumstances accompany the maltreatment?
3. How does the child/children function on a daily basis?
4. How does the parent/caregiver discipline the child?
5. What are the overall parenting and child care practices?
6. How does the parent/caregiver manage his/her own life on a daily basis?



## Gather Native American Status

*Throughout the life of the case*

CA staff must:

- ❖ Identify whether a child is of Indian ancestry (throughout the life of a case) as required of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)
- ❖ Send the inquiry letter, [DSHS 09-539](#), to the tribal ICW director and to tribal enrollment officer to verify the child's Native American Status
- ❖ Provide additional case information upon request of the child's Tribe if the Tribe has intervened as a party in a child custody proceeding

While gathering information about a family's culture, it is important to ask families if they have any Native American ancestry. If the family indicates Native American history, contact the identified Tribe(s) as early as possible. The contact can be in-person, letter or phone.

The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 had two overall purposes:

To allow Tribe(s) to be involved in child protection cases (including child abuse, child neglect, and adoption) involving Indian children and to establish a preference for exclusive tribal jurisdiction over these cases & (2) to regulate and set minimum standards for the handling of those cases remaining in state court and in state child social services agencies.

Part of involving the child's Tribe(s) is to provide them with all case record material, reports, family social histories, or other documents related to the referral and safety threats can assist in culturally competent case planning services for the family.

Remember when the child's Tribe is not available, request a LICWAC staffing so they can assist with cultural consultation and help with case planning. It's important to remember, Tribes and their families are the 'best' cultural experts.

## ICWA & Best Interest of the Indian Child

Best interests under ICWA means following:

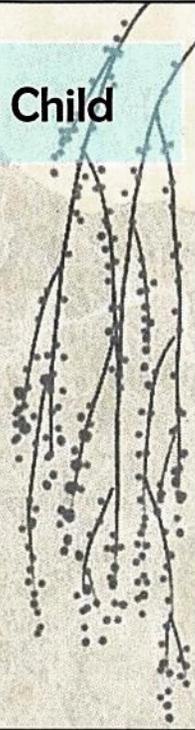
- ❖ Protect the safety, well-being, development, and stability of the Indian child;
- ❖ Prevent the unnecessary out-of-home placement of the Indian child;
- ❖ Acknowledge the right of Indian tribes to maintain their existence and integrity which will promote the stability and security of their children and families;

When placement of a child from the parent or Indian custodian is necessary for the child's safety, the state is committed to a placement that reflects and honors the unique values of the child's tribal culture and is best able to assist the Indian child in establishing, developing, and maintaining a political, cultural, social, and spiritual relationship with the child's tribe and tribal community. In the next two slides we will review what the best interest of an Indian child requires according to the Indian Child Welfare Act.

## ICWA & Best Interest of the Indian Child

Best interests under ICWA means following:

- ❖ Recognize the value to the Indian child of establishing, developing, or maintaining a political, cultural, social, and spiritual relationship with the Indian child's tribe and tribal community;
- ❖ Where out-of-home placement is necessary, to prioritize placement of the Indian child in accordance with the placement preferences



## Developing Culturally Relevant Case Plans

### Build family rapport by determining:

- ❖ Who is the family spokesperson
- ❖ How does the family want to be addressed
- ❖ What is the accepted body language and accepted eye contact



We have spent some time talking about the importance of understanding culture and diversity to effectively assess and assist families in developing Case Plans. These next few slides will explain how Case Plans are developed in partnership with families to include their cultural norms and diverse family values. While all people share common basic needs, there are differences in how families of various cultures meet and prioritize those needs.

Working with families requires rapport building. This is done by identifying strengths and underlying family values. Who takes charge in the family or makes major decisions? Even an identified family dysfunction should be viewed within a cultural context. Dysfunction could mean that something doesn't work in a particular situation. It usually relates to a behavior that creates and maintains problems rather than solving them. Family traits are considered skills in some cultures. An example would be a parent only feeding a child beans and rice. This could be viewed as an unwillingness to create well-balanced meals but it could be because the family has a limited budget. Avoid stereotypes whenever possible so you can gather more information on how the family operates.

## Engaging Families in Developing Their Case Plan

**Coming to consensus with the family on individual and family objectives by asking:**

- ❖ What are the family's ideas about child safety, and their cultural norms?
- ❖ What does the family feel needs to be different for their children to be safe?

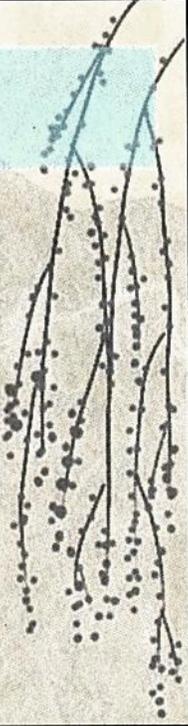


Differences can be as important as similarities. Just because a behavior or interaction is different than what we as social workers find familiar, doesn't necessarily mean that it is less correct. Engagement of the child and family members is the first step to achieve case plan goals. We as social workers can never know all of the relevant culture of a family but our interactions should be a learning process, as a way of becoming culturally competent. The key is respect for our differences and curiosity about learning to understand the family's point of view. Use observations and other indirect ways to learn how the family communicates and operates.

## Effective Case Plans

**Accomplish two things:**

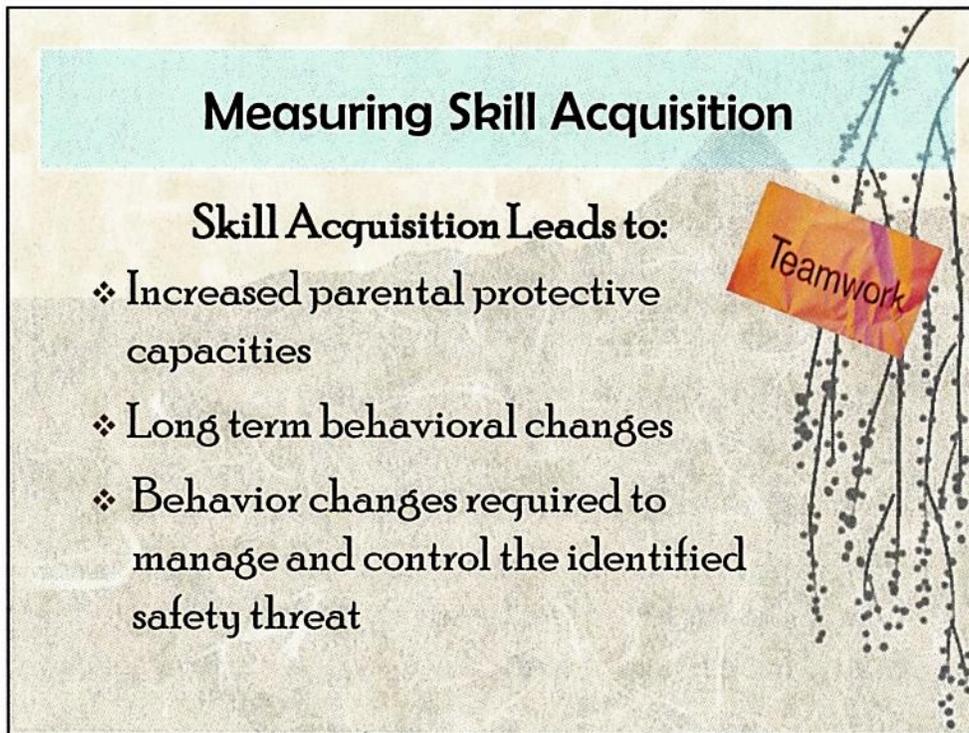
1. Describe the behavior that needs to be changed in a understandable and measurable way
2. Serve as a road map for the family on how this will be done

We co-develop the case plan with the family and come to consensus on the objectives which spell out what behavior needs to change to build parental protective capacities.

Family and Individual objectives can be identified from safety threats in the safety assessment. It is important to educate the family of what is needed to keep the children safe.

Effective case plans include the family voice and choice to meet the objectives based on their own unique expertise, family values and culture. We strive for any opportunity the family has to buy in and to own the plan that build knowledge, skills, and abilities to keep their children safe. Conducting monthly visits with the family increases your ability to see if the family is on track with their goals and revise any areas with them that are not working.



**Measuring Skill Acquisition**

**Skill Acquisition Leads to:**

- ❖ Increased parental protective capacities
- ❖ Long term behavioral changes
- ❖ Behavior changes required to manage and control the identified safety threat

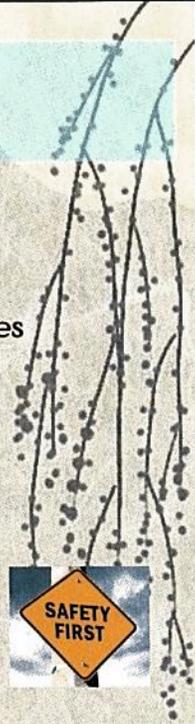
Teamwork

The graphic features a light blue header with the title 'Measuring Skill Acquisition'. Below the title, the text 'Skill Acquisition Leads to:' is followed by a bulleted list of three outcomes. To the right of the list, there is a stylized illustration of thin, dark branches with small, dark dots, and a small, tilted orange tag with the word 'Teamwork' written on it in a white, cursive font.

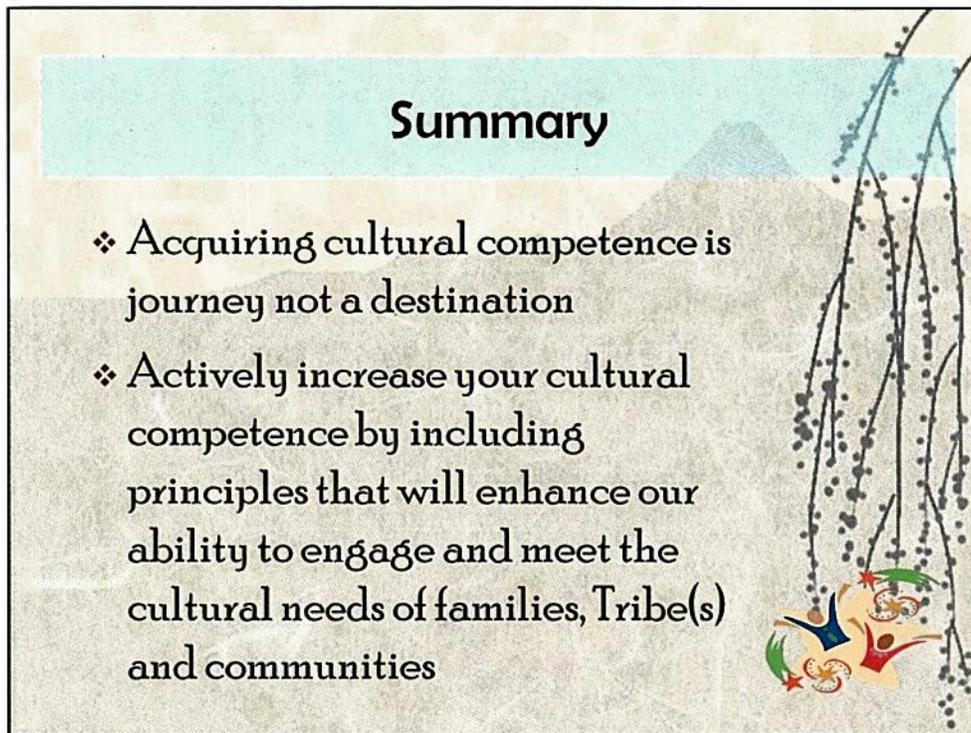
Having clear, specific and measurable case plans and corresponding action plans based on the families culture may result in timely permanency. If we partner with families early and visit with them often we learn to respect their diverse cultural needs. Skill acquisition is then anchored and the family is safe to parent their children without our involvement.

## Protective Capacities

- ❖ The knowledge, skills and abilities parents have to protect their children
- ❖ Learned in a variety of ways and experiences
- ❖ Expressed in cognitive, behavioral and emotional terms
- ❖ Demonstrated and observed in different situations
- ❖ Specific to the everyday life situations the family has difficulty with



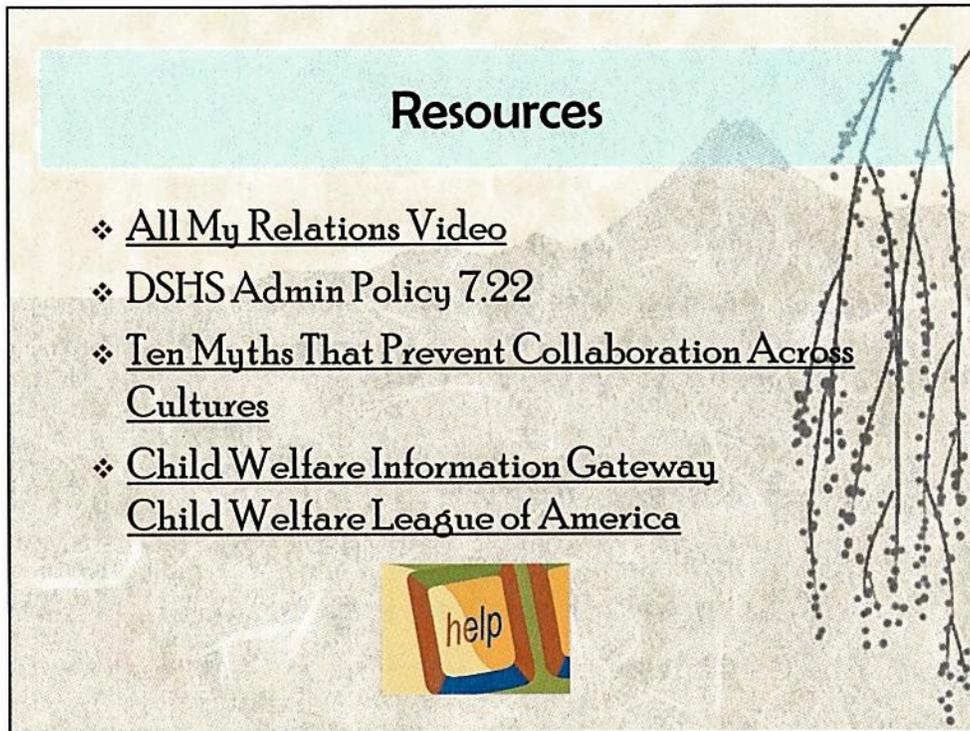
Different cultures have natural ways to support and promote child safety that may differ from our own experience. By taking into consideration cultural norms and practices that enhance child safety and by providing cultural relevant services, parent's can increase their skill acquisition that leads to the protective capacities that manages or eliminates the safety threat which caused us to become involved with the family. When these safety threats are managed and controlled in a sustainable way we will be able to close the case and let the family carry on without our involvement.

The graphic features a light green header with the word "Summary" in bold black text. Below the header, two bullet points are listed in a serif font. The background is a textured, light brownish-grey with faint mountain silhouettes. On the right side, there is a vertical illustration of a weeping willow tree with dark branches and small grey leaves. At the base of the tree, a colorful figure in a blue, yellow, and red outfit is depicted in a dynamic, dancing pose. The entire graphic is enclosed in a thin black border.

## Summary

- ❖ Acquiring cultural competence is journey not a destination
- ❖ Actively increase your cultural competence by including principles that will enhance our ability to engage and meet the cultural needs of families, Tribe(s) and communities

To effectively respond to the unique needs of children and families whose cultures are different from the dominant culture we must recognize the importance of cultural competency and instill cultural competent practice throughout our work with children and families. This practice begins at the first meeting with the child and family and continues throughout the safety assessment, and case planning process. When the family is engaged, good opportunities and outcomes for children are achieved, including compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act and elimination or reduction in disproportionality.



**Resources**

- ❖ [All My Relations Video](#)
- ❖ [DSHS Admin Policy 7.22](#)
- ❖ [Ten Myths That Prevent Collaboration Across Cultures](#)
- ❖ [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)  
[Child Welfare League of America](#)



There are several resources associated with culture. Feel free to review and access these resources by clicking on the hyperlinks above.

## Instructions to Get Training Credit

**Step 1**

Click on Exit located in the upper-right side of the screen

**Step 2**

Located in the bottom - right side of the Exit Presentation window

**Step 3**

When you exit out of the Learning Center – click on Logoff

ATTACHMENTS EXIT

Cancel Exit now

Log Off

You can print a completion certificate by: Accessing My Courses, clicking on Completed Training, and then clicking on Completion Certificate located under Options.

We are almost done but we want you to get full credit for this online training so it is important to exit this training properly by following the 3 steps on this slide.

**CA Child Safety Framework Supervisor Q & A Session**

**July, 2012**

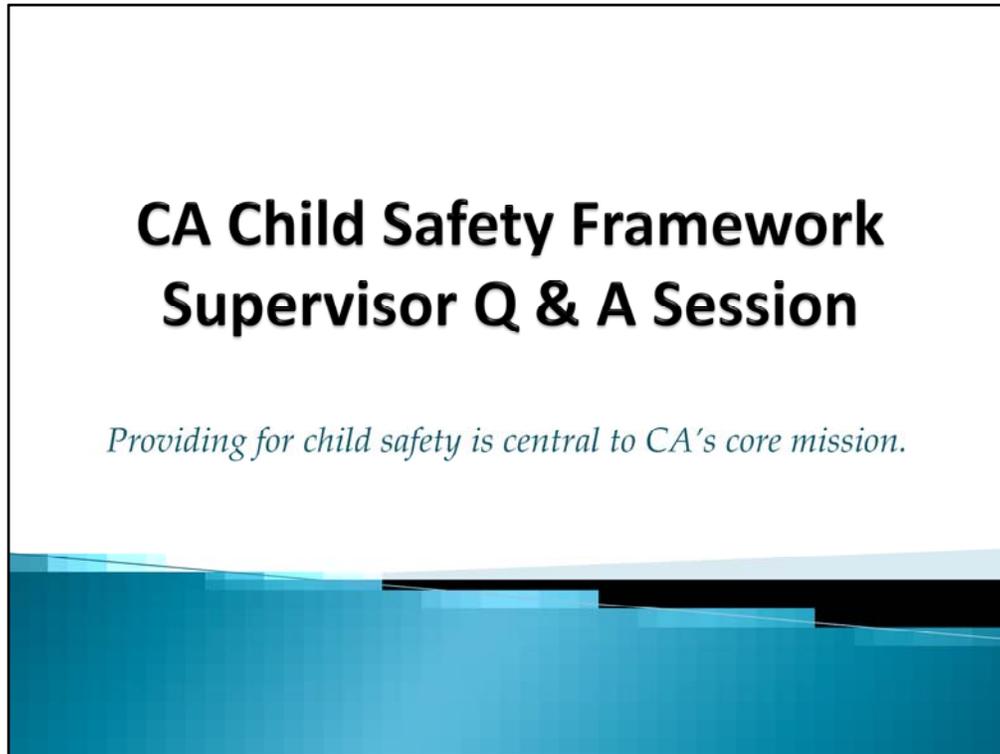
**Training Content**

Refresher training for social work supervisors was developed from a review of the most frequently asked questions sent by staff to a email box for this purpose as well as the practice areas where social workers and supervisors reported the most difficulty. A copy of the training content, *Supervisor Q & A*, is attached. Answers to the most frequently asked questions were discussed with the supervisors. In addition, the on-line training was reviewed. Each of these training modules (other than the FamLink tool modules) contain 3 – 5 includes case or practice examples which were used to model coaching for supervisors to conduct with their staff in areas of concern.

**Summary Report of Attendance**

Since implementing the Child Safety Framework, the Supervisor Q & A Session has been provided to 99% of Social Work Supervisors. Please see the data below.

Position Title	Region 1		Region 2		Region 3		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Number of Supervisors	61		79		75		215	
Complete	61	100%	77	97%	74	99%	212	99%
Incomplete	0	0%	2	3%	1	1%	3	1%



Over the past 4 months staff have been learning about the concepts, tools and policies associated with the Child Safety Framework. The tools and framework were officially incorporated into practice on November 14, 2011.

As Supervisors and Area Administrators you are the keepers of practice. You are the ones that will help to cement the concepts into practice regarding assessing child safety throughout the life of the case.

Many great questions were asked across the state during training sessions. This session has been developed using questions that were submitted during the in person trainings. Not all of the questions will be reflected in this training and I encourage you to ask questions as we move through the slides.

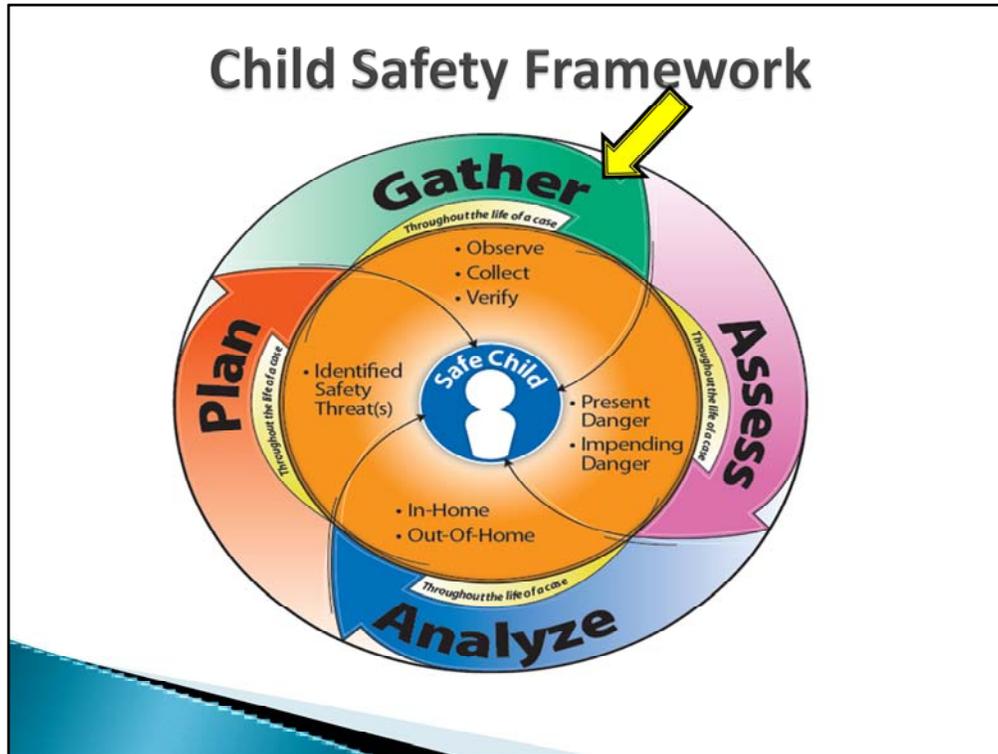
## Child Safety Framework

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

Lets look at some key principles with this framework:

Safety is the primary and essential focus that informs and guides ALL decisions made from Intake through case closure. This includes removal and reunification decisions and assessing safety of children in all placement settings. Safety is reliant on good information gathering, assessments and analysis. The Child Safety Framework supports strength-based practice and the CA Practice Model.

Assessing the safety of children is essential in all placement settings (in-home and out-of-home). Likewise, assessing child safety is a responsibility for Licensing, CFWS, FRS, FVS, and Intake as much as it is for CPS and DLR/CPS.



The child safety framework is built on 4 key principles. These principles are **Gather, Assess, Analyze, Plan**. These steps happen throughout the life of the case and in all situations that we encounter within the case. We should never stop gathering comprehensive information, assessing and analyzing the information collected and planning to keep a child safe.

Within the orange section of the flowchart, there are a variety of safety tasks and actions that need to be accomplished:

This represents **new principles that includes new terms and definitions** and ways of thinking about child safety throughout the life of the case.

You will notice that throughout our Child Safety Framework, there is the phrase "Throughout the life of the case." This means safety is not just a front-end responsibility but belongs to everyone in Children's Administration.

Now let's look at Gathering:

When we gather information, we are observing, collecting, and verifying information. Gathering is the **most important part of the Child Safety Framework**. Gathering and verifying comprehensive information relevant to child safety is done throughout the life of a case.

When we talk about gathering, we are talking about how we observe, collect, and verify specific information. It is important to gather comprehensive information when working with a family. The more relevant information we gather and verify, the stronger the assessment, analysis, and planning will be for child safety.

## 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)

There are six areas of focus in which to gather information. Social workers from all program areas will use the compiled information and continually gather new information to assess, analyze and plan for what is needed to keep a child safe.

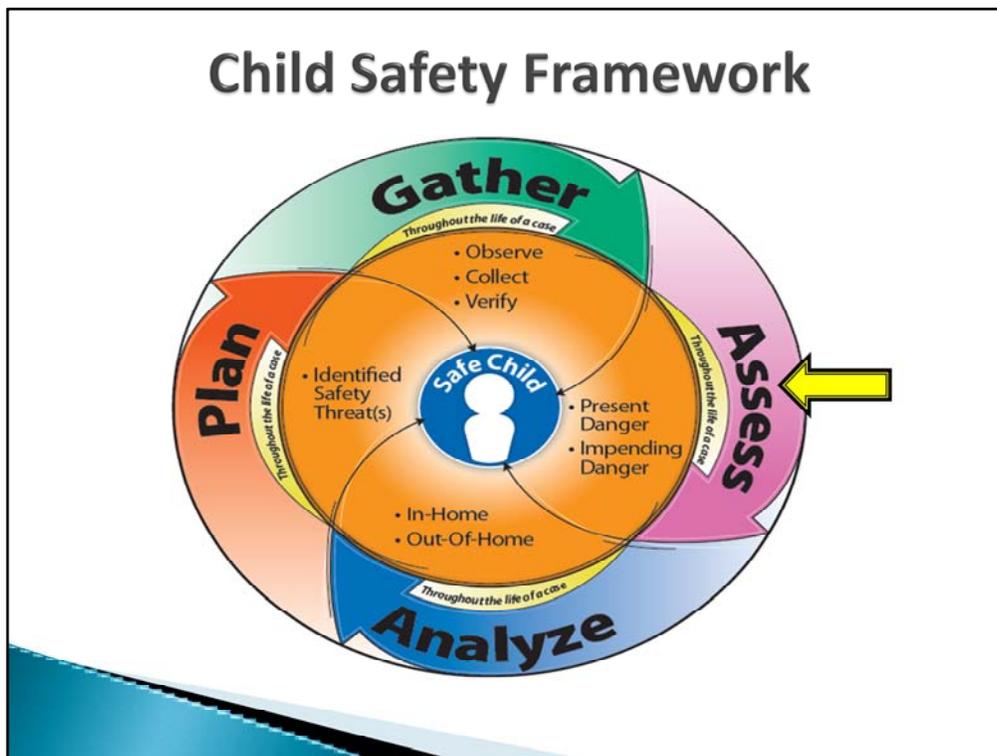
## Gathering Information Frequent Q & A

- Where are the 6 gathering questions documented?
  - The Safety Assessment, Family Assessment or Assessment of Progress
  - They do not need to be documented in a case note
- In the gathering questions the use of the word maltreatment also include issues and concerns like a “risk only intake”. Is this correct?

Yes, this is true for those intakes that do not include an allegation

Staff should be documenting the six gathering question in the Safety Assessment or Family Assessment. Many CPS staff create very detailed case notes regarding the information they collect and observe in interviews with family and collaterals. Staff should be using the safety assessment and investigative assessment to document the details of their investigation. There is no requirement for duplicate documentation.

When staff are working with a risk only intake there is still a basis for the “risk” or potential safety threat that the intake was screened in for. Although in most cases no maltreatment has actually occurred they should be describing what the concern is that surrounds the risk of danger.



Assessing gives weight to information that is consistent with danger or being a threat to child safety. In addition, it also tells you if threats to child safety exist that require intervention.

Assessing safety should be a continuous process throughout CA's involvement with a family.

## Assessing

- ▶ Weigh all gathered information
- ▶ Assign significance to the information
- ▶ Determine if safety threats exists

This Child Safety Framework is a continual process. After information is gathered we must assess that information. Through the assessment we will be able to provide weight to information that pertains to child safety, assigns significance to that information and to make a determination if safety threats exists.

The assessment process and tools will also help to identify when more information should be gathered to complete a thorough assessment.

Assessing safety should be a continuous process throughout Children's Administration's involvement with a family.



Pass out safety threats handout

## Impending Danger

- Definition of 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*
- Guidance:
 

*Without safety intervention one can reasonably judge potential for severe harm to a child in the immediate to near future.*

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Impending danger requires a safety plan that may be an in-home or out-of-home plan. Impending Danger may require filing of a dependency petition and may also be a basis to request that the court remove the child from the family's home if an in-home safety plan will not control or manage the impending danger. The identification of impending danger automatically asserts that the threat is not controllable by the parent. Impending danger may be a basis to determine that there is a serious threat of substantial harm and therefore a basis to request that the child be placed in shelter care under RCW 13.34.065(5), or it may be a basis to determine that there is a manifest danger such that the child will suffer serious child abuse or neglect if the child is not removed and therefore a basis to request removal of a dependent child placed in home under RCW 13.34.130(3).

## 17 Safety Threat Frequent Q & A

- How would a worker answer the safety threat questions when the abuse allegation they are investigating happened in the past?
  - Safety threats are only identified when in the present.
- How can I help my staff understand when a Safety Threat is active?
  - Use the Safety Threats Guide, Definitions and Examples document that you received in Day 1 in person training
  - Access the Safety Threshold Criteria & 17 Safety Threats online training
- Do all Safety threat questions default to “No” in FamLink?
  - No, each safety threat must be answered yes or no

A safety threat is happening now or in the near future. Even if we are investigating allegations that happened in the past we are only assessing for the danger to the child today. If the child is at home with the parent is there a safety threat happening now. If the child is in out of home care if the child were to be returned home what would be the active threat?

## 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

The safety threshold is used in conjunction with the safety assessment and must be applied to any identified potential safety threat.

## Assessing Information Frequent Q & A

- Is there a definition for “immediate or in the near future”?
  - Tomorrow, this week or next, at the longest is about a month. Anything past that becomes a risk factor and not safety.
- What does a social worker do if the safety threshold is met for one child but not another in the same home?
  - A safety plan is only required for the unsafe child. When a case remains open for services, the social worker should involve any safe child as a family member in the family assessment and case planning.

