This script accompanies the movie and PowerPoint® presentation by the same name.

Safety Planning Introduction
Welcome and thank you for participating in this E-learning module on Safety Planning.

Advance slide.

Carrying Forward…
Our objective is to build upon the three previous e-learning modules which introduced the information domains, the key safety constructs, and the critical thinking necessary to adequately inform safety decision making and illustrate how a sufficient and effective safety plan controls for any active danger threats identified in the home.

Advance slide.

Safety Planning
In this module we will look at what a safety plan is, and what it is not. We will lay out the criteria for a sufficient safety plan and we will describe the process for determining the least intrusive safety plan.

Advance slide.

Module Objectives
When you have finished this module, you will be able to list the criteria for a sufficient safety plan, explain the steps to determine which type of safety plan will meet the needs of the case and meet the requirements of developing the least intrusive plan.

Advance slide.

Information Standards
In a previous e-learning module, we identified the information standards that let us know when we have sufficient information on the family for decision making. Sufficient information collection gives us a full picture of the family . . . is relevant to only one particular domain . . . is pertinent to gaining a complete understanding of the domain… covers the principal or core issues of the domain . . . and is adequate enough to give us confidence in our conclusions.

Advance slide.

Sufficient Information and Safety Decision Making

Sufficient information around the six information domains reveal present and impending danger in the home. Sufficient information will also inform us about whether or not the child is vulnerable to the identified danger threat and whether or not the parent or caregiver possesses sufficient protective capacity to keep the child safe despite the presence of a threat. All this information factors into the determination of child safety.

Advance slide.

Safety Decision Making and Safety Planning

When threats of danger are identified in the presence of a vulnerable child and the parents or caregivers possess insufficient protective capacities, the child is unsafe and we must temporarily substitute for their inability to control the threats. In every instance when a child is determined to be unsafe, a safety plan is mandatory.

Advance slide.

Determining the Need for a Safety Plan

Using our safety equation from module two let's illustrate the safety determination another way: identified danger threats plus a vulnerable child with parents or caregivers lacking sufficient protective capacities, equates to an unsafe child which determines our need for a safety plan.

Advance slide.

What is a Safety Plan?

Any agreed upon arrangement or plan containing actions and tasks focusing on controlling danger threats is called a safety plan.

Advance slide.

Focus of Safety Plan?

A safety plan is made up of actions and services that will temporarily substitute for the lacking of parental protective capacity to control danger threats.

Advance slide.

Safety Plan Differs from Case Plan

A safety plan is different from a case plan. A safety plan ensures the child's safety while simultaneously working with the family.   Nothing in the safety plan identifies how the parents need to change, just what actions and strategies need to be implemented immediately. The case plan helps the parents or caregivers develop the protective capacity to assure child safety in the long run.
We want you to start thinking about . . . if you have reached the conclusion that a child or children are unsafe, what actions and tasks would you need to put into place to ensure the child's safety while remaining in the home?

Advance slide.

The Range of Safety Plans

An unsafe child does not automatically require a placement outside the home. Safety plans range from entirely in-home to exclusively out-of-home care. A safety plan's objective is to control threats in the least intrusive manner. Using a combination of respite care or short-term foster care to separate children from threats can allow children to spend more time at home. When recommending an out-of-home safety plan, the parties must inform the court why an in-home safety plan cannot work. This is the essence of demonstrating reasonable efforts to prevent placement or why we cannot reunify quickly.

Advance slide.

Safety Actions or Services to Control or Manage Danger Threats

Devising a safety plan to allow children to remain at home means knowing about actions or methods that might immediately control threats of danger by substituting for a parent or caregiver's lack of protective capacities. There are five main strategies or actions to accomplish that: managing threatening behavior, managing crises, providing for social support, providing resources and providing for temporary separation between adults and children.

Advance slide.

Who Can Provide Protective Actions?

Another important thing to remember is that many protective actions do not have to be carried out by a professional or a paid safety service provider. Child care can be provided by a daycare facility or by a church volunteer. Monitoring whether and how parents provide children's meals can be done by a grandmother, mentor or Case Manager.

Advance slide.

Safety Plan Outcomes (1 of 2)

All the safety actions or services to control or manage threats must be explored and considered in terms of how, or if, they will sufficiently substitute for a parent's lack of protective capacity. The best safety plan outcomes occur as a result of including the right participants, putting the right actions in place, and selecting the least intrusive plan to keep children protected and safe. Using an in-home plan as an alternative to full time out of home placement will always be your first consideration . . . but how do you know when it is sufficient to ensure the children's safety?

Advance slide.

Safety Plan Outcomes (2 of 2)

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Which Safety Plan Keeps Child Safe and is Still Sufficient?

