



**Child Safety: A Guide for Judges and Attorneys:** [www.americanbar.org](http://www.americanbar.org)

safe children | strong families | supportive communities

# Quick Sheets



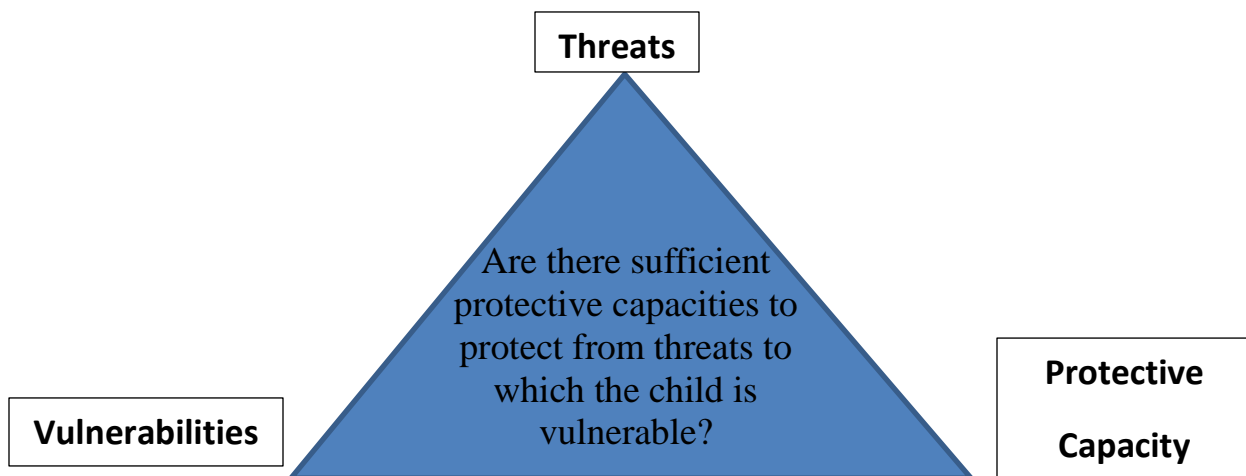
**Threats:**  
**Specific, observable, out of control, immediate or imminent, and severe**



**Vulnerability:**  
**Is this child vulnerable to this threat?**



**Protective factors:**  
**Behavioral, cognitive, and emotional characteristics**



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***Safe*** = no threats, child is not vulnerable to threat, or there is sufficient protective capacity to control threats

***Not safe*** = threats exist to which child is vulnerable, and parents have insufficient protective capacity to control threats

## **Assessing Safety:** **Key questions for gathering information**

Who do I need information from?

What is the nature and extent of the alleged maltreatment?

What are the circumstances surrounding the maltreatment?

How does the child function on a daily basis?

How is the child disciplined in the home?

What are the overall parenting practices like in the home?

How are the parents functioning outside their role as parent?



## **Safety Planning and Case Planning**

### **Safety Plan – In Home:**

- Sufficient
- Feasible
- Sustainable

**Safety Planning**

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

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- Sufficient
- Feasible
- Sustainable

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

### **Safety Plan – Out-of-Home (Conditions for Return)**

Express conditions of Return:

- Clearly
- With Value Congruence (based on Assessment of Safety)
- Behavior/Circumstance based language

**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 department exiting the family
- Usually requires changes in parental behavior



## Visitation Plans

- Assess – Learn – Practice – Demonstrate
- Quick to start
- Include siblings
- Alternative Contact
- Written Plan – Court Order
- Right of Family – Not a carrot-and-stick
- Explain supervision
  - How will it progress?
  - If-then statements.



## Assessing for Reunification: “Why can’t the child(ren) go home today?”

- Have conditions changed enough to support and In-Home safety plan?
  - Can the plan be put in place; and can it work until it is no longer needed?
- Observe visits for information to support assessment of parenting progress.
- Parent attitudes re: threats and protective capacity.
- Is team preparing care provider to support reunification?
- Recommendation independent and supported?
- Reunification is a Plan, not an event.



### Evaluating Progress on case plan

- Reduction of threats? Emergence of new threats?
- Status of parents' protective capacity?
- Current information for answers?
- Challenge parties to resolve conflicts in understanding
- In no progress, why?
  - Seek information from the parents.



### Terminating Jurisdiction

- Threats eliminated
- Protective capacity enhanced to control threats
- Combination of both