## Structured Decision Making (SDM) tool

- ▶ Used following the Safety Assessment, the worker obtains an objective appraisal of the risk to a child
- ▶ Will capture chronic neglect families
- ▶ [SDM Policy](#)

Safety Assessment Decision	SDM Score	CA Response
Unsafe	Any Risk Rating	Safety Plan
Safe	High	Offer Services
Safe	Moderately High	Consider offering services

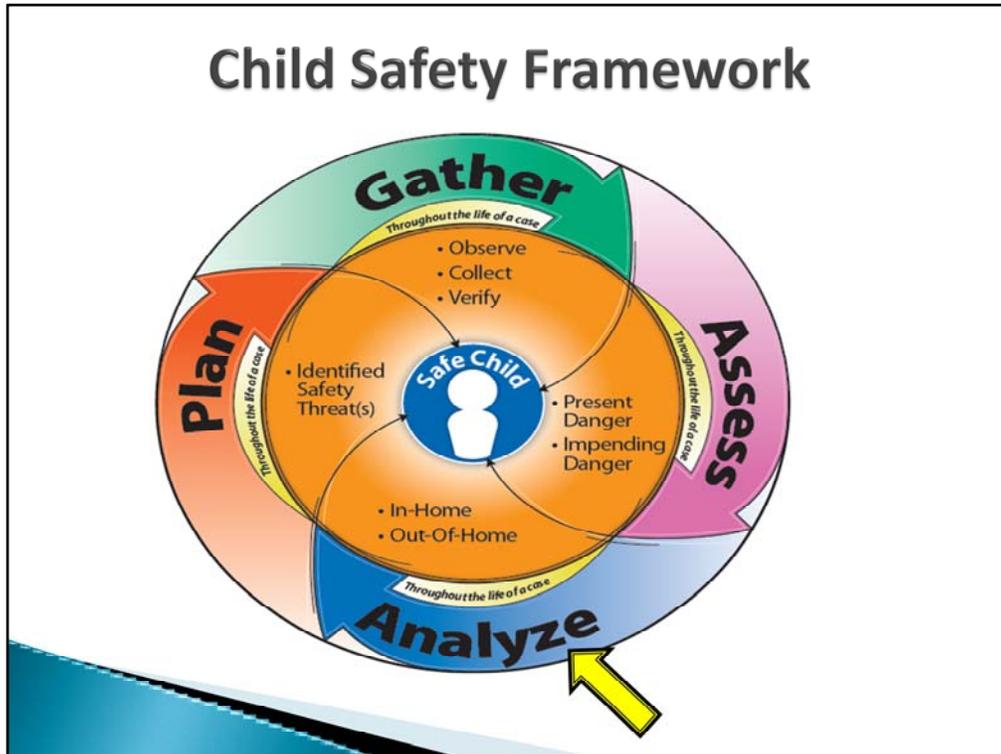
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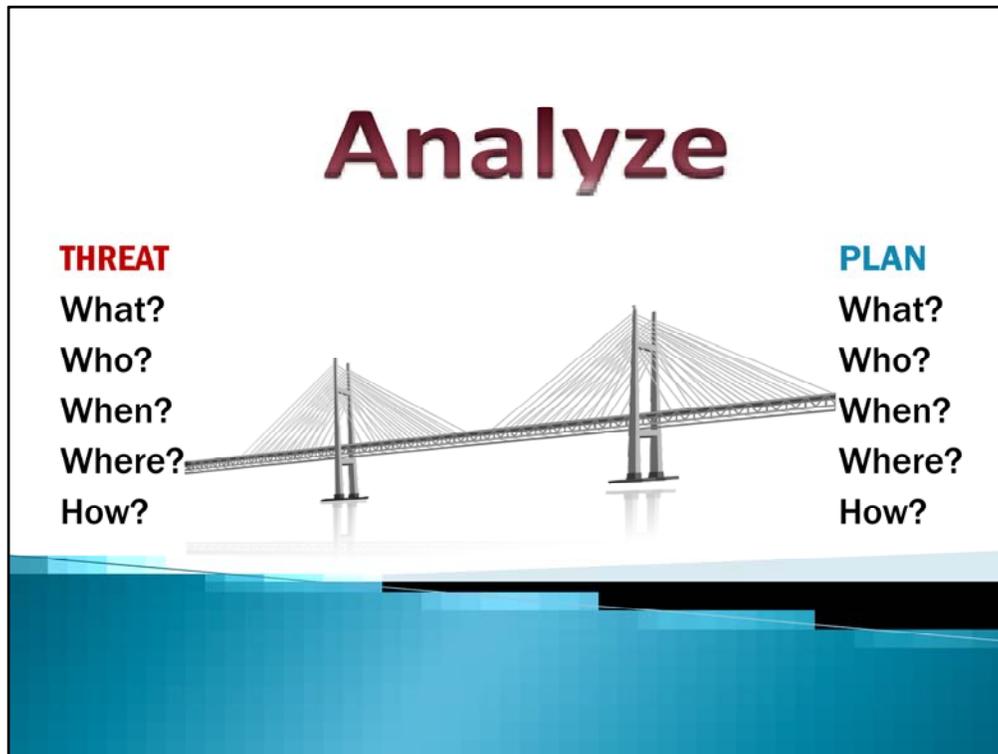
CA is legislatively mandated by RCW 26.44.30 to assess risk. CA will continue to complete the SDM on all CPS intakes when an Investigative assessment is completed. The SDM informs when services may or may not be offered when risk alone is identified.

Information gathered using the six questions will help social workers answers the questions in the SDM.

It is important for ongoing staff to review the SDM and reassess info.

Don't forget about the special requirements for cases where the chronicity indicator is flagged.





“Analyzing” refers to separating or breaking up a whole into its parts in order to find out the nature, proportion, function, and interrelationship of the whole and the part to the whole.

In safety language that means that analyzing breaks down the safety threat to gain greater understanding of how its occurring. This includes looking at intensity, frequency, duration and pervasiveness.

Once social workers understand the safety threat and how it operates in the family:

- What's happening?
- Who is creating the threat and what are other adult caregivers doing?
- When does the threat occur and intensity, duration and frequency of threat?
- Where does the threat occur?
- How does the threat occur?

Then the social worker can create a safety plan to control and manage the identified threats.

- What actions are needed to control the threat?
- Who is providing those?
- When are they going to do it?
- Where are they going to do it?
- How are they going to do it?

## Safety Plan Analysis

- ▶ There is at least one parent/caregiver in the home.
- ▶ The home is calm enough to allow safety providers to function in the home.
- ▶ The adults in the home agree to cooperate with and allow an In home safety plan.
- ▶ Sufficient, appropriate reliable resources are available and willing to provide safety services/tasks.

When there are safety threats existing within the family, safety planning is critical.

You are analyzing and coming to an understanding of how the safety threat is operating in the family

When considering the type and intrusiveness of a safety plan that's needed its important to answer these four questions

Review slide

If you answer **yes** to all four questions develop an **in-home safety plan**.

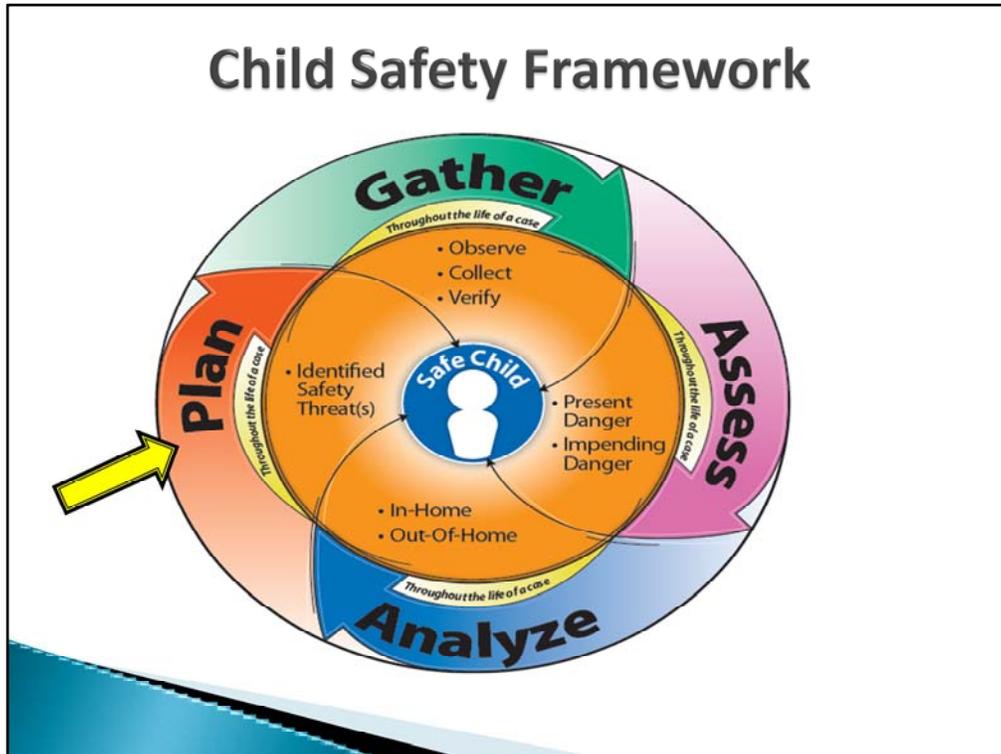
If you answer **no** to any of these four questions develop an **out-of-home safety plan**.

Staff should be aware that there will be times when we don't think an in-home safety plan can be completed but through an FTDM staffing new resources emerge, the parents had time to think about the situation and who is around to help or a situation changes and an in-home safety plan can be done.

## Safety Plan Analysis Frequent Q & A

- What background checks are required for assessing potential safety plan participants?
  - Participants working in their professional capacity do not require BCCU background checks or FamLink history checks
  - Participants with supervised access require a FamLink check
  - Participants with unsupervised access to a child require a FamLink and BCCU check
- ▶ What is the waiver process for safety plan participants?
  - RA approves waivers for founded findings and BCCU checks
  - Supervisor approves FamLink history

There were many questions asked during trainings around the background check process. Due to the concerns expressed by staff the background check policy as it relates to the suitability of a safety plan participant was revised.



## Planning

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.

Safety plans are actions taken that are developed to control and manage impending danger rather than changing the conditions that caused the impending danger.

The case plan is for changing the parental behaviors or conditions.

## Safety Plan Frequent Q & A

- Will NCR forms be available for the Safety Plan?
  - Yes, each region has received a shipment of NCR forms for distribution to all offices in the region.
  
- When the court orders a placement in a home where CA has identified a safety threat exists does the social worker still complete a Safety Plan?
  - CA will need to safety plan around the identified safety threat(s).
  - Use the override check box on the safety assessment form to document the court has ordered the child home.

NCR forms are available for the safety plan.

If the court orders a placement the department will need to safety plan around the identified safety threat(s). The department should be very clear to the court (on record or in the order) that there is a safety threat in operation at this home and the department does not support placement in the home.

## Children in Licensed and Unlicensed Care

When children are determined to be unsafe in licensed or unlicensed care, children are removed

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Safety plans are not developed when children are determined to be in danger and are in licensed or unlicensed care with relatives or others. While CA recognizes that, if children are placed out of home, the best placement is with family, children do not remain in those placements when they are in danger. The placement is intended to be a safe place for the child while safety threats are being addressed in their own home. CA does not maintain a child in placement with a safety plan. If a child is removed from their own home, they will live in a home that is safe, where no safety plan is needed.

Determining the safety of a child in a licensed or unlicensed caregiver home is a conversation that should take place between DLR and DCFS staff. An indicated safety threat is not the only reason to remove a child from a home.

## Safety Plan Frequent Q & A

- If the safety issue in the foster home or relative home is addressed, can the placement be considered again?
  - Depending on case this could be possible, however a staffing should be held to discuss what the identified threat was, how it has been eliminated and is this placement the best option.

A staffing should be held with relevant players at the table for the discussion (e.g. if this was a licensed foster home the DLR licensor should be involved in the staffing to determine if the child could return to the home).

## Conditions for Return Home

Social workers must help parents understand:

- ▶ The specific reasons for a safety plan and why their children were removed
- ▶ How the plan will work to keep their children safe while out of the home
- ▶ What is needed for the development of an in-home safety plan

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Social workers should cite the specific threats when explaining why children were removed and how management of this threat would result in the child's return. Helping parents understand the reasons why a safety plan is necessary may be an ongoing conversation. As protective capacities improve, parents may be better able to understand how threats placed their children in danger.

## Safety Plan Frequent Q & A

- Do we do an out-of-home safety plan for a legally free child?
  - Once that child becomes legally free there is no more safety threat and the out-of-home safety plan ends.
  - An out-of-home safety plan would not be completed on a safe haven or abandoned baby.
- How does the out-of-home safety plan fit with the ISSP?
  - Out of home safety plan should focus on the key points that we are doing to keep the child safe.

The Safety Plan can be written while the BCCU is in process. Once the results of the BCCU are received, the Safety Plan should be reviewed to ensure all participants with unsupervised access to the child are appropriate.

The out of home safety plan should not contain any evaluations or services that are not directly related to the immediate safety of the child. The out of home safety plan should focus on the key points that we are doing to keep the child safe.

#1 The child will be placed in out of home care with....

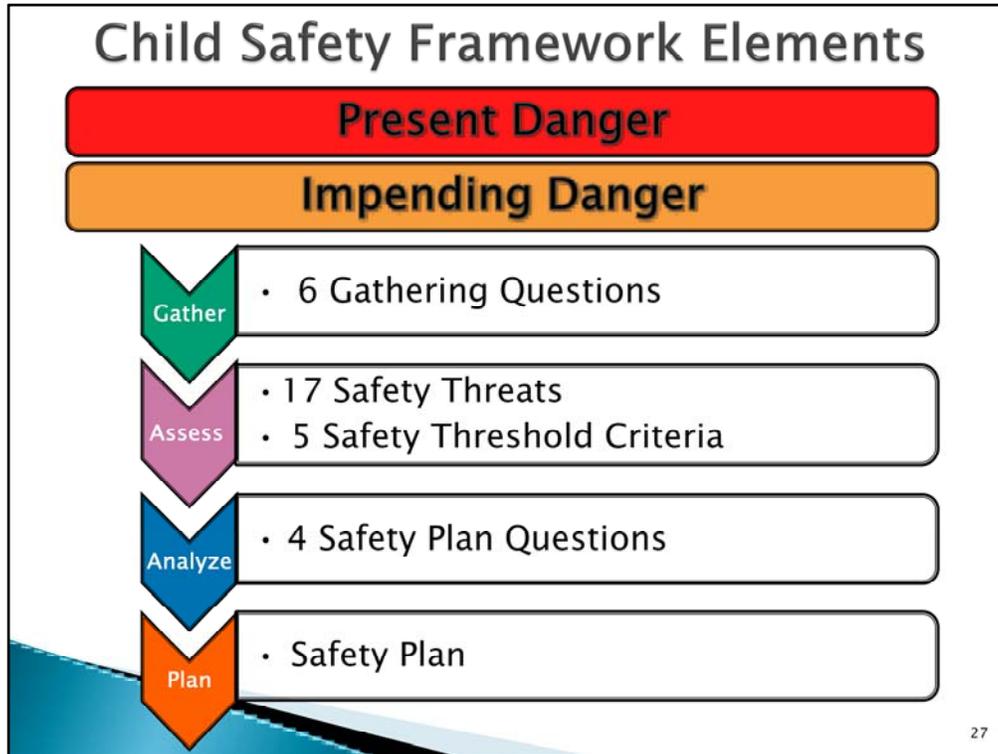
#2 Visitation is supervised (or monitored) – see visitation plan

#3 List any special transportation needs of the child as it relates to the child's safety. For example, if a child needs to be transported to their pediatrician for evaluation and assessment of injuries, or ongoing treatment of injuries related to the initial incident. The person transporting needs to be allied with the child and a reliable reporter of the information provided to the pediatrician and from the pediatrician back to the social worker, as needed.

## Safety Plan Frequent Q & A

- If CFWS is returning a child and the Safety Assessment says the child is safe does there need to be a Safety Plan? How will CFWS document the transition plan?
  - When a child is returned home and the safety threat no longer exists an in home safety plan will not be done
  - Cover the transition and safety planning information in the FTDM staffing as well as addressing the tasks and activities that will help in the transition home and keeping kids safe in the case plan

Remember, a child is returned home when the safety plan can be managed and controlled in the family home. This is different than the safety threat no longer exists. We need to help staff move to this line of thinking. When a child is returned home and the safety threat no longer exists an in home safety plan will not be done, however, we will cover the transition and safety planning information in the FTDM staffing as well as addressing the tasks and activities that will help in the transition home and keeping kids safe in the case plan



This is a linear view of the elements within the Child Safety Framework. This process is an ongoing process that will happen throughout the life of the case. When staff make contact with a child they will be assessing present and impending danger, no matter where the contact is happening. During an investigation, a monthly health and safety visit, transporting a child to a visit or medical appointment.

The present danger assessment is a very quick process. A worker will need to gather enough information to assess and determine that Present Danger exists. They will then need to analyze the information and situation to understand what protective actions must be put in place. All of this happens very quickly as Present danger is occurring in the present as the worker is standing there in the situation. The protective action plan must be put in place before the worker leaves the situation to ensure the child's safety.

Assessing impending danger is a longer process and more time can be spent in the 4 principle areas of gather, assess, analyze and plan.

## Family Assessment

- ▶ Reinforces use of the Practice Model
- ▶ Contains the Safety Assessment
- ▶ Identifies presence or absence of protective capacities
- ▶ Assesses functioning and routines of family life
- ▶ Assesses parent/caregiver behavior

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The updated family assessment will take the place of the current family assessment and provides a holistic view of the family. The family assessment is structured to help social workers to gather further assessment information to fully understand how the family operates.

The Family Assessment contains a Safety Assessment and is divided into four sections.

**Section 1 is Maltreatment**

**Section 2 is Family Functioning**

Six safety threats related to Family Functioning

**Section 3 is Parent/Caregiver Functioning**

Eight safety threats related to Parent/Caregiver Functioning

**Section 4 is Child Functioning**

Three safety threats related to Child Functioning

Much of our work around SBC has been conceptual and difficult for workers to know how and where to document the work they do with families. The new tools and policies support and mirror the work staff do with a family.

## Assessment of Progress

### Purpose is to:

- ▶ Assess family during the current review period
- ▶ Review Case Plan
- ▶ Measure progress towards each objective
- ▶ Revise case plan tasks as needed
- ▶ Recommend case disposition

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The Assessment of Progress is used to review each family, child and individual objective and document their progress or lack of progress toward each objective.

When completing the Assessment of Progress workers will be required to complete a new safety assessment and include any new identified safety threats and determine if an in-home safety plan can be developed.

Assessment of Progress is looking for measurable caregiver skill acquisition by other sources as opposed to just caregiver report and service compliance. Case plans are revised as needed.

## Family Assessment/Assessment of Progress Frequent Q&A

- ▶ Will a SW need to create a Family Assessment in the new format when an old Family Assessment has been completed?
  - A new Family Assessment will need to be completed before doing a Assessment of Progress
- ▶ How are the first two questions in the Maltreatment section of the Family Assessment answered?
  - These should be answered by using the information in the Investigative Assessment

Case Plans are created through the Family Assessment (FA). The Assessments of Progress (AP) reports skill acquisition of the FLO's and ILO's in the case plan. In order to have these pieces work together a new FA will need to be completed before doing a AP. The old FA does not contain the necessary information needed to complete a AP. FVS and CFWS social workers will have 6 months to integrate the new Family Assessment/Assessment of Progress and Case Plan for open cases. By May 1, 2012 all open FVS or CFWS cases will require the updated Family Assessment/Assessment of Progress and Case Plan.

## Case Plan

- ▶ Co-developed with family
- ▶ Generated from the Family Assessment and Assessment of Progress
- ▶ Specifies what must change to eliminate or reduce safety threats and increase protective capacities
- ▶ Contains objectives and tasks directly related to safety threats identified on the safety assessment
- ▶ Focuses on long term behavioral change

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This is a document title change from service plan to case plan. Case objectives and outcomes are achieved more often when case plans are co-developed with families.

Co-develop plans with families: If the family is involved in developing the plan they are more likely to follow the plan.

Research says outcomes are more likely to be met if plans are co-developed.

Decreases confusion on what, who and why things need to be done.

Plan development can take place:

After a FTDM

At the family home

Visitation

Prison/Jail

Shared Planning Meeting

Court hearings

Anywhere the family wants to meet

Correspondence with mail or phone calls.

## Case Plans Frequent Q&A

- ▶ Is the Case Plan a new document?
  - No, the Case Plan replaces the old Service Plan document
- ▶ Will SW need to align case plans to reflect court orders?
  - Not all tasks or activities need to be ordered by the court. The pieces that need to be in line between the court order and the case plan are those pieces that are court ordered
- ▶ Is the Case Plan part of the ISSP? As an attachment?
  - The case plan is an attachment to the ISSP

If we ask the court to order a particular piece of the case plan and they disagree this is what needs to be changed in the case plan. Not the pieces that were not brought forward to the court. When SW's meet with the family to develop the case plan (FLO's and ILO's), Families should understand the safety threats operating in the family and what needs to change for to create sustained safety for the child.

This replaces the section for Parent Responsibility. Yes there are times when case plans may not be developed until prior to disposition at a preconference meeting. However, in best practice and partnership, social workers can work with families to develop family and individual objectives prior to any court proceedings. The court may order a specific service to the family. We must work with the family to help them understand how the court ordered services serves as a bridge to reaching one of the objectives.

## General Principles

- ▶ Worker should not enter information into FamLink in more than one place (i.e. case notes vs. assessments)
- ▶ The Family Assessment and Assessment of Progress are working documents for staff they are not intended for court or families
- ▶ Child safety must be assessed throughout the life of the case

As we bring these new tools and framework into practice it is important to remember one of the base principles that FamLink brings us: reducing duplication of work. Staff should not be entering the gathering questions into a case note when they are entering that information into the Safety Assessment.

The base pieces of the Family Assessment and Assessment of Progress were designed for staff to think through what we know about the family. What have we gathered and verified in the many conversations with have had with the family, service providers and other natural supports. These are not intended to be provided to the family or to the court. The Case Plan and the Assessment of Progress and Case Plan were the products of these assessment tools intended to be shared with others.

Child safety is everyone's job. Social workers need to be continually assessing the safety of the child throughout the life of the case.

## Additional Resources

- [Child Safety Webpage](#)
- [Child Safety Section Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Framework Online Trainings](#)
- Regional Child Safety Framework Leads:
  - ✓ Region 1 – Nicole LaBelle & Tim Nelson
  - ✓ Region 2 – Kara Rozeboom & Jeff Norman
  - ✓ Region 3 – Kui Hug & Darcey Hancock



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES**  
**CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION**  
 PO Box 45040 • Olympia WA • 98504-5040

May 10, 2012

**TO:** Regional Administrators  
 Deputy Regional Administrators  
 DCFS Area Administrators  
 Administrator, Licensed Resources  
 Area Administrators, Licensed Resources  
 Children's Administration Staff

**FROM:** Becky Smith, Director  
 Field Operations, Children's Administration

**SUBJECT:** CHILD SAFETY FRAMEWORK - ADDITIONAL ONLINE TRAININGS

Children's Administration continues to strive for effectiveness, clarity and consistency with assessing and intervening into child abuse and neglect; we implemented the new Child Safety Framework in November of 2011.

Three (3) additional online trainings have been developed to help increase your understanding and use the child safety concepts. Completing the Family Assessment and the Child Safety Framework, and Skill Acquisition online trainings are an optional resource, but *Developing Culturally Relevant Safety and Case Plans* is **required** for all CPS, FVS and CFWS staff, Supervisors, Family Team Decision-Making Meeting facilitators and Area Administrators. You will be receiving an email from LMS Help confirming your registration for the online training. Follow the instructions below to complete the training.

**To launch the online training:**

- Access the [DSHS Learning Center](#)
- Click on **My Courses** (located under Student Activities located on the Welcome Page)
- Click **Online Courses**
- Click on the **CA - Developing Culturally Relevant Safety and Case Plans** course
- A separate window will open, click on the **CA - Developing Culturally Relevant Safety and Case Plans** located under the Lesson Name
  - The class will open in a separate window

To launch the ***Family Assessment and the Child Safety Framework, and Skill Acquisition*** online trainings, you will need to click this [link](#).

## **Children's Administration Practice Model Definition and Crosswalk**

Similar to other child welfare agencies, the Children Administration in Washington has actively implemented a practice model that includes a set of values, principles, approaches and techniques that are used at the system and practice level to assure children and families achieve the goals of safety, permanency and well-being. Over time, several enhancements have been made to fully optimize every part of the current practice model, and additional techniques have been implemented to support the current practice model.

The following is a description of the practice model as it currently exists and as a coherent practice model that integrates the more recent enhancements and techniques.

A practice model for a child welfare agency is theoretically and values based. The model clearly outlines specific casework skills and practices that child welfare workers must perform throughout the life of a case in order to optimize the safety, permanency and well being of children who enter, move through and exit the child welfare system.

The Children's Administration (CA) Practice Model provides the overarching conceptual map for how we as an agency conduct child focused and family centered practice. Consistent with our philosophy, values, and beliefs about best practice, our practice model framework enables our social workers to:

- Prioritize partnership to ensure safety by building a consensus with the family and service providers around the primary safety and risk concerns.
- Locate the problem(s) within the everyday life of the family and identify the individual with the high-risk behavior that led to maltreatment through an assessment.
- Help families identify cycles of maltreatment and utilize relapse prevention techniques to prevent further maltreatment.
- Develop co-constructed plans with the family that target the primary area of safety and risk by sorting out information into family and individual level objectives.
- Develop tasks to achieve outcomes that are skill-based and not just measured by service compliance.
- Celebrate and document even the smallest success and progress made by the family, and note when improvements have not been made.

CA's practice model, is based on **Solution-Based Casework (SBC)**, an evidence-based practice model for assessment, case planning, and casework management in child welfare. Solution-Based Casework draws from other researched models including family development theory, relapse prevention theory, and solution-focused therapy. SBC serves as a consistent roadmap for establishing working partnerships to target pertinent behaviors in an effort to overcome

safety threats and prevent problem relapse and recidivism. CA's work with families is anchored in the following three SBC tenets:

- Families encounter common everyday life challenges;
- Dangerous behaviors and safety threats occur within the context of everyday life and safety/case planning for prevention must be directly tied to those events; and
- Case planning must target the reinforcement and development of situation-specific, behavioral relapse prevention skills.

A high priority for the Children's Administration has been to eliminate racial disproportionality and disparities. Over the past two years, CA has constructed a comprehensive process to address racial disproportionality in the child welfare system by addressing key decision points throughout the time a family is involved with the agency. The Practice Model addresses cultural competence through the family development lens. In that, workers assess families specific to their family developmental stage and the everyday life tasks. While, at the same time, workers remain curious as to how a family's culture and beliefs influence how decisions are made. These cultural considerations are incorporated into planning to ensure that interventions and assistance are specific to the needs of each family.

The Practice Model provides many benefits including a shared vision, consistency in policies and practice, and improved accountability. The Practice Model ensures that families throughout Washington will encounter the same standard of practice. With great emphasis in the areas of child safety, family engagement, assessment, planning, case management, and agency culture, the Practice Model will ensure high levels of partnership with families and community stakeholders.

Through the Practice Model, the assessment and prevention of child abuse and neglect are enhanced with the integration of specific assessment and planning processes. Social workers conduct a comprehensive safety assessment that begins during the CPS investigation and continues throughout the life of a case. The safety assessment framework follows the SBC conceptual model for assessment and is built on precise language, including 17 safety threats that are assessed in each case. During the initial CPS investigation, information is gathered that provides the relevant knowledge and facts necessary to assess, analyze, and create safety plans that manage threats to child safety. Safety assessment and planning is also done at certain points during the case by Family Voluntary Service workers and Child and Family Service workers. The safety assessment is integrated into the *Family Assessment and Assessment of Progress* forms. The initial identified safety threats are continuously assessed to determine when a child can return home safely and they become the primary objectives in case planning.

Additionally, the Practice Model provides the parameters for how social workers conduct ongoing assessments with families, specifically when intervention is necessary beyond the CPS investigation. Assessments have been defined as an ongoing process of gathering information

on a family and its members in order to gain a greater understanding of how a family's developmental stage, strengths, protective capacities, needs, and resources affect child safety. CA uses a *Family Assessment and Assessment of Progress* to document this information in CA's information system, FamLink. The initial Family Assessment is completed with the family within 30 calendar days upon case assignment. Subsequent assessments are documented in the Assessment of Progress at specific points during the life of the case. The safety assessment and planning process is incorporated within the Family Assessment and Assessment of Progress. This assessment, as guided by the assessment concepts and theories of SBC, explores and collects information on the following:

- Identifying the family's developmental stage(s) and the commonality of challenges within their family life.
- Describing in detail the specific task or challenge (i.e. supervision, medical care) that is giving the family problems and is a threat to child safety.
- Describing the interactions of the family and its members around this task.
- Identifying the parent/caregiver that presents a behavior or condition (i.e. substance use, anger, mental health) that interferes with everyday life challenges being met.
- Describing the patterns for their loss of control or inability to manage their behavior/condition in safe approach.
- Describing specific prevention skills needed to manager or overcome this individual behavior/condition.

This comprehensive assessment, done in partnership with families, leads to a case plan that is proactive, competency-based, and measured by cognitive and behavioral skills targeted to prevent future maltreatment. Utilizing the Solution-Based Casework model as the basis for case planning, the case plan specifies what must change to reduce or eliminate safety threats. Case plans are co-developed and written in a language that is understandable by the family. Case plans include both family and individual objectives that are associated to the identified safety threats. These objectives are written in the positive and clearly define behaviors the family and its members will use instead of harmful or unproductive behaviors. Progress or lack of progress is documented in the Assessment of Progress.

Under each objective are tasks that outline the steps needed to achieve the objective. These tasks define who, what, where, and how tasks will be completed. Both the objectives and tasks should be specific, measurable, assessment based, realistic, responsibility assigned, and time-framed.

The Practice Model also provides the structure for case management. Solution-based Casework management organizes all of the complexity in a case into coherent, focused, manageable and measurable elements, capable of adjusting to set backs as they occur. It outlines case plans into action. Good case management gets the whole team focused on assisting the family in

achieving objectives on the case plan. This is done through monthly planned contact in order to help the family access a range of supports and services and to create opportunities for them to practice and demonstrate new skills.

Supervisors are provided with training and an internal process of case consultation that assists their staff in adhering to the fundamental core of best practice and transitioning that work back to the family. Case consultations assist staff in staying focused on the family in order to ensure that safety is being addressed. In addition, case consultations provide a learning process for better understanding the Practice Model and how to apply Solution-Based Casework to specific cases. The goal of consultations is to work in partnership with staff to identify strengths of families, focus on everyday life challenges, and assist in building skills necessary for families to manage these everyday challenges and for specific individuals to develop plans to address their individual behaviors that have disrupted family life.

Case consultations provide a functional format for supervisors to guide workers in best practice and ensure that activities for families are centered on eliminating threats to child safety. Case consultations are a standard of practice and are held with a unit twice per month. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss a case or two with an emphasis on practicing critical thinking in assessing child safety.

The Practice Model emphasizes that child safety is paramount and that thorough assessments lead to better planning. The practice model also maintains that an ongoing focus on family engagement, involvement, and partnership provide the foundation for obtaining quality assessments that lead to better outcomes. Partnering with families and ensuring that they have a voice is at the forefront of the Practice Model. CA uses several key strategies within the Practice Model to make certain that the family voice and choice is present at all levels of intervention within the organization. Family voice includes partnerships with parents, caregivers, youth, children, extended family members, and natural supports. To ensure consistency in family engagement practices through the Practice Model and throughout Washington, CA utilizes tools that include Family Team Decision-Making, Shared Planning Meetings, and Wraparound.

### **Tools of the Practice Model**

Family Team Decision-Making (FTDMs) provide a family-centered approach to the decision making process related to child placements. FTDMs are meetings held whenever a placement decision needs to be made. The meetings are attended by parents, children (if appropriate), relatives, friends, neighbors, community members, cultural supports, service providers, caregivers, social workers, supervisors, and the Guardian Ad Litem. Teams work together to

address safety concerns and to create a network of support for the child and the adults who care for the child.

Shared Planning Meetings provide this same family-centered approach to help make decisions for children about safety, permanency, and well-being, as well as addressing progress or barriers to accomplishing case plan objectives. These meetings are attended by parents, children (if appropriate), relatives, friends, neighbors, community members, service providers, caregivers, social workers, supervisors, and the Guardian Ad Litem. Shared Planning Meetings are held within specific timeframes during the life of a case.

Wraparound is an enhanced process that utilizes principles and skills held in common with Solution Based Casework for families that are multi-system involved and children who are at risk of entering more restrictive care. The Wraparound process is a values-based, collaborative planning process for youth and families with unique and complex needs. Team members can be anyone involved with the family, either informally or professionally. These team members come together to discover family and team strengths, identify needs, match strengths to needs and develop plans that involves both pre-existing and created or customized services and interventions. Team meetings are held as frequently as necessary to address the needs and concerns of the family.

