



Court Improvement Training Academy

*Evolve Leadership  
to Promote Justice  
in Child Welfare*

**Introduction to “ABA  
Child Safety: A Guide for  
Judges and Attorneys”**

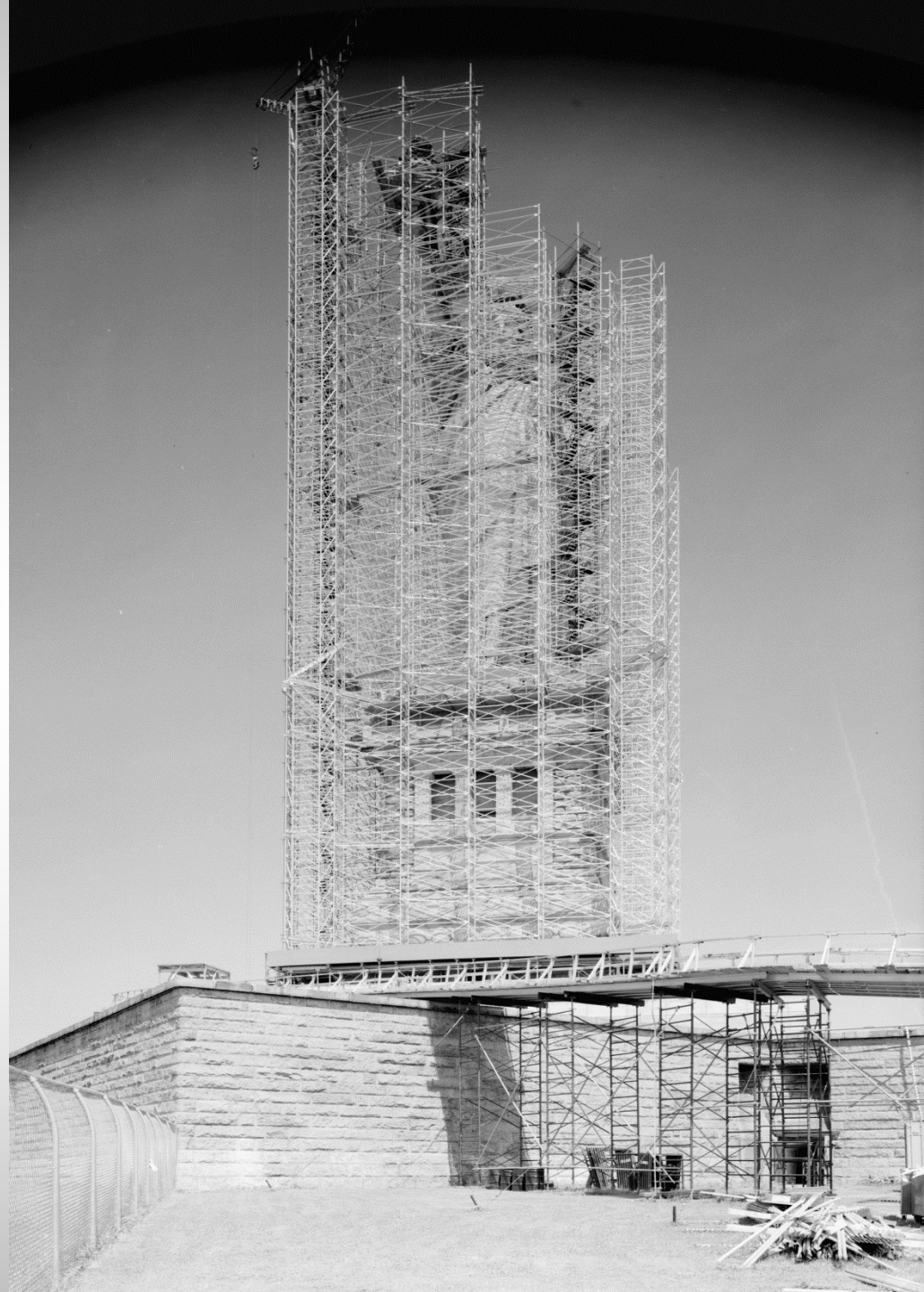
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Child

