



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**

**Division of Social Services**

## **North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services CPS Assessment in Child Welfare Track Training**

### **Participant Workbook Day Seven**

**December 2025**



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## Instructions

This course was designed to guide child welfare professionals through the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to engage with families in need of child protection services. The workbook is structured to help you engage in the lesson through reflection and analysis throughout each week of training. Have this workbook readily available as you go through each session to create a long-lasting resource you can reference in the future.

If you are using this workbook electronically: Workbook pages have text boxes for you to add notes and reflections. Due to formatting, if you are typing in these boxes, blank lines will be “pushed” forward onto the next page. To correct this when you are done typing in the text box, you may use delete to remove extra lines.

## Course Themes

The central themes of the CPS Assessment Track Training are divided across several course topics.

- Purpose and Legal Basis for Child Protection Services in North Carolina
- Essential Function: Communicating
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Family-Centered Practice
- Essential Function: Engaging
- Safety Focused
- Essential Function: Assessing
- Interviewing Learning Lab
- The Role of Observation in Assessing for Safety
- Structured Decision Making: Safety Assessment
- Assessment Learning Lab
- Safety Planning
- Safety Planning Learning Lab
- Trauma-Informed Practice
- Considerations for Cases Involving Special Circumstances
- Caseworker Safety
- Engaging the Family in Child Protection Services
- Risk Assessment
- Crucial Conversations
- Quality Contacts
- Assessing Family Strengths and Needs
- Secondary Traumatic Stress and Vicarious Traumatization
- Ongoing Assessment
- Family Engagement and Ongoing Assessment Learning Lab
- Documentation
- Well-Being as an Outcome
- Reasonable Efforts and Removals
- Reasonable Efforts and Removals Learning Lab
- Decision Making

- Decision Making and Case Closure Learning Lab

## Training Overview

Training begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m. If a holiday falls on the Monday of training, the training will begin on Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. This schedule is subject to change if a holiday falls during the training week or other circumstances occur. The time for ending training on Fridays may vary and trainees need to be prepared to stay the entire day.

Attendance is mandatory. If there is an emergency, the trainee must contact the classroom trainer and their supervisor as soon as they realize they will not be able to attend training or if they will be late to training. If a trainee must miss training time in the classroom, it is the trainee's responsibility to develop a plan to make up missed material.

### Pre-Work Online e-Learning Modules

There is required pre-work for the CPS Assessment Track Training in the form of online e-Learning modules. Completion of the e-Learnings is required prior to attendance at the classroom-based training. The following are the online e-Learning modules:

1. North Carolina Worker Practice Standards
2. Safety Organized Practice
3. Understanding and Assessing Safety and Risk
4. Understanding and Screening for Trauma

### Transfer of Learning

The CPS Assessment Track Training Transfer of Learning (ToL) tool is a comprehensive and collaborative activity for workers and supervisors to work together in identifying worker goals, knowledge gain, and priorities for further development throughout the training process. In four distinct steps, the worker and supervisor will highlight their goals and action plan related to participating in training, reflect on lessons and outstanding questions, and create an action plan to support worker growth. The tool should be started prior to beginning the CPS Assessment Track Training and re-visited on an ongoing basis to assess growth and re-prioritize actions for development.

- Part A: Training Preparation: Prior to completing any eLearning and in-person Track Training sessions, the worker and supervisor should meet to complete Part A: Training Preparation. In this step, the worker and supervisor will discuss their goals for participation in training and develop a plan to meet those goals through pre-work, other opportunities for learning, and support for addressing anticipated barriers.
- Part B: Worker Reflections During Training: The worker will document their thoughts, top takeaways, and outstanding questions regarding each section. This level of reflection serves two purposes. First, the practice of distilling down a full section of training into three takeaways and three remaining questions requires the worker to actively engage with the material, subsequently forming cognitive cues related to the information for future use in case practice. Second, prioritizing takeaways and questions by section allows workers to continually review information to determine if questions are answered in future sessions and supports the development of an action plan by requiring workers to highlight the questions they find most important.

- Part C: Planning for Post-Training Debrief with Supervisor: The worker considers the takeaways and questions they identified in each section and creates a framework to transfer those takeaways and questions into an action plan.
- Part D: Post-Training Debrief with Supervisor: Provides an opportunity for the supervisor and worker to determine a specific plan of action to answer outstanding questions and to further support worker training.

While this ToL is specific to the Track Training in North Carolina, workers and supervisors can review the takeaways and questions highlighted by the worker in each section of training on an ongoing basis, revising action steps when prior actions are completed, and celebrating worker growth and success along the way.

### **Training Evaluations**

At the conclusion of each training, learners will complete a training evaluation tool to measure satisfaction with training content and methods. The training evaluation tool is required to complete the training course. Training evaluations will be evaluated and assessed to determine the need for revisions to the training curriculum.

**All matters as stated above are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances and with approval.**

## Learning Objectives

### Day Seven

<b>Well-Being as an Outcome</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learners will be able to identify ways to ensure children's physical and emotional safety.</li></ul>
<b>Reasonable Efforts and Removals</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learners will be able to describe how to incorporate all safety and risk factors into the comprehensive family assessment.</li><li>• Learners will be able to develop strategies to adequately address safety and risk factors within ongoing case planning activities.</li><li>• Learners will be able to distinguish allowable actions from those that infringe on parental rights during a CPS Assessment.</li><li>• Learners will be able to describe diligent efforts at all stages of a CPS Assessment.</li><li>• Learners will be able to define Reasonable Efforts.</li><li>• Learners will be able to outline state and federal requirements regarding removal and placement decisions.</li><li>• Learners will explain the importance of collaborating with the child's tribe when making placement decisions to meet ICWA placement preference standards.</li><li>• Learners will be able to explain how to follow requirements, including filing and engagement discussions when making removal and placement decisions.</li><li>• Learners will describe the importance of engaging families when placing children in out-of-home care.</li><li>• Learners will demonstrate how they will discuss removal and placement with children, families, and providers.</li></ul>
<b>Reasonable Efforts and Removals Learning Lab</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learners will be able to describe whether reasonable or active efforts are appropriate to prevent removals in different case circumstances.</li><li>• Learners will be able to document reasonable or active efforts made.</li></ul>

- Learners will understand how to apply and document active efforts to prevent the removal of Indian Children.
- Learners will be able to describe which efforts are appropriate to prevent removals in different case circumstances.
- Learners will be able to describe how to document reasonable efforts made.
- Learners will be able to describe skills to de-escalate, calm, and verbally intervene to diffuse tense and potentially violent outbursts.
- Learners will be able to demonstrate de-escalation skills and safety in response to violent outbursts.
- Learners will be able to explain the importance of collaboration and communication to their safety while executing emergency custody of a child or children.

## Day Seven Agenda

### **CPS Assessment Track Training**

Welcome

#### **Well-Being as an Outcome**

Well-Being Outcomes for Children and Families

#### **Reasonable Efforts and Removals**

Parental Rights

Reasonable Efforts

Active Efforts

Skills Practice: Reasonable and Active Efforts

Filing a Juvenile Petition

Removal

Engaging Families in Placement Decisions

Worker Safety When Emergency Custody is Necessary

#### **Reasonable Efforts and Removals Learning Lab**

#### **End-of-Day Values Reflections**

## Child Welfare Track Training: CPS Assessment Day 7

### Welcome

- What was new learning for you yesterday?
- What challenged you yesterday?
- What other thoughts or questions do you have from yesterday?