**Increase Family Engagement:**

**Practice Model Coaching**

*July 13, 2012*

**Introduction**

Practice Model Coaches continue to provide support to field social workers, supervisors, and regional management to help sustain and integrate the concepts, theories, and skills of the Practice Model in their day-to-day-work. Practice Model Coaches work with social workers to assist them in integrating Solution-Based Casework with other Children’s Administration’s practice improvements. These practice improvements include but not limited to the Child Safety Framework, Wraparound, cultural competence, FTDMs, and other shared planning meetings.

Practice Model Coaches provide support to the field in numerous ways, as shown in the data summary and descriptions which follow.

**Data Summary April – June 2012**

<b>Coaching Type</b>	<b>Region 1</b>	<b>Region 2</b>	<b>Region 3</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Assessment Review	14	15	24	53
Field Work	2		2	4
Individual Coaching Session	10	5	15	30
Meetings	5	7	22	34
Presentations	2	12	6	20
Staffings	10	15	9	34
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>175</b>

<b>Expert Consultation Type</b>	<b>Region 1</b>	<b>Region 2</b>	<b>Region 3</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Planning/Coordination	5	4	17	26
Policy/Practice	23	26	26	75
Product Development	1	9	18	28
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>129</b>

**Description of Coaching Types:**

- **Assessment Review** – In November 2011, as part of the Child Safety Framework and Solution Based Casework, Children’s Administration launched new and revised assessment tools; Safety Assessment, Family Assessment, and Assessment of Progress. Social Workers and Supervisors received classroom training statewide prior to the assessment documents going live in FamLink. To ensure consistent use and documentation of these assessments, the Practice Model Coaches provided and continue to provide specific coaching and support to all levels of field social workers. This support includes assessment workshops with units and/or offices that have been requested by the field, reviewing assessments and providing feedback, sharing examples of quality assessments with social workers statewide, and providing data as to the percentage of assessments completed, missing, and pending approval.
- **Field Work** – Practice Model Coaches provide support to social workers by accompanying them in the field. This provides social workers with consultations and practice improvement areas for family engagement, assessment gathering, consensus building, safety and case planning development, and being culturally competent. Practice Model Coaches also model techniques, skills, and competencies in engagement and assessment gathering with families.
- **Individual Coaching Sessions** – Much of coaching includes one-on-one sessions with social workers and/or supervisors. Practice Model Coaches provide their expertise to individual social workers on a variety of subjects including reviewing cases, specifically assessments, safety plans, and case plans. These reviews assist social workers in recognizing strengths of their own work and indentifying areas where improvements are needed. These reviews also assist social workers to understand how identified safety threats are the thread that travels through all the work and case documentations. Another area addressed during individual coaching sessions is preparing social workers prior to meeting a family for the first time. This assistance centers on helping the worker “think developmentally” by exploring the family’s makeup and hypothesizing what everyday life tasks they must achieve daily, such as supervision, toilet training, etc. This exercise helps social workers with initial engagement and partnership building with families. Other subjects discussed during individual coaching sessions include assisting social workers with strategies to increase cultural competence, role playing specific situations encountered with families, training refreshers, and a review of the research and literature.
- **Meetings** – Practice Model Coaches respond to requests to attend a variety of meetings, including unit, all staff, supervisor and regional management meetings. Coaches use this time to update the audience on how practice is in their area and to provide recommendations for improvements. Coaches also provide clinical expertise when issues or concerns are discussed. An example of this would include a Coach attending a supervisor meeting where the issue is a small number of social workers not completing Family Assessments on new cases. The Coach would assist the supervisors to discover solutions to

the problem that would both help the workers understand the importance and advantage of Family Assessments while at the same time holding them accountable.

- Presentations - Practice Model Coaches also assist by leading a variety of trainings where the request is generated by social workers, supervisors or regional management. These trainings or workshops including but are not limited to the following topics:
  - Family Assessment
  - Case Planning
  - Safety Assessment
  - Safety Planning
  - Engagement
  - Disproportionality
  - Technical assistance in documenting in FamLink
- Staffings – Practice Model Coaches provide their expertise in the facilitation of shared planning meetings, case consultations, child protection teams, and other informal family meetings. Their facilitation provides the framework of how to conduct these meetings while adhering to the principles and concepts of Solution Based Casework as well as remain centered on child safety. Practice Model Coaches also assist with credentialing supervisors, social workers, and other social workers in being competent to lead these meetings using a solution-based format. As social workers complete the Wraparound training, Practice Model Coaches will assist in the planning and facilitation of wraparound teams and meetings.

### **Description of Expert Consultation**

To assist with the implementation of the Practice Model and to integrate other areas of practice, the Practice Model Coaches are involved in the planning and development of higher level strategies that impact social workers statewide. These areas include:

- Planning and Coordination – Practice Model Coaches assist in the planning, coordination, and implementation of specific training initiatives. The Practice Model Coaches were a main support in designing the implementation and training for the Child Safety Framework, as well as being part of training teams throughout the state.
- Policy/Practice – Practice Model Coaches have provided their expertise in the development of infrastructure tools and process that support the Practice Model and integrate it into the day-to-day business. The two main areas were the development of specific assessment tools in FamLink and the creation of new policies.
- Product Development – Practice Model Coaches assist in the development of new products that assist social workers with their consistent application of best practice. Practice Model Coaches have reformed their field guides and consultation tools to reflect the integration of

## **PIP 2.1.4**

the Child Safety Framework. Other products developed include training curriculums, resource guides, tip sheets, and targeted case review instruments.

In all of these defined coaching methods, the Practice Model Coaches stay focused on applying and integrating culturally competent practice. This focus is seen in consultations, individual coaching sessions, trainings, and product development. Children's Administration has compiled a comprehensive process to address racial disproportionality in the child welfare system by addressing key decision points throughout the time a family is involved with the agency. The Practice Model and its coaches address cultural competence through the family development lens. Coaches help social workers assess family's developmental stages and the everyday life tasks. Coaches also assist workers to remain curious as to how a family's culture and beliefs influence how decisions are made. These cultural considerations are incorporated into each coaching session to ensure that interventions and assistance are specific to the needs of each family.

**Children's Administration**  
**PRACTICE MODEL AND SOLUTION BASED CASEWORK**  
**QUALITY PROCESS PLAN**

### **Team Members**

Simon Pipkin, Continuing Specialist 4 (Practice Model and Solution Based Casework Lead)

Colette McCully, PIP Team Liaison

SBC Implementation and Integration Team

- Michael Tyers (Program Manager R2 N)
- Ron Murphy (Casey Family Programs)
- Carrie Wayno (AGO HQs)
- Laura Orlando (Partners for Our Children)
- Melissa Sayer (DLR Program Manager)

Practice Model SBC coaches

- Patricia Erdman – SBC Coach R1 North
- June West – SBC Coach R1 South
- Julian Byrd – SBC Coach R2 North
- Simon Pipkin – SBC Coach R2 South
- Amanda Meyer – SBC Coach R3 North
- Bruce Wood – SBC Coach R3 South

### **Related Policies**

[Children's Administration Practice Model and Child Safety Policies](#)

[Children's Administration Case Plan Policies 2400](#)

[Children's Administration Family Focused Assessments 4221](#)

### **Introduction**

Children's Administration adopted Solution-Based Casework as the foundation of our practice model in 2007. Solution-Based Casework is a family-centered model of child welfare engagement, assessment, case planning, and ongoing case management. The model targets specific everyday events in a family's life that cause dangerous situations for their children. Solution-Based Casework combines solution-focused models with problem focused relapse prevention approaches that evolved from work with addiction, violence, and helplessness.

Partnerships between family, social worker, and service providers are created to support basic needs. The model emphasizes the importance of the family sharing responsibility to increase safety for children and incorporates the family own cultural assets.

As of November 2011, FamLink launched the safety assessment, family assessment, case plan, and assessment of progress tools that will guide and capture the work completed using the

Practice Model SBC. These tools provide a method for data collection and evaluation to ensure model adherence and staff competency.

**Data Review, Analysis and Reporting Results**

This Quality Process Plan outlines the process for measuring Solution Based Casework performance at the local and state level. Beginning in June 2012, the Practice Model Lead, with assistance from the Division of Quality Management and Accountability, will collect, organize, and present data to the Practice Model and Solution Based Casework Quality Process team every quarter. The team is comprised of staff at the headquarters, regional, office and unit level.

The team will present a report to the CA Continuous Quality Improvement Board on findings and suggested strategies for quality improvement activities to increase adherence to the model. The initial report of findings and recommendations will be presented in August 2012. Children’s Administration Continuous Quality Improvement Board will review recommendations semi-annually and present them to the Children’s Administration management team for approval or modifications.

**Data Used in this Quality Process Plan**

Overview of Data Used in the Practice Model Quality Process Plan					
Data Element	Data Source	Reporting Cycle	Data Lead	Data Availability	
Direct Measure of Safety					
Recurrence of Abuse	FamLink Report	Semi-annual	Chris Graham	In Place	
Measures of Consistent Implementation of the Practice Model/SBC					
Safety and Practice Model Measures from Central Case Review which includes over 25 Solution Based Casework focused questions.	Central Case Review Team	Quarterly for the offices reviewed	Lyn Craik	In Place	
Consistent Application of the Practice Model and Solution Based Casework (Integrated Review with Child Safety Framework)	Targeted Case Review by HQ and Field implementation staff	Semi-Annual	Targeted Case Review Team Lead	October 2012	
Coaching sessions to field staff, supervisors, and regional management to sustain and integrate the concepts, theories, and skills of the Practice Model in their day-to-day-work.	Practice Model Coaches	Monthly	Simon Pipkin	In Place	
Frequency of Case Consultation using Integrated Practice Model / Safety Framework Tools	Case Consultations Data Report	Quarterly	Simon Pipkin	July 2012	

Related Measures					
	Monthly Visits with parents	FamLink	Monthly	InfoFamLink Report	December 2012
	Dependency Filings	Office of Administrator of the Courts	Monthly	Matt Orme	In Place
	Length of Stay for Children who are Reunified	FamLink	Semi-Annual	Casey Family	In Place

**Direct Measure of Safety**

- Recurrence of Abuse  
A measure of recurrence is used with the Governance for Management and Accountability Program (GMAP). This measure will also be used in this plan.

**Measures of Consistent Implementation of the Safety Framework and Child Safety**

- Practice Model Measures from Central Case Review  
The [Children's Administration Case Review Tool](#) incorporates Solution Based Casework questions throughout. The results from the SBC questions will be compiled quarterly and included in the QA process for the Practice Model and Child Safety Framework.
- Consistent Application of the Practice Model
  - A targeted case review will look at specific cases based on a standard review protocol. The results of these reviews will be reported quarterly to the Practice Model and SBC team.
  - Case Consultations facilitated by a supervisor or other staff credentialed in SBC  
Case consultations are held, at a minimum, twice a month in each unit or during staffings/meetings and follow the areas specified in the Consultation Review Tool that includes:
    - Identification of family’s strengths and protective capacities
    - Reaching consensus on what everyday life tasks the family is struggling with
    - Identifying family and individual level objectives.

**Related Measures**

- Placement or Monthly Visits with Parents  
By the end of December 2012, an Info FamLink report showing the CA’s performance on Monthly Visits with Parents will be available.
- Dependency Filings  
The Administrative Office of the Courts reports the number of dependencies filed monthly by county in interactive spreadsheets for the Regional CA Practice Model and Solution Based Casework Team to monitor.
- Length of Stay for Children Reunified  
CA currently obtains this data from Casey Family Programs but may use FamLink data directly.

**FTDM Facilitator Observations by Supervisor**

June 1, 2012

**Supervisors**

Shannon Boniface, Region 1 North  
 Monica Jenkins, Region 1 South  
 Kathy Ramsey, Region 2 North  
 Ronda Haun, Region 2 South  
 Pending, Region 3 North  
 Peggy Devoy, Region 3 South

**Introduction**

3.1.11 requires observations of Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) facilitators by FTDM supervisors using the standard Facilitator Observation/Development Tool. The goal for this process is to ensure both greater consistency of practice and greater fidelity to the FTDM model across the state.

FTDM observations and feedback to the facilitators were completed by the Regional FTDM supervisors listed below using the Facilitator Observation/Development Tool. Please note we will also use the observations of FTDM facilitators to help in defining training needs on an individual, regional, and statewide basis.

**Facilitator Observation Dates**

**Region 1 North**

Supervisor	Facilitator	Date of Observation
Boniface, Shannon	Berry, Becky	5/2/2012
	Deluna, Cecilia	1/11/2012
	Hines-Steve, Jackie	5/2/2012
	Larson, Erik	1/18/2012
	Needham, David	1/30/2012
	Scanlon, Marie	5/8/2012
	Sheffler, Barb	5/10/2012

**Region 1 South**

Supervisor	Facilitator	Date of Observation
Jenkins, Monica	Barbour, Tim	7/15/2011
	Bunyon, Angela	7/15/2011
	Johnson, Mary	7/14/2011
	Leon, Jose	7/14/2011

**Region 2 North**

Supervisor	Facilitator	Date of Observation
Haun, Ronda	Alexander, Deyetta	4/24/2012
	Lensky, Betty	4/25/2012
	Nelson, Sunshine	4/24/2012
	Phillips, Melissa	5/1/2012
	Prael, Fredrick (Trace)	5/7/2012
	Surface, Sandra	5/3/2012

**Region 2 South**

Supervisor	Facilitator	Date of Observation
Haun, Ronda	Cook, Kari	5/11/2012
	Dominquez, Lonette	5/30/2012
	Fiorino, James	4/23/2012
	Gibson, Teri	4/30/2012
	Grace, Deanna	5/23/2012
	Jackson, Carol	5/17/2012
	Jones, Jim	5/29/2012
	Ripley, Kim	5/4/2012
	Vigesaa, Suzy	5/2/2012

**Region 3 North**

Supervisor	Facilitator	Date of Observation
Devoy, Peggy	Betts, Lila	3/9/2012
	Kucklick, Nancy	3/29/2012
	Merringer, Kris	4/25/2012
	Mitchell, Carol	4/25/2012
	Mitchell, Judy	3/16/2012
	Pitt, Janice	5/31/2012
	Roberts, Marta	4/27/2012
	St. Peter, Rochelle	5/29/2012

**Region 3 South**

Supervisor	Facilitator	Date of Observation
Devoy, Peggy	Babcock, Jeff	4/23/2012
	Miller, Nicole	3/22/2012
	Mumford, Robert	4/30/2012
	Navarre, Teresa	5/31/2012
	Scott, Mary	4/9/2012

## Summary of Observation Reports

Common themes:

Strengths:

- Overall adherence to the FTDM model
- Facilitators utilize strong engagement skills with families and community members
- Facilitators are focusing on keeping siblings together when safe and possible
- Youth and father engagement are a priority
- Concerns and plans are linked to safety
- Facilitators are able to de-escalate situations and remain calm and patient despite the emotional tone of the meeting
- Facilitators consistently solicit information and ideas from the group.
- Record keeping/charting is clear, concise, accurate

Challenges:

- Not all units consistently meet policy expectations regarding FTDM's. Referrals are not submitted in a timely manner or meetings are being missed completely. Some social workers are not using the process as intended. FTDM meetings are held to meet the "technicality (of) FTDM's" with placement decisions having already been made.
- In some cases social workers are failing to provide the FTDM facilitator with complete information regarding a family's history of Domestic Violence.

Issues specific to model fidelity:

- Facilitators do not provide an opportunity for questions during the introduction and at the end of the FTDM meeting
- Facilitators do not emphasize the agency's intent to work cooperatively
- Facilitators do not acknowledge the parents expertise about their own children

One challenge in maintaining a process of structured facilitation is the complexity of the cases that are staffed. Due to the nature and sensitivity of the work performed by this agency, Family Team Decision Meetings can be unpredictable. Facilitators understand the need to structure the meeting, however the process may be interrupted and it can be hard to get the meeting back on track.

At times, despite strong engagement efforts by the facilitator, a family may not be forthcoming with information. In addition, some cases have been previously staffed, at a FTDM or Shared planning meeting, so participants feel there is redundancy in the process.

Areas of concern identified during the observations listed above have been incorporated into training plans for the facilitators. A refresher course for FTDM facilitators is scheduled for July, 2012 and will address model drift and re-focus on model structure.

FTDM Facilitator observations will be completed on a semi-annual basis using the Observation/Development tool. The observations must be conducted at least annually by the FTDM supervisor; the other may be conducted by the statewide program manager or a peer facilitator with significant FTDM experience.

**FAMILY TEAM DECISION MAKING**  
**Quality Process Plan**

June, 2012

**Team Members**

Cheryl Rich, Statewide Family Engagement Program Manager  
Shannon Boniface, Region 1 North  
Monica Jenkins, Region 1 South  
Ronda Haun, Region 2  
Peggy Devoy, Region 3

**Related Policies**

[Children's Administration Case Plan Policies 4302](#)

**Introduction**

Family Team Decision Making is the practice that the Children's Administration has committed to for making placement decisions for children. FTDM is one type of family meeting that is specifically convened to engage families and communities to make critical decision regarding the placement of a child. Children's Administration works to support families in safely parenting their own children whenever possible; however, there are times when children must be placed outside of their home. When placement is necessary we must employ the least restrictive, least intrusive alternative placement to assure a child's safety, stability and well-being

Child welfare professionals who engage families and communities early through Family Team Decision Making meetings forge strong partnerships among people invested in making safe child-centered placement decisions. The Family Team Decision Making model demonstrates the greatest success when there are standardized methods of implementation and when it is used consistently and in a culturally-competent manner. FTDMs may affect the rates of racial disproportionality by bringing the families and communities together to fully explore options for children.

**Data Review and Analyses**

The Family Engagement Program Manager, with assistance from other members of the Division of Quality Management and Accountability, will collect, organize, and present the data to the Family Engagement Team every quarter. The team will analyze, develop a report of findings and suggest strategies for quality improvement activities to increase adherence to the model

quarterly. This process plan has already begun. The initial report of findings and recommendations will be forwarded to the Regional Administrators and Deputy Regional Administrators and to the Children’s Administration Quality Improvement Board in August 2012. This will occur semi-annually thereafter.

**Data Used in this Quality Assurance Plan**

Data Element	Source of Data	Frequency of Reporting	Person Responsible for Providing	When Available
<b>Direct Measure of Family Engagement</b>				
Frequency of Family Team Decision Making Meetings Held	FamLink	Quarterly	Cheryl Rich	In Place
Implement the use of a Family Feedback Questionnaire at FTDM meetings	Compiled results of surveys	Quarterly	FTDM Supervisors	Sept. 2012
<b>Measures of Consistent Implementation of the Family Team Decision Making</b>				
FTDM Facilitator Observations conducted using the Facilitator Observation/ Development tool	FTDM Facilitator Supervisors	Semi-Annual	FTDM Supervisors	In Place
Frequency of children being placed safely in the least restrictive placement	FamLink	Quarterly	Cheryl Rich	In Place
Frequency of FTDMs being conducted for children who are disproportionately represented in out of home care	FamLink	Semi-Annual	Cheryl Rich	In Place
<b>Related Measures</b>				
Siblings placed together	FamLink	Monthly	InfoFamLink Report	In Place
Rate of re-entry	FamLink	Semi-Annual	InfoFamLink Report	In Place

**Direct Measure of Family Engagement**

- Frequency of Family Team Decision-Making Meetings Held:** As of March 2012, FamLink launched the “Meetings” tool that provides data for all placements made. This report provides information for all children placed, if they have had an FTDM, age of the child, race and ethnicity, length of placement from the time of the FTDM, type of placement, and type of move. The data can be refined to specific time frames, regions, and offices. Policy currently requires a FTDM at every placement move for children. The InfoFamLink report provides the ability to secure percentages from a statewide level to

a worker level. Frequency of meetings will be reported out to the Regions on a quarterly basis.

- Family Feedback Questionnaire: A questionnaire will be provided to FTDM participants at meetings. Participation in the survey will be voluntary for the family members. Facilitators will collect the completed questionnaires and give them to the FTDM Supervisor for review and response if appropriate. The questionnaire will consist of seven satisfaction/engagement related questions with five possible answers ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree and a category for not applicable. The form will also provide a blank area for comments.

### **Measures of Consistent Implementation of the Family Team Decision Making**

- FTDM Facilitator Observations: FTDM Facilitator observations are being completed on a semi-annual basis using the Observation/Development tool. The observations must be conducted at least annually by the FTDM supervisor; the other observation may be conducted by the statewide program manager or a peer facilitator with significant FTDM experience. The Observation/Development Tool identifies facilitator responsibilities for each stage of a FTDM Meeting. The tool contains both narrative and “check box” items to be documented by the observer, and used as a guide for supervisory coaching, skill development, and evaluation. The feedback from the observation is given to the facilitator and in instances when the statewide program manager observes, to the supervisor using the tool as a guide. The use of observations and a uniform tool provides a structured feedback process for clinical supervision.
- Frequency children being placed safely in the least restrictive placement (rcw/ 74.14A): FTDM and family engagement promotes the placement of children in the least restrictive placement that can provide for their safety. The InfoFamLink meetings report provides data on moves to less restrictive, more restrictive, maintain in same placement, or unable to reach consensus. FTDM brings the family and community together to secure the least restrictive placement for children when this can be done safely. Monitoring of this data will help to ensure all viable options are explored for children.
- Frequency of FTDMs being conducted for children who are disproportionately represented in out of home care: Statistics gathered from the FamLink meetings report show a steady increase in the number of FTDMs being held for disproportionately represented children in care. During the past few years an increased focus on FTDMs and family engagement has resulted in a marked increase in the number of FTDMs offered to families of color. Continued monitoring of this data will show areas of low incidence of FTDMs for children of color and allow for targeted training in those areas. Areas of concern will be reported with recommendations to Regional Administrators and Children’s Administration Executive Leadership for further action.

**Related Measures**

- Siblings Placed Together: Current InfoFamLink reports will be used for the number of siblings placed together. The Meetings report also includes whether or not the siblings have had an FTDM.
- Rate of Re-Entry: One of the purposes of an FTDM is to make the safest, least restrictive placement for children. Monitoring the rate of re-entry for children who have had an FTDM can provide information as to whether or not the planning for the return home of a child or a permanent placement has been sufficient to prevent re-entry to the out of home care system.

**FATHER ENGAGEMENT: FATHERS MATTER CAMPAIGN**

**COMMUNICATION PLAN**

**June 1, 2012 – September 15, 2012**

**DSHS Mission:** DSHS will improve the safety and health of individuals, families, and communities by providing leadership and establishing and participating in partnerships.

**Project Description:** Awareness campaign for social workers for greater father involvement in child welfare: Fathers Matter Campaign

**Intent for communications:** Raise awareness among staff regarding the importance of engaging the fathers of children involved in the child welfare system. Campaign will utilize findings from the evaluation of the efforts of the University of Washington, Seattle, in Washington State's father engagement project and the work with Region 2 fathers from 2008 to present.

**Key Messages to communicate to social workers:**

- When looking at the child's overall well-being, remember who was there at the very beginning. Include fathers and paternal relatives, including fictive father figures.
- Engage fathers early in the case.
- Provide a venue for fathers to share their stories.
- Acknowledge that non-custodial fathers may be frustrated.
- Engage in honest dialogue about father's role and responsibilities.
- Provide access to father friendly information.
- Create a seamless referral process and access to concrete services.
- Support fathers through the completion of their requirements and system navigation.
- Accommodate a father's work schedule.
- Provide an opportunity for fathers to give back.
- Employ professionals who understand the importance of engaging fathers.
- Early father engagement can and does mitigate disproportionality in child welfare systems, by increasing the social support of children in the child welfare system.

**Audience:** Children's Administration staff.

**Communication Strategies:**

Tactic/Strategy/Deliverable	Date — start and deadline	Responsible parties (CA Communications and others)	Status/Notes
Create campaign theme with graphics, slogan, messaging to promote engagement of fathers in child welfare cases. Campaign theme is recurring, woven throughout communication with staff, website, etc.  <b>Fathers Matter Campaign</b>	November, 2011-June, 2012	Marianne Ozmun: Theme and design  Carolyn Jones: Research  Debbie Dolgash: Web Design	Develop campaign theme, work on graphics, communication materials   Complete

Tactic/Strategy/Deliverable	Date — start and deadline	Responsible parties (CA Communications and others)	Status/Notes
<p><b>Research resources:</b> Work with Region 2 Father Engagement staff in Region 2 and UW, field coordinators and Bernice Morehead to identify national and state resources for posting on web, periodic all staff emails with relevant reading and links to helpful articles around father engagement.</p>	<p>December 2011 - September. 15, 2012: Continue research to add resources as identified</p>	<p>Carolyn Jones: Research and organization  Marianne Ozmun: Fit with theme and design</p>	<p>Started research December 2011  March, 2012: In process</p>
<p><b>Develop webpage</b> on father engagement campaign on internal and external CA websites, and use for resource information for Social Worker use in tool kit, and fathers to access on external site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sort resources by category, post links to resource materials</li> <li>• Post UW video promoting father engagement on website.</li> </ul>	<p>Development December 2011- May 2012  Ready to go live by July 1, 2012  Ongoing: update through September 15, 2012</p>	<p>Sherry Hill: Lead development  Carolyn Jones: Research materials  Debbie Dolgash: Web Design  Marianne Ozmun: Input on website needs</p>	<p>Development December 2011- May 15, 2012  Ongoing: through September 15, 2012</p>
<p><b>“Social Worker Tool kit”</b> to include handouts and materials for Social Worker to use when engaging fathers. Post toolkit links and items on Intranet and Internet. Tool kit to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tri-fold Wallet card</b> for SW to provide to fathers and relatives including relevant contacts and phone numbers, website info, etc. (design, print and distribute to field)</li> <li>• <b>Resource list</b> for social workers to provide to fathers, for father and relative links and contacts for information and support.</li> <li>• <b>Intranet Website</b> for staff resources</li> <li>• <b>Internet Website</b> for father/ relative access</li> </ul>	<p>January, 2012 - August, 2012</p>	<p>Marianne Ozmun: Develop materials  Carolyn Jones: Provide resource information  Debbie Dolgash: Design websites with input from team</p>	<p>In process</p>
<p><b>Kick off campaign:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Message to CA staff from Denise July 1</li> <li>• Link to Intranet and Internet</li> </ul>	<p>Draft to DRR June 2012;  Finalize July, 2012</p>	<p>Marianne Ozmun: Draft messages  Debbie Dolgash: Websites go live</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>Periodic, short <b>“Father Facts”</b>, <b>messages</b> to the field in support of engagement. Make use of anecdotal information about successful engagement of fathers in specific offices; post messages on Intranet</p>	<p>Every two weeks beginning August, 2012 through September. 15, 2012</p>	<p>Jonah Idczak: Draft Messages  Debbie Dolgash: Add to website</p>	<p>Under development</p>

Tactic/Strategy/Deliverable	Date — start and deadline	Responsible parties (CA Communications and others)	Status/Notes
<p><b>Work with field coordinators</b> (led by Bernice Morehead) to support work for regional and local offices to have conversations about father engagement at staff meetings, special meetings, brown bag lunches, etc. using materials supplied on website and from topics in communications.</p> <p>Will call field coordinators monthly to ascertain information needed and what activities have been undertaken in support of father engagement.</p>	<p>Work with coordinators: March – May, 2012;</p> <p>Contact field coordinators monthly June – September, 2012</p>	<p>Carolyn Jones: Research, contact coordinators monthly, connect and participate in meetings with field coordinators</p> <p>Bernice Morehead: Organize field coordinators, hold meetings</p> <p>Field Coordinators: Be local contact and advisor on father engagement; bring to local offices for discussion in appropriate venues</p>	<p>Ongoing feedback from field coordinators June – September 2012</p>

**Notes:**

Locate any revenue-neutral or low cost print materials available to distribute to offices.

Solicit periodic summary reports through phone call survey from the field that documents the father engagement awareness campaign efforts taking place in staff meetings, brown bag discussions, etc.

## Plan to Expand Efforts to Engage Fathers in Region 2

Status Report: July 2012

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Due Date</b> From 3.2.2 Plan	<b>Status</b>
Provided overview/training to Children's Administration Statewide Leadership	June 30, 2011	Complete. See Evidence of Completion submitted with Quarter 2 Report.
Provide Follow-up training to Statewide Leadership Team	May 31, 2012	Complete. Please see attached Agenda.
Provided overview/training to Region 2 Leadership	March 20, 2012	Complete.
Appointed fifteen (15) field office father engagement liaisons	February 28, 2012	Field office father engagement liaisons were designated for each of the region's fifteen field offices as of February 2012. These liaisons were provided a two hour training on February 23, 2012 that addressed the overall Region 2 Father Engagement Program and the role of the field office father engagement liaison in that plan.
Region 2's Relative Search units will automatically begin father identification / paternal family searches in dependent cases	March 31, 2012	As of January 1, 2012, Relative Search Units begin a search for both maternal and paternal relatives on all children placed in out-of-home care. Previously searches began when the family was referred by the social worker. Relative Search Units also search for non-resident fathers in families with open Child Protective Services or in-home services cases.
Provide training to Muckleshoot Tribe Child Welfare staff	TBD	Region 2 Father Engagement Specialist and Office of Indian Child Welfare (ICW) Office Father Engagement Liaison met with the program director for Social Services at Muckleshoot Tribe on January 23, 2012 regarding collaboration and training of tribe staff on father engagement and to establish a liaison between programs. A date for training will be set at the Tribe's request.

<p>Explore developing a tribal court informational guide for fathers with Snoqualmie tribe</p>	<p>TBD</p>	<p>Region 2 Father Engagement Specialist, Region 2 ICW Program Consultant and ICW Office Father Engagement Liaison met with Snoqualmie Tribe lead staff on March 5, 2012 to develop a collaborative planning strategy to include father engagement training, establishment of liaison contact and exploring developing an informational hand out for tribal fathers as to tribal court process. Provided tribal staff with father guide tools to be used with fathers involved in child welfare cases.</p>
<p>Provide two hour mandatory father engagement training to at least 80% of Region 2 case carrying social workers and supervisors and complete a summary report of attendance</p>	<p>December 31, 2012</p>	<p>Please see attached presentation, “Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare Cases”. Approximately 70% of case carrying social workers and supervisors have attended Father Engagement Training to date. Training continues.</p>
<p>Implement father engagement training as a module of Region 2’s supplemental Social Worker Training Academy</p>	<p>December 31, 2012</p>	<p>The new Training Alliance is restructuring the Social Worker Academy and assuring statewide consistency. On an ongoing basis Region 2 will offer Father Engagement training twice a year for staff who have not received it.</p>
<p>Contract with private agencies to form father support groups in Region 2</p>	<p>December 31, 2012</p>	<p>Father support groups will be offered through a contract with a private agency in both the North and South areas within Region 2. Priority for program expansion will be determined by community need and prioritized by Region 2’s Leadership Team.</p> <p>As of July 31<sup>st</sup> we will have a father support group in Oak Harbor, WA in collaboration with the Naval Station.</p>
<p>Develop father-specific guides and resource lists by county within Region 2</p>	<p>December 31, 2012</p>	<p>Please see attached Guides for Fathers.</p>
<p>Present at 2012 Region 2 Strengthening the Family Summit the lessons learned and local and statewide father engagement projects</p>	<p>December 31, 2012</p>	<p>Work on this section of the plan has not yet begun.</p>

Provide Father Engagement Training to DSHS –Division of Child Support, the Economic Services Administration	December 31, 2012	Work on this section of the plan has not yet begun.
Provide Father Engagement training for Region 2’s Juvenile Court, Court Appointed Special Advocate and the Office of the Attorney General	June 30, 2013	Work on this section of the plan has not yet begun.
The Children’s Administration Region 2 Quality Assurance Team will provide quarterly management reports specific to father engagement activities to Regional Leadership.	TBD	The content of the quarterly reports to the Region 2 Leadership Team are under discussion at this time.

