



Not a Single Child More: Risk and Removal

Multi- Disciplinary Child Abuse and Neglect Institute – The First 75 Days



The **LAST** thing you are willing to give up is the **FIRST** thing a child has to give up.

At Risk vs. Unsafe

At Risk

- Likelihood that maltreatment will occur or reoccur in the future (chance, prospect, potential)
- On a continuum (mild to severe)

Unsafe

- Risk has materialized
- Beyond concerning
- Requires immediate action

Imminent Risk

- **Threats of danger** exist within the family
- Children are **vulnerable** to those threats
- Parents have **insufficient protective capacities** to manage or control the threats

Imminent risk is risk that has become a present and immediate danger.



Vulnerability

- Young child
- Medically fragile
- Developmental delay
- Unable to communicate
- Dependent on others for care
- Perceived as provoking
- Not biologically related to caregiver



Protective Capacity

- Personal qualities or characteristics that contribute to vigilant child protection, such as:
- Adequate energy
- Impulse control
- Recognizes and understands threats
- Places child's needs before their own
- Adequate coping skills to meet own emotional needs

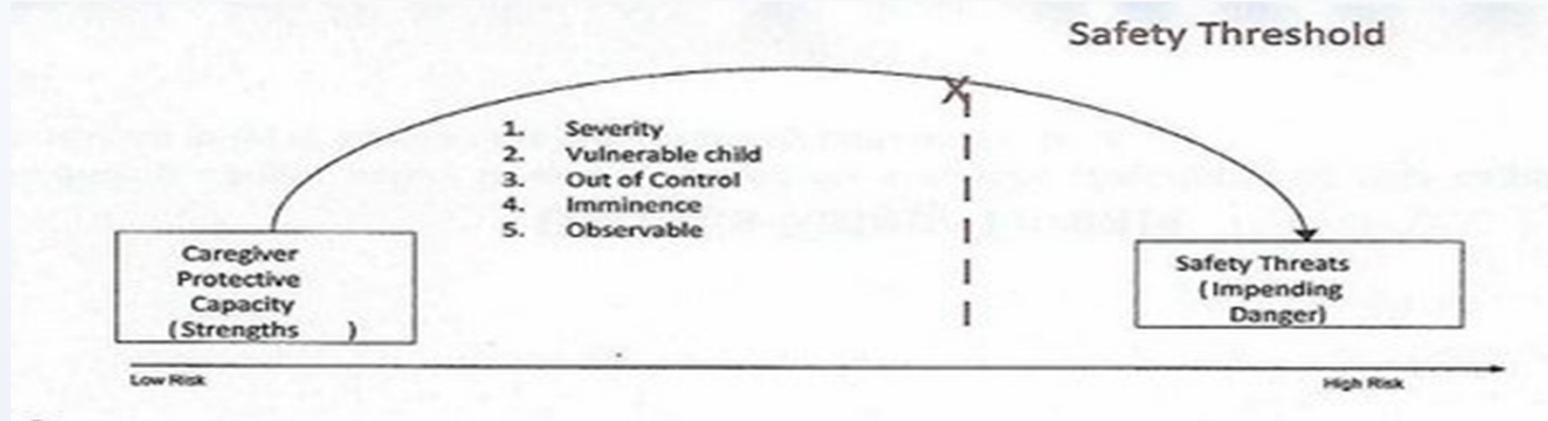


Safety Threat



An act or condition that has the capacity to seriously harm any child.

Does the Concern Cross the Safety Threshold?



Safety Threshold - the point at which a negative family condition goes beyond being concerning (risk) and actually becomes dangerous to a child.

Crossing the Safety Threshold

Present

- Immediate
- Significant
- Clearly Observable



Impending

- Vulnerable Child
- Observable
- Out of control
- Imminent
- Severe

Imminent/Present Danger

- Injuries to the face or head
- Unexplained injuries
- Multiple victims
- Parent's viewpoint of the child is bizarre
- Child fearful/anxious
- Child needs medical attention
- Caregiver intoxicated
- Family hides child

Impending Risk/Danger

- Caregiver intended to hurt child and no remorse
- Caregiver is violent and no adult is protective
- Caregiver can not control their behavior
- Caregiver fears they will maltreat child or request placement
- Caregiver lack parenting knowledge, skills, motivation that affects child safety

Other Factors

- Young child
- Chronicity or history of reports
- Family is isolated

Safety Assessment Discussion: Understand the Safety Threat

- Who is in the family?
- What is the developmental challenge with which the family is struggling and what is the pattern around this issue?
- What does it look like when things go well?
- What personal issue(s) does the caregiver have that makes it difficult to keep the kids safe?
- What is the pattern around this issue?
- What skills does the caregiver already have?

(adapted from Solution Based Casework, Dr. Dana Christensen)

Controlling Interventions: The Safety Plan

1. The alleged maltreater cannot be the one expected to provide protection.
2. Must contain strategies that will keep child safe NOW.

Reasonable Efforts

- Use family resources, neighbors or individuals in the community
- Use community agencies or services
- Alleged maltreater leaves the home
- Non-maltreating caregiver moves to a safe environment with the children
- Caregivers voluntarily place the child outside the home (Voluntary Kinship)
- Legal action to place child outside the home (TAFC/DFCS custody)

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**IN-HOME
SAFETY
STRATEGIES**



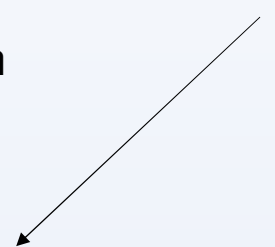
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OUT OF
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Voluntary Kinship

- Caregivers VOULUNTARILY place the child outside the home
- Can the child return home within 90 days?
- Does the Kin Caregiver have protective capacity?
- DFCS must file petition for Dependency if minimal progress meeting conditions for return
- Not to be used when there are chronic or severe issues or a history of non-compliance with case plan goals

Legal Action to Place Child Outside of Home (TAFC/FC)

- No consensus with the family
- Chronic or severe issues
- History of non-compliance with case plan goals
- “Contrary to the Welfare”

Assessing Need for Out-of-Home Placement: PRE

- Using what you have learned from developing the genogram so far, what have you learned about who lives in or frequents the home? (Include ages, relationships)
- Describe how the family condition is unsafe (apply safety threshold criteria.) What is the effect on the children?
- What is the pattern around this issue? Is this a one-time event?
- Describe the caregiver's personal issue and pattern around that issue that makes it difficult to keep the child(ren) safe.
- Describe the family's support system. (Relative, neighbor, church, etc)
- What has been attempted so far to try to manage the safety threat?
- Discuss how other options on the Reasonable Efforts Checklist have been explored.

Is it contrary to the welfare of the child to remain in the home?

- If the children remained in the home, how would they be harmed specifically?
- Have we balanced the trauma the children would endure by being removed against the physical or long-term emotional harm by staying in the home?
- Is there anything that can be done, even on a short-term basis, to protect the children?

After Removal (and Before the PPH)

- Continue assessment
- Search for relatives, kin & absent parents
- Review safety plan – it is not a “one and done” document

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