

1412 - CPS IN-HOME SERVICES

I. INTRODUCTION

CPS In-Home Services are a legally mandated and integral part of the Children's Services continuum and are provided to families who have had a substantiation of abuse, neglect, and/or dependency, or a finding of Services Needed (for more detailed information on possible case decision findings, refer to [Chapter VIII: Section 1408 – Investigative and Family Assessments](#)). The purpose of CPS In-Home Services is to maintain the safety of the child while helping the parent/caretaker to learn more effective parenting practices.

North Carolina's practice model unites System of Care philosophy with the Multiple Response System. MRS and SOC help North Carolina achieve the safety, permanency, and well-being of children. To understand this practice model, it is important to understand what it means to provide a family-centered approach to the delivery of services.

II. FAMILY-CENTERED APPROACH

The foundational philosophy of the North Carolina Multiple Response System, as well as the North Carolina System of Care, is family-centered practice. CPS In-Home Services are family-centered. Family-centered practice focuses on the family with full knowledge and appreciation for its dynamics.

The System of Care Principles are:

- Interagency Collaboration
- Individualized strengths based care
- Cultural competence
- Child and Family involvement
- Community Based services
- Accountability

The six family-centered principles of partnership are:

- Everyone desires respect.
- Everyone needs to be heard.
- Everyone has strengths.
- Judgments can wait.
- Partners share power.
- Partnership is a process.

The underlying beliefs of a family-centered approach to child welfare are as follows:

- Safety of the child is the first concern.
- Children have the right to their family.
- The family is the fundamental resource for the nurturing of children.
- Parents should be supported in their efforts to care for their children.

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- Families are diverse and have the right to be respected for their special cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious traditions. Children can flourish in different types of families.
- A crisis is an opportunity for change.
- Inappropriate intervention can do harm.
- Families who seem hopeless can grow and change.
- Family members are our colleagues.
- It is the county child welfare agency's job to instill hope.

This practice model, where the principles of family-centered practice reflect the belief that the family is its own primary source of intervention and determines who its members are, is the major focus for CPS In-Home Services. The family is viewed as a system within a larger social and environmental context. As a result, interventions focus on accessing the family's immediate and extended community through needs assessment, resource identification, and service delivery. Family-centered practice respects the family's right of self-control and capabilities, and assumes it has the capacity to grow and change when provided the proper supportive interventions. Family-centered practice develops strengths, enhances potential, and empowers families to identify and resolve their own problems. This practice model, through the application of family-centered principles of partnership, allows agencies to achieve safe, permanent, nurturing homes for children.

III. CHILD AND FAMILY TEAMS AND THE TEAM APPROACH

The main vehicle for delivering the CPS In-Home Services is through Child and Family Team (CFT) decision-making. A Child and Family Team (CFT) is comprised of family members and their community supports that come together to create, implement, and update a plan with the child, youth, and family. The plan builds on the strengths of the child, youth and family and addresses the needs, desires and dreams. CFT meetings utilize a team approach to improve the county child welfare agency's process; to encourage the involvement, support, and "buy-in" of the family, extended family, and the community to the agency's decisions; and to develop specific, individualized, and appropriate interventions for children and families.

CFT meetings recognize and respect the family as the expert on its own children. A CFT meeting genuinely engages families in the planning process, jointly develops specific plans for children at risk, and designs in-home or out-of-home service agreements and supports for families. To learn more regarding the required use of CFT meetings, refer to [Chapter VII - Child and Family Team Meetings](#).

It is important that the county child welfare worker begin talking with the family about CFT meetings, even prior to a case decision being made. Beginning discussions during the CPS Assessment should include conversations regarding who is included in the family, and who is important even if they are not related. Laying this ground work will help ensure that at the face-to-face meeting within seven days following the case decision, the family will be prepared.

Child and Family Team meetings should be discussed during every contact thereafter to assist the family in identifying and sustaining appropriate supports. Refer to [Chapter VII - Child and Family Team Meetings](#) for guidance on the frequency of CFT meetings.

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For policy guidance on conducting a Child and Family Team meeting with a family that has experienced domestic violence, refer to [Chapter VIII: Section 1409 - Domestic Violence](#).

IV. CPS IN-HOME SERVICES PRACTICE

With an emphasis on the delivery of services using a System of Care philosophy incorporated with the Multiple Response System, the [county child welfare](#) agency shall provide, arrange for, and coordinate interventions and services, as needed that shall focus on child safety and protection, family preservation, and the prevention of further abuse or neglect. When the [county child welfare agency](#) initially becomes involved with a family during the CPS Assessment phase, the [county child welfare](#) worker's chief focus is on the child's safety and protection. After a substantiation of abuse, neglect, [and/or](#) dependency, or a finding of services needed, the primary concern continues to be the child's safety and protection. The [county child welfare](#) agency is responsible for making reasonable efforts to maintain the child safely in the home, but when safety in the child's own home cannot be assured, the agency is mandated to take immediate action to protect the child by providing safe, nurturing substitute care.

CPS In-Home Services begin at the conclusion of the CPS Assessment, where all of the information gathered during the fact-finding process shall be incorporated into one case decision and one Report to Central Registry ([DSS-5104](#)) and a decision has been made to substantiate abuse, neglect, [and/or](#) dependency or there is a finding of services needed. Refer to [Chapter VIII: Section 1408 - Investigative and Family Assessments](#) for guidance on completing a CPS Assessment.

The CPS Assessment case decision shall be reported to:

- The caretakers or parents alleged to have abused, neglected, [or rendered](#) the child [dependent](#);
- The primary caretakers or parents with whom the child resided at the time the agency initiated the [CPS](#) Assessment;
- Other parents as appropriate;
- Any agency in which the court has vested legal custody;
- The licensing authority (as appropriate); and
- The Central Registry / Responsible Individuals List (as appropriate).

A. NEW ALLEGATIONS RECEIVED DURING THE PROVISION OF SERVICES

Any new allegation and/or incident that meet the legal definitions of abuse, neglect, [and/or](#) dependency received at any time during the course of CPS In-Home Services shall be documented as a new report and the [county child welfare](#) agency shall conduct a prompt and thorough CPS Assessment.

If a case is open for [CPS](#) In-Home Services following a substantiation or a finding of services needed and new allegations of abuse, neglect, [and/or](#) dependency are received by the [county child welfare](#) agency, those allegations reported should be screened independently. If accepted, the report should be assessed independently of the [CPS](#) In-Home Services case.

B. IN-HOME SERVICES SERVICE DELIVERY

When approaching families in a manner consistent with System of Care, using family-centered practice principles remains imperative. CPS In-Home Services workers maintain a single focus while preparing for two different outcomes. This section provides information on the laws, policies, and good practice standards regarding the provision of CPS In-Home Services.

