Safety Plans

A safety plan works out how to make sure a child is safe. It is also about who will be involved in the care and future safety of the child.

A safety plan may change over time as families change. Anyone who is important to the child of the family can be included in the plan.

Safety plans must be supported by the people involved. Child Protection Services, as the child protection authorities, need to agree to the safety plan.

Child Protection guiding principles

In line with the Tasmanian Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997, sections 8 and 9:

- The primary responsibility for a child’s care and protection lies within the child’s family.
- A high priority is to be given to supporting and assisting the family to carry out that primary responsibility.
- The best interests of the child is the most important factor in decisions about their safety.
- The child must have the chance to state their views and be heard.
- Aboriginal organisations must be consulted about the best way to care for children from their community.

Signs of Safety meetings

There is nothing more important than the safety and wellbeing of our children.

CONTACT

Child Protection Services
Telephone: 1300 737 639
Visit: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au
Child Protection Services holds Signs of Safety meetings to talk about how to make sure a child is safe. The meetings assess risk, look at worries and strengths and make decisions about a child’s safety. Anyone who cares about a child and their family, or the child themselves, can attend the meetings. Family members, friends, support services, community members, lawyers, teachers, or doctors are welcome.

A Signs of Safety meeting helps families and caregivers to work with Child Protection Services and other agencies to keep a child safe.

Everyone who attends a Signs of Safety meeting will have the chance to talk about what is working well and what is worrying them, and be involved in decisions about people who might support a child who has been harmed or is at risk.

One of the outcomes of the Signs of Safety meeting may be the development of a safety plan.

Meetings are led by a Child Protection Services staff member who will discuss their role with the family.

During a meeting, four key questions are asked and everyone is asked to contribute:

1. What are we worried about in relation to the child and the family?
2. What is working well in the family?
3. What needs to happen to make sure the child is safe in the future?
4. How safe is the child, from zero (very dangerous for the child) to ten (the child is safe)?

The three columns diagram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are we worried about?</th>
<th>What’s working well?</th>
<th>What needs to happen?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past harm</td>
<td>Safety Goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicating Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td>What needs to happen for the child to be safe in the future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danger Statements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Talking to children

It is important that children have an opportunity to talk about what they are worried about, what makes them happy, and what they would like to see happen in their family and community to keep them safe.

The Signs of Safety approach uses a number of tools to talk to children and ask them their view, including The Three Houses.

The Three Houses

- **House of worries**
- **House of good things**
- **House of dreams**

Created by Nicki Weld and Maggie Greening, Child Youth and Family New Zealand.