

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 7: In Home	Effective Date: July 1, 2014
	Section 11: Safety and Risk Reassessments (In Home)	Version: 2

POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will conduct [Safety and Risk Reassessments \(In Home\)](#) on all open cases where all children remained in the home or where the children have been returned home to evaluate a family's progress toward case plan goals.

[Safety and Risk Reassessments \(In Home\)](#) will be conducted at least every 180 days on all open on-going cases where family preservation services are provided. The [Safety and Risk Reassessments \(In Home\)](#) should be completed sooner if there are new circumstances or new information that would affect safety and risk or during critical case junctures.

During a Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting, DCS will discuss the results of the [Safety and Risk Reassessments \(In Home\)](#) with the CFT to assist in developing a plan to address the safety threats, identify protective factors, and reduce the risk level by thoroughly identifying and considering the families strengths, needs, and informal supports.

Code References

N/A

PROCEDURE

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Answer all questions on the [Safety and Risk Reassessments \(In Home\)](#);
2. Determine if any safety threats exist;
3. Document which protective factors mitigate the safety threats;
4. Determine the risk level; and
5. Discuss the results of the [Safety and Risk Reassessments \(In Home\)](#) with the CFT to develop a plan to assist in the identification and utilization of the family's strengths, informal supports, and services to address needs.

If no safety threats exist, consider recommending case closure with supervisory approval.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Best practice suggests each ongoing case should be reviewed in conjunction with judicial review hearings (at least every 180 days) to reassess safety and progress toward objectives and long-term goals, including the elimination of safety threats and reduction of risk. A reassessment may be done earlier if there have been significant changes that affect safety and/or risk.

Safety

A safety reassessment should be used for open cases in which a child is in the home and new information or circumstances require that the safety of the child be assessed. The safety assessment should be used to determine whether the child may remain in the home with or without protective interventions, or be protectively placed. If there are no safety threats, consider recommending case closure with supervisory approval. If any safety threats exist, the case must remain open until safety threats are resolved.

Risk

The risk reassessment determines whether the case should remain open or be closed. For cases that will remain open, the reassessment includes updating the treatment plan based on current needs and strengths.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Safety and Risk Reassessment \(In Home\)](#) – Available in the [Management Gateway for Indiana's Kids \(MaGIK\) Forms](#)
2. **[NEW]** [IN Guidebook](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

The purpose of the safety assessment is: 1) to help assess whether any child is likely to be in immediate danger of serious harm/maltreatment which requires a protecting intervention, and 2) to determine what interventions should be initiated or maintained to provide appropriate protection.

Safety vs. Risk Assessment: It is important to keep in mind the difference between safety and risk when completing these forms. Safety assessment differs from risk assessment in that it assesses the child's present danger and the interventions currently needed to protect the child. In contrast, risk assessment looks at the likelihood of future maltreatment.

Determining Overall Risk Level

Research has demonstrated that for the reassessment, a single index best categorizes risk for future maltreatment. Unlike the initial risk assessment that contains separate indices for risk of neglect and risk of abuse, the risk reassessment is comprised of a single index.

Risk-Based Case Open/Close Guide	
Risk Level	Recommendation
Low	Close, if there are no unresolved safety threats
Moderate	Close, if there are no unresolved safety threats
High	Case remains open
Very High	Case remains open

Risk Levels

Risk assessment identifies families with low, moderate, high, or very high probabilities of future abuse or neglect. By completing the risk assessment, the worker obtains an objective appraisal

of the likelihood that a family will maltreat their child in the next 18 to 24 months¹. The difference between risk levels is substantial. High risk families have significantly higher rates of subsequent referral and substantiation than low risk families, and they are more often involved in serious abuse or neglect incidents.

When risk is clearly defined and objectively quantified, the choice between serving one family or another is simplified: agency resources are targeted to higher risk families because of the greater potential to reduce subsequent maltreatment.

The risk assessment is based on research of cases with substantiated abuse or neglect that examined the relationships between family characteristics and the outcomes of subsequent substantiated abuse and neglect. The tool does not predict recurrence but simply assesses whether a family is more or less likely to have another incident without intervention by the agency.

[NEW] Risk Reassessment

Risk Reassessment is an assessment tool used by the FCM throughout the life of the child welfare case to determine the presence of risk factors that indicate the likelihood of future child maltreatment. The Risk Reassessment also assists FCMs in evaluating whether risk levels have decreased, remained the same, or have increased since the completion of the initial Risk Assessment. In addition to the Risk Reassessment Tool, FCMs should reference the [Family Functional Assessment](#) (FFA) tool when working with self-identified Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth. Risk assessment questions that may be helpful in determining the risk factors for LGBTQ youth can be found in the FFA tool.

Note: Risk Reassessments are completed for the biological or family of origin unless Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) is finalized. If TPR is finalized, Risk Reassessments are not required.

¹ See The Children's Research Center website for more information at http://www.nccd-crc.org/crc/crc/pdf/2008_sdm_book.pdf