CPS In-Home Services:

- Provides the most intensive services and contacts to families with the greatest needs, while those with fewer needs receive less intensive services/contacts,
- Delivers services within the context of the family's own community culture,
- Enables county child welfare workers to better identify risks in their work with families,
- Allows county child welfare workers to offer the most intensive services to families with the greatest need,
- Engages children, youth, and families in the planning process while producing better outcomes of safety, permanence, and well-being for children, and
- Encourages families to develop a support network and how this support network can assist them in planning for coping with future challenges.

County child welfare workers assume many roles with parents/caretakers during CPS In-Home Services. Be familiar with community programs and supports; they act as a resource. County child welfare workers act as models; demonstrating how to acknowledge anger and how to work out differences so that anger does not escalate to violence. County child welfare workers act as coaches; providing feedback about the missteps, but also providing praise for the positive steps. County child welfare workers act as mentors; giving information, instruction, guidance, and mentoring regarding parenting skills. County child welfare workers are teachers; helping parents learn to problem-solve, think through situations, make decisions and experience both failure and success.

County child welfare workers also represent the authority of the State when this becomes necessary, as when the parent harms the child. At this point, the county child welfare worker must assume the role to protect the child legally. This authority undergirds all of the work with the parent/caretaker.

County child welfare workers also work with children and youth during CPS In-Home Services. Children have information about how their family is progressing from their perspective. Children should be involved in setting goals, as well as reporting on the progress towards achieving those goals. In order to effectively communicate with children, it is important that county child welfare workers possess an understanding of developmental stages and be willing to communicate with the child in the way that is most comfortable for the child.

The provision of CPS In-Home Services has the following goals:

- To maintain the safety of children;
- To strengthen the family's capacity to protect and nurture its children; and

- To maintain children in their own families.

C. STRUCTURED DECISION-MAKING TOOLS

The use of the Structured Decision-Making tools is meant to guide county child welfare workers and families through the process. County child welfare workers are encouraged to bring these tools to every home visit so that a discussion surrounding these issues can take place. Completing these tools with the family makes the CPS process transparent and allows families to be a part of the process and to feel that they are part of the case planning.

1. The North Carolina Family Risk Assessment (DSS-5230)

The North Carolina Family Risk Assessment (DSS-5230) shall be completed and documented at the following intervals:

- Prior to the time of the case decision to substantiate abuse, neglect, and/or dependency, or a finding of services needed, and
- When a new CPS report is received and accepted during an open CPS In-Home Services case.

The Family Risk Assessment is a useful tool to assess initial risk. When completed with the family, it serves as a mechanism to collaborate with the family.

2. The North Carolina Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs (DSS-5229)

The North Carolina Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs (DSS-5229) shall be completed at the following intervals:

- During any CPS Assessment that involves a caretaker prior to the case decision and
- For CPS In-Home Services cases:
 - At the time of the In-Home Family Services Agreement updates
 - Within 30 days prior to case closure
 - With an involved noncustodial parent at concurrent time frames

Completing the North Carolina Family Assessment of Strength and Needs (FASN) is yet another way in which county child welfare workers can involve families. The FASN serves as the basis for the In-Home Family Services Agreement. This is an opportunity for the family to have input on what services are determined to be necessary.

It is also to involve families in a comprehensive discussion that recognizes strengths. When the family is allowed to participate, it is

easier to view the [county child welfare agency](#) as a partner in the process, and to develop meaningful service agreements. It is easier to gain a families cooperation if they are able to "see" what it going on. Involving them in the identification of strength and needs allows this to occur.

Child/Family Well-Being

In cases that were substantiated or have a finding of services needed and opened for more than thirty days from the date of case decision, there shall be documentation in the case record, on the North Carolina Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs and on the Family Services Agreement that includes but is not limited to the following items as they are applicable. If they are not applicable, please note that:

Child/Family Education Needs:

- 1) Special education classes, when applicable;
- 2) Normal grade placement, if child is school age;
- 3) Services to meet the identified educational needs, unless no unusual educational needs are identified;
- 4) Early intervention services, unless these services are not needed;
- 5) Advocacy efforts with the school, unless the child is not school age or there have been no identified needs that are unmet by the school; and
- 6) How the educational needs of the child/family have been included in the case planning, unless the child is not school age or has no identified education needs.

Child/Family Physical Health Needs:

- 1) Whether the child/family has received preventive health care and if not, the efforts the [county child welfare](#) agency will take to ensure that this care is obtained;
- 2) Whether the child/family has received preventive dental care and if not, the efforts the [county child welfare](#) agency will take to ensure that this care is obtained;
- 3) Whether the child/family has up-to-date immunizations and if not, what efforts the [county child welfare](#) agency will take to obtain them;
- 4) Whether the child/family is receiving treatment for identified health needs and if not, what efforts the [county child welfare](#) agency will take to obtain the treatment; and

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- 5) Whether the child/family is receiving treatment for identified dental needs and if not, what efforts the county child welfare agency will take to obtain the treatment.

Child/Family Mental Health Needs:

Whether the child/family is receiving appropriate treatment for any identified mental health needs and if not, what efforts the county child welfare agency will take to obtain such treatment.

If the family needs assistance in meeting any of these identified needs, the county child welfare worker should attempt to provide information, services, or referrals to meet the need.

The lack of adherence to the well-being issues would not be a reason to initiate court proceedings against the parent if it was not a part of the substantiation or finding of services needed or seen as a risk/safety concern.

If issues need to be addressed, they may be included in the Family Services Agreement, but they are not reasons to keep the case open when it would otherwise be closed for services.

3. The Case Decision Summary/Initial Family Services Agreement (DSS-5228)

The Case Decision Summary/Initial Family Services Agreement (DSS-5228) shall be completed at the time of the case decision and serves as the Initial Family Services Agreement. For a complete discussion of the Case Decision Summary, refer to Chapter VIII: Section 1408 - Investigative and Family Assessments.

4. Family Risk Reassessment with CPS In-Home Services

Most of the information necessary for completing the North Carolina Family Risk Reassessment (DSS-5226) is gathered throughout the course of the CPS Assessment. This, along with the North Carolina Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs, will assist the CPS In-Home Services worker in determining risk of future abuse and/or neglect, as well as assist in formulating the Family Services Agreement. The Family Risk Reassessment assists the county child welfare worker in determining the required service level intensity. Failure to complete thorough assessments can jeopardize the child's safety and affect the quality of other decisions made during CPS In-Home Services and delivery. The process is a continuous one.