Other Activities with the Region2 Tribes to Improve Engagement of Fathers

1. Presented the Region 2 Father Engagement Plan to the Regional Tribal Coordinating Council on September 27, 2011 at Swinomish Reservation.
2. Region 2 Father Engagement Specialist met with the Nooksack Tribe father support group facilitator in Bellingham on December 8, 2011 regarding coordination of father engagement services. This included the tribal facilitator presenting at the Children’s Administration Bellingham office all-staff meeting regarding coordination of father engagement services for any Nooksack tribe related case.
3. Region II Father Engagement Specialist met with the Region 2 Office of Indian Child Welfare Program Consultant on January 9, 2012 and the Region 2 ICW Program Consultant on February 10, 2012 to develop regional father engagement strategy to collaborate with all regional tribes on father engagement.
4. Region 2 Father Engagement Specialist coordinated a conference call on January 10, 2012 with Whatcom County father engagement participants to form a coordinated county wide father engagement strategy which included the Nooksack father support group facilitator, a veteran father now facilitating a father support group and the Bellingham Office father engagement liaison.

# Field Operations Extended Leadership Team Meeting

Lookout Conference Room (OB2 4<sup>th</sup> Floor)  
May 30, 2012

## Agenda

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 8:30-9:00   | Welcome/Q & A - <b>Denise Revels Robinson</b>   |
| 9:00-9:15   | Introductions - <b>Nancy Sutton and Bernice Morehead</b>  |
| 9:15-10:45  | Legislative update - <b>Becky Smith, Rich Pannkuk, Tammy Cordova, Leah Stajduhar</b>  |
| 10:45-11:00 | Break   |
| 11:00-11:15 | Budget update - <b>Rich Pannkuk</b>   |
| 11:15-11:45 | Unified Home Study update - <b>John March</b>   |
| 11:45-12:00 | PIP/Braam update - <b>Jann Hoppler</b>  |
| 12:00-1:00  | Working Lunch-Fatherhood Engagement Presentation - <b>Jonah Idczak &amp; Bernice Morehead</b>                               |
| 1:00-2:00   | 20 policies discussion/workload reduction - <b>Becky Smith, Leah Stajduhar, Jeanne McShane, Debbie Willis, Chris Parvin</b> |
| 2:15-3:15   | Group discussion  |
| 3:15-3:30   | Break   |
| 3:30-3:45   | Regions report out  |
| 3:45-4:00   | Wrap up   |

## Guides for Fathers

The following guides were adapted for Washington State use from the American Humane Association's, [Fatherhood Toolkit](#).

# Your Rights and Responsibilities

## Guide for Fathers in Child Protection Cases

Keep this guide in a safe place. Review it before you attend a court hearing or meeting. *This guide provides general information, not legal advice. If you have case-specific or legal questions, ask your lawyer or caseworker.*

You learn your child is involved in a court case because of suspected abuse or neglect. This guide helps you understand your rights and responsibilities. Even if you weren't your child's caretaker, or don't see your child often, there are many things you and your relatives can do to ensure your child is safe and returns to live with family quickly.

### Why this is important

Your child's court case will move fast. Important decisions will be made early about:

- where your child will live,
- what services your child needs, and
- who your child gets to visit or contact.

You must know how to help your child through this process and protect your rights to your child.

### When you will need this guide

- \_ Use it to **help you recall your rights and responsibilities in the court process.**
- \_ Review or take it with you to each court hearing or meeting.

### Proving you are the father

Knowing you are the child's father does not mean the court will recognize you as the father and automatically give you these rights. You may have to prove you are the child's "legal" father. How you do this depends on your state's law. When you first learn about your child's case, it is your responsibility to find out about your state's requirements to prove you are the legal father. To prove you are the father, you may have to sign a document under oath affirming you are the father (called an affidavit), and/or take a paternity test.

**Your Rights:** As a parent, you have rights in child welfare court cases. If you are the child's legal father, you have the same rights as your child's mother, including the right to:

- **Notice**—advance notice of all court hearings.
- **Contest allegations**—a chance to admit or deny any allegations of abuse or neglect that are made against you.
- **Court participation**—an opportunity to attend, participate, and be heard in all court hearings. Assistance should be available so your participation can be meaningful, such as an interpreter if you do not understand English or are hearing-impaired.
- **Representation**—a lawyer to protect your legal interests. (Note: In some states you may have to hire your own lawyer and in others you may be able to get one for free if you don't have a lot of money. If the government seeks to terminate your rights to your child, most states will give you a lawyer for free if you can't afford one.)
- **A fair trial**—the judge makes final decisions. You have a right to a judge who is not biased.
- **A relationship with your child**—a right to ongoing contact with your child unless the court or agency finds it is not in your child's best interest or may harm him or her. You also have the right to ask

for custody of your child. Your state may give you more rights. Check with your attorney or caseworker to see what other rights you may have.

**Protect your rights.** Sometimes you have to fight for your rights.

## GETTING LEGAL HELP

### If you have a lawyer

- Ask your lawyer to explain how you can protect your rights.

### If you don't have a lawyer

- Ask the court for a lawyer.
- Contact your local legal aid office to ask about hiring a low-cost or free lawyer depending on your income.
- Find out if the court has a help center that can provide information and advice.
- Ask if the agency or court has a handbook for parents or other information about child welfare law in your state.
- Look online for free information on your state's child welfare laws and parents' rights.

## PROTECTING YOUR RIGHTS

### If you think your rights are not being protected

- Tell the judge at the next court hearing and request an order requiring the agency or other parties to protect them.

### If you think the judge is not being neutral because you know him or her from a previous association

- Contact the administrative offices of the court to find out how or if you can switch judges.

## Exercise your rights

If you are given these rights, use them to your advantage. For example:

When you are notified of future court hearings be sure to prepare for every hearing in advance

When you are appointed a lawyer be sure to contact your lawyer regularly and be sure your lawyer tells the court and parties what you want

When you are permitted to see your child be sure to visit your child as much as you can

When you are unable to attend or be on time be sure to contact your lawyer or caseworker for a meeting or hearing as soon as possible to let them know

## Your Responsibilities

In the end, this is not a battle between you and the judge, caseworker, or child's mother. It is about your child's future and well-being. The following charts help you stay focused on your child and your duties in the case.

## YOUR DUTIES OUTSIDE COURT

### Contact your lawyer often.

**Why:** Your lawyer can help you understand the court process and will advocate for what you want.

#### What to do

- Let your lawyer know how things are going with you and your child. This will help him or her stand up for your rights and advocate for you at each court hearing and meeting.

- If your phone number or address changes, let your lawyer know immediately.
- Always leave the number where you can be reached so your lawyer can contact you quickly.
- If your lawyer does not respond, call again or send a letter.

### **Keep in touch with the caseworker.**

**Why:** So you know what is expected of you.

#### **What to do**

- If your phone number or address changes, tell the caseworker immediately.
- If you have issues to discuss or are unclear about what the caseworker expects, always call. Don't assume he or she will contact you if there is a problem.
- By calling and being involved, you show the caseworker you are committed to your child and the case.
- Call again or write if you get no response and leave a message and/or follow up with an e-mail as evidence of your contact.
- If you still do not hear back, contact the caseworker's supervisor.

### **Complete your case plan tasks.**

**Why:** The caseworker may give you a list of tasks the agency wants you to do to gain custody or stay involved in your child's life. This list is part of your case plan and includes services the agency thinks you need. The agency should develop this plan with you and your lawyer.

#### **What to do**

- Read the plan with your lawyer and make sure you understand it and can do everything it says. If not, ask that it be changed.
- Work with your attorney or caseworker to make sure the agency pays for the services you need, or helps you find free or low-cost services.
- Once the case plan is final, you must complete all tasks required of you. If you don't, you might not be allowed to see or take custody of your child.

## **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE COURT**

### **Attend all court hearings and meetings.**

**Why:** It ensures you have a say when important decisions are made about you and your child's future. Plus, the judge and caseworker will see you are interested in your child.

#### **What to do**

- If you can't go to a meeting or court hearing, always tell your lawyer or caseworker in advance.
- Ask if you can participate by phone or if the hearing or meeting can be rescheduled.

### **Obey all court orders.**

**Why:** The judge and caseworker expect you to follow the court's orders. If you don't, you could lose the chance to visit or reunify with your child.

#### **What to do**

- If the court orders you to do something that does not make sense in your situation, or you cannot because of money or transportation barriers, tell your lawyer or the caseworker immediately!

- Don't let the court give an order without finding out if you can do what the order says. Sharing your concerns may change the judge's mind.
- Make your argument before the court makes its final decision. Once the judge decides, you must follow his or her orders or the judge could stop you from seeing your child.

## **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TO YOUR CHILD**

### **Contact and visit your child often.**

**Why:** Your child needs your support during the court process. If the court allows, call and/or visit your child as often as he or she is available. Your child may be confused and scared about what has happened. If in foster care, your child may feel disconnected from family and familiar things. Regular contact can help get your child through this difficult time.

#### **What to do**

- If it makes you more comfortable during visits, ask the caseworker if your wife or significant other, parents, or relatives can join you on visits.
- Be consistent with your visits, always be on time, and don't miss any.
- If something comes up, tell the child and caseworker in advance that you have to reschedule. It can upset the child if you don't show up. If you don't visit or miss some visits, the court and agency may believe you aren't interested in your child's life.

### **Consider requesting custody of your child.**

**Why:** Even if you haven't been your child's primary caretaker, you have a right to ask for custody of your child. If you were not the reason your child entered the court system, some courts will let you take custody of your child quickly.

#### **What to do**

- If you are unsure if you want custody, or what it would involve, speak with your lawyer, caseworker, and family about it.

### **Ask relatives how they can support your child.**

**Why:** Parents, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles and other relatives may be interested in visiting, sending gifts, calling the child, hosting the child during holidays, or taking custody of the child if you cannot. Being with family is usually better than being in a stranger's foster home.

#### **What to do**

- Ask family members how they can help.
- Share information about relatives with your lawyer and caseworker.

### **Be the best dad you can be.**

**Why:** Your child needs you now, maybe more than ever.

#### **What to do**

- Keep in touch with your child's caseworker.
- See your child often and participate in all court-ordered services.
- Services may require that you be drug free, find housing, or get a job. Your caseworker and lawyer should help you achieve these goals.

# How to Work with Your Lawyer

## Guide for Fathers in Child Protection Cases

Keep this guide in a safe place. Review it before you attend a court hearing or meeting. Check the guide to help you as you prepare for that court date or meeting. *This guide provides general information, not legal advice. If you have case-specific or legal questions, ask your lawyer or caseworker.*

### HOW TO WORK WITH YOUR LAWYER

You learn your child is involved in a court case because of suspected abuse or neglect. Even if you weren't your child's caretaker, or don't see your child often, there are many things you and your relatives can do in court to help keep your child safe and ensure he or she is reunited with family quickly. A good relationship with your lawyer is key to helping your child through this process and protecting your rights to your child.

#### **If you don't have a lawyer**

Ask the court for one (some courts may provide one if you can't afford it). If you can't get a lawyer (because you can't afford it or the court won't appoint one):

- tell the judge in court about your concerns;
- tell the caseworker about your concerns; and
- contact your local legal aid office to ask whether you can hire a low-cost or free lawyer, depending on your income.

#### **When you will need this guide**

Use it to **create a good relationship with your lawyer and to know what to expect during the court case**. Review this guide before you meet with your lawyer.

#### **Working with Your Lawyer**

• **Be honest:** Your lawyer cannot tell *anyone* what you share with him or her unless you agree. Don't be afraid to be open and honest with your lawyer. Tell your lawyer everything that happened in your case, good and bad. This helps your lawyer give you the right advice and make the best case for you.

• **Be prepared:** Take notes on the events that brought your child into the system and what happens during your case. Share them with your lawyer so he or she knows what is happening and can advocate for you. Each time before you meet with your lawyer, write down questions or issues you want to discuss. This helps your lawyer understand what is going on and what you want. Your lawyer is busy, so writing things down before you meet ensures you cover everything.

#### • **Tell your lawyer what you want:**

Your lawyer's job is to help you get what you want from the court and agency.

This can include:

- who you want your child to live with;
- how often you want to visit your child;
- what help your child needs.

Think about what you want for you and your child. Share these goals with your lawyer. Your lawyer will ask about your goals and tell you how to achieve them. She or he will also tell you whether your goals can be met and, if not, what else you should try.

- **Ask questions:** Ask your lawyer if you don't understand something. The court and child welfare systems can be confusing. It is important that you understand these systems so you can get the result you want for you and your child.

- **Discuss options:** Your lawyer will analyze the law and the information you provide to give you legal advice on what you should do in your case. Listen carefully and decide if you want to follow this advice. Your lawyer has your best interests in mind but if you don't agree with his or her advice then tell your lawyer why, so you can talk about your options.

- **Keep in touch:**

- Write down your lawyer's name, phone number, and address.
- Contact your lawyer when there are new developments in your case, or when you have questions or concerns.
- Try to meet with your lawyer before each court hearing to update him or her on your case, your case plan progress, and what you want to happen during the court hearing.
- Share documents you have received from other parties since your last meeting.
- Make sure your lawyer has your contact information (address, cell phone, e-mail address), and let him or her know of any changes.

- **Keep your own file and share key documents:** Keep copies of *all* papers you get from anyone involved in your case. These include:

- court orders,
- papers from your lawyer
- documents from the agency or service providers (e.g., substance abuse program, parenting class, or job training program). Get a written record of your progress in classes or programs and share it with your lawyer.

## What to Bring When Meeting with Your Lawyer

- **List of questions** or issues.
- **Your notes** about the case since you last spoke with your lawyer (these may cover progress in finding housing, contact with your children, attendance at agency meetings and treatment sessions, and other case activities).
- **Case documents** you have received since you last met with your attorney (e.g., parenting class certificate, letter from caseworker, etc.)
- **Calendar** to confirm upcoming meetings and court hearings.

## What to Expect from Your Lawyer

As your advocate, your lawyer should:

- **Work quickly to protect your rights:** These cases have tight timelines. Within a year, the judge will ask where your child should live permanently and if he or she should remain with family or be adopted. You and your lawyer will have to work quickly to ensure you keep your rights to and maintain a relationship with your child.

• **Help you achieve your goals:** If you are seeking custody of your child, you will have to assure the caseworker and court that you can take on this responsibility. You need to have a good relationship with your lawyer to achieve your goals.

• **Provide effective legal representation:** Your lawyer needs to know what is happening in your case so he or she can advocate for what you want. During this process, you should expect your lawyer will:

- respond to your calls and requests for assistance and information within a reasonable amount of time;
- be on time and prepared for every court hearing;
- promptly file all documents and motions in support of your position;
- be available to advocate for your positions in out-of-court meetings
- make arguments and statements in court that support what you want.

**If your lawyer is not meeting your expectations**, discuss your concerns with him or her. If your concerns are not resolved, consider asking your lawyer to withdraw so the court can appoint you a new lawyer.

# A Father's Role In Court

## Guide for Fathers in Child Protection Cases

Keep this guide in a safe place. Review it before you attend a court hearing or meeting.

Check the guide to help you as you prepare for that court date or meeting. *This guide provides general information, not legal advice. If you have case-specific or legal questions, ask your lawyer or caseworker.*

## YOUR ROLE AS THE FATHER IN COURT

Even if you weren't your child's caretaker, or don't see your child often, there are many things you and your relatives can do in court to help keep your child safe and ensure he or she is reunited with family quickly. As the father, you have an important role to play in the court process. By coming to court and participating in the hearings, you can help your child and protect your rights.

### When you will need this guide

Use it to **remind you of your role in court and how to advocate for (stand up for) yourself.**

Review it before court hearings.

## How to Act in Court

The courtroom is formal. When coming before the judge, you must be respectful by acting and dressing in a certain way. If you don't, the judge and others may take you less seriously, which may affect your rights and relationship to your child. Follow these tips on how to behave in court. They will help you achieve your goals. If you bring family or friends to court, they should follow these tips also:

- **Focus on your child.** Remember, this is about the health and safety of *your* child. Help the caseworker and court find ways to make sure your child gets the best care and assistance.
- **Be on time or early for court hearings.**  
The courtroom may change at the last minute.
- **Attend all court hearings.**
- **Dress well.** Wear neat, clean clothes. Dress for success: wear a suit and tie if you have them.
- **Don't eat or drink.**
- **Turn off electronic devices**—your cell phone, pager, or videogames.
- **Don't speak when someone else is speaking.**
- **Show respect.** Address the judge, attorneys, and other people in the courtroom respectfully. Refer to the judge as "Your Honor," "Sir," or "Ma'am."
- **Control your emotions.** Being in court and hearing things about you can make you angry, particularly, if something is untrue. If you disagree with something, say so, but do not raise your voice or yell. Doing so will make you look bad in front of the judge and caseworker who may then think you can't control your anger or emotions.
- **Bring all documents and information** that your attorney has asked you to bring. If you still Do not have a lawyer, bring all information you need to advocate for yourself and prove your points.
- **Pay attention in court** and let the judge and lawyers know if you don't understand something

and ask if you need something repeated.

- **Set a positive example.** If your children are in court, keep them in mind.

## What to Do Before, During, and After Court

### Ask for a lawyer.

It is **always** in your best interest to have a lawyer. If you **don't** have a lawyer, ask to have one appointed at the earliest possible court date. If your request is declined, ask the judge where you can find a lawyer. If you have little money, ask where you can find a low-cost or free attorney. You may be able to find one at your local legal aid program, through a local law school clinic program, or through the local or state bar association.

### Meet with your lawyer.

If you do have a lawyer, meet with him or her a week or so before your court hearing. If you can't meet in person with a lawyer, try to speak by phone. Ask your lawyer what will happen at the court hearing. Share your opinion about where your child should live, visitation, and services.

### Know when and where the next court date will be.

Confirm the date, time, and location of your next court hearing.

- **For the first court hearing**, you should be notified by the agency or court about when and where the hearing will be and its purpose. If you were not notified, you may be able to request another hearing or challenge any decisions the court made about you.
- **For later hearings**, you will often find out when the next court date is at the end of each court hearing. Take a calendar or something to write on so you can jot it down. If you are unsure when a court hearing will be, ask your lawyer or the caseworker. If you can't reach them, call the judge's office and ask the judge's assistant. If you cannot attend a hearing in person, talk to your lawyer or caseworker, or call the judge's offices to ask to participate by phone or postpone the hearing.

### Get copies of reports.

Make sure you receive copies of reports or motions that will be discussed at the court hearing. Getting copies a few days before the hearing gives you time to review them. Often the child welfare agency will write a **progress report** informing the judge how things are going in your child's case. You have a right to a copy of this report and to review it before the court hearing begins. Ask your lawyer or the caseworker for a copy if you haven't seen one a few days before the hearing. If you are repeatedly not getting copies of reports before hearings, tell the judge.

### Prepare your arguments.

Once you know the focus of the court hearing, gather any paperwork or documents that support what you plan to say or request in court. Stay organized by keeping all of your documents in a file, arranged by date.

For example:

If the caseworker asked you to complete a class or training and you recently finished it then bring your certificate of completion or other paperwork to prove you completed the task.

- If you have had several good visits then be prepared to share these positive experiences in court.

- If you met with someone to discuss job opportunities, housing, or other services that would help you maintain or strengthen your relationship with your child then share this and provide paperwork where possible..
- If you have concerns about your child's health, safety, school, living situation, etc. then you should be prepared to discuss these concerns.
- If you are not permitted to see your child or are not getting help to maintain a relationship or obtain custody then you should talk to your lawyer and caseworker about your concerns. If they are not resolved, be prepared to raise these issues in court.

### **Share where you want your child to live.**

- If you want custody of your child then you should discuss this with your lawyer early. You should also ask what steps you must take to achieve this goal. Make sure to share your progress with the judge at every court hearing.
- If don't want custody of your child, but have relatives who may be able to care for your child then you should tell your lawyer and caseworker immediately. Also ask the lawyer to tell the judge this in court. If possible, ask those relatives to attend court hearings.

### **If you hit roadblocks, ask the judge to help you.**

The judge may be able to help overcome barriers. For example, if you can't move forward because you haven't heard from the caseworker or can't get into a program, the judge may be able to help.

### **Leave the hearing knowing what decisions were made.**

Before each hearing ends, make sure you understand what decisions have been made, what is expected of you, and the timeline for doing things. If you agree to be responsible for certain parts of the plan, you must follow through. It is better to talk about what may be hard up front with the judge than to say yes and disappoint your child or anger the caseworker or judge by not following through.

- \_ discuss this with your lawyer early.
- \_ ask what steps you must take to achieve this goal.
- \_ share your progress with the judge at every court hearing.
- \_ tell your lawyer and caseworker immediately.
- \_ ask your lawyer to tell the judge this in court.
- \_ if possible, ask those relatives to attend court hearings.

### **Learn what happened early on in the case if you get involved late.**

You may not learn about your child's case until several months after it began (or even longer). If that happens, find out what decisions have already been made and how they affect your relationship with your child. Your lawyer can help you find out what happened before. If you don't have a lawyer, ask the caseworker where you can review and make copies of the court's file so you can get up to speed. If you disagree with decisions that were made, talk to your lawyer or caseworker about challenging those decisions.

### **Get ready for trial.**

If your next hearing is a trial where the parties can call witnesses and submit documents, take these steps:

#### **PREPARING FOR TRIAL**

##### **Find out the type of trial:**

- **Fact Finding Hearing:** determines whether your child was abused or neglected.

- **Issue-specific trial:** decides an issue in your case, such as a service someone says you need, or your right to visitation with your child.
- **Termination of parental rights:** determines whether you should keep your parental rights to your child.

**If you don't have a lawyer, ask for one (even if you have asked before).**

- If you face losing your rights as a parent, most courts will give you a lawyer for free if you can't afford one.
- If it is a trial where you don't have a right to a lawyer, ask if the court has a program that helps people prepare for hearings and trials when they don't have a lawyer.

**Identify and dispute claims.**

- Find out what (if any) claims are being made against you.
- Dispute claims by submitting documents to the court or bringing witnesses to testify for you (if the issue is whether you can visit your child, bring witnesses who have observed you with your child and can describe positive interactions).

**Know when you can appeal the court's decision.**

If the court makes a decision you do not agree with, you may be able to ask a higher court to review the decision. Discuss this option with your lawyer. If you don't have a lawyer, see if you can get one for free or at a low cost to help with appeal. If you can't, ask if the court has a program that can help individuals without lawyers prepare appeals.

# A Father's Guide to The Court Process

This is a guide that gives you tips to help you and your child throughout the court case.

Keep this guide in a safe place. Review it before you attend a court hearing or meeting.

*This guide provides general information, not legal advice. If you have case-specific or legal questions, ask your lawyer or caseworker.*

## The Court Process

This guide is to help understand the court process if you have a child involved in a court case because of suspected abuse or neglect. It explains the court hearings and what happens at them so you can prepare. Many things happen outside court as well. Although the judge must decide where the child should live or who the child should visit, the judge can change his or her mind when circumstances change.

### Removal and/or Petition to Court

The agency asks the court to open a court case because it:

- removed a child from home because of concerns over the child's immediate safety;
- wants to ask to remove a child from his or her home; or
- has other concerns about a child's safety at home.

### Shelter Care Hearing

The judge will decide:

- whether the child is unsafe at home;
- if there is enough evidence to support the child's emergency removal until trial; and
- if the agency tried to prevent the child's removal (referred to as "making reasonable efforts").

If you attend this court hearing and make less than a certain amount of money, you can apply for an appointed or free lawyer. If you don't meet the income requirements you may try hiring someone. Ask the court for a list of lawyers who you could hire or ask where you can find free or low-cost legal help.

### The Court Case Closes

- Judge finds the agency lacks enough evidence to remove the child or be involved in the family's life.
- Agency may offer voluntary services to you and your family.
- Child is returned to the parent from whom he or she was removed.

Although the court case can be closed the agency may keep the service case open without court structure if it is felt in the best interest for the child.

### Case Stays Open

- Judge finds the agency had enough reason to remove the child or remain involved in the family's life.
- Child remains or is placed in foster or kinship care, or stays home. The court and agency continue overseeing how things are going.
- Judge may order contact between the child and parents

- The judge may also order evaluations or services for either the mother, the father , both parents or the child
- Attorneys may be appointed for each parent and an attorney, guardian ad litem and/or court appointed special advocate (often called a “CASA”) may be appointed for the child (if they haven’t been already).

### **Pretrial Conference/Mediation**

- Parties (e.g., parents, child, attorneys, caseworker) try to settle case without going to trial.
- One or both parents may be asked to admit they abused or neglected their child to reach a settlement agreement.
- The parties may create a basic care plan for the child.

### **If Agreement**

- Parties present settlement agreement to the judge for approval.
- If the judge accepts the agreement, the case moves to the disposition hearing and does not go to trial.

### **If No Agreement**

- Court sets a trial date.

### **Fact Finding Hearing**

- Judge decides if there is enough evidence to find the child was abused or neglected.
- Lawyers present evidence to the judge supporting their clients’ positions. Evidence includes documents and witnesses. Parents and child may be asked to testify.

### **If there is not enough evidence to find the child was abused or neglected**

- Court case closes.
- Agency may offer voluntary services to you and your family.
- Child returns home (to the parent from whom he or she was removed).

### **If there is enough evidence to find the child was abused or neglected**

- The court takes control of child’s situation and decides where the child will live, with whom the child can visit, and services for the child and parents.
- The court sets a date for the **disposition hearing**.

### **Disposition Hearing**

- The judge orders services for parents to help them reunite or remain with their child (counseling, drug treatment, evaluations).
- The judge determines what improvements the parents must make and by when so the child can go home.
- Child could return home at this hearing with the requirement that the parents participate in certain services.

The child may also stay in foster or kinship care if the judge believes the parents are not ready to care for the child.

- The judge could set multiple placement goals for the child (called “concurrent planning”). The first goal may be to live with the parent from whom the child was removed. The second goal may be to live with the other parent or a relative.

**Review Hearings** *(every 6 months or sooner if the judge decides it’s necessary)*

- The judge evaluates case progress.
- Parents’ case plans may be changed, if case circumstances change (if progress has been made, court expectations may be easier; if not, they will probably get stricter).
- The judge could set multiple placement goals for the child (called “concurrent planning”). The first goal may be to live with the parent from whom the child is removed. The second goal may be to live with the other parent or a relative.

**Permanency Hearing** *(approximately 12 months after the case began, or earlier if the abuse or neglect was severe)*

- The judge evaluates case progress.
- The judge looks at whether reunification with the parent is still appropriate. If not, the judge will consider changing the permanency goal to **termination of parental rights and adoption, guardianship** (permanent placement with a relative) or **another planned permanent living arrangement** for the child.
- If the parents have not progressed towards meeting the goals set by the judge at earlier hearings, the judge may change the focus of the case from helping the parents reunite with the child to finding the child another permanent home.

**Possible Options That Can Result From the Permanency Hearing Include:**

**Permanent Guardianship** *(placement with a relative)*

- The judge decides at the **permanency hearing** that reunification with the parent is not possible, but believes the child may be able live with a relative.
- At a later hearing, the judge gives the relative custody of the child, but the parent’s rights are *not* terminated.
- Case closes after the guardianship arrangement is final.

**Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement**

- This is the least favored option for children and youth.
- At the **permanency hearing** or a later hearing, the judge decides the parents cannot take custody of the child, the child can’t or doesn’t want to be adopted, and there are no relatives available to care for the child.
- The judge will look for other long-term living arrangements for the child.
- The parents’ rights may or may not be terminated.
- An older child will probably move to an independent living program that prepares the child to live independently.
- The court case will likely stay open and the child will continue to receive services from the agency until he or she is an adult and the court case closes. *(Some states keep the case open until the child is age 18, others may keep the case open until the child is 19, 20 or 21).*

### **Termination of Parental Rights**

- The parent may request a trial or agree to terminate his or her rights to the child. If the parent doesn't want his or her rights terminated, the judge must hold a hearing where each party's lawyers can present evidence to the judge supporting their clients' positions. Evidence will include documents and witnesses. The parents and the child may be asked to testify.
- The judge will review the case history, how long the child has been in foster care, and what the parents and caseworkers have or have not done to try to reunify with the child. • The evidence must meet a high standard before the judge can terminate parental rights.

### **If the Termination is Denied by the Judge**

- The child may stay in foster care to give the parents more time to meet the court's requirements.
- The child may return home immediately.

### **If the Termination is Granted by the Judge**

- Parents lose their rights to their child.
- Agency looks for a home to adopt the child or pursues permanent guardianship or another planned permanent living arrangement.

# Who Will Be In Court?

## Guide for Fathers in Child Protection Cases

Keep this guide in a safe place. Review it before you attend a court hearing or meeting.

*This guide provides general information, not legal advice. If you have case-specific or legal questions, ask your lawyer or caseworker.*

You learn your child is involved in a court case because of suspected abuse or neglect. Even if you weren't your child's caretaker, or don't see your child often, there are many things you and your relatives can do in court to help keep your child safe and ensure he or she is reunited with family quickly.

### When you will need this guide

- ✓ Use it to **help you recall who will be in court and what they are supposed to do.**
- ✓ Review this guide before court hearings.

## Who Attends Court Hearings and What Do They Do?

### JUDGE/COMMISSIONER

**Role: Oversees and is in charge of the court hearings.**

#### Duties

- Must be objective and neutral (not biased).
- Makes decisions about your child's placement, services for you and your child, and who your child visits.
- Decides whether your child will live with you, the child's mother, a relative (yours or the mother's), or in foster care.
- Decides the plan for your case so you (and your relatives) can maintain a relationship with your child and possibly obtain custody.
- Decides where your child can permanently live and whether you can keep your rights as his or her parent.

### LEGAL ADVOCATES

#### Your lawyer

**Role: Tells the court and parties what you want.**

#### Duties

- Explains to you your rights and responsibilities.
- Argues for what you want in court and in meetings.
- Spends time with you before court hearings.
- Explains what is happening in court and what to expect next in the process.

#### Mother's lawyer

**Role: Represents your child's mother just as your lawyer represents you.**

#### Duties

- Performs all duties listed above for the *mother*, not for you.

## **Child Protective Services lawyer (Assistant Attorney General)**

**Role:** Represents the government's position in your child's case.

### **Duties**

- Represents the caseworker.
- Argues for the caseworker's positions in court and in meetings.

## **Child's advocate**

**Role:** Advocates for your child.

### **Duties**

- A **court appointed special advocate (CASA)** argues for what is in your child's best interest and is a volunteer from the community who is probably not an attorney.
- A **child's attorney** will argue for what your child says she or he wants, unless the child is too young to carry on a conversation or is not developmentally able to share his or her opinions about the case, in which case the child's attorney will argue for what is in your child's best interest.

\* In some cases the child may have:

- an attorney and a court appointed special advocate (CASA),
- just an attorney, or
- just a CASA.

What type of attorney is assigned to the child, or whether the child gets a CASA or some combination of court-appointed representation, depends on the age and ability of the child to have a say on what happens.

## **CASEWORKER**

### **Duties**

- Arranges and oversees all services you and your child receive.
- Develops a case plan for you and your child to maintain a relationship or for you to obtain custody of your child, including timelines and who will provide or pay for services.
- Arranges for visits between you and your child.
- Finds a place for your child to live if he or she can't be with you or the child's mother.
- Discusses the case with you and how your child is doing.
- Reports to the court on how your family's case progresses.
- Recommends to the court what should happen in the case regarding your child's placement, services, and visitation.

## **COURT STAFF**

### **Court clerk**

#### **Duties**

- Sits in the courtroom and assists the judge during the hearing.
- Receives all documents, petitions, and motions to place in the court file.
- Helps schedule future court dates.