After we have considered these options, we must answer the bottom line question: will an in-home or out-of-home safety plan, or some combination, be the least intrusive approach to keep the child safe and still be sufficient?

Advance slide.

Important to Consider

This is very important because if an in-home safety plan would be sufficient, and the agency fails to consider or implement one, then the agency has failed to provide reasonable efforts to prevent removal.

Advance slide.

Critical Thinking for In-home Safety Planning (1 of 4)

Our consideration of whether an in-home safety plan will work should include a specific consideration of how and when the danger threats emerge. Some critical thinking questions to consider related to the danger threats are the following:

- Does each threat happen every day? Different times of day? Is there any pattern or are they unpredictable?
- How long have these threats been occurring? Will it be easier or harder to control or manage threatening behavior with a long family history?
- Does anything specific trigger the threat or accompany the threat, such as pay day, alcohol use, or migraine? [ADVANCE SLIDE]

Advance slide.

Critical Thinking for In-home Safety Planning (2 of 4)

We should also consider whether an in-home safety plan would be sufficient to control the threats, in view of how the household environment and how the caregiver's react to the idea of an in-home safety plan.
Some critical thinking questions which will guide this decision include:

- Are the parents living in the home, or do they disappear occasionally?
- Are the parents willing to cooperate with an in-home plan? How are we gauging "cooperation"?
- Is the household predictable enough that actions will eliminate or manage threats of danger?

As you consider these questions, if the answer to any of these is no, then an in-home safety plan is not appropriate.

Advance slide.

Critical Thinking for In-home Safety Planning (3 of 4)

Another critical thinking consideration for in-home safety planning is to match the right safety actions, at the right level, frequency, and intensity to manage the identified threats.

Thinking critically, here are some key elements to consider:

- How often and how long are safety actions likely to be needed? h
- Are informal or formal safety management providers available to carry out services at appropriate times, frequency and duration?
- Are the people who carry out the in-home safety plan aware, committed, and reliable?
- Are safety plan providers, informal or formal, able to sustain the intense effort until the parent can protect without support?

Advance slide.

Critical Thinking for In-home Safety Planning (4 of 4)

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Is an In-home Plan…

The consideration of these types of questions help us to analyze whether or not an in-home safety plan will work. If the analysis reveals that any of the three categorical considerations, sufficiency, feasibility or sustainability is not practical, an *out-of-home safety plan* must be developed.

Advance slide.

Five Criteria for In-home Safety Plan

In order to determine that an in-home safety plan is sufficient, feasible and sustainable, let's review the five criteria which we all must remember when we develop in-home safety plans.

First, the safety plan only controls or manages danger threats. This means that there must be a direct and logical connection between plan tasks and the way threats operate in the family.

Secondly, the safety plan must have an immediate effect on controlling threats. Strategies resulting in long term change, such as counseling or anger management classes, may be appropriate for the case plan but will not have an immediate effect and do not belong in a safety plan.

The third criteria is that people and services identified in the safety plan must be accessible and available when threats are present.

The fourth criteria is that in-home safety plans must have concrete, action oriented activities and tasks. Safety plans identify specific day care or supervision arrangements whereas case plans tend to include categorical activities like counseling or therapy.

Finally, the fifth criteria for in-home safety plans is that they must never rely on parental promises to stop the threatening behavior. A safety plan should never say that the parent will stop drinking or always supervise the child. We have already established that the identified danger threats are out of control, so a parental promise to control the identified behavior is not a reliable safety plan.

Advance slide.

Safety Plan Management
The safety plan is the foundation of safety management. The safety plan is the official agreement which we develop with the family and identifies who will do what, when, and where, and for how long, in order to control the identified danger threats.

Advance slide.

Four Key Components of a Written Safety Plan (1 of 4)
There are four key components of a written safety plan. The first is that it must identify, in language that can be understood by everyone involved, what the danger threats are that exist in this family. This means that each identified danger threat is described in terms of how it is displayed in this family.

Advance slide.

Four Key Components of a Written Safety Plan (2 of 4)
The second component is that the written plan must identify how the danger threat will be managed including, by whom, and under what circumstances. This must include specific agreements with specification of time requirements, availability, accessibility and suitability of all those involved. Participants to the plan may include family members, professional service providers, and any other individuals in the community supportive of the family and willing to commit their time and abide by the plan.

Advance slide.

Four Key Components of a Written Safety Plan (3 of 4)

The third essential component of the written plan is documentation of the parent or caregiver's awareness and acknowledgement of danger threats and their acceptance and willingness for the plan to be implemented.

Advance slide.