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**Use this outlined space to record notes from the introduction activity.**

## Well-Being as an Outcome

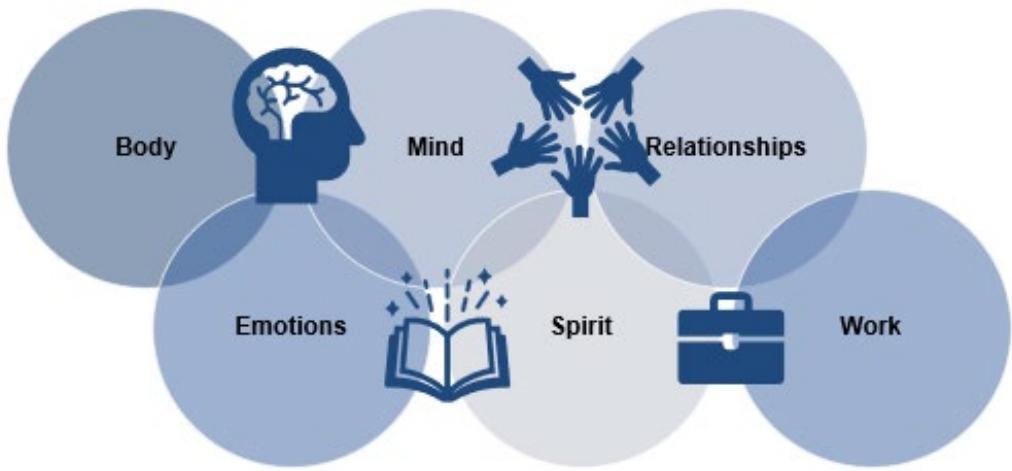
### Well-Being Outcomes for Children and Families

#### North Carolina Practice Model Roadmap



Use this space to record notes.

## How Does Your Assessment of Well-Being Impact Your CPS Assessment?



There are six dimensions of well-being: body, mind, relationship, emotions, spirit, and work.

When assessing well-being, caseworkers should focus on the whole picture of the family, rather than just the problems or negatives, as this allows the family to express their strengths and preferences.

**Use this space to record notes.**

## The Science of Resilience

Video: In Brief: The Science of Resilience

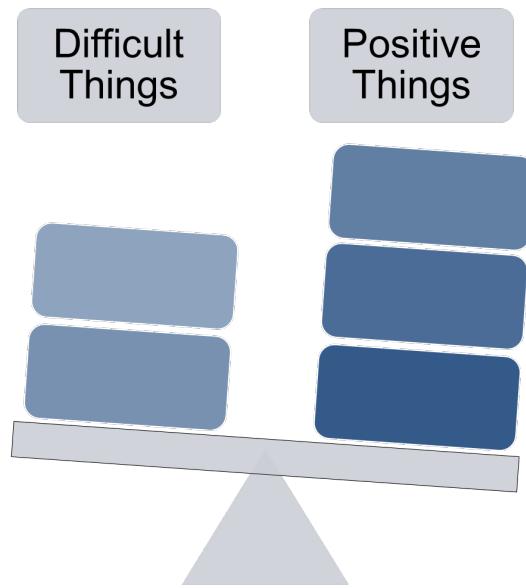
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1r8hj72bfGo>

**Use this space to record notes.**

**How is resilience described?**

**What individual elements impact resilience for an individual?**

## Resilience



Resilience comes from balancing difficult things and positive things in a person's life, such as within their family or in their community.

A child's resilience is also dependent on the presence of a supportive adult.

**Use this space to record notes.**

## Promoting Protective Factors and Capacities



The presence of protective factors and capacities increases child safety and well-being. They also reduce risk and promote sustainable safety for children.

Using opportunities when working with families to build protective factors and capacities supports safe case closure and reduces the likelihood of a future open case.

**Use this space to record notes.**

## Youth Voice: Lived Experience of Child Welfare Systems

[Video: North Carolina Child Welfare Lived Experiences: The Youth Perspective](#)

[NCDHHS Lived Experience Video](#)

**You do not need to take any notes during this video, just absorb what the youth have to share with you. As you watch this video, listen to Ares and Mikaila describe their experiences in the child welfare system.**

**What are your feelings after that video?**

**What are your thoughts after listening to these youth?**

**What are some of the things you heard Ares and Mikaila share about the most important things for caseworkers to remember when working with youth?**

## Well-Being and Voluntary Services Brainstorm

### Activity: Well-Being and Voluntary Services Brainstorm

For this activity, we encourage you to use the knowledge you have built throughout this training, your experience in the field, and Protective Factors: Action Sheets from the Center for the Study of Social Policy and the Protective Capacities Handout introduced on Day 5. As you complete this activity, please keep in mind that we are discussing the **voluntary** ways that families address well-being, and protective factors and capacities.

**Work with your group to create a poster for your assigned topic following these prompts:**

- How does this factor or capacity connect to child and parent well-being?
- What are ways to support the growth of this factor or capacity with voluntary informal resources?
- What are ways to support the growth of this factor or capacity with voluntary formal services?

**Use this space for brainstorming ideas with your group.**

## Reasonable Efforts and Removals

### Parental Rights

Family Integrity



**Use this space to record notes.**

Mandates, Best Practices, and Rights

Activity: Mandates, Best Practice, and Rights

**How can we respect parents' autonomy while ensuring child safety and well-being?**

**What role does permanence play in a child's well-being?**

**What impact does the systems of care approach have on children and families who are at risk for child abuse and neglect?**

## Reasonable Efforts

### Reasonable Efforts

To prevent removal from the home

To safely reunify a child with their parent/caregiver

To finalize an alternate permanency plan if reunification is not possible

**Use this space to record notes.**

## Handout: Reasonable Efforts

The following are the North Carolina citations related to reasonable efforts.

According to N.C.G.S. § 7B-101 (18), reasonable efforts are defined as the diligent use of preventive or reunification services by a department of social services when a juvenile's remaining at home or returning home is consistent with achieving a safe, permanent home for the juvenile within a reasonable period of time. If a court of competent jurisdiction determines that the juvenile is not to be returned home, then reasonable efforts mean the diligent and timely use of Permanency Planning Services by a department of social services to develop and implement a permanent plan for the juvenile.

Gen. Stat. § 7B-101 Reasonable efforts must be made to do the following:

- To prevent or eliminate the need for placement of the juvenile out of the home
- To develop and implement a permanent plan for the child when a court determines that the juvenile is not to be returned home

### Gen Stat § 7B-507(a)(2)

An order placing or continuing the placement of a juvenile in the nonsecure custody of a county department of social services shall contain specific findings as to whether a county department of social services has made reasonable efforts to prevent the need for the placement of the juvenile. In determining whether efforts to prevent the placement of the juvenile were reasonable, the juvenile's health and safety shall be the paramount concern. The court may find that efforts to prevent the need for the juvenile's placement were precluded by an immediate threat of harm to the juvenile. A finding that reasonable efforts were not made by a county department of social services shall not preclude the entry of an order authorizing the juvenile's placement when the court finds that placement is necessary for the protection of the juvenile.