### **Court reporter**

#### **Duties**

- Records everything said during court hearings so the judge and parties can review and use it later.
- If there is no court reporter, the courtroom may have a system that records all courtroom conversations.

## **Court bailiff/deputy**

### **Duties**

- Protects the peace and ensures order in the courtroom.

## **OTHER COURTROOM PARTICIPANTS**

Other people may also attend some hearings. They may only participate as witnesses at trials. At other hearings, they may provide information about how the case is going. They include:

- **Service providers**—individuals working with you, your child or the child’s mother, such as therapists, mentors, tutors or caseworkers providing a specific service to you or your child (e.g., job counseling, anger management, or parenting skills).
- **Child’s caregivers**—your child’s foster parents or current caregivers.
- **Relatives**—your relatives or the mother’s relatives, particularly if they are seeking custody of the child.
- **Your significant other**—if you request it and the court allows it.
- **Child’s mother’s significant other**—if she requests it and the court allows it.

# Common Court Terms

## Guide for Fathers in Child Protection Cases

Keep this guide in a safe place. Review it before you attend a court hearing or meeting. *This guide provides general information, not legal advice. If you have case-specific or legal questions, ask your lawyer or caseworker.*

- **Adoption:** This is when a child becomes the permanent, legal member of another family and no longer lives with his or her biological parents. Sometimes the child keeps in touch with his or her biological family if the adoptive parents approve (called *open adoption*).
- **Allege** (or *allegation*): When someone says something happened, but it hasn't been established as fact by the court.
- **Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA):** This living arrangement is made when a child (usually a teen over age 16) does not return home to live with biological parents or relatives and is not adopted. The child may live in a foster home or be enrolled in an independent living program that helps the child prepare to live on his or her own. The child will stay in this living arrangement until the case closes sometime between ages 18 and 21.
- **Appeal:** This is what a party can do if they don't like a decision the court made. A party who doesn't agree with the court's decision can ask a higher level court to review the decision and overrule it. If you want to appeal something, talk to your lawyer. If you don't have a lawyer, find out if the court has a help center that can assist you with this process.
- **Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA):** This community volunteer (usually not an attorney) is trained to serve as a court-appointed advocate for the child throughout the court process. The CASA conducts their own assessment of the case and reports to the judge what they believe to be in the child's best interests.
- **Case Plan** (or *Service or Treatment Plan*): This written agreement between the parent and agency describes why the family is involved in the system, the family's needs, and the goals for the child. It lists actions the parent must take to reunify (or stay unified) with the child (e.g., taking classes, participating in treatment, or making changes in the home). The judge reviews the case plan and includes it in the court order, usually at every court hearing.
- **Concurrent Planning:** The court and the agency may prepare two possible plans for a child's future living arrangement and they work towards achieving both at the same time:
  1. Often the preferred plan is for the child to return home and live with the parent he or she lived with before the case started.
  2. If that doesn't work out, the second plan could be to let the child live with a different relative or to find the child an adoptive home.

By planning for the first and backup plans at the same time, the agency can shorten the time the child remains in foster care. There are laws that require the agency to take action within set times so children don't stay in foster care for too long. Your lawyer or caseworker should tell you what the first and second plan are, and what the deadlines are for the plans to work out.
- **Court Order:** This document explains the judge's directions or instructions. Failure to follow the court's orders may prevent parents from maintaining a relationship with their child and/or could result in other sanctions.
- **Disposition Hearing:** At this hearing, which is usually held after the **fact finding hearing**, the judge reviews and approves the **case plan** (or *service plan*). This hearing lays out a plan to meet the child's future needs and sets goals for the parents to reunify or stay unified with their child.

- **Emergency Placement/Removal:** The agency temporarily removes a child from his parents’ or caregivers’ care. The child is then placed with a relative, in a foster home, a group home, or an emergency shelter for abused or neglected children. The agency will remove a child from home when it is worried about the child’s safety. Before or right after the removal, the agency must get a judge to approve the removal at a court hearing, which both parents should be told about and encouraged to attend.
- **Fact Finding Hearing:** At this hearing the court decides if there is enough evidence to prove the child was abused or neglected. The government, parents and often the child’s representative (lawyer or CASA) can call witnesses and present documents to help the judge make a decision.
- **Founded:** When the agency learns that a child may be abused or neglected (often as a result of a “report” made over the telephone) it conducts an investigation. After the investigation, the agency decides if there is enough information to believe the child was abused or neglected. If there is enough information, the agency will say the **allegation** of abuse or neglect was founded.
- **Guardianship:** This is when a court gives legal authority of the child to one of the parent’s relatives, the foster parent or a suitable adult placement and that person then has all the rights a parent would have as the guardian. This can be done without legally terminating the parents’ rights, but the guardian becomes the child’s permanent legal caretaker. When the agency gives the relative financial assistance to care for the child this is called a “subsidized guardianship.”
- **Kinship Care:** This is when a child, who would otherwise be in a foster home, is placed with a relative. It is usually temporary until the case is resolved and a permanent living situation for the child is found. There is a legal preference for kinship care rather than foster care placements.
- **Mediation** (or *pretrial conference*): A trained outside person helps the parties in a case decide or resolve problems. This person is called a “mediator” and is not directly involved with the family or the agency. Mediation is usually held before **fact finding hearing** to see if the parents and the agency can agree whether the child was abused or neglected.
- **Permanency Hearing:** This hearing is usually held a year after the child enters foster care (it can be held much earlier if severe abuse or neglect has occurred). At this hearing, the judge assesses the parents’ progress in meeting their **case plan** (also called *service plan*) goals and decides where the child should live permanently. Usually, up to this point, the goal has been to reunify the child with his or her parents. However, if the judge does not believe the parents have made sufficient progress, the judge may change the goal from reunification with the parents to **adoption, guardianship or another planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA)**.
- **Permanency Planning:** The agency and court go through this process to ensure each child has a permanent home.
- **Petition:** This is the document the agency files with the court **alleging** facts to support its belief that the child was abused or neglected. The agency will seek to prove the **allegations** in the petition at the fact finding or to convince the judge to find that the child was in fact abused or neglected.
- **Placement:** This is where your child lives during the court process. He or she could live with a parent, relative, non-relative foster parent, a suitable adult placement, a group home or other facility. Many children experience multiple placements during the length of the court process.
- **Pretrial Conference:** This is a meeting where the parties decide whether they can agree on the facts in the **petition**. If they can, the parents usually sign forms saying they agree that the child has been abused or neglected. If this happens the court will probably not hold a fact finding or and instead goes straight to the **disposition hearing**. This meeting may also be called a **mediation** session or stipulation.
- **Reasonable Efforts:** These are steps the agency must make to (1) prevent a child from being removed from his or her home, or (2) help a child return home after removal. At many court hearings the judge must decide whether the agency made reasonable efforts to achieve these goals. If the court finds the agency has *not* made reasonable efforts, the agency loses federal money to support the child’s placement. If there has been severe abuse or neglect, the agency may not have to make “reasonable efforts” to reunify the family.
- **Review Hearing:** The court has review hearings every six months after the **disposition hearing** to find out how the child is doing and what progress has been made on the **case plan** (or *service plan*). Depending on

how things are going, the case plan could change and/or the court could create **concurrent planning** goals for the case.

- **Service Plan:** see **Case Plan**.

- **Substantiated:** see **Founded**.

- **Termination of Parental Rights (TPR):** A judge decides to end all rights of the biological parents to their child. When a parent's rights to his or her child are terminated, the child is legally free to be adopted. The biological parent may still be able to maintain contact with the child, but this is usually up to the child's new caregiver or the child after he or she is 18 years old.

- **Unfounded** (or *not indicated, unsubstantiated*): When the agency learns a child may be abused or neglected it conducts an investigation. After the investigation the agency decides if there is enough information to find the child was abused or neglected. If there is *not* enough proof, it will say the **allegation** of abuse or neglect was unfounded (not indicated or unsubstantiated). If this happens, the agency may close the case and offer the parents optional services. The agency will likely keep a record of the investigation.

- **Unsubstantiated:** see **Unfounded**.

# Your Role Outside Court

Keep this guide in a safe place. Review it before you attend a court hearing or meeting.

*This guide provides general information, not legal advice. If you have case-specific or legal questions, ask your lawyer or caseworker.*

## Guide for Fathers in Child Protection Cases

You learn your child is involved in a court case because of suspected abuse or neglect. Even if you weren't your child's caretaker, or don't see your child often, there are many things you and your relatives can do outside of court to help keep your child safe and increase the likelihood he or she is reunited with family.

### When you will need this guide

- \_ Use it to learn **what is expected of you outside the courtroom and when to advocate for yourself.**
- \_ Review it before meetings and planning conferences being held about your case.

## Participating In Case-Related Meetings

Much of the work on your child's case happens outside court. Important decisions are made by the caseworker and child welfare agency and other service providers relating to your relationship with your child, your ability to see your child, and what is expected of you.

## CASE MEETINGS YOU SHOULD ATTEND

### Case plan or treatment plan meeting

- **What happens:** The agency develops a plan for how you and/or your child's mother can reunite with your child. The plan usually includes services or tasks you must complete to live with, or have more contact with your child and to have your child's court case closed.
- **Why they're important:** Not complying with the case plan may affect whether the agency (and ultimately the court) supports your interest in having custody of, or more frequent contact with, your child.
- **What you should know:** Although some agencies develop these plans on their own, most should work with you to create the plan or at least show it to you for your comments and approval.

**Agency review • What happens:** The agency meets several times a year to talk about **meetings** progress in your child's case and discuss problems and identify solutions to overcome them.

### Family Team Decision Meeting

- **What happens:** The agency and family meets to discuss what should happen in your child's case. If placement, change in placement or return home is being considered.
- **Who attends:** The meetings should include you, the child's mother, and relatives like grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, etc.

- **What you should know:** Ask that your family be included and give the agency names and phone numbers of relatives you think should attend. The goal is to make a decision on what should happen and where the child should live.

## **WHY ATTEND CASE MEETINGS?**

### **Participating is important so you...**

- understand what is happening in your child's case;
- can share with everyone your opinion regarding your child's care and case;
- know what the agency and court expects of you.

### **If you don't participate...**

- decisions may be made based on incorrect assumptions about you or your family.
- you may also find yourself in a position where you must do things you cannot do or don't think are right for you or your child.

## **PREPARING FOR CASE MEETINGS**

### **Get invited.**

- **Don't assume that if there is a meeting to discuss your child's future that you will automatically be invited.**
- In some places the father who did not live with the child is left out of important decision-making meetings. **Don't let that happen:**
- Ask the caseworker when the next meeting about your child's case is and its purpose.
- Ask your lawyer what case planning meetings you should attend and when they will be.
- If you want any relatives to attend these meetings, request that too.

### **Learn about the meeting and be prepared.**

- Ask the caseworker or your lawyer what kind of meeting it is and what will be discussed.
- For example:
- If it is a **family team decision meeting**, ask the caseworker if your relatives can participate
  - If it is a **case planning meeting**, talk to your lawyer beforehand. Think about what services you need to reunite or maintain a relationship with your child. Ask your lawyer (1) if the agency can help with these services, and (2) if those services should be written down in the case plan.
  - If there are services you can use without the agency's help, consider not including them in the case plan but doing them on your own.
  - If a service is in the case plan, and you don't complete it, the caseworker or judge may see this as proof that you should not live with or have a relationship with your child.
  - Bring a pen and paper and your calendar to all meetings and take notes on things you must do, questions you want to ask your lawyer or caseworker later, and dates of future meetings, court dates and other important events.

### **Decide if your lawyer should join you.**

- Once you hear about a meeting, you and your lawyer should decide if your lawyer should attend.
- For a case planning meeting where you may be asked to sign a plan agreeing to participate in services and accomplish certain goals, you should have your lawyer present to ensure the plan is fair. The same is true for agency review meetings.
- If your lawyer cannot attend the meeting, get instructions from him or her about what to say (or not) and whether you should agree to or sign anything when he or she is not present.

**Ask questions.**

- Ask questions so you are clear about what decisions are made at the meeting and what is expected of you.
- You have a right to know exactly what the agency wants you to do and by when. *If it isn't clear, ask!*

## Performing Other Key Tasks Outside of Court

There are other tasks you should work on during your child's case to help yourself and your child. Many of them require regular contact with your lawyer and caseworker. Keep good notes on your progress and the efforts you make in the case. **You and your lawyer should work as a team and work closely with the caseworker.**

## OUT-OF-COURT ACTIVITIES

### CONTACT YOUR ADVOCATES

**Contact the caseworker regularly.**

- Call when you have questions, concerns, information to share, or want updates on your child or the case. *Don't wait for the caseworker to call you.* The caseworker has many cases and may not think to call you when things happen that you may want to know about.
- If the caseworker is not there, leave a message and write down the date you called.
- If you don't hear back in a day or so (or sooner if it is urgent), call back. If you still can't reach the caseworker, call his or her supervisor.
- You can also contact the court appointed special advocate (CASA) to discuss your wishes and the progress you are making on your case plan. But remember, the CASA is your child's advocate, not yours, and you should not tell him or her anything you would not want the judge or other parties to hear.

**Keep in touch with your lawyer.**

- **You don't have to *only* speak with your lawyer at, or just before, court.** In fact, the more your lawyer knows *before your court date* about your case and what is going on, the better he or she can advocate for you in and out of court.
- Call when you have questions or there are new developments in your situation or your child's case.
- Check in with your lawyer a few days or even a week before each court date.
- If you call your lawyer and don't hear back, you can e-mail or write a letter to follow up. If you still don't receive a response, you can call his or her office and ask if there is someone else you can speak with about your case.

### STAY INVOLVED IN YOUR CASE

**Take notes on what is happening.**

- One good way to share information with your lawyer is by taking notes on things that happen in your case. For example, write down:
  - efforts you have made to find a job or a house;
  - how many times you have called the caseworker or service providers before getting return calls;
  - how often you visit your child and how the visits go.
- If you are not sure if something is worth documenting, assume it is and write it down!

**Don't miss visits and be on time.**

- You have a right to visit your child regularly (unless the court or agency finds it would be harmful or not in your child's best interest). Don't miss this chance.
- Always be on time and don't miss any visits.
- If something comes up and you cannot attend, call the caseworker immediately and try to reschedule.
- **If you are late or don't show up, the caseworker may think you are not committed to maintaining a relationship with your child and share this belief with the court.**

**Complete your case plan tasks.**

- **If you don't complete your case plan successfully you may lose your rights to your child.**
- If you have problems and feel you can't complete certain tasks tell your lawyer immediately so you can decide together how to overcome these issues.
- If you don't have a lawyer, discuss your concerns with the caseworker. Don't just fail to complete your obligations.

**PLAN FOR YOUR CHILD'S PERMANENT HOME****Keep your relatives in the loop.**

- If you are seeking custody, your relatives may be able to help.
- If you are not seeking custody, ask your relatives whether they want to care for your child. Be sure to share this information with your lawyer and caseworker. If they cannot care for your child, they may be able to offer support by visiting or talking to your child on the phone. Talk to your lawyer and caseworker about making this happen.

**If you want your child to reunify with his or her mother, help make this happen.**

- This may include:
- encouraging the mother to work with the agency;
- helping her find housing or other services; and/or
- providing her financial or emotional support.

**WORKING WELL WITH THE CASEWORKER**

The caseworker is an important decision maker in your case, but the judge ultimately decides what happens. If you do not have a good relationship with the caseworker, ask your lawyer how it can be improved. You may want to talk to the caseworker directly about the problem. This may include a conversation about:

- How you can improve your working relationship
- When the best times are for you to regularly talk or meet each other to discuss the case
- What the caseworker expects of you
- What you expect from the caseworker

**If things don't improve:**

Consider addressing the issue with the caseworker's supervisor, and the judge, when necessary.

# When You Owe Child Support

## Guide for Fathers in Child Protection Cases

Keep this guide in a safe place. Review it before you attend a court hearing or meeting.

*This guide provides general information, not legal advice. If you have case-specific or legal questions, ask your lawyer or caseworker.*

You're a dad who does not live with your child. You learn your child is involved in a court case because of suspected abuse or neglect. Even if you weren't your child's caretaker, or don't see your child often, you may be responsible for providing child support. This guide helps answer common questions fathers have about child support in child welfare cases.

### When to use this guide

- \_ Use it to help you recall **what is expected of you and what rights you have when you are dealing with child welfare and child support issues.**
- \_ Read it **if you are paying, owe or may owe** child support.

## What Is Child Support?

Child support is money that you pay to the person who has custody of your child when you live apart from the child. Payments are usually made either once or twice a month to help cover the costs of raising the child. This assistance can be critical to your child's upbringing because it will help pay for important things in his or her life.

## Paying Child Support Is Important

Making child support payments helps pay for items your child needs, like food, medical care, clothes, and school supplies. Providing this support, even if it's not a lot, you can make a difference for your child and helps you become closer to him or her.

## FINDING A LAWYER

### How a lawyer can help

Having a lawyer in your child support case can help you:

- protect your rights;
- file papers with the judge;
- try to get the monthly amount of support payments, or arrearages owed, reduced;
- make a request for appropriate assistance, hearings and a trial, if appropriate; and
- request a change in your support obligations, particularly if they make it hard for you to participate in and seek custody of your child in the child welfare case.

### Where to find a lawyer

- You may already have a lawyer in your child welfare case. This lawyer may represent you if child support issues arise, or refer you to another lawyer.
- Some lawyers, such as those at legal aid, the local bar association, or an area law school clinic, may be able to represent you for free or at a low cost. If you don't have a lawyer in your child welfare case, ask your caseworker for help finding a lawyer for your child support case.

**If you cannot afford or find a free lawyer**

- Washington State Superior Courts have Court Facilitators who may help provide forms and instructions about local court rules. They do not offer legal guidance.

**GETTING OTHER HELP**

Washington State provides job search assistance including basic computer skill training at Work Source offices, managed by the Department of Employment Security. There are parenting programs offered by churches and other community service organizations in many counties. This assistance helps you maintain a good relationship with your child and provide for him or her without struggling to make ends meet.

**HOW YOUR CHILD WELFARE CASE RELATES TO YOUR CHILD SUPPORT CASE****If you were already paying support because a judge ordered it**

- The money that was going to your child's caretaker (e.g., mother) will probably start going to the government to help pay for your child's foster care.

**If you weren't paying support before the child welfare case started**

- The government may file documents in court to get you to start paying, even if you were already helping your child informally.

**If you owe support under a court order**

- Always try to pay the full amount on time.
- Failure to pay support may be used as evidence against you in the child welfare case and may be considered if the government tries to terminate your parental rights.
- If you don't think you can pay the amount you owe, ask the judge to reduce your obligation.
- Also keep track of other support you provide your child, like diapers, food, or clothes as this may be taken into account.

**WHO OWES CHILD SUPPORT?****Divorced/Never married**

- If you either divorced or never married the child's mother and do not have custody of your child, you still could owe child support.
- Even though there may not be a formal court order requiring you to pay, the child's caretaker or child welfare agency may seek a formal order at any time.

**No legal proof of biological fatherhood**

- You won't owe child support if you are not legally shown to be the biological father.

**Legal proof of fatherhood *or* Acknowledge fatherhood**

- You may not owe support until after you are proven to be the father. This could be done through testing, which the agency or you pay for, or if you can admit that you are the father.
- In Washington State if you are proven to be the father, you could owe unpaid child support dating back to before your paternity was established.

**WHEN YOU MUST PAY CHILD SUPPORT**

Paying child support helps your child. This is why many states have strict laws about paying child support and say that **you must still pay child support until your order is modified** even if you are:

**In prison** • In many states, you will still owe the same amount, even if you are in jail. To change this, you will have to ask the Division of Child Support to assist in getting a judge to modify the order.

**In school** • You must still pay child support if you are enrolled in school. The order may be modified based on changed income, but you will have to initiate the request and follow through with providing proof of your new income.

**Out of work** • You will still owe support if you don't have a full-time job, lose your job, or receive unemployment or disability benefits. The court may change the amount you owe, but only if you ask.

**In the military** • You must still pay child support if you are in the military.

**Not married to the child's mother but she is married to someone else**

• Only if the stepfather adopts the child will you no longer owe support.

**Married to someone else and have or are planning to have children with your current wife**

• You may be able to get a court to lower the amount you owe because you have or will have more children to care for.

**Kept from seeing your child**

• If the child's mother or other caregiver won't let you see your child, even if it goes against a court's order, you still need to pay. If this happens it is possible to ask the court to require the caregiver to follow your visitation agreement or make a new parenting.

## HOW MUCH IS DUE AND FOR HOW LONG?

**How much?**

• Washington State uses the Washington State Child Support Schedule to determine how much child support you owe. In almost all states the amount you owe is based partly on your income. In Washington State the amount you owe also considers the income of the other parent and how many children you have living with you. The schedule also calculates a self support reserve for you if your income is below the federal poverty level. Sometimes your child support will be ordered through the superior court like when there is a Divorce Decree. Other child support orders are entered through administrative processes with the Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Child Support.

**Do I pay for my child's medical insurance?**

• Part of your child support obligation may include helping to pay your child's medical bills. For example, if you have health insurance, you may be required to add your child to your health insurance plan. Washington State Division of Child Support may require your employer to enroll your children in the company health insurance plan if the premium is not more than your order requires you to pay toward health insurance for your children.

**Can the support amount change?**

• The amount you owe may change, but *only* if the judge changes the amount. So, if you lose your job or your income is decreased make sure you get a court hearing soon to address whether the amount you owe can change.

**How long?**

• How long you have to pay child support varies from state to state. In Washington State the statute of limitations for collecting child support expires when the youngest child on the order becomes 28 years old.

• Even though your child may be considered an adult at 18, if he or she has not graduated from high school, you may still owe child support until he or she graduates.

• Some court orders for child support in Washington State order support to continue while the child is enrolled in post secondary education. The order will specifically state the requirement for post secondary support.

• If you didn't pay child support when it was owed, even if your child is too old now, you will still have to pay back what you owed, unless the child support debt has expired to the statute of limitations.

**Do I pay if my child is legally emancipated?**

• You will not owe support if your child becomes a "legal adult" through a court process called emancipation," even if the child is under age 18 at the time.

• You will also stop owing current child support if your child is adopted, but you may still have a back debt that needs to be paid off.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T PAY?**

**Not paying the amount you owe on time can have serious consequences. The child support agency or court may...**

- use this as evidence against you in the child welfare case;
  - ✓ Intercept your income tax refund
  - ✓ Intercept your lottery winnings
  - ✓ Attach your bank account
  - ✓ Seize and sell your truck or car
- put you in jail for a limited time;
- put you on probation;
- suspend your driver's license until you pay, as well as professional or recreational licenses (like hunting or fishing licenses);
- report your name to credit agencies, which will make your credit score go down and make it harder for you to get loans;
- add interest to the amount that you owe, so that you owe even more in child support than you did before;
- take your property or any money you make when you sell that property;
- take money directly from your paycheck or benefit checks (if they are not doing that already);
- deny your passport application.

# If You Are or Have Been in Prison

## Guide for Fathers in Child Protection Cases

Keep this guide in a safe place. Review it before you attend a court hearing or meeting.

*This guide provides general information, not legal advice. If you have case-specific or legal questions, ask your lawyer or caseworker.*

You learn your child is involved in a court case because of suspected abuse or neglect. If you are in prison now or were in the past, you are still an important person in your child's life. You and your family can be involved in your child's court case and be a resource to your child.

### When you will need this guide

\_This guide is important **if you are or have been in prison**.

\_Use it to **help you recall what is expected of you and what rights you have** to be involved in your child's life and participate in his or her court case.

### You Have the Same Rights

Even though you are or have been in prison, you still have a right to maintain a relationship with your child during his or her child welfare case. This includes visiting your child or becoming his or her caretaker. In both instances, you still have a right to:

- **Notice**—advance notice of all court hearings.
- **Contest allegations**—a chance to admit or deny any allegations of abuse or neglect that are made against you.
- **Court participation**—an opportunity to attend, participate, and be heard in all court hearings. Assistance should be available so your participation can be meaningful, such as an interpreter if you do not understand English or are hearing-impaired.
- **Representation**—a lawyer to protect your legal interests. (Note: In some states you may have to hire your own lawyer and in others you may be able to get one for free if you don't have a lot of money. If the government seeks to terminate your rights to your child, the courts will give you a lawyer for free if you can't afford one.
- **A fair trial**—the judge makes final decisions. You have a right to a judge who is neutral (not biased).
- **A relationship with your child**—a right to ongoing contact with your child unless the court or agency finds it is not in your child's best interest or that contact with you may harm him or her. You also have the right to ask for custody of your child.

### PROTECTING YOUR RIGHTS WHILE IN PRISON

**If you are in prison** it will be hard to protect these rights, especially your right to participate in court hearings, visit, and seek custody of your child. You must advocate strongly for yourself by keeping in contact with your lawyer and caseworker and requesting:

#### **That you be allowed to attend court hearings.**

- Ask for this well before each court date so the agency and prison have enough time to make arrangements.
- If you can't go to court, ask to participate by phone or ask for a lawyer (if you don't already have one) who can participate for you and then let you know what happened.
- Make sure you tell the lawyer what you want before the hearing regarding your child's placement, services, and visits with family.

## Regular visits with your child

- You may not be able to see your child every week, but you should still be allowed to have some kind of contact with him or her unless the court finds it would harm the child.
- Even if you can't see each other regularly, there are other ways to keep in touch:
- **“Virtual visits” through videotape or teleconferencing** where you can see your child (and he or she can see you), but you are in different locations—Ask your lawyer or caseworker to help set up in-person or virtual visits.
- **Writing letters or recording your voice** reading stories or talking to your child. Work with prison officials to make sure you have access to pens, papers, envelopes, stamps and a recording device.
- **Talking to the child by phone**—Make sure prison officials allow access to a phone and it is clear who will pay for the call (i.e., the agency arranges to have your child's foster parent or caregiver accept collect calls from you).

## Case plan and services information

- The agency may have developed a case plan that requires you to complete certain tasks to maintain a relationship with your child.
- Completing case plan tasks while in prison can be hard. You will need to contact your caseworker and lawyer to find out what is expected and ask them to work with the prison to offer you the required services.
- Many prisons offer parenting classes, GED classes, drug treatment, or job training. If your prison keeps a list of available classes and services, ask for a copy to give your lawyer and caseworker.

## PROTECTING YOUR RIGHTS WHEN OUT OF PRISON

If you are out of prison, it still may be hard to participate fully in your child's court case, especially if others don't think you should because of your criminal history. If that is the case, you may need to prove you are a positive influence in your child's life and that you have successfully re-entered the community.

### Show you are a positive influence

- Attend all of your child's court hearings.
- Know how your child is doing and ask questions about where he or she lives, his or her health, and progress in school.
- Visit your child regularly. Keep in touch by phone and/or send cards or letters. If other parties oppose visits, with your lawyer's help, fight to maintain contact. Continue doing positive things to help your child (e.g., sending letters or maintaining contact with his or her caretakers to see how the child is doing).
- Help your family keep in touch with your child.
- Become involved in your community's recreational activities, church, or other organizations that are family and child friendly.
- Participate in services that will help you better parent your child (e.g., parenting classes).

### Prepare for success after prison.

- Participate in services that will help you overcome the issues that led to your imprisonment, if you haven't already. For example, if you were in jail for assault, enroll in a class to help you manage your anger. If you were in jail for drugs, join narcotics anonymous or another treatment program or support group.
- Request housing or job assistance. If you lack stable housing, see if you are eligible for public housing and how your caseworker can help. If you are seeking custody of your child, there may be programs to help you locate an affordable place to live. If you are out of work, ask the caseworker for help finding a job or enrolling in a job training program.



# Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare Cases

**Presented by:**

**Jonah Idczak, Region II Father Engagement Specialist**

“Why all this attention to fathers? Mothers are important too.”





# Training Objectives

- Hearing the father's voice
- Review of research as to the importance of fathers
- Obtain new strategies to better engage fathers
- Review dynamics involved in working with fathers
- Review available father engagement tools
- Explore how to best work with your office father engagement liaison

# The Father Engagement Project

Child and Family Service Review Findings  
Program Improvement Plan for Children's  
Administration

Father Engagement Training (staff, partners and community)

Father Engagement Tools

Local Office Father Engagement Liaisons



**Fathers in their own words**





“To know the true reality of yourself, you must be aware not only of your conscious thoughts, but also of your unconscious prejudices, bias and habits.”

Bias: An inclination or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment.

What bias may be at play when we engage fathers in our work?



# Fathers and Their Impact on Children's Well-Being

Involved fathers bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is as likely to bring” Fathers have a direct impact on the well-being of their children. It is important for child protection services caseworkers to have a working understanding of the literature that addresses this impact. Such knowledge will help make the case for why the most effective CPS case plans will involve fathers.

# Social workers can have an important ally in the father:



- Broadens circle of family support by including fathers and potentially their family/friends
- More “eyes” to survey the well-being of the child
- Increased informal supports and resources
- Positive well-being outcomes for child
- Promotes family and cultural connection

# Involved Fathers and Case Plans:

- Helps meet federal mandates for reasonable or diligent efforts to include both parents
- Facilitates concurrent planning — more than one goal
- Engages paternal relatives as possible permanency options



# Impact of the involved Father on the Mother and family:



- Overall positive outcomes for children's well-being
- Additional support from father & paternal family
- Increase in mother's patience, flexibility and emotional responsiveness toward child

# A Father can bring his child:



- Emotional well being
- Increased financial stability
- Involvement of paternal kin
- Expanded cultural ties
- Knowledge of family medical history

# The Impact of Fathers Absence on<sup>PIP 3.2.8</sup> Children's Well-Being / Social Behavior

Children whose biological fathers are absent are 2-3 times more likely:

- to be poor
  - to use drugs
  - to experience educational problems
  - to have health problems
  - to have emotional problems
  - to have behavioral problems
  - to be victims of child abuse
  - to engage in more criminal behavior
- ...than their peers who live with their married biological parents (or adoptive parents).”





Children with involved, loving fathers are significantly more likely to:

- do well in school
- have healthy self esteem
- exhibit empathy and pro-social behavior
- avoid high risk behaviors such as drug use
- avoid truancy
- avoid being involved in criminal activity

...compared to children who have uninvolved fathers.



Horn, W., & Sylvester, T. (2002). *Father facts* (4th ed.). Gaithersburg, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative.

# The Impact of Fathers on Cognitive Ability and Educational Achievement

“A number of studies suggest that fathers who are involved, nurturing and playful with their infants have children with higher IQs, as well as better linguistic and cognitive capacities.”

--Rosenberg, J. (2006). *Fathers and their impact on children's well-being*. Child Welfare Information Gateway.

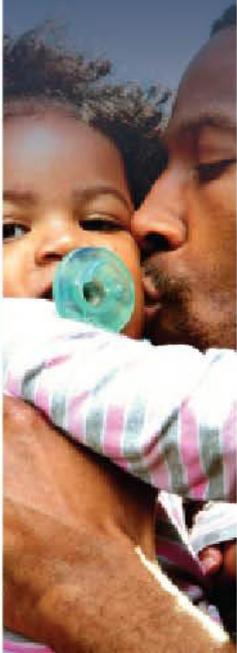


# Understanding the Socialization of Men

Socially constructed ideas cultivate stereotypes that influence Men :

- Emotional conflict
- Behavioral problems
- Emotional pain, often resulting in an emotional trauma causing men to present as:
  - Stoic
  - Firm
  - Detached emotionally

Men have traditionally found it difficult to acknowledge their feelings and the effect they have on their lives and the lives of family members.



