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<b>Approved:</b>	Karen Shea, Interim Deputy Commissioner	Effective: 7/29/2016
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## Purpose

- To provide case planning, reassessment, and closure requirements in non-custody family support cases.
- To describe the process to ensure dangers and risks are affirmatively addressed with high and very high risk families where a family support case has followed a child safety intervention (CSI).

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## Related Policies

Family Services [Policy 52](#): Child Safety Interventions – Investigations and Assessments


Family Services [Policy 55](#): Unaccepted Reports on Open Cases

## Introduction

Keeping children safe is the division’s primary focus. Safety is assessed in every intervention, every plan, and every contact. Child safety is a collaborative effort; the division engages families and community members to find safe solutions for children and youth.

## Policy

Case planning is the process of working with the family to develop a set of agreed upon

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goals and strategies that focus on the underlying issues that led to the child safety intervention, as well as the issues that are contributing to current unresolved danger and/or future risk of harm.

The case plan must plan for the safety of the child or youth. The social worker shall work with the family to identify the family's strengths, protective capacities, and any natural supports (including relatives, friends, and community supports that may be of assistance), and services needed. When possible, the priorities in the case plan should reflect the family's view of the most pressing issue facing them.


#### Case Planning, SDM Risk Reassessment, & Case Plan Updates

When a social worker has been assigned to provide family support services to a family, the social worker will complete an initial case plan with the family **within sixty days** of the date the *SDM Risk Assessment* was completed.

*The SDM Risk Reassessment* considers actuarial risk items and progress toward case plan goals to arrive at an estimate of the likelihood of future harm after services have been provided for a period of time. *The SDM Risk Reassessment* is used to guide decisions about whether to continue providing family support services or to close the case. Beginning on the date of the initial case plan, *SDM Risk Reassessments* shall be completed **every 90 days** for all family support cases.

In advance of updating the family's case plan, the social worker will collect information from the family, family's team, and providers to inform decision-making. Social workers will consider the following:

- Is the child safe?
- Have the protective factors, strengths, or safety factors changed, thereby warranting the development of a safety plan or a change in an existing safety plan?
- What changes have occurred in the factors contributing to the risk of maltreatment?
- What progress has been made toward achieving case plan goals and outcomes?
- How effective have the services and supports been in achieving outcomes and case plan goals? If ineffective, what adjustments need to be made to find effective services and supports for children and families?
- What is the current level of risk in the family?
- Have the risk factors been reduced sufficiently so that the parents or caregivers can protect their children and meet their needs, allowing the case to be closed?

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A family meeting held at the time of the *SDM Risk Reassessment* is the preferred strategy to review the family’s progress towards meeting their case plan goals.

The case plan update ([FS-246S](#)) will:

- Explain why it is necessary for the family to remain involved with the division; and
- Identify strategies to reduce the risk and/or address any unresolved danger.

If the identified strategies are not working as intended, social workers shall adjust the strategies in collaboration with the family’s team. If the risk is not reduced after two *SDM Risk Reassessments*, social workers should discuss alternative approaches to supporting the family with their supervisor.

<b>Assessments and Case Planning Requirements for Family Support Cases (No DCF Custody)</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Initial Case Plan	60 days from the date of the SDM Risk Assessment.	To engage the family to develop a case plan that address unresolved danger or risk as identified in initial SDM Risk Assessment.
SDM Risk Reassessment	At 90 day intervals from the date of the initial case plan.	To determine if risk has been reduced enough to close the case.
Case Plan Update(s)	At 90 day intervals from the date of the initial case plan.	To update the plan of services which mitigates the risk.
SDM Safety Assessment	If a change in family or household circumstances occurs OR there is a change in the ability of safety interventions to mitigate dangers.	To assess the child’s immediate danger or risk of harm.


#### **Changes in the Family or Household Circumstances**

The *SDM Safety Assessment* differs from the *SDM Risk Reassessment* in that it assesses the child’s immediate danger or risk of harm and the interventions currently needed to protect the child. A new *SDM Safety Assessment* shall be completed on open cases when:

- (1) There are changes in the family or household circumstances; or
- (2) There is a change in the ability of safety interventions to mitigate dangers.

Examples of a change in family or household circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- the birth of a baby;

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- a change in household composition/make-up (such as the addition of new household members or a person leaves the household);
- the family moves;
- there is a new criminal charge;
- there is a significant change in health; or
- there is an unaccepted report of child abuse or neglect during the open case.

The *SDM Safety Assessment* should be completed within one working day of the ongoing social worker becoming aware of changes in the family’s circumstances or a change in the ability of safety interventions to mitigate dangers.

**Risk Assessment by CSI Social Worker During Investigations or Assessments on Open Cases**

There are times when a new child safety intervention is commenced when the division already has an open case with a family. The social worker completing the child safety intervention must complete a new *SDM Risk Assessment* in accordance with [Policy 52](#). This new *SDM Risk Assessment* may or may not have the same risk score as a previous *SDM Risk Assessment* previously completed.

If there is a misalignment of the risk level on the *SDM Risk Assessment* completed by the CSI social worker and the *SDM Risk Reassessment* completed by the ongoing social worker, the district director must review the case and follow the case closure guidance below, if applicable.


**Case Closure**

Cases that are reassessed as low or moderate risk should be closed unless there are unresolved dangers. An updated *SDM Safety Assessment* should be completed to determine safety status. When closing cases, social workers should:

- Reinforce the strengths and positives with the family;
- Provide referrals to community services as needed;
- Verify that the decision to close the case is consistent with the family’s expectations; and
- Send a case closure letter to the family.

Supervisors may override the *SDM Risk Assessment* score, but only to one level higher. In rare instances, the district director may determine that a case will be closed despite a high risk score. The reasoning will be documented in case notes.

The following information will be provided to the district director to inform their decision:

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1. A brief summary, including:
  - a. why the case was opened;
  - b. date of last contact with the family;
  - c. date of the last in-person / in-home contact, which must have been within the previous 5 days.
2. Copy of the *SDM Risk Reassessment* including explanation of any identified risk items that are scored.
3. Description of the services currently in place and status of any referrals made.
4. Description of informal supports for the family and how they assist in mitigating the risk factors.

A case closure summary ([FS-242CS](#)) must be completed and copied into case notes to document required case closure information.

If unable to provide ongoing services because the family refuses and there will be no court order, social workers should consider connecting the family to community services. Staff will document the reasons ongoing services were not provided in case notes and the case closure summary ([FS-242CS](#)).

## Additional Resources

[Family Support Cases Practice Guidance](#)

[Checklist for Ongoing Assessment in Family Support Cases](#)