Gen. Stat. § 7B-901 Unless the court concludes that there is compelling evidence warranting continued reunification efforts, the court shall direct that reasonable efforts for reunification shall not be required if the court makes written findings of fact pertaining to any of the following:

- A court determines or has determined that aggravated circumstances exist because the parent has committed, encouraged the commission of, or allowed the continuation of any of the following upon the juvenile: Sexual abuse; chronic physical or emotional abuse; torture; abandonment; chronic or toxic exposure to alcohol or controlled substances that causes impairment of or addiction in the juvenile; any other act, practice, or conduct that increased the enormity or added to the injurious consequences of the abuse or neglect
- A court terminates or has terminated involuntarily the parental rights of the parent to another child of the parent
- A court determines or has determined that the parent has done any of the following: Committed murder or voluntary manslaughter of another child of the parent; aided, abetted, attempted, conspired, or solicited to commit murder or voluntary manslaughter of the child or another child of the parent; committed a felony assault resulting in serious bodily injury to the child or another child of the parent; committed sexual abuse against the child or another child of the parent; been required to register as a sex offender on any government-administered registry

## Learning Review: Reasonable Efforts

Prevent removal of a child from their home

Accessible, available, and culturally-appropriate services to improve capacity of families to provide safe and stable homes

Reasonable efforts consist of providing accessible, available, and culturally appropriate services to improve the capacity of families to provide safe and stable homes for their children.

The reasonable efforts finding is the most powerful tool the court has to monitor the actions of a child welfare agency.

**Use this space to record notes.**

## Active Efforts

### Learning Review: Active Efforts

#### Learning Review: Active Efforts



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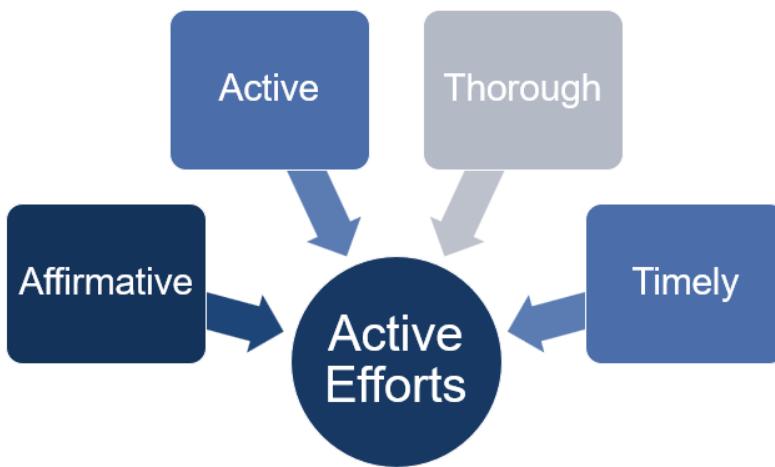
**Use this space to record notes.**

## Context for Active Efforts

- American Indian and Alaska Native populations experience worse health outcomes and have consistently higher rates of trauma than those of the general American population.
- It is important for caseworkers to be familiar with federal and state-recognized tribes in their county.

**Use this space to record notes.**

## Active Efforts and ICWA



Active efforts must be:

- Affirmative - efforts must be consistent or support family maintenance or reunification
- Active - efforts with family must be energetic and participatory
- Thorough - efforts must be executed without negligence or omissions
- Timely - efforts must occur in a suitable time frame

Active efforts are to be tailored to the facts and circumstances of the case and may include, for example:

1. Conducting a comprehensive assessment of the circumstances of the Indian child's family, with a focus on safe reunification as the most desirable goal.
2. Identifying appropriate services and helping the parents to overcome barriers, including actively assisting the parents in obtaining such services.
3. Identifying, notifying, and inviting representatives of the Indian child's tribe to participate in providing support and services to the Indian child's family and in Family Team meetings, permanency planning, and resolution of placement issues.
4. Conducting or causing to be conducted a diligent search for the Indian child's extended family members and contacting and consulting with extended family members to provide family structure and support for the Indian child and the Indian child's parents.
5. Offering and employing all available and culturally appropriate family preservation strategies and facilitating the use of remedial and rehabilitative services provided by the child's tribe.
6. Taking steps to keep siblings together whenever possible.
7. Supporting regular visits with parents or Indian custodians in the most natural setting possible as well as trial home visits of the Indian child during any period of removal, consistent with the need to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the child.
8. Identifying community resources including housing, financial, transportation, mental health, substance abuse, and peer support services and actively assisting the Indian child's parents or, when appropriate, the child's family, in utilizing and accessing those resources.
9. Monitoring progress and participation in services.
10. Considering alternative ways to address the needs of the Indian child's parents and, where appropriate, the family, if the optimum services do not exist or are not available.
11. Providing post-reunification services and monitoring.

To explore this topic further on your own time, visit: <https://turtletalk.blog/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/december2016guidelines.pdf> for Guidelines for Implementing the Indian Child Welfare Act developed by the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs.

**Use this space to record notes.**

## Skills Practice: Reasonable and Active Efforts

### Reasonable and Active Efforts

#### Activity: Reasonable and Active Efforts

**Scenario 1:** You received a report regarding the Bravebird family alleging neglect of their seven-year-old child from a school counselor. The report stated that the parents' alcohol use has led to the seven-year-old missing meals. The report alleges that she looks unkempt and has poor attendance. The family is Native American and is distrustful of Child Protective Services due to the long history of systemic racism and their tribe's having to fight for their rights, land, and services. Their ancestors experienced boarding schools when they attempted to strip them of their culture. The family is deeply connected to their cultural traditions and community. The seven-year-olds only missed school when they were participating in important cultural ceremonies and learning traditional skills from elders. The parents are struggling with a substance use disorder and admit to drinking daily. The family also struggles with food insecurity, and their washing machine and dryer need repairs.

Areas Where Support is Needed	Reasonable Efforts	Active Efforts	Potential Outcomes of Active Efforts

**Scenario 2:** A CPS Assessment report on the Littlefield family alleging that the three children are being raised by multiple people. There are allegations of abandonment for all three children and allegations of improper care of a medically fragile child. The medically fragile child has missed appointments, and the Doctor stated that the child's medicine has not been filled in a month. Upon further investigation, it was found that the parents have not abandoned their children, but that family has a broader definition in their community. The family has a dedicated support system within their Native American tribe of multiple grandparents, aunties, uncles, and cousins, as they do not define these family members as only blood relatives. The family understands that the medically fragile child has additional needs they need help with, but they want to utilize both the Doctor and their traditional tribal healer. Their car broke down, and they are having difficulty making appointments. The father has lost medical benefits as his work is seasonal. Work should pick up soon. The lack of benefits is a real concern for the medically fragile child's care, as their care can be costly.

Areas Where Support is Needed	Reasonable Efforts	Active Efforts	Potential Outcomes of Active Efforts

**Scenario 3:** You received a report regarding the Locklear family alleging improper supervision and unsafe living conditions. Upon further investigation, you find that the single mother of two children is a veteran who is receiving mental health support for PTSD symptoms. Her husband died two years ago. She has been squatting in a condemned home with her two children, ages 6 and 3 years. When she is not following her mental health treatment, she has wandered off, leaving the 6-year-old to care for the three-year-old. She was once very connected to the Lumbee tribe, but for the last few years, she has been reluctant to trust anyone.

Areas Where Support is Needed	Reasonable Efforts	Active Efforts	Potential Outcomes of Active Efforts

## Filing a Juvenile Petition

### Juvenile Petition Knowledge Check

Per policy, a county child welfare services agency must file a petition requesting adjudication of abuse, neglect, and/or dependency:

- When safety-related circumstances necessitate the need for immediate removal.
- Due to the family's unwillingness to accept critically needed services and those services are necessary to keep the family intact.
- When despite agency efforts to provide services, the family has made no progress toward providing adequate care for the child(ren) and those services are necessary to keep the family intact.