Safety Framework

A  
Structure for  
Decision-  
Making  
In  
Dependency  
Court



## Safety Assessment

- Gathering Information
- Foundation for case analysis

## Safety Plans

- Based on Safety Assessment
- In-Home
- Out-of-Home

## Conditions for Return

- Based on Safety Assessment
- Foundation for Case Plan

## Case Plan

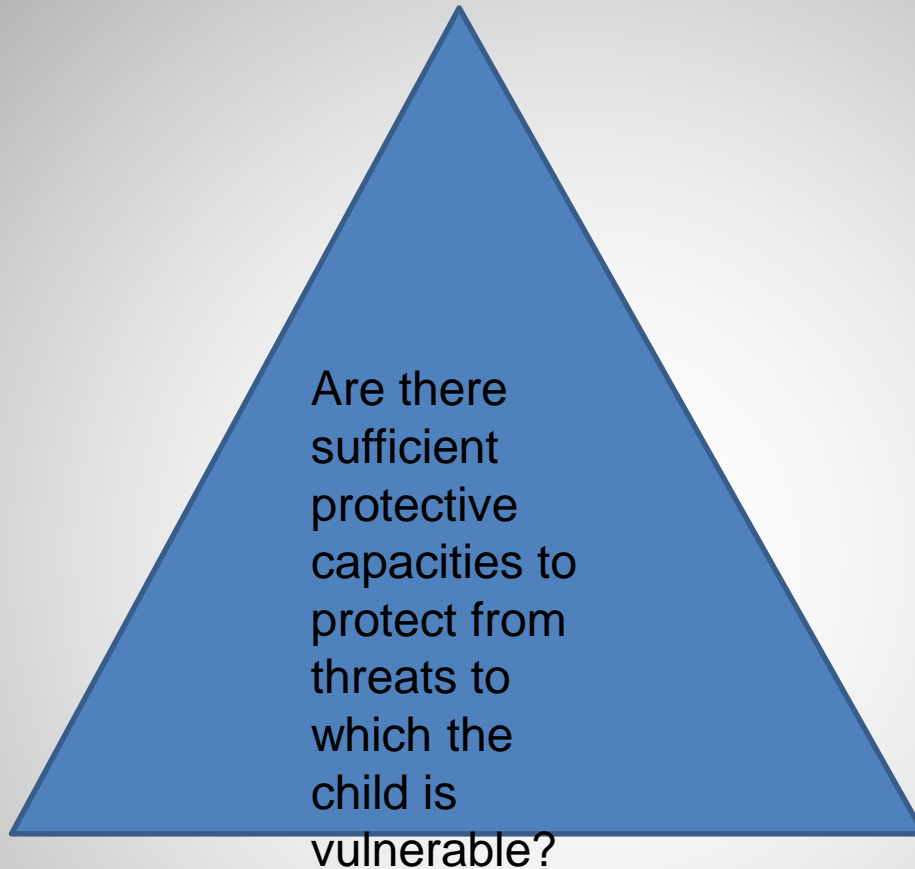
- Based on Safety Assessment
- Eliminates Threats or Enhances Protective Capacity

## Progress, Reunification, Dismissal

- Judged against Safety Assessment
- Reunification  $\neq$  Dismissal



**Threats**



**Vulnerabilities**

**Protective Capacities**

RCW 13.34.065: Shelter care—Hearing—Recommendation as to further need—Release.

WA Children's Admin Practice and Procedure Manual: 1120 Safety Assessments

# Threats

- **Specific and Observable**
- **Out of Control**
- **Immediate or Liable to Happen Soon**
- **Severe Consequences**



# Vulnerabilities

- Child Specific
- Vulnerable or Not, Not Judged in Degrees
- If Threat Exists, Presume Vulnerability



# Protective Capacity

- Cognitive
- Behavioral
- Emotional



# Threat or No Threat?

- **Specific and Observable**
- **Out of Control**
- **Immediate or Liable to Happen Soon**
- **Severe Consequences**





# The Judge Expects Information



When sufficient information collected:  
Decide if threats of danger exist

No threats exist: if  
protective action  
was taken terminate  
it; **Child is SAFE**

Threats exist:  
decide if child  
is vulnerable  
to threats

Child is not vulnera-  
ble to threats:  
**Child is SAFE**

Child is vulnerable  
to threats: Decide if  
sufficient protective  
capacities to man-  
age threats exist

Insufficient protec-  
tive capacities exist  
to manage threats:  
**Child is UNSAFE**

