

Child Protective Services: Investigation

[←←BACK](#)

[CONTENTS](#)

[FORWARD⇒⇒](#)

2104.18 Safety Plan (Form 455B)

Safety Plan Discussion

A safety plan is a response to each factor, identified on a safety assessment, which affects a child's immediate safety. It identifies the controls that are being put in place to ensure a child's immediate protection and safety. It expands on the available resources, as identified in the Reasonable Efforts Checklist section of the Safety Assessment, by identifying persons or agencies that will take responsibility for a child's safety. It provides a detailed description of the specific steps that everyone participating in the plan has agreed to for keeping a child safe. A safety plan is completed for every substantiated report and for any unsubstantiated case that is required to remain open (e.g. court-ordered supervision). A plan is completed at any time during an investigation that a safety assessment suggests a child might not be safe. There must be a plan in place by the completion of the investigation on substantiated reports and those that will remain open for court-ordered supervision.

One safety plan can be developed for all children in the family; however, it must be individualized, as needed, to cover the conditional and unique safety needs of any child whose needs differ from needs of other children covered by the plan.

Remember, Form 455B (Safety Plan) is not a case plan. The case plan identifies selected goals and the steps to be followed when making the long-term changes necessary for future and ongoing protection and safety of a child. The Safety Plan describes the safety controls that are in place up until the time a case plan is developed and activated. However, a new safety plan may be needed whenever circumstances change and a new safety assessment determines that new controls are needed to ensure safety. A Safety Plan remains in place while the ongoing case manager assesses the family's strengths and needs and develops with the family a case plan. The ongoing case manager who receives a case in transfer from investigations must continue to follow the safety plan, as written, or work with the involved parties of the plan to make any needed adjustments.

Requirement

Complete a Safety Plan*, using Form 455B, for:

Child Protective Services: Investigation

- Any child with substantiated maltreatment;
- Any child whose circumstances require a safety plan prior to the investigation being completed;
- Any child in an unsubstantiated case that is required to remain open;
- Any child in an ongoing CPS case when a reassessment indicates risk level has increased, or as needed when safety concerns are identified.

***[Exception: a safety assessment and safety plan are not completed when the alleged maltreater is a day care provider, foster parent, school employee or an agency standing *in loco parentis*.]**

The Safety Plan requires a response for each identified behavior or condition (safety factors) answered with a “Yes” on the Safety Assessment. Restate each Safety Factor on the Safety Plan. Involve parents and others who will be responsible for a child’s care with the development of the safety plan. Include the following information:

- Detailed safety steps for each identified factor that indicates the presence of behaviors and conditions that make a child unsafe.
- Names of persons who will be responsible for a child’s protection. Describe in Steps how each person has agreed to help protect the child will be protected? A plan where the person allegedly responsible for maltreatment is given responsibility for the child’s safety may not be a plan that will succeed. **Do not** give this person this responsibility without first discussing the proposed plan with the supervisor. When making a decision for the alleged maltreater to be a safety control resource, consider the frequency of alleged maltreatment, including any history of maltreatment (is this an isolated situation vs. the alleged maltreater has been indicated in other situations), ages of children and the seriousness of any alleged or substantiated maltreatment.
- Names of persons who have agreed to full or part-time responsibility for a child's care (see 2104.33) in situations where a child must be temporarily separated from parents, or who will provide respite care, if needed, to assist the parent in the process of making the necessary changes to avoid future incidents of maltreatment? Describe in steps the details of how and when these persons will assume responsibility for the child’s care.

Child Protective Services: Investigation

- What has a parent or others agreed to do to deal with the frustrations that led to the maltreatment incident? Describe these agreements as steps, giving details of who will do what, where, when and other pertinent information.
- Identify who (relative, neighbor, visiting nurse, school social worker, etc.) sees a child on a regular basis and has agreed to notify CPS immediately of any concerns? Describe in steps how these notifications will occur.
- List other tasks, identified as immediate steps, that the parent will take to ensure protection and safety and to reduce risk (e.g., enrolling a child in school, beginning immunizations, clearing yard of hazardous debris, having a child examined by a pediatrician, etc.).
- List specific agreed on case manager activities and responsibilities for contacts with plan participants and any other steps showing case manager involvement.
- Document on the Safety Plan form the date that safety planning was discussed with parents. Document on the contact sheet (Form 452) the extent of parents' involvement in the safety planning and their agreement to the plan.

Discuss the completed safety plan with the supervisor. The supervisor's signature on the plan means that the supervisor has read and approves the plan.

Review the approved plan with parents and ask for their signature. The parents' signature indicates they have read the plan, whether they agree with it or not; however, their participation in developing the plan should ensure their agreement. Give parents a copy of the plan, regardless of whether they sign the plan. Document on Form 452 (Contact Sheet) a parent's unwillingness to sign a plan and the reasons and whether the parent is willing to work with the department, even if not willing to sign the plan.

Procedures/Practice Issues

A safety plan will probably be ineffective if the family sees it only as the case manager's plan or the DFCS plan. For this reason, it is very important to involve parents in the development of the safety plan.

Child Protective Services: Investigation

It is important to remember that the case manager reviews provisions of the Safety Plan with parents at every contact and determines whether any portion needs modifying.