A juvenile petition is the document filed with the court to assume custody of a child.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
Juvenile Summons and Notice of Hearing can be filed one week after a juvenile petition.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
The decision to file a petition is a two-level decision.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
Petitions contain a general summary of all the elements of a family's involvement with child welfare, even aspects that don't directly involve abuse, neglect, or dependency.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False
A CFT meeting must be held before court action is taken.	<input type="checkbox"/> True <input type="checkbox"/> False

### Activity: The Court Process

With your group, generate ideas about how caseworkers can show up prepared to participate in court for your group's assigned hearing type.

### Non-Secure Custody Hearing

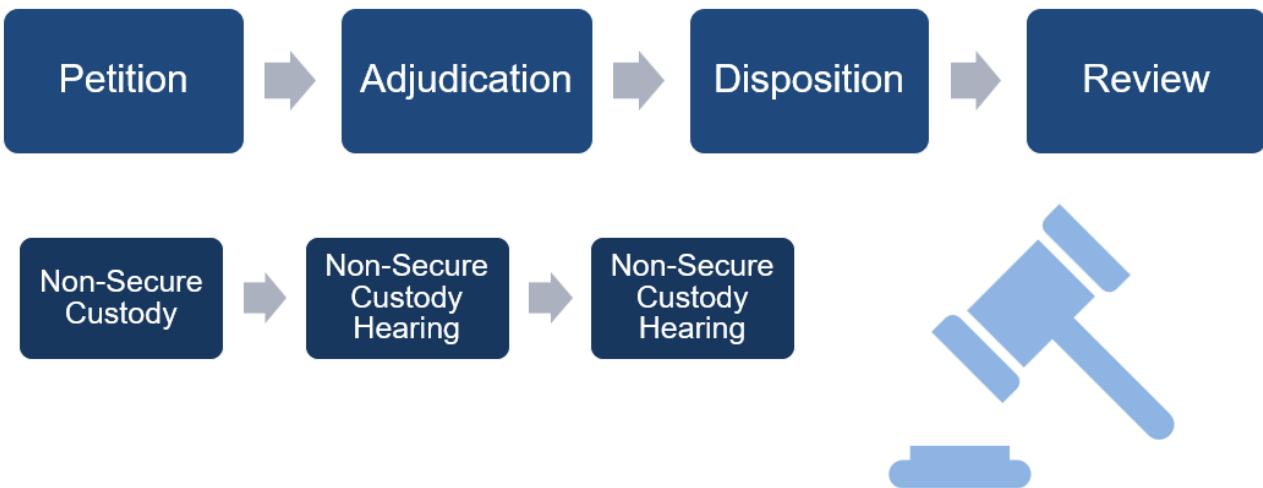
### Adjudication

### Disposition

**TPR Hearing**

**Adoption Hearing**

## The Court Process



Use this space to record notes.

## Handout: The Court Process

Proceeding	Timeframe	Overview
Petition	Initiates court process	<p>Your agency must file a petition requesting adjudication of abuse, neglect, and/or dependency:</p> <p>When safety-related circumstances necessitate the need for immediate removal.</p> <p>Due to the family's unwillingness to accept critically needed services and those services are necessary to keep the family intact.</p> <p>When despite agency efforts to provide services, the family has made no progress towards providing adequate care for the child and those services are necessary to keep the family intact.</p>
Adjudicatory hearing	No later than 60 days from the filing of the petition unless continued for cause	<p>At the adjudication hearing, the court decides whether CPS can prove the allegations in its petition. The child welfare agency's attorney will present evidence through the testimony of the social worker, law enforcement officers, or other witnesses, including any experts. Documents such as medical records or photographs also may be entered into evidence. The attorneys for the parents and the child will have the right to question or cross-examine the witnesses and to present evidence. The parents may testify, as may other family members or neighbors who have knowledge of the facts alleged in the petition or of the care the parents provided their children.</p>
Dispositional Hearing	Immediately following adjudication. If not, it shall be concluded within 30 days of the adjudication hearing.	<p>At the dispositional hearing, the judge decides what the best plan is for the child and what services will be ordered. For example, the court may enter an order that mandates counseling and rehabilitative services. The judge will also decide where the child will live, whether there are any relatives that can</p>

		help take care of the child, and what type of visits the parent will have with their child. The judge may also order each parent to receive certain services, such as substance abuse treatment, parenting classes, or domestic violence counseling. Essentially, the dispositional hearing determines what will be required to resolve the problems that led to CPS intervention.
Initial Reviews	Within 90 days of the dispositional hearing	<p>The review hearing is an opportunity to evaluate the progress that has been made toward completing the case plan and any court orders and to revise the plan as needed. At each review hearing, the judge is given information about what each parent has been doing, how the child is doing, and whether there are any needs that haven't been addressed. The court must decide if the plan that was made during disposition is working and if any changes are needed. Review hearings should guide the case to permanency for the child.</p> <p>Review Hearings occur for cases where children remain in their homes and are not in DSS custody.</p>
Ongoing reviews	At least every 6 months after the initial review	Same as the initial hearing outlined above.
Permanency Planning Review Hearings	Initial within 90 days of dispositional hearing and ongoing every 6 months thereafter	<p>Proceedings held for children in out-of-home placement.</p> <p>Much like the Review Hearings outlined above. Additionally, permanent plans are set and reviewed through this process.</p> <p>Permanency Planning Review Hearings cease after TPR if the court determines there is no longer a need for concurrent planning.</p>

While the court process follows a prescribed path, there is nuance as to the timeframes depending upon when a child enters custody.

It is possible that DSS initiates court proceedings during In-Home Services by filing a juvenile petition without filing for non-secure custody. When this occurs, the process is followed as outlined. It is possible that during the disposition or at a subsequent review hearing, the court may order that the child enter foster care. When this occurs, the case continues in the established court process, and the review hearings become “Permanency Planning Review Hearings.”

If the child enters foster care by way of a non-secure custody order, a separate court process is enacted. This process can occur at either the CPS Assessment or In-Home Services stage of the child welfare process.

Proceeding	Timeframe	Overview
Non-Secure Custody Order	Initiates entry into foster care	Accompanies a petition alleging abuse/neglect/dependency and immediate safety needs of the children
Initial Hearing/Non-Secure Custody Hearing	Within 7 days of non-secure  May continue up to 10 business days with the consent of the parent and GAL if appointed	The main purpose of the initial hearing is to determine whether the child should be placed in substitute care or remain with or be returned to the parents pending further proceedings. The critical issue is whether measures can be put in place to ensure the child's safety.
Second Hearing on Continued Non-Secure Custody	Within 7 business days of the initial non-secure hearing	Determine the need for continued non-secure custody  Inquiry as to location of parents, engagement of relatives to provide placement, the safety of children who remain in removal parents' home, MEPA and ICWA
Subsequent Non-Secure Custody Hearings	Occur at least every 30 calendar days after the second hearing until the dispositional hearing  Subsequent hearings can be waived only with the consent of the parents and GAL	Same as the second hearing outlined above

## Termination of Parental Rights

The Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights process follows a similar court process outlined above.

Proceeding	Timeframe	Overview
TPR Petition	Initiates TPR proceedings  Within 60 days of the hearing, setting adoption as the permanent plan  If the child has been in out-of-home placement for 12 of the most recent 22 months if no exception exists	Outlines reasonable efforts to reunify with parents, continuation of safety threats, and the ways in which TPR is in the best interest of the child.
TPR Hearing	No later than 90 days from filing the petition or motion	A termination of parental rights (TPR) hearing is divided into two stages, adjudication and disposition. At adjudication, the party requesting TPR must prove to the judge by clear and convincing evidence that grounds exist for termination. If the judge decides that grounds do not exist, the judge will dismiss the case. If the judge decides that the grounds do exist, the judge moves to the disposition stage and must decide whether TPR is in the child's best interest.
Post TPR Hearing	Within 6 months after the TPR order has been entered and ongoing every 6 months thereafter	Ensure that every reasonable effort is being made to finalize the permanent plan for the child

## Foster Care 18-21 Program

When a young adult enters the Foster Care 18-21 program by signing a Voluntary Placement Agreement (DSS-597), court reviews continue. The initial court review hearing occurs within 90 days of signing the VPA and additional hearings occur at the discretion of the court although the young adult or DSS may request additional hearings at any time. No GAL is appointed for foster care in 18-21 cases.

