

# Big Bend Community Based Care Policy & Procedure

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<b>Series:</b>	400: Child Welfare Services	
<b>Policy Name:</b>	Reunification and Post Placement Supervision	
<b>Policy Number:</b>	410	
<b>Origination Date:</b>	03/09/2009	<b>Revised:</b> Board Meeting of 12/13/2018
<b>Regulation:</b>	65C-13.021, F.A.C. 65C-30.014, F.A.C. CFOP 170-7 (Chapter 12)	

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## Purpose

The reunification decision evaluates the extent to which the circumstances and behavior identified in the Conditions for Return can now be met and if safety of the child(ren) can currently be managed using an in-home safety plan. Reasonable efforts require that any child with an out-of-home safety plan should be reunified as promptly as is possible and appropriate. Reunification is active as of the date the child returns to the home with an in-home safety plan.

## Procedure

### A. Due Diligence to Achieve Reunification.

1. The DCM will clearly communicate and discuss the Conditions for Return to everyone involved in the case including the parent(s)/legal guardian(s), the court, attorneys, guardian ad litem, Tribe(s), etc., through regular court reports, case plan reviews, discussions, and other forms of communication.
2. The DCM is responsible for a constant and intense level of effort to achieve reunification through the following activities:
  - a. Assist the family with meeting the Conditions for Return.
  - b. Support the frequency and quality of family time that provides the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) with opportunities to demonstrate progress toward enhancing protective capacities.
  - c. Know when the Conditions for Return have been met.
  - d. Take actions to achieve reunification with development of an appropriate in-home safety plan.
3. The DCM should proceed with reunification planning when the following criteria for an in-home safety plan have been met:
  - a. The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) are willing for an in-home safety plan to be developed and implemented and have demonstrated that they will cooperate with all identified safety service providers.
  - b. The home environment is calm and consistent enough for an in-home safety plan to be implemented and for safety service providers to be in the home safely.
  - c. Safety services are available at a sufficient level and to the degree necessary in order to manage the way in which impending danger is manifested in the home.
  - d. An in-home safety plan and the use of in-home safety services can sufficiently manage impending danger without the results of scheduled professional evaluations.

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- e. The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) have a physical location in which to implement an in-home safety plan and an assessment of the home and household members has been completed by the DCM has confirmed that it provides a safe and reasonable location. The location may be any of the following:
  - i. A location that the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) own or are renting.
  - ii. The home of a family member or friend.
  - iii. A certified domestic violence center or treatment center that will allow the child(ren) to be reunified and will support an in-home safety plan.
  - iv. Updated Florida and local criminal history checks have been completed, including required fingerprint submission.
  - v. A Progress Update has been completed and contains necessary documentation.
  - vi. A DCMS Consultation has occurred.

## **B. Staffings Associated with Reunification.**

1. Planning will occur at a safety planning staffing with the parent(s)/legal guardian(s), treatment providers, foster parents and any safety plan providers. If a treatment provider is unable to attend in person or by other means, their input will be gathered prior to the staffing.
2. The following issues will be addressed:
  - a. Review of the Progress Update to discuss the updated protective capacity assessment and safety analysis.
  - b. Development of the in-home safety plan.
  - c. Determination as to whether the child in care has any behaviors that pose a threat to self or others that need to be addressed.
  - d. Determination as to what other actions and supports are necessary to transition the child to their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) care.
  - e. Identification of supports and/or services necessary to assure a timely, smooth, and successful adjustment for the child and family after the transition occurs.

## **C. Implementation of Reunification.**

1. The DCM will determine, based on the in-home safety plan developed at the reunification staffing, that:
  - a. Safety services are available and accessible at the level of effort required to assure safety in the home.
  - b. Safety services providers are committed to participating in the in-home safety plan.
  - c. The in-home safety plan will provide the proper level of intrusiveness and level of effort to manage safety threats.
  - d. The child, the caregivers, other family members and any treatment providers are prepared for reunification.
2. If a case is court supervised, the DCM will conduct a staffing with CLS to prepare an appropriate pleading to the court for reunification.

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3. The DCM must implement the child's transition and reunification as ordered by the court. Action should begin to transition and reunify based upon the order of the court (verbal or written).

## **D. Post-Placement Supervision.**

1. Within five (5) business days after the child is reunified, the DCM and DCMS will confirm that the ongoing safety plan is sufficient.
2. Post placement supervision in court-supervised cases will be provided for no less than six (6) months.
3. The DCM will actively monitor and modify the in-home safety plan as needed.
4. The DCM will continue to assess parent(s)/legal guardian(s) progress in achieving change.
5. The DCM should terminate a safety plan when it is no longer necessary.

## **E. DCMS Consultation and Approval.**

1. The DCMS is responsible for case consultation focused on the family's progress to meet conditions for return.
2. Prior to reunification, the case management DCMS has conducted a consultation with a program manager or their designee and they concur that a reunification should occur.
3. The DCMS should consider the DCM's need for consultation in the following areas:
  - a. The DCM's consistent monitoring and assessment of family progress in meeting the Conditions for Return. Is the provider focusing on behavioral change by caregivers or compliance?
  - b. Is the DCM providing reasonable methods of supporting the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) ability to achieve Conditions for Return?
  - c. If there are differences of opinion regarding the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) level of progress, does the provider attempt to reconcile those differences?
  - d. Is the provider open to considering a lack of progress based on system issues, such as:
    - i. A safety plan that is inadequately designed?
    - ii. Service providers whose services are not adequate for the interventions needed?
    - iii. Is the provider assessing the behaviors and conditions that relate to the central issues of the danger threats and gaps in protective capacities?
    - iv. Is there a thoughtful distinction between all the central problems being resolved and enough of a change in caregiver conditions or capacities that an in-home safety plan can be implemented?
    - v. Does the evaluation carried out by the provider reflect critical thinking and teamwork?

## **F. FSFN Documentation.**

1. The DCMS will record supervisory case consultations for reunification using supervisory case consultation functionality in FSFN.
2. The DCM will use the Progress Update and Judicial Review in FSFN to update the safety analysis and document the evaluation of family progress.

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3. The child's placement and removal episode will be end-dated and the child's current living arrangement in FSFN will be documented when the child returns to the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) home.
4. The new in-home Safety Plan signed by all parties will be uploaded in FSFN to the Safety Plan page prior to the child's date of reunification.