

Chapter 4

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

4-1. Purpose. Florida's practice model includes the expectation that when children are safe but at high or very high risk for future maltreatment, affirmative outreach and efforts will be provided to engage families in family support services. Family Support services are intended to prevent the occurrence of a future child abuse investigation and/or child maltreatment by:

- a. Strengthening protective factors that will increase the ability of families to nurture their children successfully.
- b. Enhancing the social and emotional well-being of each child and the family.
- c. Enabling families to use other resources and opportunities available in the community.
- d. Assisting families with creating or strengthening family resource networks to enhance and support childrearing.

4-2. Description of Population to be Served.

- a. When the child protective investigator has determined that children in the family are safe however the family has a high or very high risk level as determined by the actuarial risk assessment.
- b. Victims of Human Trafficking who have been determined to be safe by the child protective investigator or have no safety determination ("Other" investigation or community children).
- c. Families with children who have been determined safe by the child protective investigator but at low to moderate risk of future maltreatment as determined by the actuarial risk assessment may be referred; however, they are not required to be served.
- d. If family support services are provided, including ongoing contact and case activities, those services must be captured in FSFN. Case coordination includes communication, information sharing, and collaboration with providers and staff serving the family as well as with the family being served. Coordination activities may include but are not limited to: reducing barriers to obtaining services; establishing linkages; face to face visits and home visits. Referrals to agencies in the community that typically involve a one-time only interaction with a family are not considered Family Support Services (e.g., food pantry, clothing closet, etc.) and documentation in the Family Support Module is not required. For cases requiring no ongoing case coordination the CBC will develop and/or approve local policy.
- e. When children have been determined to be safe by the child protective investigator regardless of risk level, Family Support Services are voluntary.

4-3. Local Family Support Services Array. The CBC will develop and/or approve local policy for Family Support Services for high and very high risk families that defines:

- a. The referral process(es);
- b. Service descriptions, to include at least monthly face to face home visits on Human Trafficking cases and cases with a high or very high risk level as determined by the actuarial risk assessment completed by the Child Protective Investigator;
- c. Duration of service;

- d. Staff qualifications, to include requirements of s. [409.1754\(2\)\(a\)1](#), F.S., specific to human trafficking;
- e. Expectations or conditions for family participation in Family Support Services; and,
- f. Methods for quality assurance and monitoring to ensure that policies are followed and services are of sufficient quality and effectiveness.

4-4. Provider Outreach and Family Engagement.

a. The Family Support Services provider will conduct follow-up outreach and engagement efforts with the family to collaboratively:

- (1) Review and discuss the family circumstances and the current risk level.
- (2) Identify barriers to sustained safety and intervention choices and options that would be effective ways to lower current risk.
- (3) Develop a plan to mitigate the identified barriers to the child(ren)'s future safety.
- (4) Establish a timeframe for completion of the plan.
- (5) Commit to follow and complete the plan.

b. The family has a right to request closure of their case at any time.

(1) While participation with Family Support Services is voluntary, it is expected that, should a family determined to be at high or very high risk become unwilling to engage and participate or if the family has been identified as not making progress in efforts to reduce risk, a "close the loop" staffing must occur and be documented in FSFN.

(2) Human trafficking cases in which the family is no longer participating or making progress in efforts to reduce risk will also require a "close the loop" staffing.

(3) During this "close the loop" staffing, the potential need for an in home report, additional service needs as well as ongoing risk will be discussed and the outcome documented in FSFN.

(a) At a minimum, those individuals included in the "close the loop" staffing must be the referring Child Protective Investigator, the referring Child Protective Investigator Supervisor, any service providers working with the family and the individual responsible for case coordination.

(b) Efforts should be made to complete the staffing with the referring Child Protective Investigator or Investigator Supervisor. However, if they are no longer employed in the same capacity or unable to participate despite reasonable notice, an individual who is knowledgeable regarding the family's prior investigations can suffice.

(c) During the "close the loop" staffing, discussion should include ongoing risk, services provided, unresolved service needs and benefit to the family as well as attempts to re-engage the family.

4-5. FSFN Documentation. Family Support functionality in FSFN will be used to document all “Family Support Services” provided to families. The following information must be documented in FSFN as indicated below:

a. The begin date and the date case is closed. The date the family agrees to engage in services as verified by the service provider is considered to be the begin date.

b. A brief summary of the reason for the family referral and the recommendations from the assessment will be described in the “Status Begin Comments” narrative field. The summary will include services to be provided and expected outcomes.

c. The Family Support Type will be “Prevention”.

d. The FSFN Family Support module requires the creation of a “Risk Factor” page which can be updated based on subsequent assessments. The initial risk level entered must be the risk level as determined by the actuarial risk tool completed at the conclusion of the investigation. Any subsequent risk levels determined by assessments completed by the service provider shall be documented using either the “Update” or “Closure” options, as appropriate.

(1) When a family has been referred for family support services due to Human Trafficking and there was no actuarial risk assessment completed by the child protective investigator, then the risk level will be entered as Very High.

(2) The FSFN Family Support module requires the creation of a “Risk Factor” page which can be updated based on subsequent assessments. “Risk factor” as used on this page in FSFN does not refer to the items that were marked on the actuarial risk assessment. Rather, the service provider should conduct an assessment of barriers to sustainable safety and, collaboratively with the family, identify areas of family life that will be addressed. The CBC will determine the policy for its case managers or contracted agents as to when the risk factor page must be completed.

e. Any additional assessments that the service provider refers the family to (such as mental health and substance abuse) shall be uploaded into case notes.

f. Status Ending Comments should include a summary of the reason for case closure including a family’s refusal to begin or continue receiving services offered. Summary must include the documentation of successful interventions. If there is a “close the loop” staffing, the outcome and efforts to reengage the family must be documented.

g. If a case remains open over 12 months, rationale for continuing Family Support Services must be captured in a case note.

h. Contact notes will summarize the essence of what happened during each contact as it related specifically to the Family Support Services being provided.

i. The Family Support Services Module will only be utilized as described in this chapter.

(1) The Family Support Module in FSFN will not be used to capture information regarding the utilization of Safety Management Services for children who have been determined to be unsafe by a child protective investigator.

(2) The Family Support Module in FSFN will not be utilized to capture information related to Post Adoption Services. Documentation of Post Adoption Services will be entered on the Post Adoption Services page beginning April 2016, following the release of a FSFN build.

