

Standards Excerpt: Placement Requirements

Note: This content is referenced from the CPS Safety Intervention Standards.

Visit this link to access the full document:

<http://wcwpds.wisc.edu/preservice/access/docs/safety-intervention-standards.pdf>

Safety in Out-of-Home Placement

Evaluating Safety in Unlicensed and Licensed Homes When Placing a Child in Out-of-Home Care as Part of a Protective Plan

Whenever CPS implements an out-of-home protective plan either in a licensed or unlicensed home to control present danger threats, CPS must assess and evaluate the safety of the placement setting as outlined below:

- Prior to implementing the out-of-home protective plan, CPS must assess and evaluate the safety of the placement through direct contact with the substitute caregiver. This also includes a discussion of the expectations and their role in the protective plan as well as any issues related to the care of the child.
- Prior to a child's placement with an unlicensed caregiver (e.g. relatives, friends, neighbors), CPS must request a check of law enforcement records on all individuals residing in the identified placement home. If a home visit is not conducted at the time of the time of placement in an unlicensed home, CPS must document in the family case record how child safety was ensured in the placement setting.
- When a home visit is not conducted at the time of placement in an unlicensed home, CPS must, within 24 hours of placement, conduct a home visit to assess safety and the home conditions, and to assist the caregiver in setting up whatever provisions are needed for the care of the child.
- When a child is placed in an unlicensed home, a CPS records check must be completed within 24 hours of placement.
- Within five (5) working days of placement in a licensed home, CPS must conduct a home visit to reassess the home conditions and assist the caregiver in setting up whatever provisions are needed for the care of the child.

(See: Safety Appendix 4: Present Danger Threats in Placement Homes)

Documentation

Information related to *III. Safety in Out-of-Home Placement* must be documented in the family case record.

Criteria for Assessing the Safety of a Foster Home or Relative Placement

In addition to the requirements of the Child Protective Services Safety Intervention Standard, the following criteria direct the assessment and analysis of child safety in selected placement settings. This document provides decision-making criteria for both judging safety in a foster home or a relative home (including the home of a non-custodial parent) at the time of placement, as well as confirming the safety of a child in placement as a case proceeds through the child welfare system.

Assessment of Safety at Initial Placement/During Initial Contacts (Protective Plan and Safety Plan)

In addition to the criminal background and CPS records checks of the potential caregivers and any other adults residing in the home, the CPS agency is responsible for assessing other aspects related to the safety of a child residing with relative or foster care providers. Broadly, these break down into two main areas:

1. The assessment of present danger threats to child safety that are specific to placement homes, and
2. The match between the placed child and other children in the placement and the ability of the placement provider to meet the needs of the placed child in a safe manner.

Issues related to the placed child's safety, based upon the "match", include assessment of the impact of any behaviors and needs of other children already in the home on the child under consideration for placement and the ability of the provider to care for the needs and behaviors of the child being considered for placement.

The following questions are intended to prompt an analysis of any present danger threats to child safety in a placement home. These questions form the basis of or focus for an assessment of whether the chosen placement is safe at the point of first encounter with the potential caregivers.

If any of these present danger threats apply, they must be fully examined and controlled prior to approval of the placement.

Present Danger in Placement Homes:

1. Are the relative caregivers or foster parents (*or others in the home*) violent?
2. Do the relative caregivers or foster parents describe or act toward the child in predominantly negative terms or do they have extremely unrealistic expectations?
3. If the child is currently with the relative, does the relative refuse access to the child or is there reason to believe that the family is about to flee?

4. Do relative caregivers or foster parents communicate or behave in ways that suggest that they may fail to protect the child from serious harm or threatened harm by other family members, other household members, or others having regular access to the child?
5. Are the relative caregivers or foster parents unwilling or unable to meet the child's immediate needs for food, shelter, or supervision?
6. Are the relative caregivers or foster parents unwilling or unable to provide supervision necessary for the child's developmental status?
7. Are relative caregivers or foster parents unwilling or unable to meet or manage the child's exceptional needs?
8. Is the child fearful/ of or anxious about the relative or foster home situation?
9. Are the relative caregiver's or foster parent's physical living conditions hazardous and immediately threatening?
10. Does drug or alcohol use of the relative caregivers or foster parents affect their ability to supervise, protect, or care for the child?
11. Does the mental health, emotional instability, or developmental delay of the relative caregivers or foster parents affect their ability to supervise, protect, or care for the child?
12. Have relative caregivers or foster parents previously maltreated a child, and does the severity of the maltreatment or the relative caregivers or foster parent's response to any previous incident suggest that safety may be an immediate concern?
13. Is the child seen by relative caregivers or foster parents as responsible for the child's parents' problems or for problems the caregivers are experiencing or may experience?
14. Do the relative caregivers or foster parents justify the parents' behavior, do they believe the parents rather than the CPS agency, or are they supportive of the child's parents' point of view?
15. Do the relative caregivers or foster parents indicate that the child deserved what happened in the child's home?
16. Is there history of or active criminal behavior that affects the placement?
17. Will the relative or foster family support and have the capacity to enforce any restrictions on visitation required by the protective/family interaction/safety plan?
18. Is there an active CPS case, history of reports, or history of CPS agency involvement in the placement home that affects the placement?

If a determination is made that a child is safe from immediate harm in a relative or foster home, the CPS agency continues to collect information from the caregiver to confirm the safety of the placement. This assessment includes the relative's/foster parent's ability to care for the longer term needs of the child (emotional development and well-being).