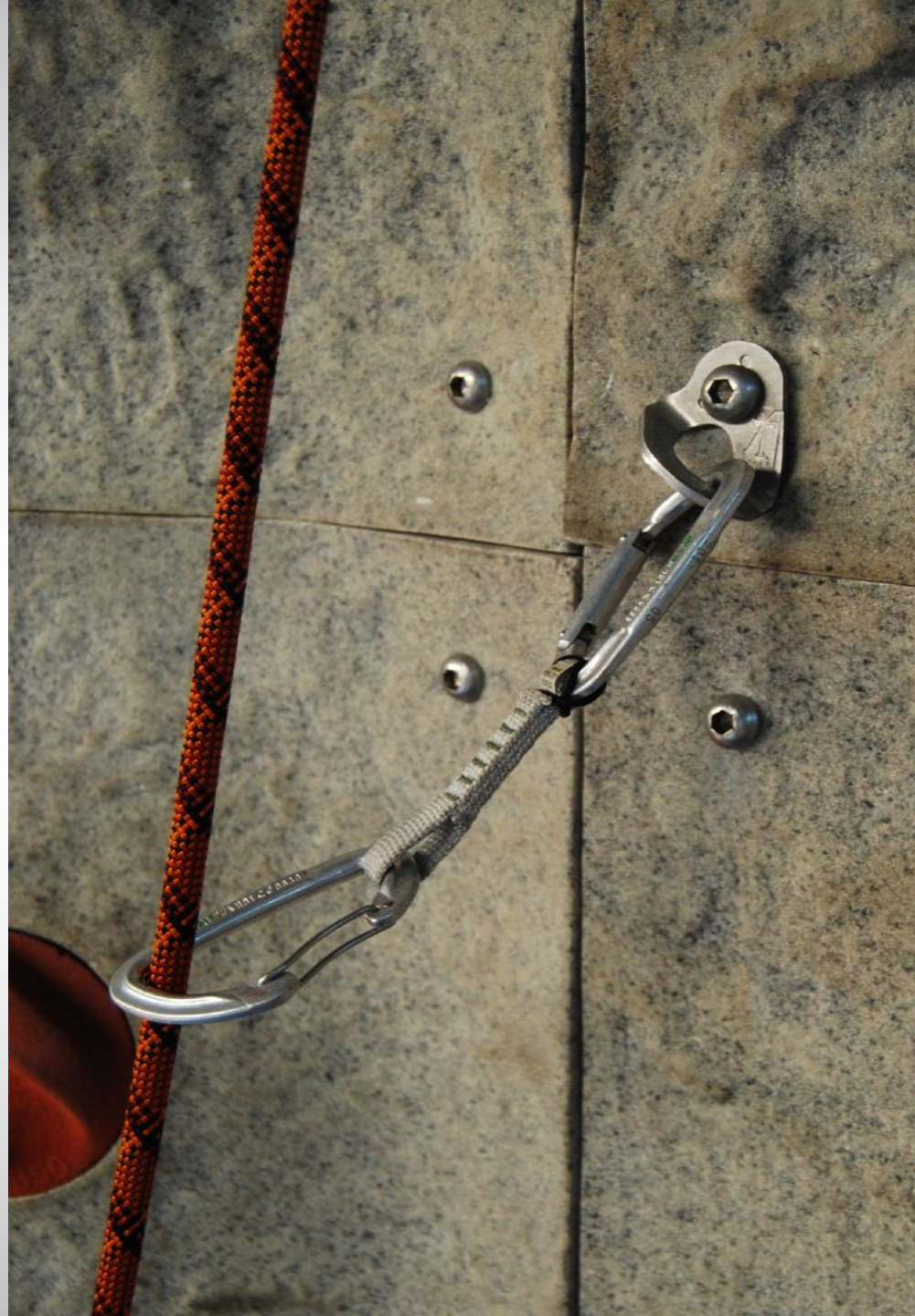
Sufficient protective  
capacities exist to  
manage threats:  
**Child is SAFE**

# Safety Planning

- Does not require change in parents behavior or attitude
  - Controls threats – immediately
- 

