

STANDARD: FAMILY PRESERVATION -- IN-HOME FAMILY SERVICES

PURPOSE

The purpose of these standards is to provide direction and guidance to the Child and Family Services (CFS) programs regarding family preservation in-home family services. These standards are intended to achieve statewide consistency in the development and application of CFS core services and shall be implemented in the context of all-applicable laws, rules, and policies. The standards will also provide a measurement for program accountability.

INTRODUCTION

Whenever possible, children should remain with their family. The purpose of family preservation services is to prevent the removal or eliminate the need to remove children from their homes. Efforts to prevent removal are to be pursued *only* when they are consistent with the child's safety. The goals of family preservation services are:

- (1) Resolve the immediate crisis;
- (2) Maintain the safety of children in their own homes;
- (3) Help families obtain services that meet their multiple needs in a culturally appropriate manner and prevent unnecessary out-of-home placement.

Services to in-home cases may represent "reasonable efforts" by the Department to preserve families, prevent placement into alternate care, and promote family unity while taking measures to safeguard children from abuse or neglect.

"Reasonable efforts" to prevent removal of children from their families are required under Title IV-E and have lead to (1) an overall decrease in the numbers of placements (2) more goal-oriented planning for children and families, (3) a greater emphasis on family decision making, and (4) a reduction in the amount of time children spend in care.

Family Preservation In-Home Services may also be used in reunification cases, and with resource families. Details regarding these specific uses will be detailed further in the Standard.

STANDARD

A social worker will conduct a risk assessment on each priority I, II, or III referral which is received. When the risk level is determined to be **moderate to high** and the child can be kept **safe at home**, a case will be opened and the family will receive services which allow the child to remain at home **without removal**. Services are to address the identified risk issues.

DEFINITIONS

Family Preservation In-Home Family Services: A referral involving a family who is the subject of a report of child abuse or neglect that is opened for services, after a risk assessment has been completed, to prevent the removal of a child from their home.

Any activities regarding safety planning, including referral to other services or case management activities, delivered prior to completion of the Comprehensive Risk Assessment and a Case Plan are considered part of the risk assessment process.

PROCEDURES and accompanying flowchart:

- (1) All referrals given a Priority I, II or III will receive an Immediate Risk/Safety Assessment (Part A);
- (2) If the risk level is determined to be “moderate” to “high,” and the child(ren) is found to be “conditionally safe,” the assigned social worker will make every effort to engage the family and offer services. A parent’s response/actions during the immediate risk assessment assists the social worker in determining if the family will voluntarily work with CFS or if CFS needs to approach the prosecutor regarding legal action in those situations where the standard of imminent danger is not met;
- (3) Develop a Safety Plan with the family and put supports in place to implement the plan. Effective Safety Plans are developed with the family’s direct input, emphasizing their individual strengths and capabilities. A family group decision making process may also be helpful in developing a safety plan. At this critical point, families and their extended member are often motivated to solve family issues when brought together. Document the safety plan on the Immediate Risk/Safety Assessment (Part A) in FOCUS;
- (4) Comprehensive Risk Assessment and Case Plan requirements within 30 days;
 - (a) Complete a Comprehensive Risk Assessment (Part B).
 - (b) Engage the family in developing a service plan. A family group decision making process may be utilized where family members and their supports participate fully in development of the plan. This process engages both the immediate family members in the development and success of the plan as well as the family’s support systems.
 - (c) When the Department is contracting with a private provider to provide family preservation services IDHW, the contractor, and the family will jointly develop the case plan.

- (d) Social workers should consider whether identified health or educational needs are relevant to the reason why the agency is involved with the family **and** whether the need to address the health or educational issues is a reasonable expectation given the circumstances of the family and agency's involvement.
 - (e) Enter the family's case plan into FOCUS
- (5) In situations where a family **refuses to work with IDHW** on a voluntary basis in spite of the worker's diligent efforts to engage the family, and the level of risk is **moderate to high**, but does not meet the standard of imminent danger, CFS will contact the local county prosecutor about a judicial order for Protective Supervision. The contact with the prosecutor will be documented in FOCUS on the Presenting Issue narrative. This action will demonstrate continued attempts by the agency to make reasonable efforts to prevent removal while reducing the level of risk.
- (6) The CFS Worker Contact with the Child and Family Standard applies to these in-home cases. The family's IDHW social worker, clinician or other responsible party who has full responsibility and decision making authority must see the child(ren) and their parent(s) in the family home at least once per month, and more frequently if needed.
- (7) At 6 months, each family preservation in-home case shall receive a risk re-assessment. The reassessment of risk is completed to help determine whether risk levels have decreased or services are not resulting in reduction of risk. A supervisory staffing will be conducted regarding case direction. If current services are not effective in decreasing the likelihood of future child abuse or neglect, consideration will be given to changing services, convening or reconvening a family group decision making meeting, or approaching the court for an increased level of intervention.
- (8) A formal re-assessment of risk must be completed prior to case closure.

PROCEDURES FOR USE OF FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES IN REUNIFICATION CASES:

- (1) Social Workers will staff reunification cases with their supervisor to determine whether family preservation services are needed, and would be effective in the successful return of the child to the family home. Family preservation services can be extremely beneficial in transitioning children back into their families after placement in foster care. Family preservation efforts would focus on continued/maintained reduction of risk to the child or children.

- (2) The re-assessment of risk must indicate family preservation services as an identified need for the family.
- (3) The Family Service Plan must include family preservation services as part of the reunification plan.
- (4) When the Department is contracting with a private provider to provide family preservation services, IDHW, the contractor, and the family will jointly develop the goals specific to the service. These goals will be entered into FOCUS.

PROCEDURES FOR USE OF FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES IN CASES WITH RESOURCE FAMILIES:

- (1) Socials Workers will staff with their supervisors and regional licensing staff, potential referrals of resource families for family preservation services. Resource families who foster children who are at risk of a disrupted placement will be staffed and referred for Family Preservation Services.
- (2) A Resource Family Assessment, and evaluation of PRIDE competencies will be completed.
- (3) When the Department is contracting with a private provider to provide family preservation services, IDHW, the contractor and the resource family will jointly develop the plan for services.
- (4) After completion of the family preservation services, PRIDE competencies will be re-evaluated.

Any variance to these standards shall be documented and approved by the Division Administrator, unless otherwise noted.

REFERENCES

Standard: Contact Between the Social Worker, the Child, the Family, and Resource Parent(s) or other Alternate Care Providers

I.D.A.P.A 16.1601.450.05 Contact with Child

FAMILY PRESERVATION IN-HOME CASES

**Immediate Risk/Safety
Assessment (Part A) on
Priorities I, II and III**

