

## **SAFETY ASSESSMENTS / SAFETY PLANS**

The **Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA)** identifies a child's safety as the paramount concern for child welfare systems. In the Children, Youth and Families Bulletin (3130-98-01), titled "Interim Implementation Guidelines for the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997" it states:

All decisions made must be based on the child's safety and well-being. The necessity to provide reasonable efforts to prevent placement or to return a child home hinges on the child's safety.

For each child receiving services, safety must be considered at each step of the case plan and review process whether the child remains home or is in placement. This includes safety considerations and documentation in casework practice and supervision and in the case plan development and review process.

While the general purpose of risk assessment is to identify risk factors which need to be resolved to improve family functioning, the ultimate purpose is to determine which of the risk factors must be controlled to insure a child's safety.

Risk/safety assessments are completed continuously throughout involvement with children and families. Documentation of these assessments occurs at specified time frames as outlined in the Pennsylvania Risk Assessment Model Case Interval Policy.

The primary purpose of the **Safety Assessment/Safety Plan** is to control the situation to prevent harm from occurring to the child(ren) while the **Case Plan** to reduce or resolve issues is implemented and worked on with the family. The second decision that must be documented in the Risk Assessment Summary narrative is the **Safety Assessment/Safety Plan**. This section of the narrative must document the following:

- ✓ **Safety Assessment:** Document the risk factors which must be controlled in order to provide the child(ren) with a safe living environment.
- ✓ **Safety Plan:** Document the plan that was put into place to control such factors.

## **DOCUMENTATION OF A SAFETY ASSESSMENT/SAFETY PLAN**

**Safety Assessment/ Safety Plan** documentation must include the following:

- ✓ Identify the immediate and obvious family condition that threatens a Child's safety or well-being.
- ✓ Identify a safety plan and how it controls the immediate and obvious family conditions that threaten child safety. This should include documentation of the following:
  - ☎ The presence and capacity (or lack thereof) of the non-maltreating parent or others to protect the child.
  - ☎ The family's capacity and willingness to support the safety plan.
  - ☎ Arrangements made with family and other service providers to carry out the safety plan.
  - ☎ How each of the identified immediate and obvious family conditions that threaten child safety are controlled by use of the safety plan.