Family Risk Reassessment updates shall be completed when the child remains in the home and CPS In-Home Services are being provided, or when the county child welfare agency has legal custody and the child has not been removed from

the home. The Family Risk Reassessment shall be completed at the following intervals with the family, when CPS In-Home Services are being provided:

- At the time of the Family Services Agreement updates;
- Whenever a significant change occurs in the family; and
- Within 30 days prior to case closure.

The Family Risk Reassessment process provides an opportunity for the CPS In-Home Services worker and the family to reevaluate progress or lack of progress around those particular areas of concern that have been determined to affect the risk of harm to the children. The Family Risk Reassessment is used to guide decision-making following the provision of services to clients while assessing a change in behavior that mitigates the identified risk factors.

While the initial assessment projects a risk level prior to the agency service provision, the risk reassessment takes into account the provision of services.

At risk reassessment, a family may be continued for services or the case may be closed.

In arriving at an assessment of risk, the county child welfare worker should assume that overall risk is a balance between factors that escalate risk of abuse/neglect and family strengths. The balance should be assessed based on number, degree, and interaction of risk factors and strengths. Patterns or clusters of risk factors commonly found in serious child abuse and neglect cases should receive added weight in making an overall assessment of risk. These clusters of risk factors are mutually reinforcing and, therefore, increase the risk of abuse/neglect with which they are associated. Similarly, family strengths that combine to indicate and/or support social competence and a capacity for forming positive interpersonal relationships should receive special attention in determining an overall level of risk.

V. DEVELOPING THE IN-HOME FAMILY SERVICES AGREEMENT

The In-Home Family Services Agreement is completed for all cases assigned in which the family is receiving CPS In-Home Services after substantiation or a finding of services needed is made. The agreement will also be used to document a plan of voluntary services to families.

The purpose of the In-Home Family Services Agreement is to specify a plan to respond to the conditions or needs that threaten a child's safety and place him or her at risk of future harm while identifying and building on the family's strengths. The conditions and needs of the family, as well as, family strengths, are identified through the results of the Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, and the Family Assessment of the Strengths and Needs. They are reflected in the documentation of the Case Decision Summary as part of the Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs Summary which will serve as the Initial Case Plan.

The In-Home Family Services Agreement ([DSS-5239](#)) addresses the needs of the family identified in the Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs, safety issues, and the future risk of harm to the child. It also outlines a plan to meet those needs contingent upon the actions and activities of the family and the county child welfare worker. Although priority needs will be

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addressed first, the family needs to be aware of all of the needs that must be addressed with target dates based on the appropriate priority level. Other needs may also be addressed in the agreement when the family requests voluntary services. Additionally, the In-Home Family Services Agreement must identify the child and family well-being issues and include a plan for how the county child welfare worker and family will ensure these issues are addressed ([DSS-5239ins](#)). However, failure to resolve the well-being issues will not result in continuation of involuntary services.

A. THE FAMILY SERVICES AGREEMENT

The Family Services Agreement shall be developed with the family, to provide a basis for providing services to the family.

It shall:

- Be based on the information obtained from the Safety Assessment, Family Risk Assessment, and Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs;
- Be developed jointly with parents or primary caretakers, their personal support systems, any other persons who are involved in and critical to the successful completion of the agreement and the safety and welfare of the children, and the child if cognitively and emotionally able to participate;
- Contain objectives, activities that are measurable, time-limited, describe specific desired outcomes, and identify necessary behavior changes;
- Specify the outcomes or consequences resulting from following the plan successfully or not, and
- Reflect progress or lack of progress of the family in each of the updates or revisions.

Both custodial and noncustodial parents should participate in the development of the agreement. Involving a noncustodial parent and/or the relative supports in the planning for a child could possibly prevent future maltreatment, placement, and lengthy stays for children in out-of-home care. Even if a parent is incarcerated, (in-state or out-of-state), he or she should be contacted to determine if he or she can assist in identifying any strengths or needs of the family, receive input on the In-Home Family Services Agreement, determine if there are any possible relatives that may be a resource in supporting the child, and determine what level of involvement he or she can maintain particularly around the planning for and contact with the child. To locate a parent that is in prison, contact the [NC Department of Corrections](#) Records Office at 919-716-3200. Contact numbers and addresses for specific prisons can be found on the NC Division of Prisons website <http://www.doc.state.nc.us/dop/index.htm>. All inmates have a case manager or social worker that can assist in contacting a prisoner.

If a noncustodial parent is not involved in the planning, it may be beneficial to ask what it would take to become involved, as well as if there are any relatives that may be a resource in supporting the child.

Documentation should reflect this discussion.

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Prior to completing the In-Home Family Services Agreement, a North Carolina Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs should be completed with an involved noncustodial parent.

For CPS In-Home Services, the In-Home Family Services Agreement shall be:

- Completed with the family within 30 days of the assessment case decision to Substantiate or a finding of Services Needed, and
- Updated at least every three months thereafter to coincide with the Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs and Risk Reassessment updates or whenever family circumstances warrant a change.

All county [child welfare agencies](#) should use Child and Family Team Meetings to develop the Family Services Agreement or update it if circumstances warrant changes (please see [Chapter VII - Child and Family Team Meetings](#)). If the Agreement is not completed within 30 days, documentation shall reflect diligent efforts made or rationale for extra time to develop the plan. If the Agreement is not updated, documentation shall reflect diligent efforts to engage the family or rationale for continuing the previous plan.

B. THE DISCUSSION AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE IN-HOME FAMILY SERVICES AGREEMENT

The Family Services Agreement developed with the family should be the result of formal and informal assessments with the family, as well as, taking into consideration what they see as important to them. Below is a discussion of the various aspects of the Agreement that should be included in the documentation and discussion with the family.

1. Identify needs from the Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs that affect the child's present safety or places the child at future risk of harm. The greatest need should be addressed first in the In-Home Family Services Agreement. Only one need per page should be addressed. In identifying needs of the family, be sure that the safety and risk assessment concerns of the family are incorporated into the Service Agreement. If needs from an involved noncustodial parent are identified, [his or her](#) needs should also be addressed within the In-Home Family Services Agreement either on the same one or on a separate Agreement.
2. Specify the conditions/behaviors affecting the child's present safety or that put the child at risk of future harm as identified in the Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs and the Initial Case Plan of the Case Decision Summary.
3. When developing objectives, describe specifically what the desired behavior/condition or expected changes will look like when the need is met so the [caretaker](#) and the [county child welfare](#) worker are clear about what is expected and when it has been accomplished. The family should be involved in the development of these outcome statements.
4. List the activities that are planned to correct the identified need/behavior and the date the activity should be completed (or begun, as appropriate). Activities should state what will be done, where it will be done, who will do it, and when it will be begun/[be](#) completed.