Four Key Components of a Written Safety Plan (4 of 4)

The final essential component of the written plan is a specific description of how the investigator or case manager will manage the plan.

Advance slide.

How Long do Safety Plans Last?

So how long should we anticipate a safety plan to be in place in any given case? The answer to this is simple, as long as it is needed. And the need is defined by the presence of danger threats, the presence of a vulnerable child and the lack of protective capacity. The safety plan must be implemented and active as long as danger threats exist and caregiver protective capacities are diminished..

Advance slide.

Safety Plan vs. Case Plan

And, remember, we will have safety plans operating at the same time we have case plans. Safety plans and case plans serve a different purpose. Simply put, safety plans are focused on control; case plans are focused on change. Safety plans substitute for lack of protective capacity; case plans focus on changing or enhancing protective capacity. And safety plans must have an immediate effect, whereas case plans have treatment effects which are achieved over time.

Advance slide.

Summary of Module

In this module we have examined the steps to determine what type of safety plan will be sufficient and the requirements to consider in implementing the least intrusive plan possible. We have also looked at the specific criteria used to evaluate the sufficiency of in-home safety plans. And, finally, we identified the essential written components of all in-home safety plans.
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Quiz Directions

Please proceed to answer the questions which follow and thank you for your participation.

Advance slide.

Q1

Q1: Which of these items is not true?
  a. The primary purpose of a safety plan is control
  b. People involved in safety plans must be immediately accessible and available
  c. **A safety plan only lasts for 30 days**
  d. A safety plan must have an immediate effect
  e. Safety plans can include professional and non-professional providers

Q1 Answer

Answer (c) is not true because safety plans are always "open-ended", that is, they are in place as long as they are needed which is defined by how soon the parental or caregiver protective capacity can control any and all active danger threats previously or currently identified in the home.

Q2

Q2: Safety plans initiate actions and services that will temporarily substitute for _____ ?
  a. Present danger
  b. Child vulnerability
  c. Basic resources
  d. Lacking parental protective capacity

Q2 Answer

Answer (d) "Lacking parental protective capacity" is the correct response. Substituting for inadequate protective capacity will assist in controlling the danger threat while the parent or caregiver begins to address what he or she needs to change to be able to protect their children without agency oversight or involvement.

Q3

Q3: Which of these is not a criteria for an in-home safety plan?

   a.   **Addresses all apparent needs in the family**
   b.   Has an immediate effect on controlling threats
   c.   Has concrete, action oriented activities and tasks
   d.   Must never rely on parental promises
   e.   Must be based on people and services that are available when the threats are present

Q3 Answer

Answer (a) is not one of the criteria for implementation of an in-home safety plan. Safety plans are all about taking immediate safety actions to control active danger threats and appropriately manage the plan, which is commonly referred to as "safety management." As important as it is to meet the parent's and children's needs, that again, is an aspect of case planning, not safety planning.

Q4

Q4: Reasonable efforts requires that we consider in-home safety plan options prior to making the recommendation to place the child in an out-of-home placement.

   a.   **True**
   b.   False

Q4 Answer

The correct answer (a) "True." Not only do we have to consider an in-home safety plan prior to placing a child in an out-of-home placement , we have to be able to demonstrate to the court why even with the provision of appropriate services the child cannot be maintained safely in

his or her home. This is why your efforts in documenting the insufficiency, unfeasibility and the unsustainability of an in-home plan are so important: they provide the rationale and justification to the court for the out-of-home placement.

Q5

Q5: Written safety plans should include:
   a. A description of the danger threats in language the family can understand
   b. A description of how the danger threats will be managed and by whom
   c. A description of the parent or caregiver's awareness of the danger threats
   d. A description of how the plan will be managed by the investigator or case manager
   e. **All of the above**

Q5 Answer

Answer (e) "all of the above" is correct. When your written safety plan includes all the elements listed in (a) through (d) you have developed a detailed plan which takes all the guesswork out of what is supposed to be happening on a hourly, daily or weekly, basis, who is responsible for completing the action, and how the plan is going to be managed and reviewed in a timely manner in order to make any necessary adjustments to ensure child safety.

Congratulations!

Congratulations on completing Module Four: Safety Planning

Within the week you should also complete the discussion guide that accompanies this module. If you are not watching the module as part of a group exercise facilitated by your supervisor or assigned safety practice expert please contact them for a copy of the discussion guide. The discussion guide is intended to provide additional resources and instruction so you can further explore the five criteria for an in-home safety plan and review and evaluate some sample written in-home safety plans.

One last thing, don't forget to get credit for participating in this e-learning module by going to your individual training screen in FSFN and selecting the training course titled Module Four: Safety Planning.

Again, thank you for your participation!