

State of Illinois
Department of Children and Family Services

**SAFETY PLAN RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR CHILD PROTECTION SPECIALISTS AND CASEWORKERS**

When a Child Protection Specialist or Caseworker implements or seeks to extend a safety plan, they have the responsibility to:

- Implement a safety plan only when DCFS has a basis to take protective custody of a child and the safety plan is an alternative to protective custody;
- Perform a new safety assessment and write a new safety plan, that must be approved by the supervisor, every 5 working days;
- Ensure that all parties receive a signed copy of each written safety plan and that a hard copy of the signed plan is retained in the investigative file;
- Explain to the parent(s)/guardian(s) the safety plan alternatives and that the parent(s)/guardian(s) have a voluntary choice to enter into the safety plan as an alternative to protective custody and to choose the individual(s) responsible for supervising or monitoring the safety plan if such person(s) is/are determined to be qualified by DCFS;
- Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing, by setting forth in the safety plan document, the basis for the DCFS determination that there is an immediate and imminent threat of moderate to severe harm to the child;
- When assessing the presence of a safety threat, consider and document any information that may contradict the basis for determining that the safety threat is present;
- Give full consideration to the presence of family strengths or circumstances that may mitigate or reduce the identified safety threat;
- Work with the family to develop a short-term safety plan which addresses the identified safety threats and is as minimally disruptive as possible to the child and family, favoring safety plans that permit the family to continue to reside together whenever it is safe to do so;
- Consider the concerns of the family as they develop the safety plan and consider in-home protective conditions that will address the identified safety threat while permitting the family to continue to reside together;
- Disclose that if the family refuses a safety plan or violates a safety plan, DCFS will evaluate whether it continues to have grounds for protective custody and if grounds exist based on the refusal or the violation, DCFS can take protective custody if necessary to protect the child from immediate harm;
- Advise parents or guardian they can identify a safety plan monitor or supervisor;
- The Child Protection Specialist should approve the safety plan supervisors and/or temporary caregivers that are preferred by the parents or guardians if cleared through a

background check, and no parent or guardian shall be required to accept supervision of their contact with their child by a specific person whose involvement as a safety plan supervisor is objectionable to the parent or guardian;

- Explain the safety plan to all participants, including the specific steps the parent(s)/guardian(s) must take in order to mitigate and/or reduce the identified immediate safety threat so that the safety plan can be terminated;
- Obtain parental consent/signatures on the safety plan;
- Monitor the safety of the child while the safety plan remains in effect, which at a minimum includes the investigator/caseworker seeing the child every five working days and a supervisory re-assessment every five working days as to whether DCFS continues to have a basis to take protective custody of the child;
- Ensure that the safety plan is short-term;
- Assist the family in resolving, mitigating or reducing the identified immediate safety threats as quickly as possible;
- Modify the safety plan if the family's circumstances change or if the participants request modifications, including a change in the person(s) preferred by the parent(s)/guardian(s) to supervise or monitor the safety plan or serve as a temporary caregiver;
- Refrain from encouraging or directing persons who are not the primary caregiver of the children to take any legal action against the primary caregiver;
- Terminate the safety plan as soon as the investigator and/or supervisor determine there is no longer a legal basis to take protective custody and provide the parent(s)/guardian(s) with the Safety Plan Termination form; and
- Inform any persons supervising or monitoring a safety plan that the safety plan has been terminated and that the child should be returned to the physical custody of the parent(s)/guardian(s) from whom the child were removed, and if that parent(s)/guardian(s) is/are having difficulty with the arrangements to return the child to their care, provide assistance to the extent possible.