

16. Closing an In-Home Ongoing Safety Plan

When the family has made significant progress in achieving the Expected Outcomes of the case, child safety is being sustained in the child's home, the safety threats have been eliminated or mitigated, and the child's safety can be sustained without the ongoing intervention of safety service providers, the case is nearing closure. The caseworker **continues to be responsible for managing child safety** until the case is closed. The caseworker is guided by administrative rule in making a determination to close an in-home ongoing safety plan. Those requirements are:

- Caseworker observations of the child and the parents in the home
- Receipt of evaluations and reports from service providers
- Reports from participants in the ongoing safety plan
- Measured progress on the extent the Expected Outcomes have been achieved
- The reduction or elimination of safety threat
- Consultation with others who may be participating with the family to sustain child safety

Procedure

The caseworker must:

- Continue to contact the family a minimum of once every 30 days. Prior to closing the ongoing safety plan, make more frequent contact whenever possible.
- Observe firsthand the changed behaviors, conditions or circumstances in the family, and the changes in protective capacity.
- Document those observations in case notes.
- Review the progress the family has achieved as reported and documented in written reports by the services providers.
- Review the progress the family has achieved as reported by participants in the ongoing safety plan.
- Interview the parents to determine the parents' understanding of assuring child safety and their ability to sustain safety over time.
- Interview and observe the child to determine whether the child remains safe in the home.
- Confirm that the identified safety threats that occurred at the beginning of the case are no longer occurring or are consistently managed by the parents.
- Confirm that the parents have developed a plan and identified resources to manage child safety over time.
 1. **For example**, the family has a plan if there is a relapse in alcohol use, or the primary caretaker becomes ill or loses a job.
- Confirm that the parents understand and accept responsibility to care for and keep the child safe over time.

- Document the facts and observations that support your recommendation to close the in-home ongoing safety plan.
- Obtain the approval of your supervisor.
- Contact the participants in the ongoing safety plan and notify each participant that the ongoing safety plan has ended.
- Schedule a final visit with the family to provide closure to Child Welfare's relationship to the family. Reinforce their ability to keep the child safe, remind them of available resources, and their plans and resources to handle new situations.

When Child Welfare has custody of the child

There are additional responsibilities when the court has given Child Welfare temporary legal custody of the child, most specifically petitioning the court to dismiss wardship. The case cannot be closed until legal custody has been returned to the parent. Refer to Chapter 8, Work with the Courts and External Partners for procedures regarding preparing this petition.

Procedure

- Subsequent to the court relieving Child Welfare of custody, notify the parents' service or treatment providers that Child Welfare no longer has legal custody of the child.
- Notify the child's school, medical or and other treatment providers that the family has regained custody of the child.
- If all parties to the case were not present at the court hearing, notify all parties that Child Welfare no longer has legal custody of the child.

The Supervisor's Role

- Provide consultation to the caseworker when needed on case closure.
- Support the worker in ending the relationship between the family and Child Welfare.
- Review and confirm Child Welfare's ability to confidently close the ongoing safety plan.
- Confirm the closing of the ongoing safety plan in FACIS.
- Review and confirm the court has returned legal custody of the child to the parent when Child Welfare had been granted legal custody of the child.
- Confirm all notifications of change of wardship have been completed.
- Review and confirm case documentation is completed.
- Review and approve closing the case.



Forms and References

References

- I-B.3.1 Developing and Managing the Child Welfare Case Plan
http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-b31.pdf

