

# **Changes to Safety and Risk Assessments to Reduce Repeat Maltreatment**

Handout Materials



**New York State  
Office of  
Children & Family  
Services**

New York State  
Office of Children and Family Services  
and  
Distance Learning Project

# **CHANGES TO SAFETY AND RISK ASSESSMENT TO REDUCE REPEAT MALTREATMENT**

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# **Safety Definitions**

## **Safety**

A child is safe when there is no immediate or impending danger of serious harm to a child's life or health as a result of acts of commission or omission (actions or inactions) by the child's parents and/or caretakers.

## **Safety Factor**

A Safety Factor is a behavior, condition, or circumstance that has the potential to place a child in immediate or impending danger of serious harm.

## **Immediate Danger**

A child is in immediate danger when presently exposed to serious harm. In deciding whether the child(ren) is in immediate or impending danger, consider the following:

- the seriousness of the behaviors/circumstances reflected in the safety factor;
- the number of safety factors present;
- the degree of the child(ren)'s vulnerability and need for protection; and
- the age of the child(ren).

## **Impending Danger**

A child is in impending danger when exposure to serious harm is emerging, about to happen, or is a reasonably foreseeable consequence of current circumstances. In deciding whether the child(ren) is in immediate or impending danger, consider the following:

- the seriousness of the behaviors/circumstances reflected in the safety factor;
- the number of safety factors present;
- the degree of the child(ren)'s vulnerability and need for protection; and
- the age of the child(ren).

## **Safety Decision**

The Safety Decision is a statement of the current safety status of the child(ren) and the actions that are needed to protect the child(ren) from immediate or impending danger of serious harm. A safety decision is dynamic, and is always based on the information you have available to you at the time of the decision.

## **Safety Plan**

A safety plan :

- is a clearly identified set of actions, including controlling interventions when necessary, that have been, or will be taken without delay, to protect the child(ren) from immediate or impending danger of serious harm;
- addresses all of the behaviors, conditions, or circumstances that create the immediate or impending danger of serious harm to the child(ren);
- specifies the tasks and responsibilities of all persons (Parent/Caretaker, household/family members, caseworker, or other service providers) who have a role in protecting the child(ren);
- delineates the timeframes associated with each action or task in the plan that must be implemented;
- identifies how the necessary actions and tasks in the plan will be managed and by whom;
- must be modified in response to changes in the family's circumstances, as necessary, to continually protect the child(ren) throughout the life of the case; and
- is necessary until the protective capacity of the Parent/Caretaker is sufficient to eliminate immediate or impending danger of serious harm to the child(ren) in the absence of any controlling interventions.

A safety plan is **not** a set of educational, rehabilitative or supportive activities or services intended to reduce risk, address underlying conditions and contributing factors, or to bring about long-term and lasting change within a family.

### **Controlling Interventions:**

Controlling interventions are activities or arrangements which protect a child from situations, behaviors or conditions which are associated with immediate or impending danger of serious harm, and without which the dangerous situations, behaviors or conditions would still be present, would emerge, or would in all likelihood immediately return.

## **Safety Assessment**

### **Safety Factors**

A Safety Factor is a behavior, condition, or circumstance that has the potential to place a child in immediate or impending danger of serious harm. As the first step in the safety assessment process, caseworkers assess for the presence of each of the following safety factors. When documenting their safety assessment for children and families with a protective program choice, caseworkers will check all factors that apply to the child and family and describe in a narrative the specific behaviors and circumstances in the family that apply to the identified safety factor.

### **Safety Factor List**

1. Based on your present assessment and review of prior history of abuse or maltreatment, the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) is unable or unwilling to protect the child(ren).
2. Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) currently uses alcohol to the extent that it negatively impacts his/her ability to supervise, protect and/or care for the child(ren).
3. Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) currently uses illicit drugs or misuses prescription medication to the extent that it negatively impacts his/her ability to supervise, protect and/or care for the child(ren).
4. Child(ren) has experienced or is likely to experience physical or psychological harm as a result of domestic violence in the household.
5. Parent(s)/Caretaker(s)'s apparent or diagnosed medical or mental health status or developmental disability negatively impacts his/her ability to supervise, protect, and/or care for the child(ren).
6. Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) has a recent history of violence and/or is currently violent and out of control.
7. Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) is unable and/or unwilling to meet the child(ren)'s needs for food, clothing, shelter, medical or mental health care and/or control child's behavior.
8. Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) is unable and/or unwilling to provide adequate supervision of the child(ren).

