

Present Danger Threats to Child Safety

DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

Present Danger Threats refer to a:

- *clearly observable family condition, that is*
- *significant*
- *immediate - occurring or "in process" of occurring at the point of contact with the family, and*
- *will likely result in severe harm to a child.*

Maltreatment

The child is currently being maltreated at the time of the report or contact

This means that the child is being maltreated at the time the report is being made, maltreatment has occurred the same day as the contact, or maltreatment is in process at the time of contact.

Severe to extreme maltreatment of the child is suspected, observed, or confirmed

This includes severe or extreme forms of maltreatment and can include severe injuries, serious unmet health needs, cruel treatment, and psychological torture.

The child has multiple or different kinds of injuries

This generally refers to different kinds of injuries, such as bruising and burns, but it is acceptable to consider one type of injury on different parts of the body.

The child has injuries to the face or head

This includes physical injury to the face or head of the child alleged to be the result of maltreatment.

The child has unexplained injuries

This refers to a serious injury which parents/caregivers and others cannot or will not explain. It includes circumstances where the injury is known to be non-accidental and the maltreater is unknown.

The maltreatment demonstrates extreme cruelty

This includes such things as locking up children, torture, extreme emotional abuse, etc.

The maltreatment of several victims is suspected, observed, or confirmed

This refers to the identification of more than one child who currently is being maltreated by the same maltreater.

The maltreatment appears premeditated

The maltreatment appears to be the result of a deliberate, preconceived plan or intent.

Dangerous (life threatening) living arrangements are present

This is based on specific information which indicates that a child's living situation is an immediate threat to his/her safety. This includes serious health and safety circumstances such as unsafe buildings, serious fire hazards, accessible weapons, unsafe heating, or wiring, etc.

Child

Parent's/caregiver's viewpoint of child is extreme and dangerous for the child.

This refers to an extreme viewpoint that is not aligned with reality, not just a negative attitude toward the child. The parent's/caregiver's perception or viewpoint toward the child is so skewed and distorted that it poses an immediate danger to that child.

Child is unsupervised and unable to care for self

This applies if the child is without supervision or care. It is important to consider the time of day and length of time the child has been unsupervised and/or without care. Unsupervised does not always mean that the parent/caregiver is not present; this can also include circumstances where an older child is left to supervise younger children and is incapable of doing so.

Child needs medical attention

This applies to a child of any age. The medical care required must be significant enough that its absence is likely to seriously affect the child's physical or emotional health. Lack of routine medical care is not a present danger threat.

The child is profoundly fearful of the home situation or people within the home

"Home situation" includes specific family members and/or other conditions in the living arrangement. "People within the home" refers to those who either live in the home or frequent the home so often that a child routinely and reasonably expects that the person may be there or show up. The child's fear must be obvious, extreme, and related to some perceived danger that the child feels or experiences. This threat can also be present for a child who does not verbally express fear but their behavior and emotion clearly and vividly demonstrate fear.

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Family

The family may flee

This will require judgment of case information. Transient families, families with no clear home, or homes that are not established, etc., should be considered. This refers to families who are likely to be impossible or difficult to locate and does not include families that are considering a formal, planned move.

The family hides the child

This includes both overt and covert behaviors. This refers to families who physically restrain a child within the home as well as families who avoid allowing others to have contact with their child by passing the child around to other relatives, or other means to limit CPS access to the child.

Child is subject to present/active domestic violence

This refers to the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment. Either presently occurring domestic violence or a general recurring state of domestic violence. Child maltreatment may occur in conjunction with the domestic violence or may be separate. There is greater concern when the abuse of a parent/caregiver and the abuse of a child occur during the same time.

Parent/Caregiver

Parent/caregiver is intoxicated (alcohol or other drugs) now or is consistently under the influence

This refers to a parent/caregiver who is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs much of the time and this impacts their ability to care for the child.

Parent/caregiver is out of control

This includes mental or emotional distress or other unusual or dangerous behaviors where a parent/caregiver cannot manage their behaviors in order to meet their parenting responsibilities related to providing basic, necessary care and supervision. The parent's/caregiver's actions or lack of actions may not be directed at the child but may affect the child in dangerous ways.

Parent/caregiver is demonstrating extremely unusual or unexpected behaviors

This may include unpredictable, incoherent, outrageous, or extremely inappropriate behavior.

Parent/caregiver is unable or unwilling to perform basic care

This only refers to those parental duties and responsibilities consistent with basic care or supervision. It is important to consider what basic care is for each child, as children with disabilities will have different basic care needs compared to children without disabilities.

Parent/caregiver is acting dangerous now or is described as dangerous

This includes a parent/caregiver described as physically or verbally imposing and threatening, brandishing weapons, known to be dangerous and aggressive, currently behaving in an aggressive manner, etc.

Parent's/caregiver's whereabouts are unknown

This includes situations when a parent/caregiver cannot be located at the time of the report or contact, and this affects the safety of the child.

One or both parents/caregivers overtly reject intervention.

They key word here is "overtly." This means that the parent/caregiver avoids all CPS attempts at communication and completion of the assessment. This refers to situations where a parent/caregiver refuses to see or speak with CPS staff and/or to let CPS staff see the child; is openly hostile (not just angry about CPS presence) or physically aggressive towards CPS staff; refuses access to the home, hides the child or refuses access to the child.