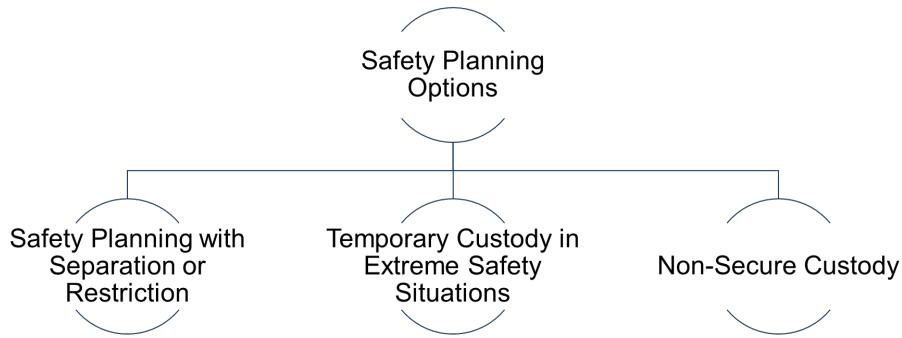
## Partnership with Families and the Court



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## Removal

### Removal Decisions



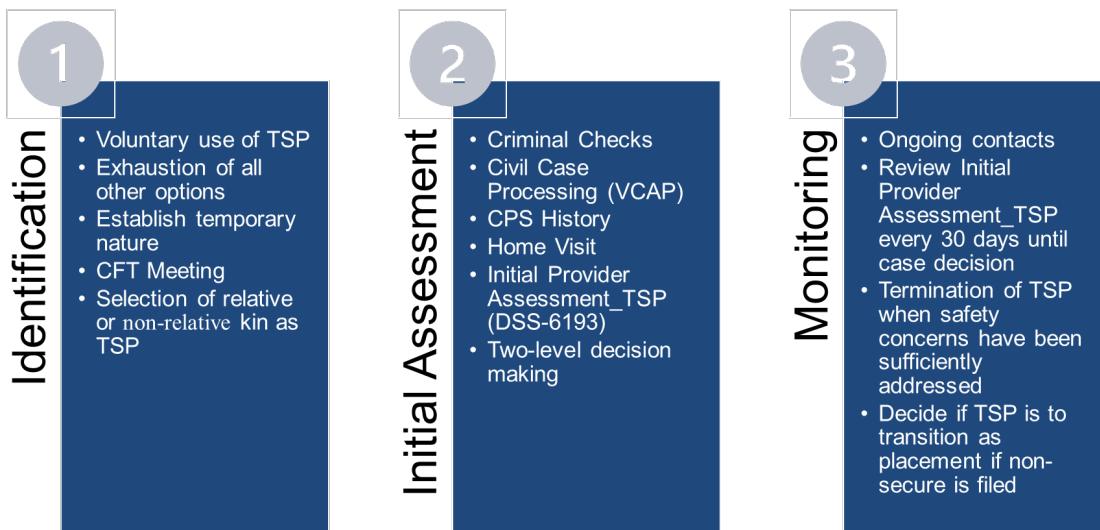
**Present safety threat** refers to an immediate, significant, and clearly observable family condition (severe harm or threat of severe harm) occurring to a child in the present. Present danger is easier to detect because it is transparent and is occurring now. If present danger is observed, the child is not safe.

**Impending safety threat** refers to threatening conditions that are not immediately obvious or currently active but are out of control and likely to cause serious harm to a child soon. Impending danger is covert. Impending danger is a threat that can be reasonably expected to result in serious harm if safety action is not taken and/or sustained. These threats may or may not be identified at the onset of involvement by a county child welfare services agency but are understood upon a more complete evaluation and understanding of the individual and family conditions and functioning.

To be classified as a safety threat, a situation, condition, or behavior must meet the “safety threshold.” The **safety threshold** is the point when a parent’s behaviors, attitudes, emotions, intent, or circumstances create conditions that fall beyond the mere risk of future maltreatment and have become an actual imminent threat to the child(ren)’s safety. These conditions could reasonably result in the serious and unacceptable pain and suffering of a vulnerable child. Safety threats are conditions that are specific, observable, out of control, and imminent, and the conditions can have a serious effect on the child.

**Use this space to record notes.**

## Temporary Safety Provider



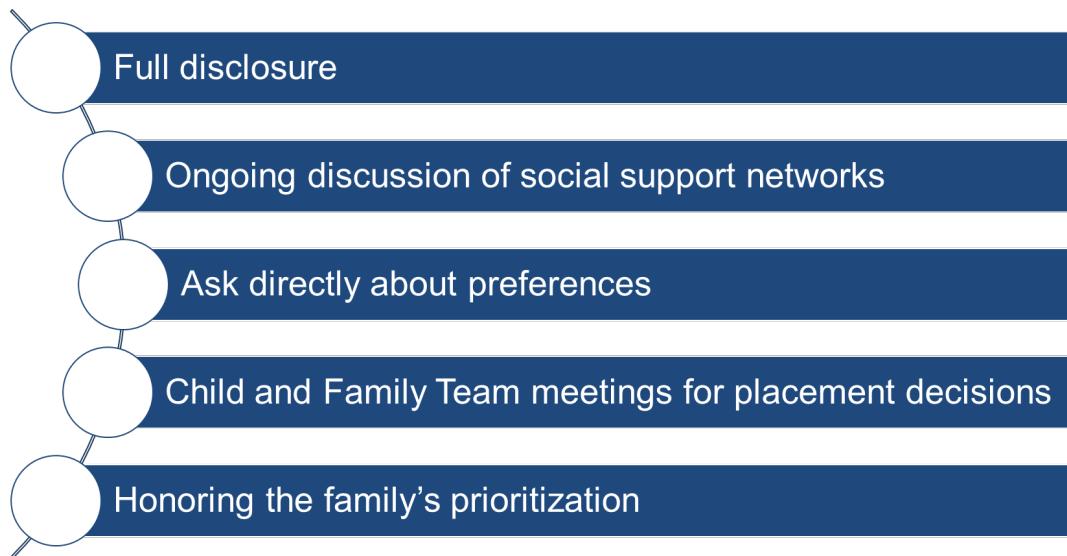
Under U.S. law, parents have a fundamental right to the care, custody, and control of their children. Any safety action that restricts or separates a parent from their child must include reasonable procedural protections, typically through a juvenile court hearing. Emergency actions without prior due process should only occur when necessary to protect the child and must be temporary.

When a Safety Agreement involves separation or restriction, the child may be placed with a Temporary Safety Provider (TSP). DSS must remain actively involved, maintain required contacts, and ensure parents participate in planning. TSPs must be voluntary, family-centered, and used only as a last resort when no other intervention can ensure safety.

**Use this space to record notes.**

## Engaging Families in Placement Decisions

### Family Voice and Choice in Placement Decisions



**Use this space to record notes.**

## Relatives, Non-Relative Kin, and Foster Home Considerations



**Use this space to record notes.**

## Preparing for Placement

### Activity: Preparing for Placement

Follow the trainer's instructions to participate in this walking brainstorm activity where you will record your responses to what is involved in preparing the child, the placement provider, and the parents for placement.

