Structure Decision Making: Reunification Assessment

A Reunification Assessment tool is used to guide decisions about whether to return a child(ren) home or to reach a permanency placement recommendation.

A Reunification Assessment is required to be completed in every Child Protection workgroup when there is a child(ren) currently in out-of-home placement with a goal of returning home. Exclude cases in which the court relieves the agency of responsibility for a reasonable effort toward reunification.

The Reunification Assessment should be completed no later than 90 days after completing the first service plan. Reunification Assessment occurs quarterly thereafter, prior to court hearings, and at any time the child(ren) is being considered for return home.

The results from the reunification Risk Reassessment tab and the Visitation Plan Evaluation tab indicate if a child(ren) is eligible to return home or if a new recommendation should be made.

If families have effectively reduced risk to low or moderate and have achieved at least moderate compliance with visitation, the reunification Safety Factors tab results are used to determine if the home environment is safe. The Safety Response tab is enabled only if safety factors are identified on the Safety Factors tab. The Recommendation tab is used to guide decisions to return a child(ren) home, to continue with the permanency plan, or consult the agency attorney regarding legal permanency.
Reunification Assessment

To complete a Reunification Assessment:

1. Select the **Decision Tools** folder in the Tree View of the desired workgroup.
2. From an **Action** menu, select **New Decision Tool**.
3. Select **Reunification Assessment** in the **Decision Tool** field using the drop-down menu.
4. Select **Generate Tool**. The tool displays.
5. The **Assessed by** field autofills with the user logged on to SSIS. Select a different assessor if the Reunification Assessment was completed by another worker.
6. Select the date of assessment in the **Assessment Date** field.
7. Select a caregiver in the **Primary Caregiver** field.
8. Select a caregiver in the **Secondary Caregiver** field, if applicable.
9. Uncheck any children who are not in out-of-home placement, if applicable.
10. On the **Risk Reassessment** tab, select answers for **R1-R3**.
11. The scored risk level displays in the **Scored Risk** field.
12. If a risk override is necessary (see SDM Policy and Procedures manual for more information), select one of the policy reasons or select **Discretionary override (increase one level)** in the **Override** field. Otherwise, proceed to step 14.
13. If **Discretionary override (increase one level)** is selected, type reason in the **Override Comments (Required when override is discretionary)** field and select a level in the **Override risk level** field.
14. Select the **Visitation Plan Evaluation** tab.
15. Select a compliance level for each child in the **Plan compliance** field.
16. Select the **Safety Factors** tab.
17. Check all safety factors that apply or select **No safety factors apply**. If no safety factors apply, proceed to step 23.
18. If safety factors apply, type a description for each factor in the **Safety factor description** field.
19. Select the **Safety Response** tab.
20. Check all safety responses that apply or select **None of these responses will ensure safety**. If no safety responses will ensure safety proceed to step 23.
21. If safety responses apply, type a description for each response in the **Safety response description** field.
22. A safety decision displays in the **Safety Decision** field.
23. Select the **Recommendation** tab.
24. Check the **Score tool – calculate recommendation for each child** check box.
25. The recommendations display for each child in the **Recommendation** field.
26. Select **Save**.
27. If a risk override was completed, a dialog displays indicating that approval is required. Select **OK**. If no risk override was completed, the tool is complete, stop here.
28. Access the **Action** menu, select **Send for Approval**.
29. Select approver name in the **Approver** field.
30. Click **OK**. Risk Overrides must be approved by a supervisor to complete the tool.
31. Once the override is approved or denied by the supervisor, the tool is complete.
Hint: If fields are not completed the tool is saved as Incomplete. You must complete all required fields before the tool is complete.

References: Find the following resources under Structured Decision Making at the following web address:

- Printing Blank Tools and Definitions
- SDM Safety Assessment
- SDM Risk Assessment
- SDM Strengths and Needs Assessment
- SDM Risk Reassessment.