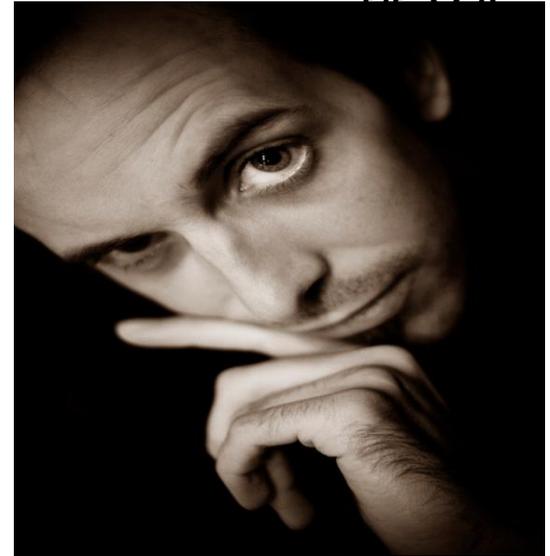
# Societal Factors That Influence the Development of Manhood & Fatherhood

- Expression of emotions is discouraged
- Anger is an acceptable male emotion
- Drive to be dominant
- Being physically strong
- Pressure to be an economic success



The section was adapted from Shears, J., & Furman, R., Working with fathers: A review of the literature. University of North Carolina- Charlotte; and Hofferth, S. L. (2001, February). *Race/ethnic differences in father involvement in two-parent families: Culture, context, or economy*. Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan. Retrieved May 21, 2009, from <http://ceel.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs/papers/ceel019-01.pdf>

# Barriers to Men Seeking Help



- Admitting there is a problem
- Difficulty in asking for help and depending on others
- Being perceived as “weak”
- Fear of intimacy & vulnerability

# Strategies to Encourage Help-Seeking Behaviors with Fathers

- Normalize their experience
- Minimize reflection on his affect & emotions
- Provide direct feedback and action-oriented steps
- Use metaphors to make problems concrete and relatable
- Use approaches that focus on logic and behavior

# Developing the Relationship

## Principles of Partnership

- Everyone desires respect
- Partners share power
- Everyone has strengths
- Everyone needs to be heard
- Partnership is a process

# What we have learned in three years of working with fathers:

- Assume the non-resident father wants to be involved
- Restore the non-resident father in the child's life at what level he can be
- Individualize each case
- Suspend judgments
- Make room for his expressions of anger

# What has been effective to engage Non-Resident Fathers:

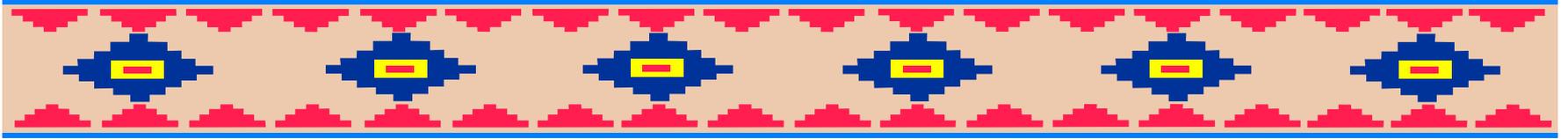


- Seek first to understand
- Recognize and acknowledge his previous experience with child welfare
- Help him understand his role in the case process
- Acknowledge the power in your position along with empowering the father

# Approaches to Engaging Non-Resident Fathers

- Increase his understanding of how important he is to his child/he brings life long benefits to the child's well being. At some level he already knows he is important but we can help grow this understanding with him.
- Encourage opportunities for change, particularly if he is the person that caused the harm. Everyone has the potential to change.





- Ask the father, “How would you like your child to remember you 10 to 15 years from now?”
- Remind the father that he is a role model for his child (he may not have had that) ...breaking the chain of fatherlessness

# Transforming Conflict Into Partnerships <sup>PIP 3.2.8</sup>

- Focus on future planning
- Don't seek to resolve; seek to find common ground to move forward
- Shared responsibility and power
- Be diligent to bridge incompatibility



# Common Challenges to Non-Resident Father Engagement



- Expressions of anger
- Co-parenting and parental conflict
- Multiple issues: unemployment, housing, other court involvement, substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence

# How do we involve the incarcerated father?

Tools available on Share Drive





# Tools for Father Engagement

- **Father Information Guides**
- **County Specific Resource Lists**
- **What Dads Can Do With Their Children**
- **What is expected of you as the father in working with the social worker**
- **Sample letter to a father in prison**

## Websites Related to Engaging Fathers

Including Fathers Video

<http://www.uwvtv.org/video/player.aspx?mediaid=2055300379>

National Fatherhood Initiative

[www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)

National Responsible Fathers Clearinghouse

[www.fatherhood.gov](http://www.fatherhood.gov)

Child Welfare Information Gateway section on fathers

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/fatherhood.cfm>

**Unified Home Study**  
**Report of Lessons Learned from Initial Implementation**  
**June 2012**

**Discussions Held with Home Study Staff and Caregivers**

The Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) Deputy Administrator:

- Met with Region 2 North Home Study Staff to discuss the lessons learned from implementing the unified home study and how to improve the implementation statewide.
- Met with members of the Child Placing Agency Coalition to get feedback about the initial implementation of the unified home study in Region 2 North.
- Contacted foster, relative, and adoptive caregivers who had completed the unified home study process to get their feedback about their home study experience.

**Lessons Learned**

**Input from home study staff:**

What Went Well:

- Due to the ongoing communication between DLR and Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), it appears that the quality of initial relative placements is improving. Having a check list of things to look for has helped DCFS staff.
- DLR Supervisors attending DCFS unit meetings has been helpful for everyone to learn the new expectations.
- The training was comprehensive.
- Staff appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions of State Office staff on a regular basis. This should continue for staff transferred to DLR.
- Staff are recognized as experts in their area of training.
- Family Team Decision-making Meetings help clarify the expectations for relative placements.
- Having a 45 day letter to send to people who are not responsive is helpful to get things moving.

**Training feedback:**

- There was too much about the home study tool. All the staff transferring to DLR had done home studies in the past and we should focus this training on what is different and new. [Update: The training has been updated to reflect this request.]
- Need more interactive FamLink training in Provider functionality. [Update: All regions will have FamLink training within 2 weeks of the initial training.]
- The unified home study process takes longer to complete and is more challenging with relatives. It would be helpful to have additional training about engaging relatives in the process. [Update: The training has been updated to reflect this request.]
- Those who conducted licensing and relative home studies in the past would like more guidance about how to assess for permanency (include strengths and red flags). [Update: The training is updated to reflect this.]
- More training on ICPC processes and how ICPC Headquarters staff needs work to be done. [Update: Training has been updated to reflect this].
- It would be helpful to have an FAQ about how to find forms and DLR resources at the next training, so that is all in one place and easy to find. [Update: Most frequently used forms are available on the CA DLR intranet website.]

**Feedback from the Child Placing Agency Coalition:**

- The CPA Coalition had questions about the Financial, Marital, and Medical worksheets. [Update: DLR is working with the CPA coalition to provide information on sample worksheets that will aid in training for both CA home study staff and CPA staff.]
- The CPAs have not previously completed adoption home studies for homes that they license. CA staff will continue to complete the unified home studies for CPA certified homes who wish to adopt, when they have not completed a unified home study previously.
- Some caregivers feel it is unnecessary to ask questions about adoption when they clearly do not intend to adopt.
- The CPA Coalition reports it takes approximately 5 additional hours to complete the unified home study.

**Feedback from Caregivers:**

The unified home study process was only complete with a few families in April and May 2012, when information for lessons learned was gathered. The DLR Deputy Administrator made phone contact with randomly selected families who completed the unified home study process. The six caregivers contacted included relatives who became licensed and intend to adopt,

licensed foster parents, and a relative who initially began the licensing process to care for their relative, but has since accepted other children for placement in their home.

Caregivers who completed the unified home study provided the following feedback:

- One foster parent who began the process as a relative caregiver, but became involved in a unified home study as the process changed felt that the change was confusing. She said that it was clear that the licensor was learning a new process, which may have slowed the process by about a week.
- A caregiver was concerned that her paperwork had been lost. The DLR Area Administrator in Region 2 North has been notified of the concerns about lost paperwork and he is working with his staff to develop a process to track applications more carefully.
- The caregivers reported that the process took about 3 months, which is consistent with the licensing standard to complete licenses in 90 days.
- The caregivers acknowledged that there were “lots of questions, but we expected that.” When asked, they could not identify any questions that they would not have asked and they said they recognized the importance of being thorough in this process.
- There were two requests for additional training and training that is more specific for relatives who are going through the home study process for a specific child. Most current training is geared toward general foster care. The Resource Family Training Institute does have specific sections of PRIDE for relative caregivers; DLR will work with the Institute to address training issues.
- A foster adopt relative reported that her licensor was very clear about what was needed and she could not be happier about the outcome. She said that the process was “so much faster than we would have anticipated.” She was relieved that she would only have to complete one home study instead of the two or three she would have had to complete under the previous process.

**Unified Home Study**

**Discuss Lessons Learned with Staff and External Stakeholders**

**June 2012**

**Internal Stakeholder Meetings**

DLR staff had internal meetings with the following groups to discuss the lessons learned in the initial implementation of the unified home study:

- Family Team Decision Making Facilitators Statewide meeting, April 6, 2012 (Agenda is Attachment 1)
- DLR/DCFS statewide unified home study workgroup, April 11, 2012 (Agenda is Attachment 2)
- DLR Region 2 North all staff, May 1, 2012 (Agenda is Attachment 3)
- Field Operations Management Team Meeting May 10, 2012 (Agenda is Attachment 4)
- DLR Area Administrators and Supervisors May 29, 2012 (Agenda is Attachment 5)
- Extended Leadership Team Meeting ( Statewide DLR and DCFS Regional Administrators, Deputy Regional Administrators, Area Administrators) May 30, 2012 (Agenda is Attachment 6)

**External Stakeholder Meetings**

CA staff had external meetings with the following groups to address the lessons learned in the initial implementation of the unified home study:

- Washington State Judges Association February 25, 2012 (Talking Points are Attachment 7)
- CPA Coalition April 19, 2012 (Agenda is Attachment 8)
- Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee, June 6, 2012. DLR Administrator John March discussed the Unified Home Study with the committee as part of regional updates from 1:00-2:30 (Agenda is Attachment 9)

## Agenda

### Statewide FTDM Facilitators

April 6, 8:45-3

Tacoma DCFS, Room 195

- 8:45-9 Welcome, settling in, announcements from Nicole LaBelle
- 9-12 Margaret Hobart, Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- 12-1 Lunch on your own
- 1-2 Robbie Downs, Homestudies
- 2-3 Hot Topics
  - Background Checks/Waivers

## Unified Home Study Work Group

April 11, 2012 Agenda

10:30-10:45: Introductions/ review agenda

10:45 – 12:00: Review and discuss lessons learned draft document

1:00- 1:30: Discuss issue of DSHS relative placement home study backlog

1:30 – 3:00: Next steps

Workgroup Attendees:

Name	Region	Position
Jeanne Mcshane	DLR Headquarters	DLR Acting Administrator
Xuan Chung	Region 2 South	Home Study Supervisor
John March	Region 2 South	DCFS Area Administrator
Terri Brown	Region 2 North	DLR Supervisor
Linda Kalinowksi	Region 3 North	DLR Area Administrator
Robbie Downs	DLR Headquarters	Licensing Program Manager
Joe Rissone	Region 2 North	DLR Supervisor
Maria Rivera	Region 1 South	DLR Licensor
Donna Brantner	Region 2 North	DLR Supervisor
Terri Barnett	Region 3 South	DCFS Supervisor
Cherrie Druffle	Region 3 North	DCFS Supervisor
Kris Randall	Region 1 North	DCFS Area Administrator
Jason Engle	Region 1 North	DLR Licensor
Sharon Gilbert	Field Operations HQ	Deputy Director of Field Operations

## PIP 4.2.10 - Attachment 3

### Questions for Region 2 North Debriefing with Staff

Are you using peer mentors to learn the new work?

What are you learning from each other that has helped implement the UHS?

What are the new “knowledge, skill and/or ability” challenges where you need more support?

What do you know now you wish you knew at the beginning?

What has been most helpful to you so far in implementing this new approach? Least helpful?

What do you want me to know about this process?

How can we best support you going forward?

What sections of the training were most helpful to you in the work you are doing?

What sections of the training were least helpful to you in your everyday work?

If we were to do this all over again, what would you recommend we do differently? What would you recommend we do the same?

Field Operations Meeting  
 May 10, 2012 9:00-3:30pm  
 UW School of Social Work-Room 210F  
 Seattle, WA

Attachment 4

### AGENDA

Time	Title/Topic	Presenter
9:00 a.m.	CA Topics General Discussion	All – Theresa Tanoury
9:45-10:25	EBP's (Evidence Based Practice)	Dr. Eric Trupin & Tim Kelly
10:30-11:30	WA State Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence signing ceremony (Room 305)	Robin and Denise (Lunch is provided)
12:00-12:30p.m.	Missing from Care	Brenda Villarreal
12:30-1:00	Braam	Jann Hoppler
1:00-1:30	Background Checks Administrative Approval Process	Nicole Muller
1:30-2:00	Emergency Care	Nancy Sutton / Barb Geiger
2:00-2:30	Unified Home Studies Rollout	John March
2:30-2:45	Budget	Rich Pannkuk
2:45-3:00	Performance Based Contracts update	Tammy Cordova
3:00-3:30	Closing / Add ons	All

# DLR All Supervisors Meeting

## Tuesday May 29, 2012

### Agenda

- 9:30 - Meet John March
- 10:00 - Unified Home Study Update - John March
- 11:15 - Extensions and Exceptions - Melissa Sayer
- 12:00 - Lunch - On Your Own
- 1:00 - FamLink Changes - Melissa Sayer and Robbie Downs
- 3:30 - Adjourn



## Attendance

Name	Position
John March	DLR Administrator
Jeanne McShane	DLR Deputy Administrator
Randy Roberts	DLR Program Manager
Nancy Rowswell	ICPC Program Manager
Robbie Downs	DLR Program Manager
Melissa Sayer	DLR/CPS Program Manager
Connie Morlin	DLR Region 1 North Area Administrator
Linda Kalinowski	DLR Region 3 North Area Administrator
Diana Chesterfield	DLR Region 3 South Area Administrator
Rich Taylor	DLR Supervisor
Ron Stewart	Region 1 North DLR/CPS Supervisor
Jeff Kincaid	Region 1 North Licensing Supervisor
Penny Oliver	Region 1 North Licensing Supervisor
Jennifer Triggs	Region 1 South DLR/CPS Supervisor
Maria Tovar	Region 1 South Licensing Supervisor
Joe Rissone	Region 2 North Licensing Supervisor
Teri Brown	Region 2 North Licensing Supervisor
Amy Martinez	Region 2 North DLR/CPS Supervisor
Ruben Reeves	Region 2 South Licensing Supervisor
Matt Cleary	Region 2 South Licensing Supervisor
Tina Childers	Region 3 North Licensing Supervisor
Shannon Freeman	Region 3 North Licensing Supervisor
Krissy Wright	Region 3 South Licensing Supervisor
Scott Minnick	Region 3 South Licensing Supervisor
Judi Hardy	Region 3 South Licensing Supervisor

# Field Operations Extended Leadership Team Meeting

Lookout Conference Room (OB2 4<sup>th</sup> Floor)  
May 30, 2012

## Agenda

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 8:30-9:00   | Welcome/Q & A - <b>Denise Revels Robinson</b>   |
| 9:00-9:15   | Introductions - <b>Nancy Sutton and Bernice Morehead</b>  |
| 9:15-10:45  | Legislative update - <b>Becky Smith, Rich Pannkuk, Tammy Cordova, Leah Stajduhar</b>  |
| 10:45-11:00 | Break   |
| 11:00-11:15 | Budget update - <b>Rich Pannkuk</b>   |
| 11:15-11:45 | Unified Home Study update - <b>John March</b>   |
| 11:45-12:00 | PIP/Braam update - <b>Jan Hoppler</b>   |
| 12:00-1:00  | Working Lunch-Fatherhood Engagement Presentation - <b>Jonah Idczak &amp; Bernice Morehead</b>                               |
| 1:00-2:00   | 20 policies discussion/workload reduction - <b>Becky Smith, Leah Stajduhar, Jeanne McShane, Debbie Willis, Chris Parvin</b> |
| 2:15-3:15   | Group discussion  |
| 3:15-3:30   | Break   |
| 3:30-3:45   | Regions report out  |
| 3:45-4:00   | Wrap up   |

## Unified Home Studies

## Talking points for stakeholder meetings

**Issue**

Beginning in the next year, Children's Administration will begin implementing a unified home study for:

- Relative Caregivers
- ICPC Placements
- Licensed Foster Homes
- Adoptions

The Unified Home Study will provide a consistent quality assessment for all families who want to care for dependent children. Over time, the Unified Home Study will:

1. Improve outcomes for children in out-of-home care (ensure the same safety standards for placement, that providers are both willing and able to care for children, reduce disruptions when children are legally free and a provider cannot meet the Adoption Home Study Requirements)
2. Improve CA relationships with out-of-home caregivers
3. Encourage more relative caregivers for CA dependent children to become licensed
4. Reduce duplicate work by CA staff
5. Save state funds that currently go toward duplicate fingerprint-based background checks.

**Plan**

- Start implementing the Unified Home Study first in areas where adoptions and relative home study staff are already centralized
- Provide expedited licensing training to adoptions staff who have not attended the licensing track week
- Provide expedited adoptions training to licensing staff who have not attended adoptions track week
- Work with the existing DCFS/DLR workgroup to address implementation issues.
- We want to be in close communication with DCFS staff when there are emergency placements made with relatives, to make sure that we are getting those home studies started in a timely manner.

**Retention & Recruitment Contract**

- Extending current contracts for one year
- One statewide contract for both
- Performance based --Outcome measures (what makes sense?)
- To include investigation support
- What are your priorities for a retention and recruitment contract?

**Statewide CPA Network/Children’s Administration Stakeholder Meeting**

**4-19-2012@ CA-OB 2**

CA Participants:

CPA Network Participants:

<b><u>Discussion Item</u></b>	<b><u>Action Steps/Decisions</u></b>
<p><b><u>Review Item</u></b></p> <p><b><i>Clarifying Shared Values- "Always come back to what’s best for children".</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Safety – Child safety must remain the focus and priority for all considerations and activities.</li> <li>+ Permanency – Identifying and completing <u>timely</u> permanent plans (reunification, adoption or guardianship with relative, kin or appropriate placement resource) for children and youth is the goal for service provision.</li> <li>+ Well-being – Children and youth have the right to be provided safe, nurturing homes and placements.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Review Item</u></b></p> <p><b><i>Discussions, interactions and strategies must include and be built upon fundamental principles.</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Agreed Fundamental Principles:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Transparency</li> <li>❖ Mutual Accountability</li> <li>❖ Trust</li> <li>❖ Solution Focused: does the activity meet the intended purpose?</li> <li>❖ Consistency</li> <li>❖ Willingness to speak up</li> <li>❖ Active Participation</li> <li>❖ Leadership in communicating with our stakeholders</li> <li>❖ Interdependence</li> <li>❖ Timely Communication</li> <li>❖ Hard Conversations are part of the work</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Review Item</u></b></p> <p><b><i>CA Perimeters for Collaboration:</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ CA is ultimately responsible for the decisions.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Items that are non-negotiable are identified; CA has a commitment to be transparent about the why behind the decision that something is non-negotiable.</li> </ol> </li> <li>+ CA will clarify for CPAs- statewide conversations vs. the regional conversation on specific issues. The goal is to move collaborative issues forward; having the right people at the table for the right conversations, making sure the scope of the issue is clear, state vs. regional.</li> <li>+ CA- wants an avenue to communicate with the CPA statewide Coalition across programs. Their goal is to share drafts/get feedback on policy and practice initiatives.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Review Item</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Commitment to regular meeting schedule for on-going</li> </ul>

<p><b>Process: Successful communication should be process dependent, not person dependent.</b></p>	<p>collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Commitment to taking meeting Notes:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Concise notes with discussion topic and basic action items.</li> <li>❖ Minutes will be disseminated to group.</li> </ul> </li> <li>+ Commitment to “Swat Meetings”, prioritizing those issues that are emergent, establishing a lead from both CA/CPA, moving up a meeting timeframe to respond to the urgency of the issue.</li> <li>+ Commitment to small group project meetings, scheduled as needed, with clear goals and timeframes for completion of those goals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agreed Meeting Schedule:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Next Meeting:</li> <li>+ Previous agreements in our process:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Pre planned agenda</li> <li>❖ Small group reports</li> <li>❖ Rumor control</li> <li>❖ Prioritizing issues to be addressed</li> <li>❖ Next meeting scheduled before meeting ends</li> <li>❖ Data shared ahead of time with group discussion</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Review of key issues for follow up :</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ <u>Unified home study</u></li> <li>+ <u>Contracts</u></li> <li>+ <u>DLR Process</u></li> <li>+ <u>Receiving Care</u></li> <li>+ <u>Placement Process</u></li> </ul> <p>Identify new or potential areas of discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Travel Requirements and their impact children</li> <li>+ Respite</li> <li>+ WAC Revision</li> <li>+ Region 1 Service Authorization</li> <li>+ Foster Care to 21 Implementation</li> <li>+ How CPAs are notified about CA policy changes: Guardianship Policy Updates</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identify key next steps:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ </li> </ul>
<p><b>Review CA identified statewide leads for specific contract areas.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Finance Budget Issues: Rich Pannkuk</li> <li>+ Payment Issues: Dan Ashby</li> <li>+ BRS/CPA Issues: Doug Allison (and any out of home contracted service)</li> <li>+ In Home contracted services: Tim Kelly</li> <li>+ DLR: Jeanne McShane</li> <li>+ Visitation/Policy Issues: Leah Stadjuhar</li> <li>+ Background Check process: Sharon Gilbert and Jeanne</li> </ul>

	<p><i>McShane</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> <i>Contract Requests: Local regional contract managers</i></li><li> <i>RFTI: part of University of Washington</i></li></ul>
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# Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee Retreat

June 6-7, 2012

Northern Quest Resort  
100 N Hayford Road  
Airway Heights, WA 99001  
8:00 am to 5:00 pm

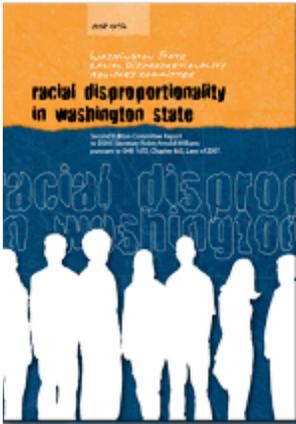
**Facilitator:**  
**Mr. Lyman Legters**

**GOALS:**

- ✓ Review of past year and status of current work on remediation plan
- ✓ Develop plan of action for upcoming year
- ✓ Reaffirming members' commitment to WSRDAC and work of the committee
- ✓ Solicit feedback from community stakeholders

**Wednesday – June 6, 2012**

<b>8:00</b>	<b>Opening Prayer</b>	<b>Liz Mueller</b>
<b>8:00-9:00</b>	<b>Breakfast, Greetings and Introduction of Committee Members</b>	<b>Co-chairs</b>
<b>9:00-9:15</b>	<b>Opening Remarks</b>	<b>Denise Revels Robinson</b>
<b>9:15-9:30</b>	<b>Overview of the Day</b>	<b>Lyman Legters</b>
<b>9:30-11:00</b>	<b>Presentation</b> <i>Overview of National Practices and How Those Practices are Impacting Disproportionality</i>	<b>Dr. Ralph Bayard</b>
<b>11:00-11:15</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	
<b>11:15-12:00</b>	<b>ICW Update</b>	<b>Liz Mueller Toni Lodge Betsy Tulee</b>
<b>12:00</b>	<b>Blessing</b>	<b>Toni Lodge</b>
<b>12:00-1:00</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	
<b>1:00-2:30</b>	<b>Regional Reports</b>	<b>Regional Administrators/ Leads</b>
<b>2:30 – 2:45</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	
<b>2:45 – 4:15</b>	<b>WSRDAC Remediation Recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of 2011 Recommendations</li> <li>• Supplemental Remediation Initiatives</li> <li>• Committee Discussion</li> </ul>	<b>Lyman Legters</b>
<b>4:15 -4:30</b>	<b>Closing &amp; Transition to Tomorrow</b>	<b>Lyman Legters</b>
<b>DAY ONE ENDS - DINNER ON YOUR OWN</b>		



# Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee Retreat

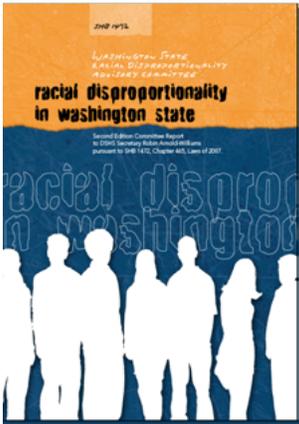
June 6-7, 2012

Northern Quest Resort  
100 N Hayford Road  
Airway Heights, WA 99001  
8:00 am to 2:00 pm

Thursday – June 7, 2012

<b>8:00</b>	<b>Opening Prayer</b>	<b>Gwendolyn Townsend</b>
<b>8:00-8:30</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>8:30-8:45</b>	<b>Welcome</b> Summary of Previous Day	<b>Lyman Legters</b>
<b>8:45 – 10:45</b>	<b>Review of 2011 Goals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did We Accomplish What We Wanted?</li> </ul> <b>Adoption of 2012 Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Future Directions</li> </ul>	<b>Lyman Legters</b>
<b>10:45 – 11:00</b>	<b>BREAK</b>	
<b>11:00 – 11:45</b>	<b>FTDM Update</b>	<b>Cheryl Rich</b>
<b>11:45</b>	<b>Blessing</b>	<b>Gwendolyn Townsend</b>
	<b>LUNCH</b>	
<b>12:45 – 1:45</b>	<b>Community Engagement Projects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 98178 Project</li> <li>• 98118 Partnership with South Seattle Schools</li> </ul>	<b>Region 2 Staff</b>
<b>1:45 – 2:00</b>	<b>Closing</b>	<b>Lyman Legters</b>
<b>ADJOURN</b>		

*Thank you for your efforts to reduce disproportionality and disparate treatment of children of color.*



“What we need to do is learn to respect and embrace our differences until our differences don’t make a difference.”

## Revise Unified Home Study Implementation Plan

*June 2012*

### Revised Unified Home Study Implementation Plan

The attached documents reflect the changes made to the Unified Home Study implementation plan following the initial implementation in North Region 2. Changes were made in consultation with home study staff, Child Placing Agencies, the statewide DLR/DCFS unified home study workgroup, and the Children's Administration Management Team. Changes include:

#### Updated Timeline

The implementation timeline was revised so that the training could be modified and a plan for the backlog of relative home studies developed. The implementation timeline is Attachment 1.

#### Referral Criteria for Relative Placements

The referral criteria for relative homes study was changed to 60 days after placement, rather than at the start of the placement. Many children leave a relative placement in under 60 days, often to return home. Home studies usually take 90 days. In order to make the best use staff resources, relative home studies will not begin until the placement has lasted 60 days. Background checks and home assessments occur before the placement begins. The *Unified Home Study Referral Criteria and Process* is Attachment 2.

#### Home Study Prescreening Tool for Social Workers Requesting Home Studies for Relative Placements

A prescreening process was implemented for relative caregivers to assess the relatives willingness to care for the child(ren) on a long-term basis, if necessary, and to complete the home study process. Please see Attachment 3.

#### Flyer for Relatives: Benefits of Becoming a Foster Parent

Information aimed at encouraging relative caregivers to become licensed has been developed and is Attachment 4.

## 2012 Children’s Administration Unified Home Study Implementation Timeline/Plan

*Prerequisite online home study training will be made available through the DSHS Learning Center for DLR staff prior to the classroom home study training.*

Unified Home Study Implementation Target Dates	Tasks
Nov 2011 R2N- Early implementation of Unified Home Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 days of training</li> <li>• DLR begins taking new Unified Home Study referrals from DCFS</li> <li>• Lessons learned, adjustments</li> </ul>
May 16 <sup>th</sup> – All Regions began collaborating with CPAs or certified adoption professionals to build capacity for contracting out adoption home studies – Letter of Notice to Contract to the Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procure Adoption Home Study contracts in each Region (suggestion of having multiple contractor’s to build capacity to serve geographically and culturally)</li> <li>• Current DCFS adoption supervisors will gate keep the adoption home study to be referred out to the contractors</li> </ul>
June 1 <sup>st</sup> – Share Unified Home Study presentation with DCFS statewide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present Unified Home Study presentation for DCFS</li> <li>• Share new Unified Home Study forms</li> </ul>
June 16 <sup>th</sup> R2S – DCFS staff officially move to DLR for unified home study transition. (official letters sent to staff of new assignment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with Human Resources Division</li> <li>• Home study cases currently assigned to DCFS staff will remain assigned for completion</li> </ul>
June 19 <sup>th</sup> , 20 <sup>th</sup> , 21 <sup>st</sup> R2S- Unified Home Study training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 days of training (Del Ridge Pine Rm.)</li> </ul>
Week of June 25 <sup>th</sup> R2S CPA Unified Home Study training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 day of training (place TBD)</li> </ul>
June 25 <sup>th</sup> R2S – Implementation of Unified Home Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DLR begins taking new Unified Home Study referrals from DCFS</li> </ul>
July 1 <sup>st</sup> Statewide Adoption Home Study contracts in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All adoption home study contracts completed (Goal)</li> </ul>
July 10 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> , 12 <sup>th</sup> R1N Unified Home Study training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 days of training (Spokane SW conf. room)</li> <li>• Coordinate lodging/travel arrangements for staff</li> </ul>
Week of July 16 <sup>th</sup> R1N CPA Unified Home Study training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 day of training (place TBD)</li> </ul>
July 16 <sup>st</sup> R1N – DCFS staff officially move to DLR for unified home study transition. (official letters sent to staff of new assignment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with Human Resources Division</li> <li>• Home study cases currently assigned to DCFS staff will remain assigned for completion</li> </ul>
July 16 <sup>th</sup> R1N – Implementation of Unified Home Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DLR begins taking new Unified Home Study referrals from DCFS</li> </ul>
July 24 <sup>th</sup> , 25 <sup>th</sup> , 26 <sup>th</sup> R1S Unified Home Study training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 days of training (Yakima Conference room)</li> <li>• Coordinate lodging/travel arrangements for staff</li> </ul>
August 1 <sup>st</sup> R1S – DCFS staff officially move to DLR for unified home study transition. (official letters sent to staff of new assignment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with Human Resources Division</li> <li>• Home study cases currently assigned to DCFS staff will remain assigned for completion</li> </ul>
August 1 <sup>st</sup> R1S – Implementation of Unified Home Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DLR begins taking new Unified Home Study referrals from DCFS</li> </ul>
Week of Aug. 6 <sup>th</sup> R1S CPA Unified Home Study training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 day of training (place TBD)</li> </ul>
July 31 <sup>st</sup> , Aug. 1 <sup>st</sup> , Aug. 2 <sup>nd</sup> R3N Unified Home Study training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 days of training (Tacoma/room195)</li> <li>• Coordinate lodging/travel arrangements for staff</li> </ul>
August 1 <sup>st</sup> – R3N DCFS staff officially move to DLR for unified home study transition. (official letters sent to staff of new assignment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with Human Resources Division</li> <li>• Home study cases currently assigned to DCFS staff will remain assigned for completion</li> </ul>
August 6 <sup>th</sup> – R3N Implementation of Unified Home Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DLR begins taking new Unified Home Study referrals from DCFS</li> </ul>
Week of Aug. 6 <sup>th</sup> R3N CPA Unified Home Study training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 day of training (place TBD)</li> </ul>
August 14 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> , 16 <sup>th</sup> R3S Unified Home Study training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 days of training (Tumwater Nisqually room)</li> <li>• Coordinate lodging/travel arrangements for staff</li> </ul>
August 16 <sup>th</sup> R3S – DCFS staff officially move to DLR for unified home study transition. (official letters sent to staff of new assignment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with Human Resources Division</li> <li>• Home study cases currently assigned to DCFS staff will remain assigned for completion</li> </ul>
August 20 <sup>th</sup> R3S – Implementation of Unified Home Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DLR begins taking new Unified Home Study referrals from DCFS</li> </ul>
Week of August 20 <sup>th</sup> R3S CPA Unified Home Study training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 day of training (place TBD)</li> </ul>

## Unified Home Study Referral Criteria and Process

### Guiding Principles:

- Improve the quality of our home studies through one comprehensive, standardized individualized assessment for all placement resources
- All placement resources submit same required documents
- One background clearance
- Increase the number of “fit and willing” licensed relative homes
- Reduce length of stay, Increase of timely permanency
- Increase placement stability
- Increased relative engagement and support

### SW Steps Prior to making UHS Referral Process for DCFS Cases

1. Child needs to be placed with a relative caregiver or suitable adult placement for minimum of 60 days (excluding home study requests where the child isn't placed)
2. Assigned DCFS social worker and supervisor need to complete and approve the UHS pre-screening assessment tool (excluding home study requests where the child isn't placed)
3. Placement needs to have a cleared and approved finger print based criminal background check completed (*if background check has crimes and/or negative actions that requires “Administrative Review Request for Crime and/or Negative Action” (DSHS 15-367) this must be approved and at appropriate management level (HQ, RA or AA) prior to UHS referral being made*)

### Documents required for the UHS Referral for DCFS Cases

DCFS- Social worker will email the following documents to the identified regional unified home study group email address to make a unified home study referral:

1. Copy of most recent ISSP or dependency petition
2. Completed Unified Home Study referral
3. Completed and approved UHS pre-screening assessment tool
4. UHS requests where the child is not placed will not require “UHS pre-screening assessment tool”



CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION (CA)  
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (DCFS)

### Home Study Pre-Screen for Relative / Suitable Adult Caregivers

CHILD'S NAME
FAMILY CASE NUMBER
CAREGIVER'S NAME

**To be completed by caregiver with primary DCFS worker between 30 and 60 days of placement.**

- While the child is in my care, I will only allow contact with the family as explained in the case plan.  Yes  No
- The safety and supervision expectations for the dependent child in my care are:
- I am willing to participate in the reunification process with the parents / guardians.  Yes  No
- I have received the following documents:
  - Permanency Planning Matrix (DSHS 16-231)
  - Fact Sheet for Relatives on Licensing (DSHS XX-XXX)
- I am interested in being considered as a permanent care provider if the child cannot be safely reunified with the parent/s within 12 months.
  - I do not know if I could be a permanent care provider at this time.
  - I cannot be a permanent placement option.
- I am interested in becoming a licensed foster parent.  Yes  No

CAREGIVER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	CAREGIVER'S PRINTED NAME
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**To be completed by primary DCFS worker and supervisor during monthly case conference.**

- This caregiver has completed the required CA/N and finger print based criminal background check.
  - Yes. There were no crimes or negative actions that required an "Administrative Review Request for Crime and / or Negative Action" (DSHS 15-367).
  - Yes. The background check returned crimes / negative actions that required an "Administrative Review Request for Crime and/or Negative Action" (DSHS 15-367) and the signed administrative approval has been obtained.
- This caregiver has demonstrated a general understanding of the permanency options for the dependent child in his/her care if family reunification cannot occur within 12 months and an ability to provide safe and nurturing care for the child. The caregiver is willing to participate in a home study.
  - Yes. We recommend the current caregiver complete a home study.
  - No. We do not recommend the current caregiver complete a home study.