#### **Preparing the Child or Youth**

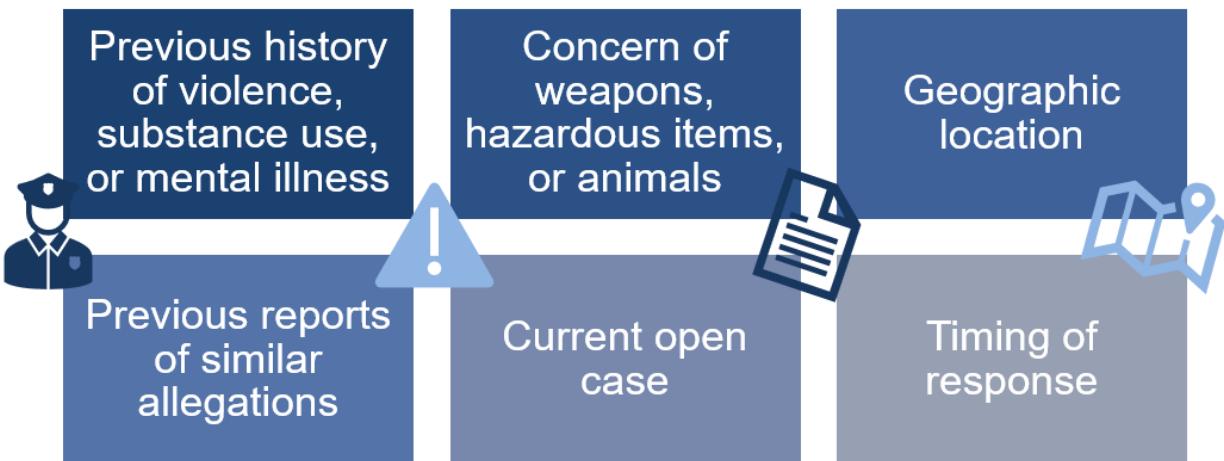
#### **Preparing the Placement Provider**

#### **Preparing Parents**

## Worker Safety When Emergency Custody is Necessary

### Emergency Custody Situations

**Safety considerations include:**



**Use this space to record notes.**

## Reasonable Efforts and Removals Learning Lab

### Skills Practice: Collaborating with Parents During Removals

#### Lewis Family Scenario

Mother	Monica Lewis, female, 42, White, incarcerated
Father	George Jackson-Bailey, male, 45, White, shift manager at McDonald's
Stepfather	William Bailey-Jackson, male, 46, White, cashier/stocker at a grocery store
Child	Van (legal Vanessa) Jackson, female, 14, White, 8th Grade at Johnson Middle School
Child	Raymond Jackson, male, 10, White, 4th Grade at Johnson Elementary School

The initial report was received five days ago, alleging unsafe discipline. Initiation found that George has repeatedly “whupped” Raymond to the point that he has left marks and bruises on his arm, lower back, and buttocks. The incident resulted in swelling, bruising, and pain in Raymond’s arm, buttocks, and leg. Raymond reported that he is scared of his father, George, as evidenced by hiding in his closet and lying awake at night in fear. A safety plan was created upon initiation with “safe with a plan.”

Five days after initiating the case, a New Report on Open Case (NROC) was received alleging that George whupped Raymond, causing injury. Interviews and observation revealed that George whupped Raymond after Raymond accidentally broke a glass. George caused bruising and swelling along Raymond’s spine, discomfort, and pain in movement, and later it was found by medical staff that Raymond had a broken rib.

Law Enforcement plans to arrest George for misdemeanor child abuse. William is out of state due to a critical family emergency and cannot return to care for the children. It is Saturday night, therefore George’s first appearance will not occur until Monday morning.

After staffing with your supervisor, it is determined that an alternative caregiver is required and that a juvenile petition will be filed.

Activity: Narrative Statements and Open-Ended Questions

- Prepare to meet with George and call the prison to speak with Monica.

**Craft several narrative statements and open-ended questions that could be used to partner with the parents during this removal process.**

### **Group Debrief**

- Gather into assigned small groups
- Share your statements and receive feedback
- Listen to group members' responses and give feedback

### **Feedback and Notes**

## Calming and De-Escalation Strategies

### Video: Calming and De-Escalation Strategies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2PSExM-NhU>

## Calming and De-Escalation Strategies

### Escalation

- We become escalated from a sense of threat or fear, real or perceived.
- Some brains are wired to expect harm or danger due to past experiences.
- When a person is stressed, angry, or scared, their survival brain becomes activated to keep them safe. This turns off the thinking part of the brain. People act on instincts, especially reading non-verbal cues from others and the environment.

### De-Escalation

Use non-verbal cues to reduce the perception of threat.

- Do not block or corner people who are upset, angry, or escalated.
- Keep body posture open and relaxed, even when difficult.

It takes the body 20-30 minutes to come back to baseline after a real or perceived threat.

## Three Strategies for De-Escalation

Low and Slow: reference to body movements and voice and speech patterns.

- Speech: use a low tone and slow speed.
- Body: move slowly, sit down, or lower the body to a more equal stance to the escalated person.

Name it to Tame it: naming emotions, acknowledging feelings, validating the feeling, not the behavior.

Regulate over Educate: Focus on regulation for yourself and the escalated person.

- Give physical space and time.
- Avoid discussions of consequences or introspection about how actions are affecting others.
- Refrain from sharing essential information, as it cannot be processed or retained at this time.

## Custody Conversation

### Activity: Custody Conversation

**The trainers will demonstrate a conversation between a parent and a caseworker in the following scenario. Imagine yourself as the caseworker.**

As we discovered earlier today, George has caused harm to Raymond and will be arrested for misdemeanor child abuse. You have tried to contact Monica in jail and due to the after-hours timing, you were unable to make contact. All efforts to locate a TSP have been unsuccessful. You staff with your supervisor, and it is determined that DSS must assume emergency custody and then file a non-secure and juvenile petition, as law enforcement has indicated a need to bring George in the next thirty minutes.

You are speaking to George about the decision to file for non-secure custody. For the purposes of our role-play, we will imagine the conversation between George and the caseworker without law enforcement involvement. You explain to George that the children will enter foster care.

**At this point, the trainers will ask for volunteers to continue the conversation in the role of the caseworker and practice one of the learned de-escalation techniques.**

**Use this space to record notes and observations.**

## Learning Lab: Reasonable Efforts and Removals

### Handout: Lewis Family Detailed Case Scenario

#### Lewis Family

Mother	Monica Lewis, female, 42, White, incarcerated
Father	George Jackson-Bailey, male, 45, White, shift manager at McDonald's
Stepfather	William Bailey-Jackson, male, 46, White, cashier/stocker at a grocery store
Child	Van (legal Vanessa) Jackson, female, 14, White, 8th Grade at Johnson Middle School
Child	Raymond Jackson, male, 10, White, 4th Grade at Johnson Elementary School

#### CPS History

6 months ago: CPS Family Assessment for neglect, unsafe discipline. Report alleged marks and bruises left on Raymond's buttocks because of spanking by his father, George. Slight bruising was observed on the upper buttocks. Child Protective Services not needed as the safety of the children was not an issue and there was no concern for the future risk of harm to the children.

#### CPS Report

The report was made by Ms. McIntyre, the school counselor at Johnson Elementary School.

