

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>	
	<b>Chapter 4:</b> Assessment (Investigation)	<b>Effective Date:</b> July 1, 2007
	<b>Section 19:</b> Family Support/Community Services Plan for Conditionally Safe Children	<b>Version:</b> 1

<b>POLICY</b>	<b>OLD POLICY: 205.472</b>
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- **[REVISED POLICY]** During the assessment (investigation) the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will assist the child’s family with the development of a Family Support/Community Services Plan whenever:
  - A safety decision of “conditionally safe” has been determined; **or**
  - An assessment (investigation) finding of “Indicated” is reached.
  - An assessment (investigation) finding of “Substantiated” is reached but DCS will take no further direct intervention.
- Following the completion of the Safety Assessment, a Family Support/Community Services Plan will be created as quickly as necessary to protect the safety of the child.

Code References

- N/A

<b>PROCEDURE</b>
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The FCM will:

- Discuss in detail with the family the implementation of either of the interventions below that were chosen as part of the safety response:
  1. The family uses extended family resources, neighbors or other individuals in the community to ensure the child’s safety;
  2. The family receives services through community providers;
- With the family’s participation and input, write a Family Support/Community Services Plan that describes in detail how, when, and by whom each intervention will be implemented.
- Specify the consequences for the family if an intervention is not followed.
- Specify how the FCM will monitor and support the family’s compliance with the plan until the completion of the assessment (investigation).
- Have the parent(s)/guardian(s)/custodian(s) sign the plan.
- Re-assess the child’s safety before closing the assessment (investigation). See separate policy, [Completing the Assessment \(Investigation\)](#).

<b>RELATED INFORMATION</b>
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**General**

The Family Support/Community Services Plan is a written agreement between DCS and the parents/guardians/custodian specifying what extended family supports or community services will be utilized and how those will ensure the immediate safety of the child. The plan should contain action steps and these action steps should have deadlines for completion that do not extend beyond the end of the assessment (investigation). All actions should relate directly to the child’s immediate safety. The extended Family Support/Community Services Plan is a

voluntary, non-legally binding agreement with the family that cannot contradict any existing court orders, including, but not limited to child support and child custody orders.

### **Parental Involvement in Development**

Involvement of the family in the development of a Family Support/Community Services Plan is imperative. The greater the family's participation in this process, the more ownership they will have in a successful outcome. For this reason, it is critical that the FCM focus the discussion on the safety of the child and not on the allegations. When developing the plan with the family, the FCM should speak in such a way as to develop a common understanding that the safety of the child is contingent on their ability and willingness to follow the terms of the plan. If the family is hesitant or unwilling to create a plan and/or commit to abiding by the plan's terms, remind the parent that the child is not safe under present circumstances and the child will not be able to stay in the home.

### **Extended Family Support**

Extended family members are often the most resourceful and most effective as resources for support and their interventions are least disruptive for the child involved. Family support services may consist of childcare, transportation, home management assistance and teaching of skills, and financial assistance for housing, food, or clothing on a short term basis.

### **Referring the Family to Community Services**

Community services are an appropriate intervention if they help the family control or mitigate the identified safety factors. Examples include routine or emergency medical care or mental health care (outpatient), alcohol or substance abuse services, in-home health care, day care, respite care, child-oriented activities (e.g. - Brownies, Boy Scouts), home management/life skills, parenting skills, individual or family crisis counseling, financial services, housing services, transportation services, food and clothing assistance, etc.

### **Child or Alleged Perpetrator Leaves The Home**

A Family Support/Community Services Plan is not to be used when the composition of the household is changed either as a result of DCS intervention or voluntarily on the part of the family. In the event the household composition changes (e.g. - the child leaves the home and goes to a relative home or the alleged perpetrator leaves the home), a CHINS petition will be filed in order to provide for due process for the affected household member. If the Child and Family Team can then create a plan to keep the child safe, DCS can request that the petition be dismissed and an Informal Adjustment (IA) created.

## **FORMS AND TOOLS**

- [Family Support/Community Services Plan](#)