

Chapter 9

ESTABLISH CONDITIONS FOR RETURN

9-1. Purpose. Conditions for Return are definitive written statements that must be developed when there is an out-of-home safety plan in response to impending danger. The Conditions for Return describe what must exist or be different with respect to specific family circumstances, home environment, caregiver perception, behavior, capacity and/or safety service resources that would allow for reunification to occur with the use of an in-home safety plan. While the statements are based on the common criteria that must be met in order to establish an in-home safety plan, they are uniquely tailored to the specific behaviors, circumstances, or conditions of each family.

9-2. When Conditions for Return Are Required.

a. The “Conditions for Return” will be established by the child welfare professional responsible whenever an out-of-home safety plan is necessary in response to Impending Danger.

b. The “Child Safety Analysis Summary” of the FFA-Investigations, FFA-Ongoing, or Progress Update will provide a clear, up-to-date summary as to why the family’s current circumstances do or do not meet criteria for an in-home safety plan as outlined in Chapter 3 of this operating procedure, Develop Impending Danger Safety Plan.

c. The child welfare professional will develop the Conditions for Return based on which of the five criteria for an in-home plan the family does not currently meet. Conditions for Return describe what unmet criteria will look like for this family when the criteria are met. Refer to Appendix C to this operating procedure, “Conditions for Return,” for specific examples of behaviors and conditions associated with each of the criteria for an in-home safety plan and for examples that reflect when a family meets and does not meet each of the five criteria.

d. The criteria for Conditions for Return are as follows:

(1) Whether or not the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) were willing for an in-home safety plan to be developed and demonstrated that they would cooperate with all identified safety service providers.

(a) If parent(s)/legal guardian(s) were not willing, what would need to happen in order for them to become willing?

(b) If parent(s)/legal guardian(s) could not demonstrate that they would cooperate with providers, what would they need to do to demonstrate that commitment?

(2) Whether or not the home environment was calm and consistent enough for an in-home safety plan to be implemented and for safety service providers to be in the home safely.

(a) If the home environment was not calm and consistent enough, what exactly would need to be different in order for safety service providers to be in the home safely based upon what is making the home environment unpredictable?

(b) What behavior needs to change and how does it have to change for the environment to be calm and consistent?

(3) Whether safety services (formal or informal) were available at a sufficient level and to the degree necessary in order to manage the way in which impending danger manifests in the home.

(a) What specific safety services need to become available?

(b) If there are services that will be provided by the family resource network, what needs to happen?

(4) If a professional evaluation is needed, what needs to be learned from the evaluation in order to develop an in-home safety plan?

(5) If the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) do not have a physical location in which to implement a plan, what needs to happen in order to have a location?

e. If a child has been sheltered, after the FFA-Investigation, the In-Home Safety Analysis is completed and the Conditions for Return should become part of the court order, making it the official record and expectation that gives guidance to intervention, decisions, and subsequent court involvement concerning return of the child.

9-3. Supervisor Consultation and Approval.

a. Through case consultation, the supervisor is able to affirm that the completed FFA-Investigation, FFA-Ongoing or Progress Update demonstrates that:

(1) The child welfare professional has gathered sufficient information and is clearly able to describe how each of the five in-home criteria are met or not met.

(2) The Conditions for Return are specific given the unique family conditions.

(3) The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) were involved in the safety analysis and transition planning.

b. The proposed in-home safety plan is well-defined as to:

(1) The danger threat(s) addressed.

(2) How it addresses the child and family's specific routines and the times that the danger threat is known to manifest.

(3) Utilization of informal safety management providers, if any, who have been appropriately interviewed and screened.

(4) Utilization of safety service providers, as needed, that are appropriate and available.

(5) Transition planning and support for the child, parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and other caregivers when less frequent or less intrusive safety services are appropriate.

9-4. FSFN Documentation.

a. The investigator will use the FFA-Investigation to document the Safety Analysis Summary and Conditions for Return.

b. The case manager will use the FFA-Ongoing and the Progress Update to document the on-going assessment of Conditions for Return, any modifications to the Conditions for Return and efforts by the family to achieve the Conditions for Return.

c. If the case does not involve the use of new practice model assessment tools, case note documentation and the most recent Family Assessment will reflect the reasons why the criteria for the establishment of an in-home safety plan are not met.