

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 7: In-Home Services	Effective Date: January 1, 2009
	Section 5: Meaningful Visits	Version: 2

POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will address safety, stability, well-being and permanency with the parent, guardian or custodian and the child(ren) who are identified as candidates at imminent risk of placement during all visits. See Practice Guidance for suggested questions that address each area.

DCS will ensure that sufficient time and opportunity is given to observe and evaluate the parent-child relationship during all visits. Child safety must always be addressed. The observation and evaluation must be documented in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System (ICWIS) within 'Contacts' and in the hard copy file. Any and all safety concerns that are identified will require the development of a plan to address the safety concern(s) and must be reported to the supervisor immediately.

DCS will provide on-going assessment of safety and risk when visiting the parent, guardian or custodian and the child(ren) who are identified as candidates at imminent risk of placement. DCS will identify the parent, guardian or custodian's functional strengths and underlying needs. DCS will monitor and reassess to assure that the current Case Plan goals or identified activities or actions in the Informal Adjustment (IA) are meeting the underlying needs of the family.

Note: The FCM is strongly encouraged to utilize the [Family Functional Assessment \(FFA\) Field Guide](#) for suggested questions to assist in gathering the parent, guardian or custodian's functional strengths and underlying needs.

DCS will utilize the family's functional strengths to assist in the identification of informal and formal support systems that may decrease the possibility of future risk of abuse and/or neglect. Over time, ideally, the parent, guardian or custodian's functional strengths should increase with the inclusion of identified services and their underlying needs should decrease. Each individual case should be evaluated independently based upon its own unique conditions.

PROCEDURE

The FCM will:

1. Address and assess safety and risks, stability, well-being and permanency during all visits with the parent, guardian or custodian and the child(ren) identified as candidates at imminent risk of placement.
2. Ensure that sufficient time and opportunity is given to observe and evaluate the parent-child relationship during all visits.
3. Identify the parent, guardian or custodian's functional strengths and underlying needs.

4. Partner with the parent, guardian or custodian to utilize their functional strengths and underlying needs to identify formal and informal supports.
5. If a safety concern is identified, collaborate with the parent, guardian or custodian and the child(ren), if age appropriate, to develop a plan to address the safety concern.
6. Report any and all safety concerns to the Supervisor immediately.
7. Accurately document in ICWIS within 'Contacts', the observation, evaluation and outcomes of visits with the parent, guardian or custodian and the child(ren). It is important to reflect in the 'Contact' that the parent, guardian or custodian was actively involved during the visitation and if any barriers were identified by the parent, guardian or custodian or FCM to prohibit the completion of activities or objectives agreed upon by the CFT.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Below is a suggested list of specific questions in the areas of Safety, Stability, Well-being and Permanency that the FCM should consider when completing a visit. These questions are taken from the Quality Service Review (QSR) Protocol (Version 2.1).¹

1. **Safety** – Is the child free of abuse, neglect, and exploitation by others in his/her place of residence and other daily settings? Are there shared protective strategies with the team? Is the family utilizing informal supports and resources to keep the child(ren) free from harm? Have all team members been afforded the opportunity to provide input into the development of a Safety Plan, if applicable?
2. **Stability** – Does the child have consistent routines, relationships, etc.? Has the child experienced changes in their school setting?
3. **Well-being** – If there are identified special needs for the child, does the parent have the capacity and supports necessary to address these needs? Is the child achieving his/her optimal or best attainable health status? Is the child achieving key developmental milestones? Does the child express a sense of belonging and demonstrate an attachment to family and friends? Is the child achieving at a grade level appropriate for their age?
4. **Permanency** – Safety, stability and sufficient caregiver functioning are simultaneous conditions of permanency for a child or youth. Is the child's daily living and learning stable and free from risk of disruption? Was there a change in adults residing in the home? Has the child experienced a change resulting from behavioral difficulties or emotional disorders in the past year?

FORMS

1. Family Functional Assessment (FFA) Field Guide - Available on the Indiana Practice Model SharePoint
2. Quality Assurance Review (QSR) Protocol (Version 2.1)

¹ Quality Service Review Protocol for Use by Certified Reviewers. "A Reusable Guide for a Child/Family-Based Review of Locally Coordinated Children's Services", April 2007.

RELATED INFORMATION

Over time, ideally, the parent, guardian or custodian's functional strengths should increase with the inclusion of identified services and their underlying needs should decrease. Each individual case should be evaluated independently based upon its own unique conditions.