9. Child(ren) has experienced serious and/or repeated physical harm or injury and/or the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) has made a plausible threat of serious harm or injury to the child(ren).
10. Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) views, describes or acts toward the child(ren) in predominantly negative terms and/or has extremely unrealistic expectations of the child(ren).
11. Child(ren)'s current whereabouts cannot be ascertained and/or there is reason to believe the family is about to flee or refuses access to the child(ren).
12. Child(ren) has been or is suspected of being sexually abused or exploited and the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) is unable or unwilling to provide adequate protection of the child(ren).
13. The physical condition of the home is hazardous to the safety of the child(ren).
14. Child(ren) expresses or exhibits fear of being in the home due to current behaviors of Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) or other persons living in, or frequenting the household.
15. Child(ren) has a positive toxicology for drugs and/or alcohol.
16. Child(ren) has significant vulnerability, is developmentally delayed, or medically fragile (e.g. on Apnea Monitor) and the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) is unable and/or unwilling to provide adequate care and/or protection of the child(ren).
17. Weapon noted in CPS report or found in the home and Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) is unable and/or unwilling to protect the child(ren) from potential harm.
18. Criminal activity in the home negatively impacts Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) ability to supervise, protect and/or care for the child(ren).
19. **No Safety Factors** present at this time.

## Safety Decision

The safety decision is a statement of the current safety status of the child(ren) and the actions that are needed to protect the child(ren) from immediate or impending danger of serious harm. The decision is based on currently available information. When documenting their safety decision, caseworkers will select the safety decision that most accurately reflects case circumstances.

1. No Safety Factors were identified at this time. Based on currently available information, there is no child(ren) likely to be in immediate or impending danger of serious harm. No Safety Plan/Controlling Interventions are necessary at this time.
2. Safety Factors exist, but do not rise to the level of immediate or impending danger of serious harm. No Safety Plan/Controlling Interventions are necessary at this time. However, identified Safety Factors have been/will be addressed with the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) and reassessed.
3. One or more Safety Factors are present that place the child(ren) in immediate or impending danger of serious harm. A Safety Plan is necessary and has been implemented/maintained through the actions of the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) and/or either CPS or Child Welfare staff. The child(ren) will remain in the care of the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s).
4. One or more Safety Factors are present that place the child(ren) in immediate or impending danger of serious harm. Removal to, or continued placement in, foster care or an alternative placement setting is necessary as a Controlling Intervention to protect the child(ren).

*Note: If safety decision #4 is chosen from the Safety Decision tab, the Placement window asks: "Please document which children were placed or remain in foster care or an alternative placement. If applicable, please identify the protecting factors that allow each child to safely remain in the home"*

5. One or more Safety Factors are present that place or may place the child(ren) in immediate or impending danger of serious harm, but Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) has refused access to the child(ren) or fled, or the child(ren)'s whereabouts are unknown.





### Safety Factors Tab – INV Stage

**Safety Assessment - Mister, Example - S:XXXXXXXXXX/C:XXXXXXXXXX**

File Options Help

Date:  Type:

**Safety Factors**
Safety Decision
Prnt/Ctrkr Actions/Safety Plan
Ctrl Interventions/Safety Plan

Assess for the presence of each of the following safety factors. Check all factors that apply.

Check	Safety Factors
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Based on your present assessment and review of prior history of abuse or maltreatment, the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) is unable or unwilling to protect the child(ren).
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) currently uses alcohol to the extent that it negatively impacts his/her ability to supervise, protect and/or care for the child(ren).
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) currently uses illicit drugs or misuses prescription medication to the extent that it negatively impacts his/her ability to supervise, protect and/or care for the child(ren).
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Child(ren) has experienced or is likely to experience physical or psychological harm as a result of domestic violence in the household.