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5. The caretaker should also have input into decisions concerning who will be service providers, as needed. Also listed here should be the specific activities the county child welfare worker agrees to do to assist the family in successfully completing the Agreement, as well as activities that both formal and informal supports agree to do.
6. The family may request voluntary services in addition to the services addressed in the Agreement to address identified needs. The family's objectives or voluntary services accepted by the family should be documented.
7. Specific effective services should be evaluated and updated at least every six months for each child. Revisions may be done every three months when the In-Home Family Services Agreement is updated for quarterly reviews. The child is only eligible for IV-E funded in-home services if agency services are critical to prevent removal from the home.
8. Specify what action will be taken if the safety and future risk of harm to the child becomes unacceptable, up to and including, the possibility of the agency filing a juvenile petition requesting nonsecure custody and/or removal of the child from the home, if necessary. The county child welfare worker should explain that the primary goal is to maintain the child safely in the home of the parent/caretaker, but if the child's safety is compromised, the county child welfare agency will take steps to ensure the safety of the child, which may include filing a juvenile petition.

A discussion should be held with the family regarding issues of behavior change or lack of that could affect the safety and future risk of harm of the children. When discussing issues of behavior change, it is important to discuss the behaviors of the parent/caretaker that are continuing to create risk--not just that he or she has not completed an activity of the Service Agreement. Although the decisions of the family in the development of the In-Home Family Services Agreement are valued; safety and repeat maltreatment concerns must be addressed. Clearly defined goals and involvement of the family in the development will help alleviate confusion or resistance. Consequences of a lack of behavior change should also be clearly stated so that the alternative process is outlined.

CPS In-Home Services workers need to identify extended family members early and assess them for their capacity and willingness to care for the child. These support persons can be accessed to support the child and family while the child is in the home. Knowing which family members can best meet the child's needs becomes particularly important when the child must be removed.

9. Allowing the family to be involved in placement decision-making when out-of-home care of the child is needed reflects a family-centered approach. Involving the parent(s) emphasizes the importance of parental involvement and facilitates the development of the casework relationship.

The plan for out-of-home placement should include the family's ideas on options for care if the child should be removed from the home. It then becomes the county child welfare worker's responsibility to assess any placement provider, if out-of-home placement appears imminent, to ensure that it is a safe and nurturing environment for the child.

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10. The family should be reminded that completion of the In-Home Family Services Agreement might mean case closure. Whenever the desired outcome of the Agreement is achieved, the child is safe and the risk to the child is reduced to an acceptable level, the case will be closed for services. The county child welfare agency shall terminate CPS In-Home Services when:
 - a. Parents or caretakers are willing to provide a safe home and demonstrate their ability to do so, or
 - b. The county child welfare agency receives legal custody and/or placement responsibility.

11. The signatures of the parent/caretaker, the child, if cognitively and emotionally able to participate, the county child welfare worker, and the county child welfare supervisor are all required on the In-Home Family Services Agreement. If the child was able to participate but did not sign the agreement, the county child welfare worker should include an explanation of why the child did not sign. By signing the agreement, the family, the county child welfare worker, the child(ren), and any others who were involved with the development of the plan agree to work toward meeting the identified needs. Other signatures may include service providers, community representatives, or family members and friends who have a role with the parent or child and support the plan. These signatures are optional and not required.

If a parent/caretaker refuses to sign the In-Home Family Services Agreement, the county child welfare worker should try to address the parent/caretaker's concerns and stress the need for working together to prevent the need for court involvement. The parent/caretaker may verbally agree even if he or she refuses to sign the agreement.

The county child welfare worker must note that the parent/caretaker has agreed to each need and activity if he or she refuses to sign the agreement. If the parent/caretaker refuses to sign the agreement and verbally refuses to agree to its provisions, the county child welfare agency has the responsibility to ensure that the child is safe whether the child is in his or her own home or in another type of arrangement.

The county child welfare worker may petition for court involvement ordering the family to work in compliance toward case goals, without requesting nonsecure custody of the child. The court hearing that results from the juvenile petition can bring the court's authority on the parent and the court order can then contain the plan for the family. This gives immediate authority to the county child welfare agency if the situation deteriorates to the point of removal and requesting nonsecure custody.

The date the signature was received must be documented on the Agreement and there is room for signatures for three reviews. A copy of the Agreement must be given to all parties involved in the completion of the Agreement and the date the copy was provided must be recorded on the In-Home Family Services Agreement.

VI. IMPLEMENTING THE IN-HOME FAMILY SERVICES AGREEMENT

CPS In-Home Services involves arranging for and providing services to help the family change the maltreating behavior. CPS In-Home Services workers must achieve a balance in helping families by performing actual tasks for them when needed and by empowering them to perform the required tasks themselves. The CPS In-Home Services worker is as active a participant in helping design and implement the services as the family. Once the services are agreed upon, they should be written into the Family Services Agreement. Regular contact with the family and significant others is critical in maintaining the child's safety and in knowing which services are most relevant. CPS In-Home Services provides the most intensive services and contacts to families with the greatest needs, while those with fewer needs receive less intensive services/contacts.

A. CPS IN-HOME SERVICES (High Risk Cases)

If the initial Risk Assessment documents the overall risk rating to be high and there are safety issues, the agency will provide CPS In-Home Services. These services are provided to children and their families, after there has been a substantiation of child abuse, neglect, and/or dependency or a finding of services needed and the child is determined to be a reasonable candidate for foster care in the absence of preventive services. Services include activities such as:

- Monitoring, expanding, and updating the In-Home Family Services Agreement to address identified areas of need;
- Routine case supervisory activities;
- Maintenance of contact with the family and others significant to the case;
- Working with the parents on the status of the case and case goals;
- Giving information, instruction, guidance and mentoring regarding parenting skills;
- Referral or monitoring of service as appropriate, including referrals to county agency-provided clinical treatment;
- Ongoing determination of appropriateness of need for out-of-home placement; and
- Documentation of CPS In-Home Services activities.

For cases where the risk is rated as high, weekly face-to-face contact shall be maintained with the family. This is to ensure the safety of all children in the home. Given that families have various schedules, this may require multiple visits to the home to ensure that every member of the family is seen. This visit should include a discussion of the identified risk related behaviors while assessing the current safety of the children.

