



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 or the family can be included in the plan.

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



Guiding principles

In line with the *Western Australian Children and Community Services Act 2004*, sections 9 and 10:

- The parents, family and community of a child have the primary role in safeguarding and promoting the child's wellbeing.
- Every child should be cared for, protected from harm, live free from violence, have safe relationships and a stable home.
- A child's parents and any other people who are important in the child's life should be part of making decisions and plans for what needs to happen.
- A child's parents and any other people who are important in the child's life should be given clear information that they can understand.
- Children have the right to be heard and given the chance to express their wishes and views according to their abilities.

For further information, please contact your local Department for Child Protection office or visit www.childprotection.wa.gov.au.

Signs of Safety Meetings

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





The Department for Child Protection (the Department) 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 the Department and other services 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.

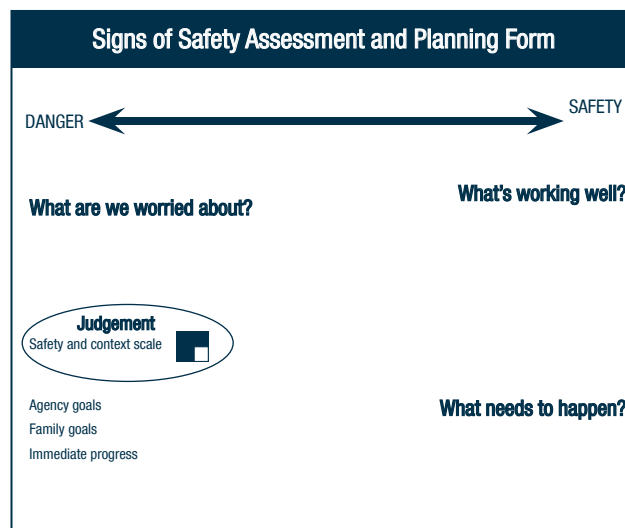
Meetings are led by a Departmental officer who will discuss their independent role with the family.



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)?

A copy of the Signs of Safety document will be given to everyone who attends the meeting.

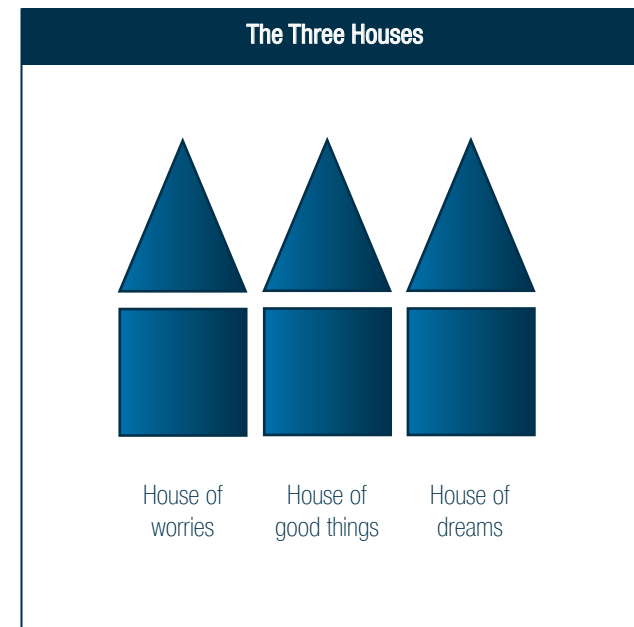


Turnell, A. and Edwards, S. (1999). *Signs of Safety: A Solution and Safety Oriented Approach to Child Protection*, WW Norton, New York.

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 views including *The Three Houses*.



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