Worker will request FTDM for placement change if worker and supervisor do not recommend a home study OR if the caregiver is not willing to proceed with a Home Study. If there is an immediate safety concern for the child, the worker will take immediate action to move the child.

WORKER'S SIGNATURE	DATE	WORKER'S PRINTED NAME
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TITLE
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SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE	DATE	SUPERVISOR'S PRINTED NAME
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cc: Family Case File  
Provider File



# FACT Sheet

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL & HEALTH SERVICES

## 2012 Children's Administration Division of Licensed Resources



### Why Should I Be Licensed to Care for My Relative?

Children's Administration seeks to place children with relatives whenever possible. We know relatives can provide stable, committed homes for children in crisis. While licensing is not required for relative care, there are specific benefits:

- Foster care reimbursement is a higher rate than the grant available through Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. The 2012 basic foster care rates are
  - Child ages 0-5= \$423.68
  - Child ages 6-11=\$500.69
  - Child ages 12-21=\$575.30Rates may be higher depending on the level of care the child needs.
- Partial reimbursement for damages or injuries caused by a child placed with you that are not fully covered by private insurance through the Foster Parent Reimbursement program.
- "Foster Care to 21" allows foster care reimbursement to foster parents providing care for youth over age 19 who continue in foster care to participate in, or complete, a post high school academic or vocational program. This program is limited in the number of youth it can serve.
- Each applicant is assigned a foster care licenser who provides support through resource referral, training opportunities and individual consultation.

### What Types of Residences Can Be Licensed as Foster Homes?

Foster families may rent or own their homes or apartments. Any home can be a foster home if:

- It is reasonably clean, safe and in good repair.
- Poisons and cleaning solutions are kept out of reach of children.
- Medications, including vitamins and herbal remedies, are in locked storage and in their original containers.
- All firearms, ammunition, and other weapons are kept in locked containers.
- Smoke detectors are installed.
- Approved 2A10BC rated or larger all purpose (ABC) fire extinguisher is on hand.

#### ***Any adult living in a potential foster home must:***

- Complete a background clearance check with the FBI and Washington State Patrol.
- Submit tuberculosis tests dated within the last year.

Youth ages 16 to 18 in the household must complete a Washington State Patrol check

***There is no smoking in foster homes or in motor vehicles transporting children. Adults may smoke outdoors away from children.***

## Frequently Asked Questions About Foster Parenting as a Relative

### Can a single person be a foster parent?

Yes.

### Is there an age minimum?

Foster parents should be at least 21 years of age, however, we may waive this age requirement for relative caregivers.

### How long does it take to become licensed?

It takes approximately 90 days. We need you to return information quickly. Processing background checks can sometimes delay licensing.

### How long would my relative stay in my home as a foster child?

It depends on the particular child and the parents' situation. A child may stay in care a few days or several months. The goal is for the child to safely return home or have a permanent home if a safe return is not possible.

### What contact will my relative foster child have with his/her biological parents?

Most foster children have regular court ordered visits with their biological parents. Children and parents need to have regular contact for children to safely return home. The child's social worker will work with you and the child's parents to decide the location and time of the visits. The court decides whether the visits will be supervised.

### Can my relative foster child share a room with my child?

Most children may share bedrooms. Your licensor will work with you and your social worker to make sure that sharing bedrooms is safe for all of the children involved. Some children cannot share bedrooms because of behavior concerns.

### Can I spank my relative foster child?

No. Foster parents and relative caregivers are prohibited from using any form of physical punishment for foster children. Positive discipline, combined with warmth and caring, should be used to teach the child.

### Can we take our relative foster child with us on vacation?

Yes. The child's social worker must approve the plan and know how to contact you.

### Can we leave our relative foster child with a baby sitter?

Yes. The sitter needs to be at least 16 years old (with a few exceptions). Respite care might also be available to you. Please consult with the child's social worker.

### Is there a problem with our having pets?

Family pets are not usually a problem. We evaluate pets to make sure there are no concerns about safety or cleanliness. Some children cannot be placed with some pets because of health issues (such as allergies).

### What training is required?

- First Aid/CPR
- Blood Borne Pathogens
- Licensing orientation
- PRIDE pre-service training
- Inservice training

### What financial help is available?

The Department provides reimbursement for foster care using standard rates that reflect the child's age and special needs.

## Who Do I Contact For More Information?

Region 1N:	Laurie Palmquist, Spokane	<a href="mailto:PALL300@dshs.wa.gov">PALL300@dshs.wa.gov</a>	509.363.3523
Region 1S:	Maria Rivera, Yakima	<a href="mailto:ZIMA300@dshs.wa.gov">ZIMA300@dshs.wa.gov</a>	509.225.6561
Region 2N:	Vickie Tupper, Everett	<a href="mailto:TUVI300@dshs.wa.gov">TUVI300@dshs.wa.gov</a>	425.339.2961
Region 2S:	Richard Tagorda, Seattle	<a href="mailto:TARI300@dshs.wa.gov">TARI300@dshs.wa.gov</a>	253.372.6014
Region 3N:	Charlotte Glen, Tacoma	<a href="mailto:GLCH300@dshs.wa.gov">GLCH300@dshs.wa.gov</a>	253.983.6132
Region 3S:	Steve Overton, Vancouver	<a href="mailto:OVST300@dshs.wa.gov">OVST300@dshs.wa.gov</a>	360.993.7925

*DSSH does not discriminate and provides equal access to its programs and services for all persons without regard to race, color, gender, religion, creed, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, age, veteran's status or the presence of any physical, sensory or mental disability.*

[Robbie.Downs@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:Robbie.Downs@dshs.wa.gov)

June 2012

Children’s Administration  
Division of Licensed Resources

**Unified Home Study Quality Process Plan**

**Team Members**

Randy Roberts, Quality Assurance Program Manager, Division of Licensed Resources  
Darla Torno, Region 1 North Team Reviewer  
Maria Tovar, Region 1 South Team Reviewer  
Donna Brantner, Region 2 North Team Reviewer  
Ruben Reeves, Region 2 South Team Reviewer  
Carmen Cabrera, Region 3 North Team Reviewer  
Mark Niskanen, Region 3 South Team Reviewer

**Related Policies**

Unified Home Study – Policy currently under revision  
Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee – (SHB 1472)  
Relative Framework and Unlicensed Placement

**Introduction**

The goal of the Unified Home Study project is to provide a single approval for foster care and adoption home study applicants. The Unified Home Study reflects CA’s dedication to strengthening out-of-home placements for dependent children by designing and supporting a single assessment tool that addresses relative, non-relative, and pre-adoption placements. Using the Unified Home Study will better serve children by reducing placement disruptions for children who become legally free and improve outcomes for children in out-of-home care.

**Data Review and Analyses**

The DLR Quality Assurance Program Manager, with the assistance of lead reviewers in each region and the Division of Quality Management and Accountability, will assemble the data identified in this plan and develop a report of findings and strategies to improve consistent practice in the unified home study assessment. This information will be assembled presented semi-annually to the Division of Licensed Resources Management Team for review and analysis. The management team will implement strategies that are within their scope of authority and provide a report with recommendations, if needed, for additional changes to the Children’s Administration Continuous Quality Improvement Board for consideration and approval.

Data Used in this Quality Assurance Plan				
Data Element	Source	Reporting	Lead	Availability
Direct Measure of Permanency				
Length of Stay: For children whose achieved permanent plan is adoption or guardianship with a relative	FamLink Self-Service Placement Report	Semi-Annual	Cindy Ellingson	In place
Children Placed with Relatives	Monthly Metrics	Semi-Annual	Randy Roberts	In place
Measures of Consistent Implementation of the Unified Home Study				
Consistent Application of Unified Home Study	Targeted Case Review by HQ and DLR Field Lead Reviewers	Semi-Annual	Randy Roberts	November 2012
Related Measures				
Caregiver Race	DLR Internal Log until data in InfoFamLink	Semi-Annual	Randy Roberts	Internal Log September 2012

**Direct Measure of Permanency**

- Length of Stay – Whenever children must be placed into out-of-home care to provide for their safety, every effort is made to ensure that their temporary placement is stable and that a permanent home is secured as quickly as possible. We will be measuring the length of stay for children whose achieved permanent plan is adoption or guardianship with a relative.
- Placements with Relatives - Measures number of dependent children in care for more than 60 days who are placed with relatives. CA seeks to maintain continuity of family relationships. This report is available now through Monthly Metrics.

**Measures of Consistent Application of the Unified Home Study**

- Targeted Case Review - Division of Licensed Resources leads from each region will review unified home studies to measure consistent implementation through the use of a standardized review tool semi-annually.

**Related Measures**

- Caregiver Race – Measures the impact of the unified home study on our efforts to seek foster families that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of children in out-of-home care. Data will be used to evaluate impact of implementation of the Unified Home Study and correspond to the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee (WSRDAC) recommendations. This data will come from an internal tracking log until a FamLink report is available.

**Data Reporting**

This quality plan outlines the process for measuring performance and consistent implementation of the unified home study. The quality process plan will begin by November 1, 2012 and provide the initial report of findings and recommendations to the Children’s Administration Continuous Quality Improvement Board in January 2013. This process will occur on a semi-annual basis.

## Restructured Case Planning Meetings July, 2012

### Recommendations from Community Partners

In the second quarter of this Program Improvement Plan, Children's Administration discussed case planning meeting with our advisory committees and parent advocates. These groups supported consolidating case planning meetings. They also advocated for conducting the meetings in a manner that supports parent engagement. Specifically, they recommended that:

- The time and location of the meetings be set to facilitate parents' participation
- Parents receive support from Parent Advocates and other neutral parties
- The content of the meetings be clear to parents

### Response to Recommendations

The attached revised policy and diagram show the consolidation of case planning meetings which Children's Administration is making at this time.

Children's Administration supports holding case planning meetings in community locations and outside business hours. Many meetings are held in these settings and times currently.

Parent Advocates are available in a few areas of the state currently. At this time, there are not state resources to expand this support.

As the new structure of case planning meetings is implemented, Tip Sheets for parents will be made available to the field offices.

### Specific Changes to the Structure of Meetings

This revision streamlines our Case Planning meetings by eliminating three required Shared Planning Meetings. Specifically, Shared Planning Meetings at the following times will no longer be required:

- Within 72 hours of the child's Original Placement Date
- Within 30 days of the child's Original Placement Date
- Within 60 days of child's Original Placement Date to review the Child Health and Education Tracking report.

The issues which have been discussed in these meetings will be discussed at Family Team Decision Making Meetings and the Shelter Care Case Conference.

The revised policy also clarifies that “multiple issues impacting children and families may be addressed in one meeting rather than separate meetings held for each issue”. In addition, the timeframes for Shared Planning Meetings have been revised to read “within xx days”. Some staff in the local offices report a belief that separate or repeated staffings are currently required.

As stated in the Program Improvement Plan, the Child Protection Team and Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee staffings have not been changed. The Child Protection Team staffings are currently required by Executive Order. The Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee staffings can only be changed in collaboration with the Tribes. While discussions have begun, there have not been any completed actions that would allow policy requirements to be changed.

## Summary

Children’s Administration has restructured case planning meetings so that the process:

- Is clear to social workers and families: By reducing meetings and clarifying that one meeting can cover multiple purposes, case planning meetings will be clearer to both staff and families.
- Will better engage families in case planning: Fewer meetings will assist parents in attending those that do occur. The Family Team Decision-Making meeting process, which is designed to engage families, will be used in many of the meetings.
- Meetings are consolidated, whenever possible and more efficient: The revised structure reduces the number of meetings required and integrates the meetings which still need to occur.
- Support the appropriate, timely setting and changing of permanency goals: The meeting structure supports key phases of decisions about the direction of a case and emphasizes concurrent planning.

**DRAFT POLICY**

Expected Implementation: September 2012

**1700. Case Staffings****PURPOSE STATEMENT**

All staffings engage parents in the shared planning process to develop family specific case plans focused on indentified safety threats and child specific permanency goals. Working in partnership with families, natural supports and providers helps identify parents' strengths, threats to child safety, focus on everyday life events, and help parents build the skills necessary to support the safety and well-being of their children. The shared planning process integrates all CA staffings.

**LAWS****POLICY**

- A. Engage families, natural supports and providers in case planning. Schedule staffings in a location and time that meets the needs of the parent(s) and their participants whenever possible.
- B. Identify all relevant case participants.
- C. Schedule staffings to correspond with planning for court hearings whenever possible. (Staffings may be held at anytime an urgent issue is identified.)
- D. Multiple issues impacting children and families may be addressed in one meeting rather than separate meetings held for each issue.
- E. Utilize staffings to assist you and the family to develop or review resources or approaches to address child safety.
- F. Prepare for staffings by determining how the participants can contribute to the case discussion and planning.
- G. Utilize the [concurrent planning](#) process to develop child specific permanency goals.

**RESOURCES**

[Practice Model Website](#)

**FORMS**

[DSHS 14-474 Shared Planning Form](#)

**1710. Shared Planning**

**1720. Family Team Decision Making Meetings (FTDM)**

**1730. Shelter Care Case Conference**

## 1740. Child Protection Teams (CPT)

### Related Staffings:

[43104. Multi Disciplinary Staffings for Youth Exiting Care \(age 17.5\)](#)

[4533. Behavior Rehabilitative Services \(BRS\) Staffing](#)

[45431. Foster Care Assessment Program \(FCAP\)](#)

### ~~4301~~ 1710. Shared Planning

<b>Purpose Statement</b>	Shared Planning Meetings bring individuals together to help make decisions for children about safety, permanency and well-being.
<b>Laws</b>	<a href="#">RCW 13.34.067</a>  <a href="#">RCW 13.34.145</a>
<b>Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Shared Planning meetings must occur within the required timeframes.</li> <li>B. Required participants must be invited to Shared Planning meetings.</li> <li>C. Safety, Permanency and Well-Being for the child and family must be discussed during Shared Planning meetings.</li> <li>D. Shared Planning Meetings must be documented in FamLink using the Shared Planning Form.</li> </ul>
<b>Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Conduct a Shared Planning Meeting <b>within</b> the following timeframes (Combine Shared Planning Meetings as needed) to address the safety, permanency and well-being of the child:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <del>72 hours of the child's Original Placement Date (OPD).</del></li> <li>2. <del>30 days of the child's OPD.</del></li> <li>3. <del>Within 60 days of child's OPD to review the Child Health and Education Tracking (CHET) report.</del></li> <li>4. <b>Within 6 months of child's OPD.</b></li> <li>5. <b>Within 9 to 11 months of child's OPD prior to Permanency Planning Hearing.</b></li> <li>6. Every 12 months or until the child's permanent plan is achieved or the case is closed.</li> <li>7. <b>Within 30 days of a Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) referral to the Assistant Attorney General (AAG).</b></li> <li>8. <b>Within 30 days following the court ordering TPR.</b></li> </ol> </li> <li>B. Invite the following participants to Shared Planning Meetings 5 calendar days before the meeting when possible:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parent(s)</li> <li>2. Youth (as developmentally appropriate)</li> <li>3. Youth's mentor (if applicable)</li> <li>4. Family members/relatives</li> <li>5. Caregiver(s)</li> </ol> <p><b>Note:</b> Parent(s) must agree for Caregiver(s) to attend a Shared Planning Meeting</p> </li> </ul>

when conducted in place of a Case Conference.

6. Tribe(s)
7. LICWAC member if Tribal staff is not available or Tribe is unknown
8. Community partners
9. CASA/GAL/Attorney(s)
10. Other persons identified by child or family
11. Agency staff as needed:
  - a. CHET Worker
  - b. Adoption Worker
  - c. Placement Coordinator

**Important:** If the child, caregiver or parent is unable to attend the Shared Planning Meeting their input will be presented and considered in the decision-making process.

C. Address the following elements (when applicable) during Shared Planning Meetings:

1. **Safety**

- a. Assessments related to safety
- b. Safety and transition planning
- c. Family strengths, community and cultural supports
- d. Services needed to eliminate safety concerns

2. **Permanency**

- a. Strengths and challenges to timely permanence for the child
- b. Placement stability, need for services to reduce risk of disruption
- c. Efforts to place siblings together
- d. Relative search, maternal and paternal/relative home
- e. Status of Tribal affiliation and Tribal involvement
- f. Plan to maintain community and cultural connections
- g. [Permanency planning](#) goals and progress, including barriers to reunification; TPR, compelling reasons and alternate permanency plan including [adoption](#)
- h. Update visit plan, including sibling visits

3. **Well-being**

- a. Mental health, physical health and educational well-being of child
- b. Services to support healthy development
- c. Assign roles and responsibilities for child's education
- d. Update medical information
- e. Results of the CHET screening and other assessments
- f. Independent Living Services
- g. Transition plans
- h. Alternative plan for assessment and treatment if child has been denied mental health or substance abuse services
- i. Cultural and/or Tribal connections

D. Document all Shared Planning Meetings in FamLink using the Shared Planning Form within the required documentation timeframes.

**4302. 1720. Family Team Decision Making Meetings**

<p><b>Purpose Statement</b></p>	<p>Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) meetings bring people together who are involved with the family to make critical decisions regarding the removal of child(ren) from their home, changes in out-of-home placement, and reunification or placement into a permanent home.</p>
<p><b>Laws</b></p>	<p><a href="#">RCW 13.34.067</a> <a href="#">RCW 13.34.145</a></p>
<p><b>Policy</b></p>	<p>A. Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) meeting must occur within the required timelines. B. The required participants must be invited to the FTDM meeting. C. FTDM meetings must be documented in FamLink using the Shared Planning Form and case note.</p>
<p><b>Procedures</b></p>	<p>A. Conduct a FTDM meeting within the following timeframes (Convene additional FTDM meetings as needed):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Prior</b> to removing a child and anytime out-of-home placement of a child is being considered unless safety threats make it necessary to request immediate protective custody.</li> <li>2. <b>If</b> a child is placed into protective custody by law enforcement, the FTDM must be held as soon as possible and no later than 72 hours of the placement and always prior to the shelter care hearing.</li> <li>3. <b>Prior</b> to moving a child from one placement to another.</li> <li>4. <b>Prior</b> to reunification of a child with parent(s) or exiting from care.</li> </ol> <p>B. Invite the following participants to the FTDM meeting when possible:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parent(s)</li> <li>2. Youth (developmentally appropriate)</li> <li>3. Youth's mentor (if applicable)</li> <li>4. Family members/relatives</li> <li>5. Caregivers (if parent(s) agree)</li> </ol> <p><b>Note:</b> Parent(s) must agree for Caregiver(s) to attend a FTDM when conducted in place of a Case Conference.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Tribe(s)</li> <li>7. Community partners</li> <li>8. CASA/GAL/Attorney(s)</li> <li>9. Other identified by child or family</li> <li>10. Agency staff as needed:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. CHET Worker</li> <li>b. Adoption Worker</li> <li>c. Placement Coordinator</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><b>Important:</b> If the child, caregiver or parent is unable to attend the FTDM meeting, their input will be presented and considered in the decision-making process.</p> <p>C. Document meeting attendees in the Shared Planning Section of FamLink within the required documentation timeframes. <i>(Include any decisions reached and any plans made at the meeting, include items needed from those responsible for tracking issues in a case note,).</i></p> <p><b>Important:</b> FTDM meetings cannot be held in lieu of mandatory CPT meetings, nor can CPT</p>

	meetings be held in lieu of an FTDM meeting. Efforts should be made to combine these meetings with a CPT quorum and incorporate FTDM meeting structure.
<b>Resources</b>	<a href="#">FTDM Guide</a> <a href="#">FTDM Online Training</a>

## 1730. Shelter Care Case Conference

### PURPOSE STATEMENT

Provide an opportunity to develop and specify in a written case plan the expectations of both CA and the parent regarding the care and placement of their child.

### LAWS

[RCW 13.34.067](#)

[RCW 74.14A.020](#)

[RCW 13.34](#)

### POLICY

- A. Following Shelter Care and no later than thirty days prior to Fact Finding hearing CA will facilitate a conference to develop a written service agreement.
- B. Required participants must be invited to the Shelter Care Case Conference.

### PROCEDURE

- A. Schedule a Case Conference meeting when the court establishes shelter care and no later than thirty days before the Fact Finding court hearing.
- B. Invite to the case conference the following individuals:
  - 1. Parents
  - 2. Youth (as developmentally appropriate)
  - 3. Parents and youth’s assigned counsel
  - 4. GAL or CASA
  - 5. Tribe(s)
  - 6. Other persons identified and agreed upon by the parties
- C. Develop a written case plan including the expectations of CA and the parents regarding the care and placement of the parent’s child.
- D. Document the Case Conference within the Shared Planning Page in FamLink.

### FORMS

Case Plan

## 1740. Child Protection Teams (CPT)

### PURPOSE STATEMENT

Provide confidential consultation and recommendations on cases where there is a risk of serious harm to the child and when there is dispute if an out-of-home placement is appropriate.

### LAWS

[Executive Order 95-04](#)

[WAC 388-15-033](#)

### POLICY

- A. Regional Administrators (RA) must establish and maintain at least one Child Protection Team in each region.
- B. Child Protection Teams will include at least four selected professionals that provide services to abused and neglected children or their families.
- C. Child Protection Team recommendations are advisory to CA staff except when deciding a child's out-of-home placement or return home.

### PROCEDURE

- E. Child Protection Teams participants may include:
  - 1. Law Enforcement Officers
  - 2. Physicians
  - 3. Mental Health Counselors
  - 4. Substance Abuse Counselors
  - 5. Other Mandated Reporters
- F. Submit a [CPT Case Presentation Summary](#) to the regional CPT Coordinator for any case:
  - 1. With a moderately high or high SDM score per [SDM policy](#) and the child is six years or younger,
  - 2. Where there is serious professional disagreement about a risk of death or serious injury,
  - 3. Opened on the basis of imminent harm, or
  - 4. Where consultation will help improve outcomes for children on complex cases.
- G. CPT Coordinators must:
  - 1. Coordinate and manage CPT membership, recruitment, training, scheduling, record-keeping including CPT recommendations, reporting and communication for the CPT.
  - 2. Provide in writing the CPT staffing recommendations to the assigned social worker and supervisor following the staffing.
  - 3. Maintain a tracking system to document activity for staffings and recommendations.
- H. Consult with Supervisor, Area Manager and Regional Administrator immediately if CA disagrees with CPT recommendation regarding placement of a child.

- I. Follow the CPT recommendation for placement unless the RA authorizes an action contrary to the recommendation. If the RA authorizes a contrary action then:
  - 1. The supervisor or Area Manager must notify the CPT in writing within seven days of RA authorized action contrary to CPT placement recommendation.
  - 2. CPT may request the RA to review the social worker's case plan decisions and present additional information to support concerns for the contrary decision.
  - 3. If the CPT disagrees with the RA decision, the team may appeal to the Assistant Secretary.
  
- J. Document the CPT in the Shared Planning section in FamLink.

**FORMS**

[DSHS 15-266 CPT Staffing Recommendations](#)

[DSHS 15-268 CPT Case Presentation Summary](#)

**CASE PLANNING MEETINGS**  
**Quality Process Plan**

Effective January 2013

**Team Members**

Cheryl Rich, Statewide Family Engagement Program Manager  
Carrie Kendig, Permanency Program Manager  
Shannon Boniface, Region 1 North  
Monica Jenkins, Region 1 South  
Ronda Haun, Region 2  
Peggy Devoy, Region 3

**Related Policies**

[Children's Administration Case Plan Policies 1700](#)

**Introduction**

Children's Administration is restructuring case planning meetings to improve family engagement, support timely setting and changing of permanency goals and streamline work for Children's Administration staff. This change is scheduled for September 2012.

By January 2013, the Quality Process for Family Team Decision-Making will be expanded to include all case planning meetings. This document describes the expanded process.

Case planning meetings are an important opportunity to engage parents and other families members, as well as community partners in setting (and changing, if necessary) appropriate and timely permanency goals for children.

**Data Review and Analyses**

The Family Engagement Program Manager, with assistance from other members of the Division of Quality Management and Accountability, will collect, organize, and present the data to the Family Engagement Team every quarter. The team will analyze, develop a report of findings and suggest strategies for quality improvement activities to increase adherence to the model quarterly. The initial report of findings and recommendations will be forwarded to the Regional Administrators and Deputy Regional Administrators and to the Children's Administration Quality Improvement Board in August 2012. This will occur semi-annually thereafter.

**Data Used in this Quality Assurance Plan**

Data Element	Source of Data	Frequency of Reporting	Person Responsible for Providing	When Available
<b>Direct Measure of Family Engagement</b>				
Frequency of Family Team Decision Making Meetings and Other Case Planning Meetings Held	FamLink	Quarterly	Cheryl Rich	In Place
Attendance of Family Members at case planning meetings	FamLink	Quarterly	Cheryl Rich	December 2012
Implement the use of a Family Feedback Questionnaire at FTDM meetings	Compiled results of surveys	Quarterly	FTDM Supervisors	Sept. 2012
<b>Measures of Consistent Implementation of Case Planning Meetings</b>				
Case Planning Measures from the Central Case Review	Central Case Review Team	Quarterly	Lyn Craik	In Place
FTDM Facilitator Observations Conducted Using The Facilitator Observation/ Development Tool	FTDM Facilitator Supervisors	Semi-Annual	FTDM Supervisors	In Place
Frequency Of Children Being Placed Safely In The Least Restrictive Placement	FamLink	Quarterly	Cheryl Rich	In Place
Frequency of FTDMs, and other case planning meetings, being conducted for children who are disproportionately represented in out of home care	FamLink	Semi-Annual	Cheryl Rich	In Place
<b>Related Measures</b>				
Siblings placed together	FamLink	Monthly	InfoFamLink Report	In Place
Rate of Re-unification	FamLink	Quarterly	Famlink	In Place
Rate of re-entry	FamLink	Semi-Annual	InfoFamLink Report	In Place

**Direct Measure of Family Engagement**

- Frequency of Family Team Decision-Making Meetings and Other Case Planning Meetings Held: As of March 2012, FamLink launched the “Meetings” tool that provides data for all placements made. This report provides information for all children placed, if they have had a case planning meeting, age of the child, race and ethnicity, length of placement from the time of the FTDM, type of placement, and type of move. The data can be refined to specific time frames, regions, and offices. Policy currently requires a FTDM at

every placement move for children. The InfoFamLink report provides the ability to secure percentages from a statewide level to a worker level. Frequency of meetings will be reported out to the Regions on a quarterly basis.

- Attendance of Family Members at Case Planning Meetings: An enhancement to the report describes in the previous section will support reporting and analysis of the participants of case planning meetings.
- Family Feedback Questionnaire: A questionnaire will be provided to FTDM participants at meetings. Participation in the survey will be voluntary for the family members. Facilitators will collect the completed questionnaires and give them to the FTDM Supervisor for review and response if appropriate. The questionnaire will consist of seven satisfaction/engagement related questions with five possible answers ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree and a category for not applicable. The form will also provide a blank area for comments.

#### **Measures of Consistent Implementation of the Family Team Decision Making**

- FTDM Facilitator Observations: FTDM Facilitator observations are being completed on a semi-annual basis using the Observation/Development tool. The observations must be conducted at least annually by the FTDM supervisor; the other observation may be conducted by the statewide program manager or a peer facilitator with significant FTDM experience. The Observation/Development Tool identifies facilitator responsibilities for each stage of a FTDM Meeting. The tool contains both narrative and “check box” items to be documented by the observer, and used as a guide for supervisory coaching, skill development, and evaluation. The feedback from the observation is given to the facilitator and in instances when the statewide program manager observes, to the supervisor using the tool as a guide. The use of observations and a uniform tool provides a structured feedback process for clinical supervision.
- Frequency children being placed safely in the least restrictive placement (rcw/ 74.14A): FTDM and family engagement promotes the placement of children in the least restrictive placement that can provide for their safety. The InfoFamLink meetings report provides data on moves to less restrictive, more restrictive, maintain in same placement, or unable to reach consensus. FTDM brings the family and community together to secure the least restrictive placement for children when this can be done safely. Monitoring of this data will help to ensure all viable options are explored for children.
- Frequency of FTDMs and other case planning meetings being conducted for children who are disproportionately represented in out of home care: Statistics gathered from the FamLink meetings report show a steady increase in the number of FTDMs being held for disproportionately represented children in care. During the past few years an increased

focus on FTDMs and family engagement has resulted in a marked increase in the number of FTDMs offered to families of color. Continued monitoring of this data will show areas of low incidence of FTDMs for children of color and allow for targeted training in those areas. Areas of concern will be reported with recommendations to Regional Administrators and Children's Administration Executive Leadership for further action.

