

# STRENGTHENING FAMILIES: EXPLORATION OF ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL IN-HOME SAFETY PLANNING LEARNING COLLABORATIVE



## SEPTEMBER 2024 DEMONSTRATING A SAFETY PLAN MAY WORK FOR THE FAMILY

In the beginning of the safety plan creation process, much of what has been discussed is theoretical. “What could be in place here?” “Who is available to perform this function?”

The pieces are falling into place for a sufficient, realistic, and least intrusive plan but it doesn’t come with a guarantee they will work. When getting to the end of the development phase, it’s important to reflect on the readiness of all strategies and providers to start the next phase of implementation.

Reviewing the plan for sufficiency before it becomes active affords Child Welfare and the family an opportunity to have open conversations, answer questions, and discuss any concerns before the plan is active.

### Qualities of a Sufficient Safety Plan

- 1. Necessary Responses and Providers are Available NOW.** All responses detailed in the safety plan need to be available immediately. The same day the plan is needed to shield from the identified danger, everyone on the plan is clear regarding their role and when they are needed.
- 2. Control Services – Not Change Services.** The purpose of the safety plan is to assure child safety. Other plans, such as Case Plans, detail the strategies and steps towards making changes to enhance diminished protective capacities.
- 3. The Plan Specifically Addresses each Danger Threat.** All dangerous conditions that require CPS intervention must be accounted for on the safety plan.
- 4. The Plan Needs to Have Immediate Impact.** The safety plan must be clear to be effective. It’s the Child Welfare Professional’s responsibility to provide verbal and written instructions regarding the negotiables and non-negotiables for all parties that have a role.



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## Qualities of a Sufficient Safety Plan (continued)

**5. The Level of Service Needs to be Sufficient to Control the Danger.** The critical functions occur during the critical times and circumstances. The plan clearly describes the duration, frequency, and predictability of the danger to provide sufficient responses.

**6. The Plan is Only as Intrusive as it Needs to Be.** The plan includes enough actions to shield from danger when it is active, and the family does not require intervention during periods of times the child is safe. Safety plans are not the place to add in any extras that would enhance the child and family's well-being.

**7. The Plan Needs to Cover Critical Times and Circumstances.** The CW Professional's previous work to understand the predictability of the danger, along with the underlying dynamics, triggers, or characteristics of parental behavior is accounted for with the agreed upon strategies.

**8. The Plan Doesn't Rely on Caregivers' Promises to Stop Behaviors or Act Differently Towards the Child.** Promising to "never do it again" is not an adequate safety plan. Sometimes, the crisis of an event of maltreatment or CW intervention can precipitate changes, but those changes would need to be consistently observed before the plan is modified. Decreasing the critical functions during the specified times and circumstances that shield from danger occurs after evidence of protective capacities, not good intentions.

Before implementation of the plan, it's important to evaluate the partnerships developed to increase confidence the team will be successful.

### The Three Pillars of Successful Teamwork

**Communication:** Speaking openly, honestly, asking questions of each other, providing answers and context, offer guidance and insight to one another.

**Collaboration:** Partners have agreed upon methods to ensure safety. There's clarification of roles and responsibilities and how they will be fulfilled. Sharing of tasks to achieve the goal.

**Coordination:** Clear plan to move forward. Visibility of each other's progress and the direction things are going in.



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## Reflection on Content

**How might reviewing the Qualities of a Sufficient Safety Plan before implementation increase your confidence, and lower any risk averse feelings?**

## Action Item

**Apply the Qualities of a Sufficient Plan to an active plan. Does the documentation that is available to all parties make it clear how the plan is sufficiently shielding from the identified danger?**