No Safety Factors present at this time

Describe the behaviors and/or circumstances that apply to the selected safety factor.

Select those safety factors that place the child(ren) in immediate or impending danger of serious harm.

Check	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

**Complete?** NO

Save

Save and Submit

Cancel

## Safety Decision Tab – INV Stage

**Safety Assessment - Mister, Example - S:XXXXXXXXXX/C:XXXXXXXXXX**

File Options Help

Safety Factors      **Safety Decision**      Prnt/Ctrkr Actions/Safety Plan      Ctrl Interventions/Safety Plan

The safety decision is a statement of the current safety status of the child(ren) and the actions that are needed to protect the child(ren) from immediate or impending danger of serious harm. Based on currently available information, select the safety decision that most accurately reflects case circumstances. Check only one.

**Check**

1. No Safety Factors were identified at this time. Based on currently available information, there is no child(ren) likely to be in immediate or impending danger of serious harm. No Safety Plan/Controlling Interventions are necessary at this time.

2. Safety Factors exist, but do not rise to the level of immediate or impending danger of serious harm. No Safety Plan/Controlling Interventions are necessary at this time. However, identified Safety Factors have been/will be addressed with the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) and reassessed.

3. One or more Safety Factors are present that place the child(ren) in immediate or impending danger of serious harm. A Safety Plan is necessary and has been implemented/maintained through the actions of the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) and/or either CPS or Child Welfare staff. The child(ren) will remain in the care of the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s).

4. One or more Safety Factors are present that place the child(ren) in immediate or impending danger of serious harm. Removal to, or continued placement in, foster care or an alternative placement setting is necessary as a Controlling Intervention to protect the child(ren).

5. One or more Safety Factors are present that place or may place the child(ren) in immediate or impending danger of serious harm, but Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) has refused access to the child(ren) or fled, or the child(ren)'s whereabouts are unknown.

Placement

Complete? NO  Save Save and Submit Cancel

Prnt/Crtkr Actions/Safety Plan Tab – INV Stage

**Safety Assessment - Mister, Example - S:XXXXXXXXXX/C:XXXXXXXXXX**

File Options Help

Date: 2/22/2008 Type: CPS 7 day

Safety Factors Safety Decision **Prnt/Crtkr Actions/Safety Plan** Ctrl Interventions/Safety Plan

Describe the specific actions taken by the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) to protect the child(ren) from the specific identified danger. Describe how these actions fully or partially protect the child(ren); the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s)' ability to keep that protection in place; and how long, and/or under what circumstance(s) the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) must maintain the specific protective actions.

**Complete?** NO Save Save and Submit Cancel

**Ctrl Interventions/Safety Plan Tab – INV Stage**

**Safety Assessment - Mister, Example - S:XXXXXXXXXX/C:XXXXXXXXXX**

File Options Help

Date:  Type:

Check all of the Interventions that have been implemented to control for the safety of the child(ren).

Check	Interventions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intensive Home Based Family Preservation Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency Shelter
<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic Violence Shelter
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-offending Prnt/Crtkr has been Moved to a Safe Environment with the Child(ren)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Authorization of Emergency Food/Cash/Goods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Judicial Intervention
<input type="checkbox"/>	Order of Protection
<input type="checkbox"/>	Law Enforcement Involvement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency Medical Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Crisis Mental Health Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency In-patient Mental Health Services

Describe how each selected controlling intervention is protecting the child(ren) from the identified danger. Describe who is responsible for taking and/or maintaining the specific actions and interventions and how the implementation of the safety plan will be monitored.