- Sufficient
  - Feasible
  - Sustainable
- 

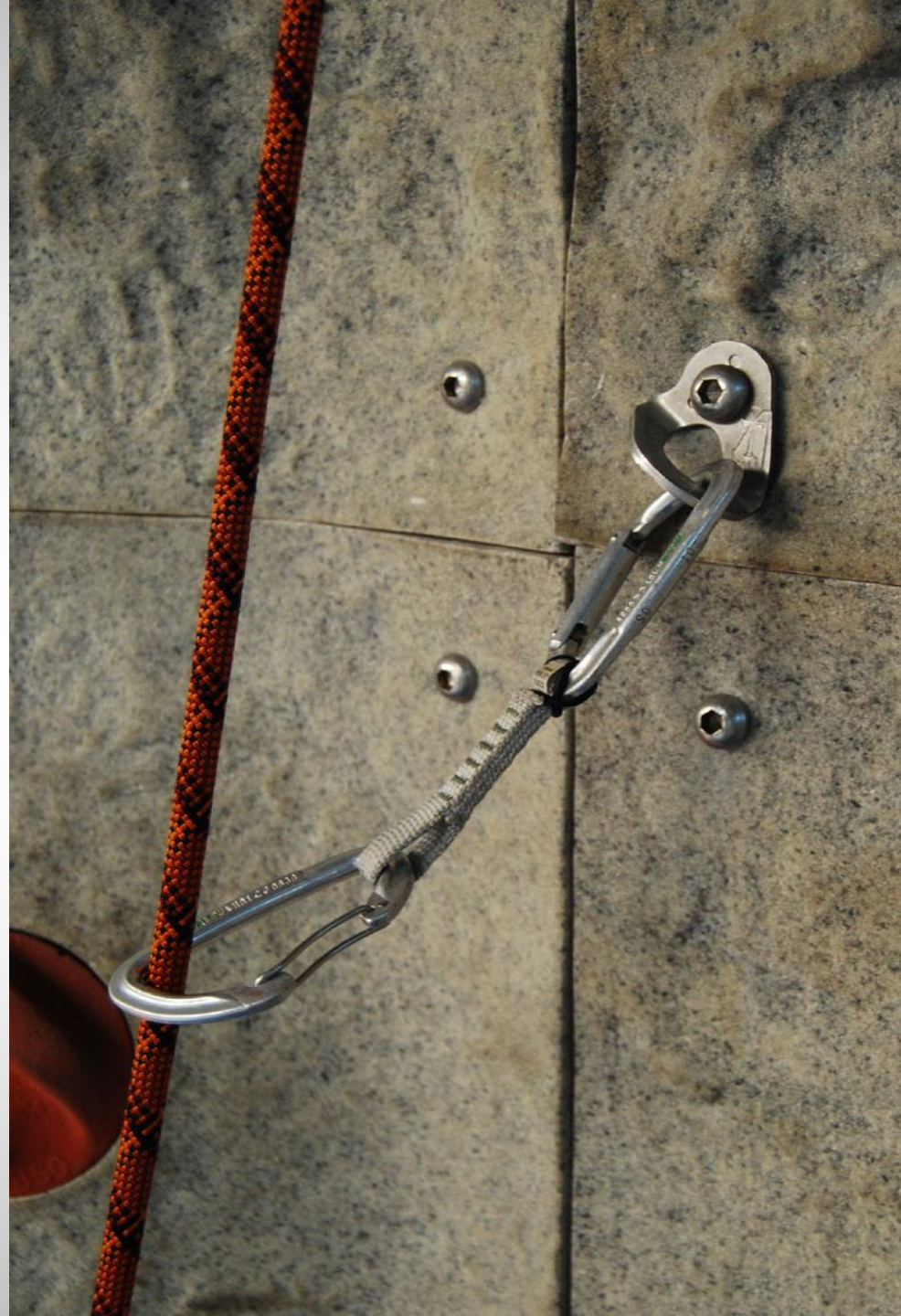
- Assessing Reasonable Efforts
  - Actions or Services to Control or Manage Threats



# Safety Planning

## Out-of Home Plan

- **Assessing Reasonable Efforts**
- **Conditions for Return - Clearly**
  - **Value Congruence**
  - **Behavior/Circumstance-Based Language**
- **Kind and Amount of Parent-Child contact.**



# Case Planning



- **Use Safety Framework to design case plan.**
- **Looking toward the Court and Dept exiting Family.**
- **Usually requires changing in parental behavior**

**RCW 13.34.136 Permanency Plan of Care**  
**CA-PPM 1140 Family Assessment...**

# Visitation Plans

- **Assess - Learn - Practice - Demonstrate**
- 

- **Quick to Start**
- **Include Siblings**
- **Alternative Contact**
- **Written Plan – Court Order**
- **Right of Family – Not Carrot-and-Stick**
- **Explain Supervision**
  - **How will it progress?**



# Evaluating Success

## Why Can't Children Go Home Today?

- Reduction of Threats? Emergence of New Threats?
- Status of Protective Capacity?
- Current Information for Answers?
- Why Disputes? Challenge Parties to Resolve.
- If no progress, why?
  - Demand Information/Perspective of Parents



# Reunification

- Have conditions changed enough to support an In-Home Safety Plan?  
Sustainable:
  - Can the plan be put into place?  
and can it work until it is no longer needed?
- Observe visits
  - Can unsupervised visits be happening now?
  - Are any of the visits structured to provide information about the child-parent relationship
- Parent Attitudes re: Threats and Protective Factors
- Info from Treatment Providers





# Reunification

- Are We Preparing the Care Provider to Support Reunification?
- Is the Recommendation of Social Worker Independent and Supported .
- Reunification is a Plan, not an event.



# Terminating Jurisdiction

- Threats Eliminated
- Protective Capacity Enhanced to Control Threats
- Combination of Both





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**Robert Wyman**

