

Initial Risk Assessment

April 18, 2014

Explanation: The remaining component of Florida's practice model to be finalized is the use of risk assessment. The function of risk assessment is to ensure that families at risk of future maltreatment are identified and served. DCF identified actuarial risk tools known as Structured Decision Making® (SDM), developed by the Children's Research Center (CRC), as the preferred option available for assessing risk. The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance and additional training information for the utilization and implementation of the risk assessment tool.

Benefit:

- Families at risk of future maltreatment are identified and served.
- Agency resources target higher-risk families, resulting in greater potential to reduce subsequent maltreatment.
- Florida will utilize a statewide, evidence-based actuarial risk assessment tool that will help investigators and supervisors identify family risk levels using consistent constructs and language.

Who is impacted:

- Child Protective Investigators (CPI)
- Child Protective Investigators' Supervisors (CPIS)

Policy / Decision surrounding practice:

Which Cases: The risk assessment will be completed on all in-home investigations where a Family Functioning Assessment is completed.

Who: The CPI assigned to the investigation completes the risk assessment.

When: The risk assessment should be completed only after the CPI has gathered sufficient information to support the safety determination and inform the risk assessment tool.

Decision: Different actions will be taken depending on the safety and family risk level.

- Unsafe children, regardless of the family risk level, will be transferred to on-going services for case management.
- Safe children with a family risk level of high or very high will be offered intervention services that will include an assessment of needs, home visitation, and prevention plan development. This category of prevention services will be further developed in May, in conjunction with the Florida Coalition for Children.
- Safe children with a family risk level of moderate or low will be offered community referrals.

On-line Training: Training for these changes is posted on the Center for Child Welfare's website:

E-learning module "Introduction to Actuarial Risk Assessment":

<http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/fsfn/actuarialriskassessment/actuarialriskassessment.html>

New FSFN functionality e-learning module "Risk Assessment": <http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/fsfn/riskassessment/riskassessment.html>

Resources: Upon finalization, User Guides, How Do I Guides, Topic Papers and Reference Data will be posted on the Center for Child Welfare's FSFN Reports Information and Resources site: <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/FSFN/FSFNAll.shtml>.

CONTACT INFO: If you believe the new FSFN functionality is not working as it should, please contact the DCF Help Desk at (850) 487-9400 or dcf_helpdesk@dcf.state.fl.us. Policy questions and requests for assistance may be submitted via e-mail to Safety_Methodology@dcf.state.fl.us.