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At a minimum, the following requirements shall be in effect:

- All children substantiated as abused, neglected, and/or dependent, or identified as services needed and their parents or primary caretakers shall be seen face-to-face two times per month.
- All other children (unsubstantiated or found services recommended or services not recommended) residing in the home shall be seen face-to-face one time per month.
- Every other week the county child welfare worker shall be required to have face-to-face contact with as many significant family members as necessary to ensure the children's safety. This face-to-face contact should include a discussion of the risk factors and behaviors identified during the CPS Assessment.
- Two collateral contacts per month with service providers significant to the case: mental health therapist or case manager, school, childcare, Work First, or other professionals working with the family are some examples. These contacts may be made at the Child and Family Team Meeting if the child's safety can be ensured in the process.

Documentation should include the identity of the person the county child welfare worker talked with, when the conversation took place, and what observations have been made of the family's progress or barriers toward case goals.

- When a family's progress cannot be documented and risk is not reduced due to a lack of progress or behavior change after three months, there should be a facilitated Child and Family Team meeting to address the behavior change issues, set deadlines for behavior change, and to outline the court process.
- If after six months there are no activities completed on the Family Services Agreement nor any behavioral changes demonstrated that mitigate risk, by the family, there shall be a Child and Family Team meeting that should be facilitated that advises the family court action will be pursued by the filing of a juvenile petition.

This CFT meeting shall be an examination of the Family Services Agreement and the barriers that prevent successful completion (note that these barriers may not lie within the family's control). Because Family Services Agreements are a family-driven process, it is critical for the county child welfare agency to remember that it has a defined role in assisting families to achieve their plan. After evaluating the Family Services Agreement and the barriers to its successful completion in the CFT meeting, it may be determined that support from the county child welfare agency may need to extend to calling a service provider with the family or driving them to the first appointment with that service provider or even attending the appointment with the family to assist them in successfully navigating the service provider's system. Note: it is not necessary to wait six months if the risk factors associated with the case dictate that a CFT be held sooner.

The county child welfare worker and county child welfare supervisor shall staff the case frequently enough to ensure the safety of all victim children. Issues to be discussed include but are not limited to, risk, safety, the family's strengths and needs, and the family's progress.

1. Case Contact Reduction

Once the family has demonstrated a reduction of the behaviors that were identified during the CPS Assessment to create risk, the case contacts may be reduced. Once the assessment process accurately reflects reduction of risk, the overall risk factor may be documented as moderate; thereby removing the requirement of weekly contacts and stepping down the CPS In-Home Services case to moderate. It is important to note that the key here is accurate documentation of the family's progress.

Case contacts with family members may not be reduced while the case remains open for CPS In-Home High Services except for the following circumstances.

- If the child is in a safe, stable arrangement with a Temporary Safety Provider, contact with the child may be reduced although the risk rating is still high. Contact with the parent remains required.
- If the child is in a safe, stable arrangement with a Temporary Safety Provider, contact with the child may be reduced if the parent "disappears". The county child welfare agency should consider pursuing nonsecure custody.
- If Intensive Family Preservation Services (IFPS) is in place, these contacts will be documented and shared with CPS In-Home Services worker.

Contacts will remain as set forth above until the risk level in the home is reduced.

The first underlying belief of family-centered practice is that the safety of the child is the first concern. No child should be interviewed in such a manner that compromises his or her safety.

During the provision of CPS In-Home Services, there is nothing that prevents the county child welfare worker from interviewing the children alone. County child welfare workers should use their professional judgment in deciding how children will be interviewed. In many cases, interviewing the family together can provide vital information about family dynamics and may trigger discussions that otherwise would not be held. However, attention should be paid to verbal and non-verbal cues from the child that might lead the county child welfare worker to feel that this child needs to be interviewed in a different setting also. Each child should be interviewed in the way that will best provide safety and build rapport with

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the child. Building a bond of trust with the child can be especially important to them if out-of-home placement must occur.

At each quarterly Child and Family Team Meeting, the team is to convene to discuss what level of progress has been made since the last meeting.

If the team determines that the family is showing progress but the risk continues to stay high, another meeting is scheduled. When the team determines that no progress has occurred and risk remains high and/or the case has been open for 90 days, the county child welfare agency should explore the following options:

- Accepted referral to IFPS if available;
- Petition the court for adjudication and oversight;
- Petition the court for adjudication and request nonsecure custody; or
- Due to exceptional situations, extend CPS In-Home Services.

It is imperative that the Risk Reassessment, the Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs, the Family Service Agreement are used as working documents in the team meetings.

All Child and Family Team meetings conducted while the case has a high risk rating will have a facilitator, except those that involve case closure.

B. INTENSIVE FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES

Intensive Family Preservation Services (IFPS) (refer to the IFPS Family Service Manual), provide intensive, in-home crisis intervention services designed to help families with children at imminent risk of being removed from the home. These services are time-limited (a maximum of six weeks) and are characterized by very small caseloads for workers, 24-hour availability of staff, and the provision of services primarily in the child's home. Evaluations of IFPS programs in North Carolina indicate that IFPS is very effective at helping children remain safely in their home.

IFPS should be considered as an option for all cases in which there is a risk rating of high. When IFPS is chosen as a service delivery option, the following guidelines are to be followed:

- Provide all documentation required by the IFPS program as part of the referral process. This includes all relevant referral information and necessary forms (e.g. DSS-5231 and DSS-5027). This information should be provided to IFPS programs before they start working with the referred family.
- There must be a risk rating of high, as well as a substantiation of child abuse, neglect, and/or dependency or a finding of services needed. In cases involving any substantiation of abuse, there must be a risk rating of high or moderate.

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- At least during the time IFPS is involved with the family, the IFPS worker is to be a member of the Child and Family Team. This collaboration will assist in prioritizing IFPS activities towards addressing the existing high risk factors.
- The county child welfare worker must maintain weekly contact with the IFPS worker and document discussion regarding progress towards case activities. These contacts can either be over the telephone, via e-mail, or in person. The ongoing county child welfare worker should see the family twice per month while IFPS is involved.
- The IFPS worker is to provide the county child welfare worker with written documentation regarding case objectives per IFPS policy.
- Upon completion of IFPS, the county child welfare worker will again facilitate a meeting with the IFPS worker (preferably a Child and Family Team) to discuss, with the family, progress achieved towards case objectives. This meeting should occur within seven days of completion of Intensive Family Preservation Services.

C. CPS IN-HOME SERVICES (Moderate Risk Cases)

When there has been a substantiation of child abuse, neglect, and/or dependency, or finding of services needed and the initial risk assessment rating is moderate, the children and their caretakers will be provided CPS In-Home Services.

These services are provided to children defined, as reasonable candidates for foster care and in the absence of preventive services would be in foster care. The purpose of CPS In-Home Services in moderate risk cases is to maintain the safety of the child while helping the parent to modify the harmful behavior that induces risk to the child. To accomplish this, the county child welfare worker must continually assess the safety and risk to the child and, should it become necessary, take action to prevent any further harm. Simultaneously, the county child welfare worker must actively support the parent's efforts to change and include them with all decision making throughout the life of the in-home services.