Report alleges that Raymond came to school today complaining of pain. Raymond told his teacher that he got into trouble the night before for "talking back" to his dad. The teacher sent Raymond to the school counselor who observed redness, light bruising, and swelling on Raymond's buttocks, visible just above the waistband of his shorts which sit lower on his hips, and bruising that could be fingerprints on Raymond's left arm. When the school counselor asked Raymond about what happened, Raymond said "I don't want to get Dad into trouble." He wouldn't speak about the matter any further.

The report was screened in as neglect, unsafe discipline. Family Assessment, 24-hour response.

#### Summary of Initiation

The children have been living with their biological father, George, and George's husband, William, since their mother, Monica, went to prison a little over a year ago. Before this change, George and William had been consistently involved in the children's lives, caring for them several days a week and attending school events. George and William have been in a relationship for five years and married for three.

Raymond says, "I am always in trouble." For "bigger stuff," Raymond gets spankings from George. When asked about "bigger stuff," the family described the following:

Yesterday, Raymond told his dad he had finished his homework and logged onto the Xbox. When George went to make dinner, he found the homework lying on the floor, unfinished and covered in juice. The juice container had been left on the counter without a lid and had been knocked over, spilling juice all over the floor. George said that he "snapped" and went to "confront" Raymond. George asked Raymond why he lied, and Raymond said he didn't lie, he must have forgotten.

George indicated that he cannot tolerate this level of disrespect. He “lost it,” meaning he grabbed Raymond and began to “whup” him. Raymond was trying to get away, but George held his arm tightly while hitting his butt with his open hand. At one point, Raymond’s pants fell down, and George continued to hit his unclothed buttocks.

Raymond is observed to have purple marks on the soft tissues of his buttocks, primarily on the left side, beginning at the upper region of the buttocks just below the hips and extending to the upper leg, just below the buttocks. Raymond reports that it doesn’t hurt as bad when he sits “to the right” and demonstrated shifting his weight by leaning to the right. Raymond said sitting at school is painful.

George indicated that he believes that the purple marks on Raymond’s buttocks were a result of his whupping. George said that he doesn’t ever mean to hurt Raymond when he disciplines him, just “teach him a lesson.” In response to an inquiry about how it feels to notice the extent of the bruises, George shrugged and said, “It doesn’t feel good.” William and Van were not home when the incident occurred.

Raymond is diagnosed with ADHD. He takes Adderall every day unless they forget in the rush of the morning to get to school. This happens about once a week.

George says he is “at a loss” for what to do with Raymond and that he “better shape up” because things cannot continue like this. George says that Raymond “makes” him whup him with his bad behavior. George said that the whupping would not have been so bad if Raymond had “just accepted it” and not tried to pull away.

Caseworker presented information about ADHD and its impact on behaviors. George indicated that this was just an excuse. George shared his thought that “kids today just don’t have discipline” and are not held accountable. George indicated that he was whupped as a child, and he learned not to lie and to see things through, so he believes that Raymond hasn’t learned these things because his mother didn’t discipline him enough.

When asked about steps to ensure Raymond isn’t injured during discipline, George indicated that DSS was “blowing this all out of proportion” and that DSS involvement was unnecessary; Raymond just needs to “do better.”

### **Individual interview Summaries**

#### Interview with Raymond:

When asked if Raymond ever feels scared, Raymond stated he is always scared that his dad is going to “whup” him. Raymond described getting spankings every week and then a “whupping,” like yesterday, about three times since he moved in with his dad. Raymond says he thinks about getting whupped “all the time” and that sometimes this makes it hard for him to do things at home because he is afraid he will mess it up. Raymond described that sometimes his worry keeps him up at night and he cannot sleep so goes to the closet to stay away out of fear. Raymond says it doesn’t always hurt as badly as yesterday’s, and he doesn’t always get marks. He cannot remember how often that happens. Most of all, Raymond hates it when his dad calls him “lazy” or “stupid” or accuses him of lying. Raymond says he tries his best to remember to do things, and sometimes he can, but other times he cannot. He said worrying about getting in trouble makes him more forgetful. Raymond says that William tries to help him remember things, but he can’t always remember.

#### Interview with Van:

Van said that when they heard about yesterday, they got really scared that one day their dad was going to “really hurt” Raymond.

## Additional Information

### Mental Health:

Raymond has ADHD, which is managed with medication by a primary care provider. Raymond says that his ADHD makes him forgetful, and sometimes he cannot focus.

### Collateral Contact with Ms. Rosa, the neighbor who occasionally watches Raymond:

Although she sometimes hears George yelling, Ms. Rosa isn't aware of any spanking or problems. Ms. Rosa agreed that if there was ever trouble between George and Raymond, George could send Raymond to her apartment. She is always home after school and on the weekends because she is a "real homebody." Both Ms. Rosa (neighbor) and Michelle (aunt) are identified as supports in case of an emergency.

### Phone interview with mother, Monica Lewis, non-resident parent:

Monica is incarcerated on a two-year sentence after convictions for shoplifting and writing bad checks. She has about ten months left of the sentence. Monica engaged in this criminal behavior after losing her job and could not make ends meet each month. Monica is worried about the children and whether they will be okay. She worries now that she knows how bad it is that George will take out his embarrassment about DSS being called on Raymond.

## Harm and Worry Statements

### **Harm Statement**

It was reported that George has repeatedly "whupped" Raymond to the point that he has left marks and bruises on his arm, lower back, and buttocks. The incident resulted in swelling, bruising, and pain in Raymond's arm, buttocks, and leg. Raymond is scared of his father, George, as evidenced by hiding in his closet and lying awake at night in fear.

### **Worry Statement**

Raymond may be seriously injured and scared of George if George continues to whup Raymond by grabbing and hitting him.

**Safety Assessment: Safe with a Plan**

<b>Part A: Factors Influencing Child Vulnerability</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Child has a diagnosed or suspected behavioral or mental condition</li> </ul>		
<b>Part B: Danger Indicators</b>		
13	Yes	<p>Child fears the caretaker, other family members, or people living in or having access to the home, and the caretaker fails to protect the child from these individuals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Child cries, cowers, cringes, trembles, or exhibits or verbalizes fear in relation to certain individuals.</li> <li>✓ Child exhibits anxiety, nightmares, or insomnia related to a situation associated with a person in the home.</li> </ul> <p>Comments: Raymond is scared of his father, George. Raymond hides in the closet and lays awake at night in fear. This has happened after George has whupped Raymond repeatedly and left marks and bruises on Raymond's leg, buttocks and lower back. George states that Raymond "makes" him whup him with his bad behavior and that George would not have hurt Raymond if Raymond had "just accepted it and not pulled away" with reflects a lack of accountability.</p>
<b>Part C: Family Safety Interventions</b>		
<p>Family Safety Interventions (Safe with a plan):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 1. Use of direct services by the county child welfare agency.</li> <li>✓ 2. Include family, neighbors, or other community members in the developing and implementing of a safety plan</li> </ul>		
<b>Part D: Safety Decision</b>		
Safe with a plan		<p>One or more danger indicators are present. Safety interventions have been initiated to mitigate the danger. A safety plan is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Family Safety Interventions 1 and 2 will address safety indicators.</li> </ul>

<b>Part E: Safety Plan</b>				
<b>Describe the Danger Indicator (caretaker + behavior + impact)</b>	<b>What will be done to address the danger indicator until the next updated safety plan? (proactive/reactive)</b>	<b>Who will do it?</b>	<b>How will we know it is working?</b>	<b>What will people do if they believe the safety plan is not working?</b>
<p>It was reported that George has repeatedly “whupped” Raymond to the point that he has left marks and bruises on his arm, lower back, and buttocks. The event resulted in swelling, bruising, and pain in Raymond’s arm, buttocks, and leg. Raymond is scared of his father, George, as evidenced by hiding in his closet and lying awake at night in fear.</p>	<p>Utilize discipline techniques, such as removing privileges or having Raymond finish cleaning a mess with directions and support.</p> <p>When George feels it is becoming harder to manage his anger toward Raymond’s behavior, George will walk out of the house and call Ms. Rosa.</p> <p>George and Ms. Rosa give permission for Raymond to go to Ms. Rosa’s house if he ever feels scared.</p> <p>Caseworker will make visits to the home to check in on progress</p>	<p>George William  George William Ms. Rosa  Caseworker</p>	<p>Immediately</p> <p>Immediately</p> <p>Weekly</p>	<p>Call Caseworker</p>

## New Report on an Open Case

On Saturday, five days after the initial report was initiated, DSS received a new report.