**Related Measures**

- Siblings Placed Together: Current InfoFamLink reports will be used for the number of siblings placed together. The Meetings report also includes whether or not the siblings have had an FTDM.
- Rate of Reunification: FamLink data will be used for the rate of reunification.
- Rate of Re-Entry: One of the purposes of an FTDM is to make the safest, least restrictive placement for children. Monitoring the rate of re-entry for children who have had an FTDM can provide information as to whether or not the planning for the return home of a child or a permanent placement has been sufficient to prevent re-entry to the out of home care system.



6. Child's adjustment to caregiver family and caregiver family expectations:

7. Child's visits with parent(s) and sibling(s):

8. Your view on the needs of the child:

9. Your thoughts on how these needs can be addressed:

10. Your thoughts on Department's case plan:

11. Other child/case specific information you wish the court to consider:

Caregiver's Signature:

Signature Date:

Caregiver's Printed Name:

## CAREGIVER'S REPORT TO COURT – EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

### What is the Caregiver's Report to the Court?

The report provides an opportunity for caregivers to share their valuable information about how the child is doing in their care directly with the court. Your information can help the court better understand the child's progress and needs. **A picture of the child attached to the report is encouraged.**

### What goes in the report?

Focus on giving firsthand information about the child in your care. Do not offer opinions about others involved in the court process; i.e., birth parents, the social worker, attorneys, or GAL or CASA.

### What should I expect when I go to court?

Different courts have different procedures:

- Most courts hear a large number of cases each day and only have a short time to hear each case.
- Some courts schedule multiple hearings at the same time, so be prepared to wait.
- Hearings may last less than ten minutes in total.
- Hearings can be postponed or continued at the last minute.
- Some courts ask the caregiver to make a short statement.
- Others ask caregivers specific questions about the child.
- Others only allow you to submit your written report.

### Oral Report to the Court:

- Write down two or three important points you want to share.
- Your oral report should be factual, brief, organized and describes behavior you have observed in the child first hand.
- Try to avoid words like: "think", "feel", "believe", they are emotional; you want to stick to observations and facts.
- The Caregiver's Report to the Court form can help you plan and organize what you want to share.
- Ask the child's social worker for suggestions and help with what to expect.

Below is the outline of the Caregiver's Report to the Court. You **do not** need to address every area.

- Focus on what has occurred since the last court review
- **Do not write in the margins on the report form** – the court scans these documents and your comments will be lost.

### Caregiver's Report to the Court Outline:

#### Placement Information:

- Date child was placed in the caregiver's home/how long has the child been placed in your home?
- Description of child's physical and emotional condition at that time.

#### Child's Strengths, Special Interests and Activities:

- Describe talents, interests, hobbies, or skills you have observed in the child.
- Special activities the child does (scouts, sports, music lessons, religious groups, etc.)

#### Describe Child's Social Interactions with Caregiver Family, Siblings and Peers:

- Child's social skills and peer relationships.

- Does the child do well in one-on-one situations, in groups of children/youth
- How child interacts with other members of the caregiver’s family.
- Arrangements/frequency of sibling visitation, if applicable. Describe behaviors before/after sibling visits.

**School Progress and Adjustment:**

- Child’s grade in school, favorite subjects, is the child performing at grade level?
- Behavior at school and on the school bus.
- Dates of any school conferences caregivers have attended, and results, especially if the child is in special education classes.
- Any educational testing the child has completed, and results of the testing.
- Last Individual Education Plan (IEP) and we discussed:

**Child’s Physical Health:**

Summary of all doctor or dental visits or hospitalizations since the last court hearing.

- Any medication the child takes and the dosage.
- Any adverse reactions the child has had to medical procedures or medications.
- Describe the child’s physical development and any developmental lags observed.

**Child’s Emotional Health and Well Being:**

- Describe the child’s behavior in your home – what changes have occurred in the last six months?
- Any therapist services the child receives, who provides the services, and how often child goes for services?
- How does the child expresses his/her feelings and needs?
- Describe the child’s eating and sleeping patterns and any problems.

**Child’s Adjustment to Caregiver Family and Expectations:**

- How does the child participate within your family, does child follow rules and expectations for behavior, age appropriate chores?

**Child’s Visits with Parents and Siblings:**

Dates of visits between child and parents, siblings, or other family members.

- Factual description of the Child’s behavior before and after visits. *Please be careful to describe only the child’s behavior.*
- Dates of contacts between child and parents or other family members, including telephone, letters, and e-mail.

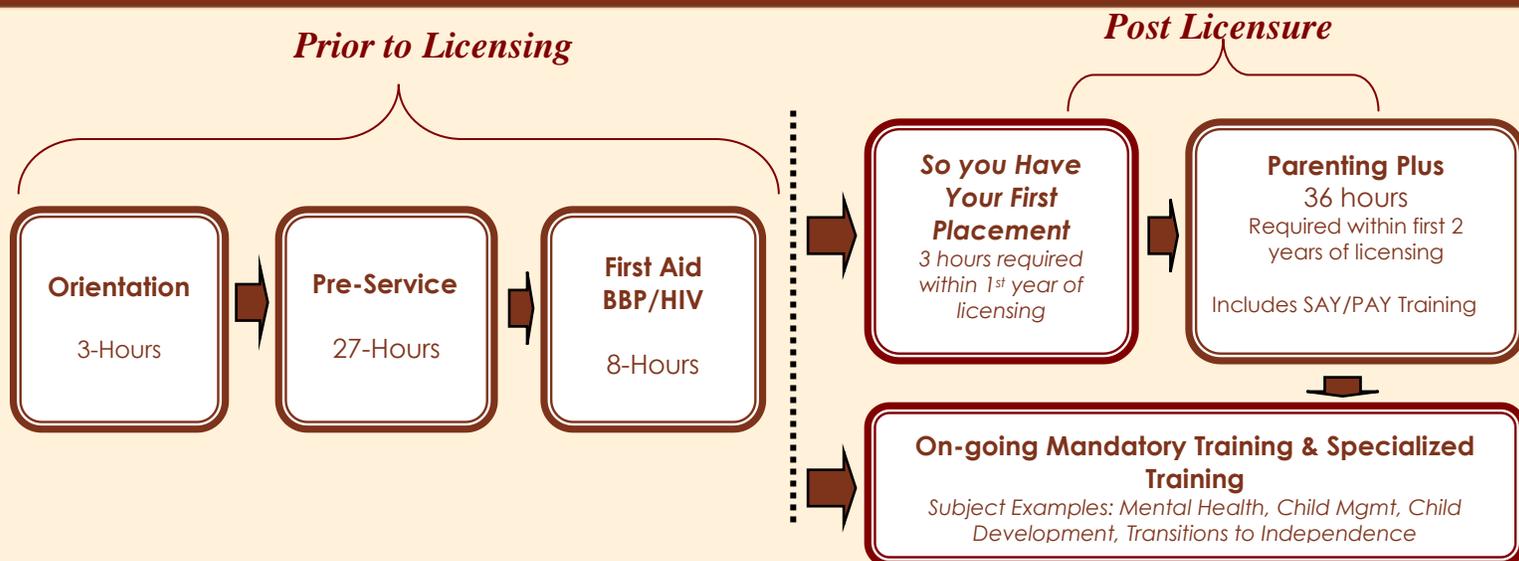
**Also Include:**

- What you think the child needs (other supports or services the child may need)?
- Your Thoughts on How These Needs Can Be Addressed.
- Your Thoughts on the Department’s Permanent Plan for the Child: (is the permanent plan in the child’s best interests?)
- Other Child/Case Specific Information You Wish the Court to Consider:

**Important:**

If you want the social worker to send your report to the court, it is important you provide it to the social worker at least **two weeks** before the hearing.

# Foster Parent Training Model



The **Resource Family Training Institute (RFTI)** provides training for foster, adopt and unlicensed relative caregivers statewide. A new Caregiver Training Policy was implemented on **October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011**. Improvements include:

### Pre-Licensing Required Training:

- Orientation (provided by DLR Licensors), 3 hours in length. Classroom and on-line training available.
- PRIDE Pre-Service, 27 hours in length. Classroom training.
- HIV/ First Aid/ CPR/BBP training, 8 hours in length. Classroom training.

### In-Service Required Training:

- Required 3 hour *So You Have Your First Placement* course within first year of licensing.
- Required 36 hour *Parenting Plus* course within first 2 years of licensing which includes Sexually Aggressive and Physically Assaultive (SAY/PAY) training.
- Training hours decreased to 30 hours for second licensing period.
- Training hours decreased to 24 hours for third and all subsequent licensing periods.
- A total of 12 training hours can be rolled over into next licensing period.

### Additional Training and Information:

- In-Service classes are provided by contracted trainers on a variety of subjects. Topics and length of class vary.
- SAY/PAY training is required for foster parent who care for children with these behaviors.
- A Video Lending Library is now available to all caregivers, free of charge as an option to fulfill their mandatory training hours.
- Video trainings on-line are available to fulfill their mandatory training hours.
- Experienced foster parents co-train with RFTI Trainers for Pre-Service and other trainings.
- The classroom training is provided weekdays, weeknights and weekends to meet the needs of the caregivers. Foster Parent Trainers are located and integrated within the regions statewide.

## 45121. Foster Parent Training

<p><b>Purpose Statement</b></p>	<p>Children in out of home care have needs unique to their situation in addition to the developmental concerns all children share. Foster parents and the children they care for will benefit from training about both specific and general needs.</p>
<p><b>Policy</b></p>	<p>A. Foster home license applicants must complete the following training prior to licensing: \</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Orientation, completed by at least one licensee residing in the home</li> <li>2. Pre-service Training, completed by at least one licensee residing in the home</li> <li>3. First Aid/CPR, completed by all licensees residing in the home</li> <li>4. HIV/BBP, completed by all licensees residing in the home</li> </ol> <p>B. Effective 10-15-11, Licensed foster parents must complete in-service training as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First licensing period (years 1 - 3):             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 36 hours of Parenting Plus in-class training:                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. At least one licensed foster parent in the home must complete the entire course.</li> <li>ii. Foster parents licensed after 10-15-2011 must be enrolled within their first year of licensure and complete Parenting Plus by the end of their second year of licensure.</li> <li>iii. Foster parents licensed prior to 10-15-2011 must complete Parenting Plus by 10-15-2015.</li> <li>iv. Licensees who completed a 60-hour Foster Parent Scope training are exempt from the Parenting Plus requirement.</li> </ol> </li> <li>b. Foster parents licensed after 10-15-2011 must have at least one parent in the home complete the 3 hour So You Have Your First Placement within the first year of licensure.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Second consecutive licensing period (years 4 - 6): 30 hours of in-service training</li> <li>3. All subsequent licensing periods (year 7 and beyond): 24 hours of in-service training every three years.</li> </ol> <p>Note: The in-service training requirement for the second and subsequent consecutive licensing periods may be met by one or both parties on a license, in any combination. That is, one party on a two parent license may complete all required training hours or two people on a two parent license may each complete part of the required hours as long as the total number of hours meets the requirement.</p> <p>C. Training which meets the in-service requirement includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conferences and trainings related to child welfare and/or other human services relevant to the foster parent's scope of duties;</li> <li>2. Training offered by the Office of Training and Development, Children's Administration;</li> <li>3. CA approved private agency training courses;</li> <li>4. Other training as approved by the licensor.</li> </ol> <p>D. If a licensed foster home exceeds the required training hours during any licensing period, they may carry up to twelve hours into the next licensing period.</p> <p>E. DLR licensors may require specific and additional training as part of a compliance plan.</p> <p>F. Foster family homes must take the required DLR training again, following a break in service that exceeds 12 months. Previous coursework may be substituted on a case-by-case basis as determined by the Licensor.</p>
<p><b>Procedures</b></p>	<p>A. Prior to licensing, the DLR licensor will verify that foster home license applicants have completed the licensing training outline in "A" in the policy above.</p>

	<p>B. The DLR licensor will verify that licensed foster parents complete in-service training as outlined "B" and "C" in the policy above.</p> <p>C. DLR licensor will verify that foster family homes re-take the required DLR training following a break in service that exceeds 12 months. Previous coursework may be substituted on a case-by-case basis as determined by the Licensor.</p> <p>D. The DLR licensor will create a compliance plan up to 6 months with the licensee(s) if the licensed family foster home reaches re-licensing without completing the required hours in the 3 year licensing period.</p> <p>If the compliance plan is not met, the licensor will issue a stop placement until the training requirement is met.</p> <p>Revocation may occur if the compliance plan is not met.</p> <p>E. CA staff will enter training into FamLink as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The RFTI training manager will enter training completion for RFTI in-person classes.</li> <li>2. The DLR licensor for the home will enter all other training.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Cultural Considerations</b></p>	<p><b>Family Centered Approach:</b></p> <p>The way CA staff engages the family (or fails to engage the family) can directly affect the willingness of the family to work with other members of the department. The level of trust and integrity established between the agency and the family often has a direct relationship on the child being able to remain/reunify with his/her family. Everyone who meets the family needs to build positive relationships.</p>
<p><b>Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">WAC 388-148-0040</a> what first-aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training is required?</li> <li>• <a href="#">WAC 388-148-0045</a> What HIV/AIDS and blood borne pathogens training is required?</li> <li>• <a href="#">WAC 388-148-0020</a> What are the training requirements for foster parents and prospective foster parents?</li> </ul>

### 45122. Access to Training

DCFS licensed family foster homes, private agency licensed family foster home, and relative caregivers are eligible to participate in department sponsored training.

### 45123. Procedures for Accessing Training

The licensed family foster home consults the licensor, private agency and/or regional training manager for class announcements and procedures to access to this service. The web site also maintains a training calendar available to all foster parents, relative caregivers and agency staff.

**Children's Administration**  
**Notification to Caregivers of Court Hearings**  
**QUALITY PROCESS PLAN**

**Court Notification Planning Team Members**

Myra Casey, Permanency Supervisor

Meri Waterhouse, HQ Program Manager

Regional QA Leads:

Tim Nelson

Steve Ellis

Stacey Weaver Wee

**Related Policies**

[Notice of Court Hearing to Caregivers CA Policy 45303\(k\)](#) for children who are dependent under chapter [RCW 13.34.138](#)

**Introduction**

CA recognizes the value of having caregivers involved in the court process to inform and aid the court in making permanency decisions for the child in their placement. A tool developed in FamLink will alert the social worker that there is an upcoming court hearing and that a notice needs to be sent to the caregiver. The letter will be launched from FamLink. A FamLink generated report will verify that notification has occurred.

All foster parent addresses that have been shared with CA are recorded in FamLink to automate the mailing of the Caregiver Monthly Newsletter which includes information and/or articles about the importance of the court hearings and their participation in court. The [Caregiver Report to Court Form](#) is accessible to caregivers through the foster parent web page.

**Data Review and Analysis**

The Permanency Supervisor will collect data from the FamLink report of Notification to Caregivers and present it for analysis to the Court Notification Planning team. The team will develop a report of findings and strategies to improve consistent notification to caregivers of court hearings. The report will be presented to the CA Continuous Quality Improvement Board for consideration, and approval (or modification) of strategies for improvement. The QA leads will work with their Regional Management teams to review the report for accuracy and identify barriers and gaps in notification. Supervisors will identify inconsistencies and discrepancies in data as well as identify which workers are out of compliance. A corrective action plan will be implemented.

This quality plan outlines the process for measuring compliance with notifying caregivers of upcoming hearings and consistent recording in FamLink of that notification. Additional monitoring and practice improvement processes occur at the regional, office, and unit level. The FamLink

report is scheduled to be completed by December, 2012 so this quality process plan will begin January 01, 2013. The initial report of findings and recommendations will be presented to the CA Continuous Quality improvement Board by February, 2013.

**Data Used in this Quality Assurance Plan**

Overview of Data Used in the Notification of Caregivers of Court Hearings Quality Process Plan				
Data Element	Data Source	Reporting Cycle	Data Lead	Data Availability
Measures of Consistent Implementation of the Notification to Caregivers of court hearings				
Caregiver Notification Report. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Caregivers Notified</li> <li>• Future Court Hearings</li> </ul>	InfoFamLink Report	On-going	Meri Waterhouse	December 2012

**Measures of Consistent Implementation of the Notification to Caregivers of Court Hearings**

- The Caregiver Notification report is currently being developed in FamLink and will be available on an on-going basis beginning in December 2012. The report will display the following three views:
  - Number and Percentage of notifications sent or not sent to a caregiver and the number of days to a hearing; 0-15 days, and 16+ days.
  - Number and Percentage of notifications sent or not sent, number of days to a hearing and the child’s race and ethnicity.
  - Number of future court hearings. The user will be able to insert a date and learn how many notifications to send.

The results from this report will be compiled quarterly and included in the Court Notification Planning Quality Assurance process.

## Service Array Meetings and Recommendations

*July 13, 2012*

### Introduction

During the first and second quarters of this Program Improvement Plan, Children's Administration conducted a service assessment to understand the availability of core in-home services at each office. Through this assessment we intended to identify gaps where services do not exist, where additional resources are needed, and the quality of the service. Language and cultural needs were also included in the inventory.

The results of this assessment were consistent with previous findings. The full array of services is not available in many offices, particularly offices in rural areas, and the lack of culturally responsive services was the concern most often cited by Children's Administration staff. This situation has been frequently discussed and was the impetus for the recent legislation to change the way in which Children's Administration contracts for services, especially the services that safely support children who remain in their own homes.

### State Legislation: E2SHB 2264

The 2012 Legislature enacted E2SHB 2264, which revises the previous legislation concerning performance based contracting and outlines a new process. This legislation requires Children's Administration to contract with one or more network administrators for the provision of family support and related services by December 31, 2013. The Request for Proposals for these services will be released by December 31, 2012.

### Meetings with Stakeholders and Community Partners

Children's Administration has worked with stakeholders and community partners to take a fresh look at what families need to keep their children safely at home or to facilitate and maintain reunification. Thirty-six focus groups were held across the state in May 2012, where participants described the services they believe families need to safely care for their children. More than 230 Children's Administration social workers and supervisors participated in these focus groups. A summary of the stakeholders and community partners consulted is attached.

### Recommendations

The consultation and analysis process, service requirements and the recommended service array is also attached.

**Family Support and Related Services – Service Array**  
**DSHS Children’s Administration**  
**Released July 13, 2012**

### Consultation Process

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[Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 2264](#) was enacted by the 2012 Legislature requiring the Children’s Administration (CA) to contract for Family Support and Related Services with one or more network administrators under a performance based contract by December 1, 2013. The Legislature did not define Family Support and Related Services. Instead, it required CA to consult with caseworkers, tribes, parents, youth, employee union, and researchers to assist in identifying categories of Family Support and Related Services by July 15, 2012. In addition to completing this required consultation, Children’s Administration sought input from our other child welfare partners through an on-line survey, two public meetings, and participation in thirteen regularly scheduled partner meetings.

Through the formal consultation with the groups mandated in statute and partner outreach, Children’s Administration met with or heard from over 600 individuals who took great care in telling us about the services or concrete resources families need to:

- Reduce the likelihood of abuse or neglect
- Keep their children safely at home and prevent placement
- Promote permanency more quickly, including facilitating and maintaining safe reunification

This process resulted in a richness of input that demonstrated the depth of understanding about families in the child welfare system. There was much consistency between different groups about the services families need, regardless of the group providing the input.

CA received over 2,300 different comments, which were coded into logical groupings by the DSHS Division of Research and Data Analysis. An internal team representing each of the three CA regions and headquarters reviewed these groupings and added several groupings to better distinguish the input. The team then reviewed the detailed comments in each grouping. In addition, the group met with researchers from Partners for Our Children and consulted with other child welfare researchers about the services identified during the consultation process that are effective in meeting the needs of families. The team also mapped the input from the consultation with the 17 safety threats in the Child Safety Framework and with individual and family-level objectives in the Solution Based Casework practice model. This team process culminated in the service array on page 3.

During the consultation process, CA asked about the services and concrete resources families need, encouraging those commenting to consider all services, including those that may not currently be part of the CA service array. Much of the feedback reflected a need to continue providing many of the elements of the services CA purchases today, although the input guided us to organize these services differently than our current service contracts. CA has completed an initial cross-walk of these service categories with current contract requirements to understand how this array may vary from what is available today. Most of the examples of service elements in these service categories exist in some component of current contracts, with the exception of veteran parent and youth mentors.

### Requirements for Services

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The Request for Proposal (RFP) to be issued by December 31, 2012, will include additional information about the requirements for service provision that are consistent with the consultation input, including requirements that support the following values of the Children’s Administration in purchasing contracted services.

- Service providers recognize that child safety is the paramount goal of the department
- Service providers consistently collaborate with social workers to mitigate safety threats in the family, respond to present danger, and notify the department of potential safety threats they observe during service interventions

- Services are culturally responsive to the family receiving them
- Services are equally available and accessible for both fathers and mothers and will be tailored to address the needs of fathers and mothers
- Services are provided in the family's home, unless otherwise indicated by the social worker
- Services support child safety and increase parental protective capacity, as identified in the case plan, using evidence-based programs where appropriate and available
- Services to increase parental capacity continue for the parent when their child is placed in out-of-home care
- All service providers support the family in developing linkages to their community and natural supports
- The delivery of services is done in a way that minimizes the number of service providers in a family's life
- Service providers engage families congruent with the Solution Based Casework practice model
- Service providers are skilled to provide all the service elements in a service category because service provider continuity is important to families, even though most families will not need all of the service elements in a service category

## Service Array

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The *purpose* of Family Support and Related Services is to increase the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional protective capacity of parents to safely care for their own children. The array distinguishes *three primary focuses* of these services (Crisis Services, Family Education & Support, and Assessment) across which *nine service categories* are identified.

- Crisis Intervention
- Basic Home Safety
- Parenting Skills
- Family Functioning
- Core Life Skills
- Parent Support Services
- Supported Visitation
- Concrete Resources
- Evaluation & Assessment

The text under each of the service categories is provided only as *examples of service elements* within the service category to provide a better understanding of what each service category includes. These service elements are expected to be further refined in the RFP.

The service array identifies the service categories that will be contracted through a network administrator. This comprehensive service array is intended to meet the unique service needs of individual families, to support social workers as they design flexible case plans with these families, and to guide service providers as they develop individualized effective services within these categories. This current procurement only includes services that are within the purpose of Family Support and Related Services. As such, the service categories are not an indication of the status of contracts that do not fall within this purpose. CA will continue to access these other services through the current CA contracting process rather than through a network administrator, e.g. Behavioral Rehabilitation Services, Child Placing Agency, Urinalysis, and others.

## Next Steps

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The service array is posted on the CA website at <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/about/srv-intro.asp>, along with the projected implementation timeline. Children's Administration welcomes your comments about the service array at [CAPBC@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:CAPBC@dshs.wa.gov), although we will be unable to acknowledge individual input due to the short timeframe available to complete the procurement process. We commit to read all of the comments we receive, but we do not have the capacity to respond to or catalog the input. CA expects to release the draft RFP in October 2012 and will accept formal comments at that time. The final RFP will be released December 31, 2012.

**PURPOSE OF SERVICES:** Increase the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional protective capacity of parents to safely care for their own children.

FOCUS →	CRISIS SERVICES SHORT-TERM, IN THE MOMENT	FAMILY EDUCATION & SUPPORT LONG TERM BEHAVIORAL AND COGNITIVE CHANGE	ASSESSMENT FOR FAMILIES WITH COMPLEX NEEDS
<p><b>9 SERVICE CATEGORIES ARE LISTED IN BOLD</b></p> <p>Bulleted text indicates examples of service elements within each service category.</p> <p>Service elements will be further defined upon the release of the RFP.</p>	<p><b>CRISIS INTERVENTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emergent response                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 24/7 response</li> <li>○ Safety plan tasks</li> <li>○ Notify CA of potential safety threats</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Supervision and intervention to control safety threats</li> <li>▪ Crisis stabilization and de-escalation</li> </ul> <p><b>BASIC HOME SAFETY</b></p> <p>SERVICES TO ADDRESS PRESENT OR IMPENDING DANGER IN THE HOME SUCH AS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Toxins</li> <li>▪ Health risks</li> <li>▪ Exposed wires</li> </ul>	<p><b>PARENTING SKILLS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Age appropriate discipline</li> <li>▪ Health/well-being needs (including complex medical needs)</li> <li>▪ Parental skill building and mentoring specific to child welfare families</li> <li>▪ Intensive parent coaching</li> <li>▪ Safely manage child’s behavior</li> <li>▪ Ability to protect child(ren) from other adults/children</li> </ul> <p><b>FAMILY FUNCTIONING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Address family system and individual issues impacting child safety</li> <li>▪ Family functioning supports child safety</li> <li>▪ Interpersonal relationships and positive connections</li> <li>▪ Increase empathetic response of parent and address emotional needs of child</li> <li>▪ Safely manage child’s behavior</li> <li>▪ Self-advocacy skills for parents and their children</li> </ul> <p><b>CORE LIFE SKILLS</b></p> <p>SERVICES TO BUILD CORE LIFE SKILLS IMPACTING CHILD SAFETY AND MAY INCLUDE AREAS SUCH AS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decision-making skills</li> <li>▪ Basic home management and maintenance</li> <li>▪ Employment</li> <li>▪ Housing</li> </ul> <p><b>PARENT SUPPORT SERVICES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Veteran parent and youth mentors to support families to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Navigate the system</li> <li>○ Facilitate parent engagement</li> <li>○ Minimize distrust of the child welfare system</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Transportation</li> </ul> <p><b>SUPPORTED VISITATION</b></p> <p>IN THE FAMILY HOME WHEN SAFE, TRANSPORTATION AS NEEDED, SELECTION OF 4 AVAILABLE COMPONENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Visit with intensive parent coaching</li> <li>▪ Visit with skill building and mentoring</li> <li>▪ Visit with supervision for safety</li> <li>▪ Visit with monitoring for safety</li> </ul>	<p><b>EVALUATION &amp; ASSESSMENT</b></p> <p>DETERMINED NECESSARY BY CA TO ADDRESS SAFETY THREATS WHEN NOT COVERED BY THE REGIONAL SUPPORT NETWORK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parental attachment assessment</li> <li>▪ Parental capacity assessment</li> <li>▪ Child assessment when associated with parental assessment</li> <li>▪ Domestic violence/intimate partner aggression violence evaluation</li> <li>▪ Psycho-sexual evaluation</li> <li>▪ Anger management evaluation</li> <li>▪ Neuro-psychological evaluation</li> <li>▪ Psychological evaluation</li> </ul>
<p><b>CONCRETE RESOURCES</b> CONCRETE RESOURCES ARE PROVIDED BY THE NETWORK ADMINISTRATOR (NA) IN CONJUNCTION WITH CRISIS SERVICES AND FAMILY EDUCATION &amp; SUPPORT. CONCRETE RESOURCES ARE PROVIDED BY CA WHEN THE NA IS NOT PROVIDING OTHER SERVICES.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Food</li> <li>▪ Clothing</li> <li>▪ Appliances</li> <li>▪ Baby gate or crib</li> <li>▪ Car repairs</li> <li>▪ Other</li> </ul>			

**From:** Gagnon, Colleen M (DSHS/CA)  
**Sent:** Friday, July 13, 2012 2:10 PM  
**To:** DSHS DL CAALLSTAFF  
**Subject:** Release of the Service Array

*Sent on behalf of Denise Revels Robinson*

**DSHS mission:** DSHS will improve the safety and health of individuals, families and communities by providing leadership and establishing and participating in partnerships.

## Children's Update



July 13, 2012

**TO:** Children's Administration Staff  
**FROM:** Denise Revels Robinson, Assistant Secretary  
**SUBJECT: RELEASE OF SERVICE ARRAY**

I am writing to inform you of the release of the service array for Family Support and Related Services that Children's Administration will contract for under a performance based contract in December 2013. This service array was developed to meet the requirement in Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 2264 that Children's Administration define service categories by July 15, 2012.

Thirty-six focus groups were held across the state in May 2012, where participants described the services they believe families need to safely care for their children. I want to especially thank the more than 230 social workers and supervisors who participated in these focus groups. I know this took time away from your regular responsibilities, but your input was invaluable in guiding our decision-making.

The staff who participated in the focus groups represented 37 different offices and all program areas, and provided more than 1,000 comments about the services and concrete resources families need. The input from the focus groups was very consistent across the state and was foundational in developing the service array.

As you review the service array for Family Support and Related Services, please keep the following in mind about the implementation of these new service contracts in 2013:

- Social workers will retain all case management responsibilities;
- Social workers will choose the services and the service providers;
- Services will include the concrete resources and services families need to increase their protective capacity to safely care for their own children;
- Services will be organized differently than they are today, but the services families need will be available;
- Families will not experience a decrease in services; and

## **PIP 6.1.5**

- The service array builds on the Child Safety Framework and on Solution Based Casework.

You can review the service array on the CA website at: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ca/servicearray.pdf>. If you have comments or feedback about the service array, please send them to [PBC2012@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:PBC2012@dshs.wa.gov). You will also have an opportunity to comment on the draft RFP in October 2012.



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION  
PO Box 45040 • Olympia WA • 98504-5040

July 13, 2012

Dear Valued Child Welfare Partner and Tribal Leader:

I am writing to inform you of the release of the service array for Family Support and Related Services that Children's Administration will contract for under a performance based contract in December 2013. This service array was developed to meet the requirement in Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 2264 that Children's Administration define service categories by July 15, 2012. The service array is now available on our website at:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ca/servicearray.pdf>.

In May 2012, we requested your participation in public meetings, an on-line survey, or focused consultation meetings to describe the services families need. I want to thank each of you who took time from your busy schedules to provide this important input. Your perspective and insight about the services and concrete resources families need was invaluable in guiding our decision-making. The input we received from different groups we consulted with across the state was very similar, and was foundational in developing the service array.

We are moving forward to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Family Support and Related Services by December 2012, and will contract for these services under a performance based contract by December 2013. We will release a draft RFP in October 2012 and will request your comments at that time.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the families and children who will benefit from these important services.

Sincerely,

Denise Revels Robinson, MSW  
Assistant Secretary  
Children's Administration



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES**  
**CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION**  
PO Box 45040 • Olympia WA • 98504-5040

July 17, 2012

Dear Washington State Legislator:

I am writing to inform you of the release of the service array for Family Support and Related Services that Children's Administration will contract for under a performance based contract in December 2013. This service array was developed to meet the requirement in Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 2264 that Children's Administration identify service categories by July 15, 2012. The service array is now available on our website at <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/pdf/ca/servicearray.pdf>.

This legislation required Children's Administration to consult with caseworkers, tribes, parents, youth, employee union, and researchers to assist in identifying categories of Family Support and Related Services. In addition to completing this required consultation, Children's Administration sought input from other child welfare partners through an on-line survey, two public meetings, and participation in regularly scheduled partner meetings. Over 600 individuals provided input about the services and concrete resources families need, and their perspective and insight was invaluable in guiding our decision-making. The input we received from different groups across the state was very similar, and was foundational in developing the service array.

Children's Administration will release a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) in October 2012 to request additional input about these services. As required by the legislation, Children's Administration will issue the RFP for Family Support and Related Services by December 2012, and will contract for these services under a performance based contract by December 2013.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the service array.

Sincerely,

Denise Revels Robinson, MSW  
Assistant Secretary  
Children's Administration