CPS In-Home Moderate Services include activities such as:

- Monitoring, expanding, and updating the In-Home Family Services Agreement to address identified areas of need;
- Routine case supervisory activities;
- Maintenance of contact with the family and others significant to the case;
- Working with the parents on the status of the case and case goals;
- Giving information, instruction, guidance and mentoring regarding parenting skills;
- Referral or monitoring of service as appropriate, including referrals to county agency-provided clinical treatment;

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- Ongoing determination of appropriateness of need for out-of-home placement; and
- Documentation of CPS In-Home Services activities.

Case Contacts for CPS In-Home Services in moderate risk cases are as follows:

- All children substantiated for abuse, neglect, and/or dependency or have a case finding of services needed and their parents or primary caretakers shall be seen face-to-face two times per month.
- During visits with family members, risk and safety issues will be addressed and progress discussed. The family's well-being needs should also be discussed during these visits, as well as, their strengths and needs. Documentation of the visits should include who was seen, where, when, and progress toward meeting the goals of the case plan.
- Two collateral contacts per month with someone significant to the case--mental health therapist or case manager, school, child care, family members, Work First or other professionals working with the family. Documentation should include whom the county child welfare worker talked with, when, and what observations have been made of the family's progress or barriers toward case goals.
- Option to reduce contacts for moderate risk cases is allowable upon county child welfare supervisor and county child welfare worker discussion of rationale. The decision to reduce contacts should only be made after a discussion with the family and collaterals and there is a clear reduction in risk. A reduction in contacts should be based on the family's progress on changing the identified behaviors, and the lessening of safety concerns in the home. Reducing risk during moderate risk cases allows there to be a natural progression towards case closure. The family has tangible evidence of its progress.
- When a family's progress cannot be documented and risk is not reduced due to a lack of progress or behavior change after three months, there should be a facilitated Child and Family Team meeting to address the behavior change issues, set deadlines for behavior change, and to outline the court process.
- If after six months there is not documented progress due to behavior change or lack of progress, a Child and Family Team meeting shall be facilitated that advises the family court action will be pursued by the filing of a petition. It is not necessary to wait six months if the risk factors associated with the case dictate that a CFT be held sooner.
- The county child welfare supervisor and county child welfare worker shall staff the case frequently enough to ensure the safety of all victim children. Issues to be discussed include but are not limited to, risk, safety, the family's strengths and needs, and the family's progress.

The first underlying belief of family-centered practice is that the safety of the child is the first concern. No child should be interviewed in such a manner that compromises his or her safety.

During the provision of CPS In-Home Services, there is nothing that prevents the county child welfare worker from interviewing the children alone. County child welfare workers should use their professional judgment in deciding how children will be interviewed. In many cases, interviewing the family together can provide vital information about family dynamics and may trigger discussions that otherwise would not be held. However, attention should be paid to verbal and non-verbal cues from the child that might lead the county child welfare worker to feel that this child needs to be interviewed in a different setting also. Each child should be interviewed in the way that will best provide safety and build rapport with the child. Building a bond of trust with the child can be especially important to them if out-of-home placement must occur.

D. QUARTERLY REASSESSMENTS OF THE IN-HOME FAMILY SERVICES AGREEMENT

Family Service Agreements are only valuable if they are current and relevant. Timeframes for reviews are the maximum period of time between reviews. If major changes occur that affect the objectives or activities, or that affect the risk to the child, a Child and Family Team Meeting should be scheduled and the plan updated as soon as possible.

Quarterly assessments of the Family Services Agreement are formal discussions with the Child and Family Team about the progress that is being made. However, since every contact with the parent will involve a discussion of the progress on the Family Services Agreement, this formal assessment will bring few surprises. It is important to document the successful steps and the items that remain to be accomplished. The county child welfare worker shall complete a Risk Reassessment, as well as, a Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs at the time of the Family Services Agreement review. These tools should assist in determining the family's progress.

As the work with the family has progressed, changes to the Family Services Agreement will be necessary. It is important to reiterate with the parent the accomplishments that have been made. This is particularly important if other risk factors have surfaced. The county child welfare worker will also need to address next steps with the parent at the time of the quarterly review. Of particular importance will be discussions about how long the county child welfare agency has been involved with the family, what changes have or have not been made, and what next steps will be needed.

If there is a lack of progress or behavior change that mitigates risk after three months, there should be a facilitated Child and Family Team meeting to address the behavior change issues, set deadlines for change, and to outline the court process.

If after six months there is not documented progress due to behavior change or lack of progress, a Child and Family Team meeting should be facilitated that advises the family court action will be pursued by the filing of a juvenile petition.

If the parent has been intermittently successful or successful only on minor items and the county child welfare worker continues to have concerns for the child's safety, then decisions regarding legal custody will need to be made immediately, if they have not been made before the quarterly review.

VII. TRANSFER OF CASES

Sometimes during the provision of CPS In-Home Services the family will relocate to another county in North Carolina. Whether the family informs the county child welfare agency of the move or the county child welfare agency discovers the fact, the agency shall request the new county of residence provide CPS In-Home Services to the family.

The new county child welfare agency will be responsible for overall case management responsibilities and updating the Family Services Agreement. The original county child welfare agency shall provide a copy of pertinent information from the case record to the new county child welfare agency. The new county of residence is responsible for the provision of CPS In-Home Services as soon as the agency is aware that the family has moved into the county.

Both counties should discuss whether immediate contact should be made with the family to assure the safety of the child. Good practice dictates that, unless there is an immediate need for the child and family to be seen, the child should be seen within 72 hours of the notification to the new county child welfare agency that the family has relocated to its area.

The case record shall be shared in its entirety when a case is transferred from one county child welfare agency to another within seven business days.

In determining which county has overall case management responsibilities, please refer to [Chapter V - Jurisdiction in Child Welfare](#).

When there is juvenile court involvement, CPS In-Home Services should not transfer to another county. If it is determined that transfer is appropriate due to the circumstances of the case, prior to the transfer of custody or a change of venue, a hearing shall be held giving each involved county the right to appear and plead his or her position. North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure 13(h), states: "additional parties may be brought in. When the presence of parties other than those to the original action is required for the granting of complete relief in the determination of a counterclaim or cross-claim, the court shall order them to be brought in as defendants as provided in these rules, if jurisdiction of them can be obtained."

North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure 19(b) states: "the court may determine any claim before it when it can do so without prejudice to the rights of any party or to the rights of others not before the court, but when a complete determination of such claim cannot be made without the presence of other parties, the court shall order such other parties summoned to appear in the action."