NO





	<b>Parent/Caretaker Actions/Safety Plan</b>	<b>Controlling Interventions/Safety Plan</b>
<p><b>1.</b> No Safety Factors were identified at this time. Based on the currently available information, there is no child(ren) likely to be in immediate or impending danger of serious harm. No Safety Plan/Controlling Interventions are necessary at this time.</p>	<i>Disabled</i>	<i>Disabled</i>
<p><b>2.</b> Safety Factors exist, but do not rise to the level of immediate danger of serious harm. No Safety Plan/Controlling Interventions are necessary at this time. However, identified Safety Factors have been/will be addressed with the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) and reassessed.</p>	<i>Optional</i>	<i>Disabled</i>
<p><b>3.</b> One or more Safety Factors are present that place the child(ren) in immediate or impending danger of serious harm. A safety Plan is necessary and has been implemented/maintained through the actions of the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) and/or either CPS or Child welfare staff. Children will remain in the care of the Parent(s)/Caretaker(s).</p>	<i>Required</i>	<i>Required</i>
<p><b>4.</b> One or more Safety Factors are present that place the child(ren) in immediate or impending danger of serious harm. Removal to, or continued placement in, foster care or an alternative placement setting as a Controlling Intervention to protect the child(ren).</p>	<i>Optional</i>	<i>Required</i>
<p><b>5.</b> One or more Safety Factors are present that place or may place the child(ren) in immediate or impending danger of serious harm, but Parent(s)/Caretaker(s) has refused to access the child(ren) or fled, or the child(ren)'s whereabouts are unknown.</p>	<i>Disabled</i>	<i>Required</i>

## FINAL Wording Changes to RAP Elements

**1. Total prior reports for adults and children in RAP family unit.**

*No change*

**2. Any child in the RAP family unit was in the care or custody of any substitute caregivers (informally or formally) at any time prior to the current report date.**

*Previously #2 was: Child (ren) in RAP family unit was in the care or custody of substitute caregivers or foster parents at any time prior to the current report.*

**3. Child under one year old in RAP family unit at time of the current report, and/or new infant since report.**

*Previously #3 was: Child (ren) under one year old in RAP family unit.*

**4. Current or recent history of housing with serious health or safety hazards; extreme overcrowding; unstable housing; or no housing.**

*Previously #4 was: Inadequate housing with serious health or safety hazards; extreme overcrowding or no housing.*

**5. Financial resources are mismanaged or limited to the degree that one or more basic family needs are intermittently or chronically unmet.**

*Previously #5 was: Financial resources are severely limited or mismanaged to the degree basic family needs are chronically unmet.*

**6. Caretaker has, and utilizes, reliable and constructive support and assistance from extended family, friends, or neighbors.**

*Previously #6 was: Caretaker(s) in primary household has reliable and useful social support, from extended family, friends or neighbors.*

**7. Caretaker has been a victim or perpetrator of abusive or threatening incidents with partners or other adults in family/neighborhood.**

*Previously #7 was: Caretaker is a perpetrator of, or a victim of, domestic violence; or has serious conflicts with other adults*

**8. Caretaker's alcohol use has had negative effects on child care, family relationships, jobs, or arrests, within the past two years.**

*Previously #8 was: Caretaker(s) with alcohol abuse problem within past 2 years, with risk of not meeting responsibilities*

**9. Caretaker's drug use has had negative effects on child care, family relationships, jobs, or arrests, within the past two years.**

*Previously #9 was: Caretaker(s) with drug abuse problem within past 2 years, with risk of not meeting responsibilities*

**10. Caretaker's behavior suggests a mental health problem exists and/or caretaker has a diagnosed mental illness.**

*Previously #10 was: Caretaker(s) has a serious mental health problem*

**11. Caretaker has very limited cognitive skills.**

*No Change*

**12. Caretaker has a debilitating physical illness or physical disability.**

*No Change*

**13. Caretaker demonstrates developmentally appropriate expectations of all children.**

*Previously #13 was: Caretaker(s) has and applies realistic expectations of all the children*

4/21/2008

**14. Caretaker attends to needs of all children and prioritizes the children's needs above his/her own needs or desires.**

*Previously #14 was: Caretaker(s) always or usually recognizes and attends to needs of all the children*

**15. Caretaker understands the seriousness of current or potential harm to the children, and is willing to address any areas of concern.**

*Previously #15 was: Caretaker(s) views the abuse/maltreatment situation as seriously as the caseworker*