



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carroll
Secretary

DATE: November 20, 2015

TO: Community Based Care Lead Agency CEOs
Regional Managing Directors

THROUGH: Vicki Abrams, Assistant Secretary for Operations *Vicki M. Abrams*
Janice Thomas, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare

FROM: Traci Leavine, Director of Child Welfare Practice *TL*

SUBJECT: Child Safety Determination Selections
Effective Date: Ongoing

PURPOSE: The purpose of this memorandum is to remind child protective investigation staff not to use the FSFN Child Safety Determination and Summary option: "Safe – Impending danger threats are being effectively controlled and managed by a parent/legal guardian in the home."

BACKGROUND: Current FSFN functionality for the Safety Summary and Planning tab in the FFA – Investigation offers three options for the child safety determination:

- 1) Safe – No impending danger threats that meet the safety threshold.
- 2) Safe – Impending danger threats are being effectively controlled and managed by a parent/legal guardian in the home.
- 3) Unsafe

During the initial implementation of the safety methodology practice the intent of providing a second "Safe" option was designed primarily to help child protective investigators focus on and understand the importance of identifying caregivers that had sufficient protective capacity to manage problematic or challenging individual or family conditions. An inherent, but unintended discrepancy was created by the use of the "conditionally safe" determination in that a basic tenet of the Safety Methodology practice is that if a caregiver can consistently manage the out-of-control conditions in the home then no danger threat exists. Children are determined to be either safe or unsafe based solely upon the absence or presence of danger threats in the home.

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Mission: Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

Because a child cannot be "conditionally safe" as the second "Safe" option appears to suggest, investigative staff were previously directed to discontinue use of that option. Unfortunately, recent fidelity of practice reviews have indicated that investigators continue to use that option.

To support a more consistent practice throughout Florida and address the confusion inadvertently caused by having multiple safe options a change request has been submitted to modify FSFN functionality to make the safety determination a binary selection process consisting of only two options: "Safe – no impending danger threats that meet the safety threshold" and "Unsafe."

ACTION REQUIRED: Please share this memorandum effective today with all child protective investigators and case managers to ensure the following actions are completed by December 4, 2015.

1. Child protective investigator supervisors are to remind investigators during "Initial" supervisory consultations that use of the "Safe - Impending danger threats are being effectively controlled and managed by a parent/legal guardian in the home" option is no longer a valid safety determination on the FFA-Investigation.
2. Any local circuit or regionally-based training material used to augment the Pre-Service training curriculum should be revised to reflect the child safety determination as a binary process.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have any questions, please contact Alissa Cross, Safety Manager, Office of Child Welfare, at (850)717-4653 or via e-mail at Alissa.Cross@myflfamilies.com.

Attachments

cc: David Fairbanks, Deputy Secretary
Vicki Abrams, DCF Assistant Secretary for Operations
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