If a county elects not to be present at the change of venue hearing, all rights to argue against the transfer are forfeited.

The county with venue shall notify all involved counties of any changes in venue.

VIII. TERMINATION OF CPS IN-HOME SERVICES

The agency shall terminate CPS In-Home Services when:

- Parents or caretakers are willing to provide a safe home and demonstrate their ability to do so, or
- The county child welfare agency receives legal custody or placement responsibility.

A. WHEN PARENTS ARE WILLING TO PROVIDE A SAFE HOME AND DEMONSTRATE THEIR ABILITY TO DO SO

CPS workers need to be involved with the family only for as long as the child's safety is a primary concern. As long the county child welfare worker is involved with the family there should be ongoing examination of the level of safety and risk. When it appears that those levels have been significantly reduced, a CFT should be convened to discuss closure and plan for how the family will sustain the changes they have made. Within 30 days prior to closure of the CPS In-Home Services case, there should be supporting documentation, written or verbal, from service providers and or person(s) significant to the case. By engaging service providers and other significant person(s) in a discussion regarding case closure, the county child welfare agency is able to communicate the progress believed d to have been made by the family and check-in with others regarding any remaining concerns. This would also be a time to discuss any referrals for wrap-around services. A routine conversation with service providers emphasize SOC, service array, and communicate the message that child welfare is a community issue.

Documentation shall:

- Support the rationale for case closure;
- Indicate that the decision was a shared decision made by the county child welfare worker and the county child welfare supervisor or supervisor's designee at a minimum; and
- Show that the well-being issues have been addressed.

While both the county child welfare worker and the family will have discussed the eventual outcome as work has progressed, a formal notification to the family that Child Protective Services will be terminated needs to be communicated to the family within seven days of the county child welfare agency's decision to close the case. Verbal acknowledgements of the strengths and accomplishments the family has demonstrated should also be a part of the notification. The CPS In-Home Services worker should also provide information on services the family may access if the need arises.

B. WHEN PARENTS ARE UNABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR ABILITY TO PROVIDE A SAFE HOME

During the provision of CPS In-Home Services, there may be times when parents are unable to demonstrate their ability to provide a safe home for their children. A discussion should be held with the family regarding out-of-home placement options for the children. Every effort should be made to allow the family an opportunity to identify resources that would be willing and able to care for the children. Refer to Section 1201 for a discussion regarding assessments of Temporary Safety Providers.

A Child and Family Team meeting should be convened during which it is vital that a discussion be held with the parents regarding their behaviors that have created risk to their children and what behavior changes are needed to mitigate the risk factors for the children to return to the home. If there is a lack of progress or behavior change that mitigates risk after three months, there should be a facilitated Child and Family Team meeting to address the behavior change issues, set deadlines for change and to outline the court process.

If after six months there is not documented progress due to behavior change or lack of progress, a Child and Family Team meeting should be facilitated that advises the family that court action will be pursued by the filing of a petition and a decision made whether nonsecure custody will be sought. The parents should also be informed of the county child welfare agency's obligation to notify close adult relatives of the child should the child be removed from their custody (Refer to Section 1201 Relative Notification for more information).

If the children were placed with a Temporary Safety Provider and the children cannot be returned to the home from which they were removed because of safety; the CPS In-Home Services case cannot be closed until legal permanence has been obtained for the children. Refer to Chapter X - The Juvenile Court and Child Welfare or Chapter IV; Section 1201; VI - Permanency Planning for a discussion of permanent options.

C. PREPARING THE CHILD AND THE FAMILY FOR REMOVAL

The parents shall be appropriately prepared for placement of their children into agency custody by explaining:

- The reason for the removal;
- Appropriate details about the placement provider;
- What to expect from the placement provider and Child Placement Services worker;
- How to reach the Child Placement Services worker and/or agency;
- When the next contact with the child will occur; and
- The legal process.

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The child shall be prepared for placement into agency custody based on his or her level of understanding by explaining:

- The reason for the removal;
- Appropriate details about the placement provider;
- What to expect from the placement provider and Child Placement Services worker;
- How to reach the Child Placement Services worker and/or agency;
- When the next contact with his or her parents will occur; and
- When the next contact with his or her siblings will occur.

Preparing children and parents for placement can be accomplished even when the removal is an emergency. County child welfare workers need to enlist the cooperation of the parent in helping the child understand the need for a new living arrangement. If the parent cannot do this, the county child welfare worker must take this role with the child. Even very young children can understand that a change is being made and that the parent cannot care properly for the child at this time.

It is generally helpful if the county child welfare worker can provide pictures of the placement provider when the child does not know the provider. This can be done on the way to the home and can help the child begin to master the move. The county child welfare worker must ensure that the child and the placement provider are seen within seven days of the initial placement and subsequent placements in order to assess the child's adjustment, or there shall be documentation to reflect diligent efforts. If possible, the child should be seen within 24 hours of the move.

For information regarding petitioning for legal custody, please refer Chapter IV: Section 1201 - Child Placement.

D. WHEN REMOVAL IS IMMEDIATE

The county child welfare agency shall make reasonable efforts to protect the child in his or her own home and to prevent placement. If the child must be removed, the removal shall require supervisory approval. For a discussion of reasonable efforts, refer to Chapter X - The Juvenile Court and Child Welfare. Additionally, the county child welfare agency shall provide notification of the child's removal to his or her adult relatives (refer to Chapter IV: Section 1201: VI - Relative Notification for requirements).

Upon filing a juvenile petition during CPS In-Home Services, a nonsecure order should be considered. A hearing shall be held within seven days when a child is removed from home by a nonsecure order and may be postponed for no more than ten business days with the parent's consent. The nonsecure order shall give specific sanction for a placement other than a licensed placement provider.

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In determining where a child shall be placed, the court needs complete information regarding other family members. The Adoption and Safe Families Act includes the following statement: "in placing a juvenile in nonsecure custody, the court shall first consider whether a relative of the juvenile is willing and able to provide proper care and supervision of the juvenile in a safe home. If the court finds that the relative is willing and able to provide proper care and supervision in a safe home, then the court shall order placement of the juvenile with the relative unless the court finds that placement with the relative would be contrary to the best interest of the juvenile." It is clear that county child welfare staff must assess the willingness and ability of each relative to provide proper care and supervision in a safe home prior to placement.

North Carolina statute defines safe home as "a home in which the child is not at substantial risk of physical or emotional abuse or neglect." While a complete home study is not required by statute, the assessment must be sufficiently thorough to allow the court to make an informed decision. The Initial Provider Assessment (DSS-5203) and the Kinship Care Comprehensive Assessment (DSS-5204 and the Kinship Care Comprehensive Assessment instructions (DSS-5204ins)) will assist the county child welfare worker in assessing a possible placement.