The report was made by Law Enforcement.

Report alleges that 911 was called by Rosa Ward. Around 8:30 pm Rosa had heard glass break upstairs in the family's apartment and the father yelling and heavy footsteps. Raymond and Van arrived at her apartment at 9:00 pm scared and upset. Raymond's back was swollen and red with bruises starting to form along his spine; Raymond was having trouble walking and complained of his back hurting.

Law Enforcement arrived on the scene. From information gathered by the officers, George whupped Raymond for breaking some glass dishes. Raymond has swelling and bruising along his back. George is being arrested for misdemeanor child abuse. DSS is requested to assess the situation for the children.

Report was screened in as physical abuse, Investigative Assessment, immediate response.

### Summary of New Report Initiation

#### Information Gathered in Interviews

Raymond had been trying to "be good" all week and was cleaning the kitchen. He stacked up all the dirty dishes from dinner on the counter and went to play Xbox. George had come in and when he opened the dishwasher, the pile of dishes that was unsteady fell, breaking all the glass dishes. George went into Raymond's room, grabbed his arm, and "whupped" him on the back, butt, and upper legs. Van told their dad to stop and that they would take Raymond to Ms. Rosa. This got George's attention, but he wouldn't let Raymond go. Raymond pulled away. Raymond and Van ran to Ms. Rosa's house.

Raymond was observed to have purplish marks and swelling right side, extending from his mid back down to his buttock to the upper right leg, just under the buttock. Raymond reports pain on the right side when he breathes in and pain in his buttocks and leg. George was arrested for misdemeanor child abuse. Due to this occurring on a Saturday, his first court appearance would not occur until the following Monday.

Ms. Rosa said that George's yelling and mean behavior scared her. She was glad she could intervene today, but she isn't in a place to stay involved. She had to think about her own health. William could not return to the house immediately, as he was managing a critical medical situation with his mother out of state. Ms. Rosa declined placement due to fear of retaliation from George. Michelle Boyd, maternal aunt, was unable to provide placement due to an acute hospitalization as a result of flu requiring IV fluids. Samantha Warren, Van's best friend's mother, could not be reached for placement.

**Safety Assessment: Unsafe**

<b>Part A: Factors Influencing Child Vulnerability</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Child has a diagnosed or suspected behavioral or mental condition</li> </ul>		
<b>Part B: Danger Indicators</b>		
1	Yes	<p>The child has a serious non-accidental injury or harm, or a sentinel injury suspected to be caused by the parent, other caretaker, or an unknown person. The parent or other caretaker cannot be ruled out and the circumstances suggest that the child's safety may be of immediate concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Substantial or unreasonable use of physical discipline</li> <li>✓ Caretaker committed an act that placed child at risk of significant/serious pain that could result in impairment or loss of bodily function</li> </ul> <p>Comments: George repeatedly "whupped" Raymond, meaning he hit Raymond with his hand to the point that George has left marks and bruises on Raymond's back along his spine, ribs and kidney regions, and buttocks. This has resulted in swelling, bruising, and Raymond reports pain on the right side when he breathes in.</p>
13	Yes	<p>Child fears the caretaker, other family members, or people living in or having access to the home, and the caretaker fails to protect the child from these individuals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Child cries, cowers, cringes, trembles, or exhibits or verbalizes fear in relation to certain individuals</li> <li>✓ Child exhibits anxiety, nightmares, or insomnia related to a situation associated with a person in the home</li> </ul> <p>Comments: Raymond is now more scared of his father since George didn't let him go to Ms. Rosa's house, which was the safety plan. Raymond hides in the closet and lays awake at night in fear. This has happened after George has whupped Raymond repeatedly and left marks and bruises on Raymond's leg, buttocks and lower back.</p>
<b>Part C: Child Welfare Safety Interventions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Removal of any child in the household; interventions one through six do not adequately ensure the child(ren)'s safety. Explain why a family safety intervention could not be used to protect the child.</li> </ul> <p>Comments: Due to George's arrest and the timing of the events, George will not be released before Monday at his first appearance in court. While several attempts were made to locate a Temporary Safety Provider, no options were available.</p>		

<b>Part D: Safety Decision</b>	
Unsafe	One or more children were removed in response to legal action

**Custody**

Due to George's arrest and the timing of the events, George will not be released before Monday at his first appearance in court. While several attempts were made to locate a Temporary Safety Provider, no options were available. The Department filed a petition alleging abuse, neglect, and dependency and a non-secure custody order, bringing Van and Raymond into foster care.

## Learning Lab Worksheets

**Station 1: Reasonable Efforts**

Instructions: Using the Lewis scenario, document the reasonable efforts taken to prevent removal.

<b>Scenario</b>	The Lewis Family
<b>Key Facts to consider from the scenario</b>	
<b>Reasonable Efforts</b>	
<b>Notes</b>	

**Station 2: Active Efforts**

Instructions: Using the Avilla Chavis scenario, imagine you learn that the family has Native American heritage. Document the active efforts taken that could be used to indicate prevention of removal, should new concerns arise in the future that warrant a discussion about family separation, restriction of contact, or removal.

<b>Scenario</b>	Avila Chavis Family
<b>Key Facts to consider from the scenario</b>	
<b>Active Efforts</b>	
<b>Notes</b>	

**Station 3: Filing a Juvenile Petition**

Instructions: Filing a Juvenile Petition: Using the Lewis family scenario, write a list of what should be stated in a petition to the juvenile courts for an order of removal.

<b>Scenario</b>	Lewis Family
<b>Key Factors to Consider from Scenario</b>	
<b>What should be stated in a petition to the juvenile courts for an order of removal?</b>	
<b>What documentation should you be prepared to provide?</b>	
<b>Notes</b>	

**Station 4: Impact Trauma on Self-Care Discussion**

Instructions: Engage in a sharing session with others about their experiences of impact trauma, how they manage Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) and Vicarious Trauma (VT), and strategies to combat compassion fatigue.

What is your experience with Impact Trauma? How does it impact your practice?

How do you manage STS and VT?

What strategies do you use to address compassion fatigue?

Notes

## End-of-Day Values Reflections

### Questions and Reflections

**Use this space to record questions and reflections about what you have learned today.**

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Juvenile Code, N.C.G.S. §7B-507. Juvenile placed in nonsecure custody of a department of social services. [https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter\\_7B/GS\\_7B-507.pdf](https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_7B/GS_7B-507.pdf)

Juvenile Code, N.C.G.S. § 7B-901. Initial dispositional hearing. [https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter\\_7B/GS\\_7B-901.pdf](https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_7B/GS_7B-901.pdf)

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