In addition to the relative's willingness and ability to care for the child safely, county child welfare staff need to assess the extent to which the placement with a relative is in the best interest of the child. This is a very important decision. The law makes it clear that the judicial process must be directed toward the goal of ensuring "a safe, permanent home for the child within a reasonable period of time".

The definition of "permanency" originally developed by the *Families for Kids* initiative is a positive, nurturing relationship with at least one adult that is characterized by mutual commitment and is legally secure. Consequently, county child welfare staff should not recommend placement with a relative if it means separating siblings unless placing siblings together is contrary to their developmental, treatment, or safety needs. Siblings shall be placed together whenever possible, unless contrary to the child's developmental, treatment, or safety needs.

The county child welfare agency should not overlook an alternative placement that has greater potential for becoming a safe, permanent home within a reasonable period. Older children should be allowed to have an important voice in these types of decisions. If the kinship care provider wishes to be licensed as a foster parent, the county child welfare agency is required to determine whether the family meets state licensing requirements, thus enabling him or her to receive foster care board payments, Medicaid, and other benefits. Since foster care placement, even with licensed relatives, is not a permanent plan, the kinship care providers should be assessed for their interest and ability to adopt the child or to assume guardianship or legal custody. When the child is in custody of the county child welfare agency, Child Placement Services begin and CPS In-Home Services are terminated.

E. WHEN THE AGENCY RECEIVES LEGAL CUSTODY OR PLACEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

When the items in the Family Services Agreement have not been successful and the child cannot remain safely in his or her home, the county child welfare worker must

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convene [a Child and Family Team meeting](#). If a child's immediate safety is threatened, the [county child welfare](#) worker must ensure the child's safety first and convene a Child and Family Team meeting as soon as possible (i.e., the next working day). The CFT ensures that the birth parents and all service providers are working cooperatively towards a safe, permanent plan for the child.

When removal from the home is required, the [county child welfare](#) agency shall assess whether any relatives are willing and able to care for the child. The [county child welfare](#) agency shall evaluate if such placement would be in the child's best interest. A criminal record check must be performed on possible kinship [care](#) providers. If the [county child welfare](#) worker has [assessed](#) the relevant family members, the child may be placed with a relative.

It is important to ask if the child is a member of an [American](#) Indian tribe or is eligible for membership. The Indian Child Welfare Act ([ICWA](#)) applies to federally recognized Indian tribes within child custody proceedings. If an [American](#) Indian child is identified, it remains the responsibility of the county [child welfare agency](#) to complete CPS In-Home Services. Refer [Chapter IV: Section 1201 - Placement Decision Making](#) for direction on how to proceed if placing an [American](#) Indian child.

When the initial placement is with relatives or other non-licensed persons, documentation shall show that the [county child welfare](#) agency assessed the placement [provider](#) before making the placement. If continuing placement is recommended or planned with a non-licensed relative or other non-licensed person, the [county child welfare](#) agency shall conduct a thorough assessment of the placement provider. Assessments shall be documented on the Initial [Provider](#) Assessment ([DSS-5203](#)) and the Kinship Care Comprehensive Assessment ([DSS-5204](#)) and the Kinship Care Comprehensive Assessment Instructions ([DSS-5204ins](#)).

Whenever children are placed with a relative, the court should sanction this plan. The following may result if court action is not obtained:

- The child may be removed from the home precipitously without adequate protections to insure safety or prevent an untimely or inappropriate return;
- Parents may feel coerced, or feel they have no choice, but to agree to out of home placement; or
- Parents' rights to due process is being violated if this placement is done to avoid court involvement.

An assessment must be conducted prior to placement both to evaluate the relative's ability and [his or her](#) willingness to provide a temporary and/or permanent placement for the child. An evaluation must be done to determine if the placement is in the child's best interest.

When the child enters the legal custody or placement responsibility of the [county child welfare](#) agency, CPS In-Home Services are terminated and [Child Placement Services](#) begin.

IX. EXPANDED PRACTICE

A. STUCK CASES

At times, the county child welfare worker will encounter a CPS In-Home Services case that is "stuck." These are situations where the risk remains moderate and the family is not making any progress or simply not cooperating. If there are no high risk issues present, the following course of actions should occur:

- Discussion between the county child welfare worker and supervisor.
- With the Structured Decision-Making tools as a guide, evaluate the:
 1. Safety - Have other reports been received, assessed, and a finding of substantiated or services needed found? Are there current safety issues?
 2. Future Risk- Using the Risk Re-assessment, what is the risk, in what areas, and how does risk affect the children now and since working with them?
 3. Family Strengths/Needs- Using the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment, what identified family issues remain unaddressed?
- Utilize the Child and Family Team meeting to determine possible resolutions to bring down the risk and allow the family to achieve its objectives.
- If safety and risk issues warrant, file a juvenile petition to have the case adjudicated in juvenile court.
- After discussion of the issues, it is decided to close the case at moderate risk, all services offered to the family, as well as, the response and any progress should be documented.
- A letter should be sent to the family notifying them of the closure decision and indicating that the lack of progress will be considered if future protection issues should arise.

B. CHRONIC NEGLECT CASES

Counties also experience families that have been provided CPS In-Home Services in the past, have closed Child Protective Services to the family, and a new report is made and accepted for CPS Assessment. A CFT shall be held within 30 days when the CPS Assessment decision is to substantiate the report or make a case finding of Services Needed.

CPS In-Home Services shall be provided again to the family. This cycle may happen several times leading to a description of the incidents or choices the family makes as being chronic, a frequent recurrence of maltreatment.

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When conducting the Child and Family Team meeting, it is important to allow each participant to discuss his or her concerns of the recurring neglect, as well as if he or she is able to support the family in hopes of providing safe care for the child.

One of the underlying beliefs of the family-centered approach continues to be that the safety of the child is the first concern. The county child welfare worker should explain that the primary goal is to maintain the child safely in the home of the caretaker, but if the child's safety is compromised the agency will take steps to ensure the safety of the child. This may include filing a juvenile petition requesting nonsecure custody.

X. DOCUMENTATION

CPS In-Home Service requires that all activities be documented.

Documentation of CPS In-Home Services shall:

- Include completion of the Risk Reassessment at required intervals;
- Include completion of the Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs at required intervals;
- Include a description of the ongoing assessment of risk, safety, and health of the child;
- Describe actions taken and services provided;
- Support the need for continuing agency involvement; and
- Be prompt and current within seven days.