

# In-Home Family Support Plan Introduction and Tutorial

## Purpose

This document is created to provide general information to child welfare staff and caseworkers who are responsible for providing in-home child protection case management services and are required to complete an In-Home Family Support Plan. The In-Home Family Support Plan takes the place of the existing Child Protective Services Plan and Family Assessment Service Plan. Following the release of the new In-Home Family Support Plan, workers will no longer be able to create new Child Protective Services Plans or Family Assessment Service Plans. Existing plans that are not finalized will still be editable in Social Service Information System (SSIS). The updates to the child protection case plans were to address the needs related to implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), to improve consistency and strengthen the plans.

Child protection case management is provided to address safety concerns, reduce the risk of future maltreatment and address child and family well-being. When completing case plans collaboratively with families, caseworkers utilize a strength-based approach while meeting the needs of children/youth, parents, caregivers and families.

There is not one universal process for completing case plans. Every family is unique and case plans should be developed in collaboration with the family to meet their needs and reduce the risk of future maltreatment.

This document will not cover each section of the new In-Home Family Support Plan but will provide an overview of updates and changes made to the in-home services plan. A more detailed Job Aid with additional guidance was created and will be shared to [SSIS Documentation](#) site under FFPSA upon release of the In-Home Family Support Plan at the end of November 2023.

## Set-up

Caseworkers will now select “In-Home Family Support Plan” under “Plan Type” in SSIS to create a case plan with families receiving in-home child protection case management. Within the newly designed set-up screen, caseworkers will have additional selections to comply with federal mandates. Caseworkers will select if a service plan meets Child Welfare Targeted Case Management (CW-TCM) requirements for a child, if the plan includes a Plan of Safe Care for an infant and if the plan includes Prevention Services under the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA).

## **Child Welfare Targeted Case Management**

The new In-Home Family Support Plan may be designated as the CW-TCM plan if it addresses each eligible child specifically, and the services to be provided to each child. This means that caseworkers will not be required to complete a separate CW-TCM plan if all requirements are completed within the new In-Home Family Support Plan. To meet CW-TCM requirements, goals and services for each eligible child must be addressed specifically in the Goals and Services section of the In-Home Family Support Plan. CW-TCM eligibility for each child must also be documented in SSIS. For further policy guidance on CW-TCM, visit [Child Welfare Targeted Case Management \(CW-TCM\) \(state.mn.us\)](#).

## **Plan of Safe Care**

A Plan of Safe Care is required for all infants born with prenatal exposure to substance use that is reported to child protection. A Plan of Safe Care includes a written service plan and safety plan focused on the infant, siblings, affected caregiver and father. Whenever possible, the plan is to be completed prior to birth, prior to hospital discharge or within 30 days if a report is received post-discharge. The plan addresses the parent's strengths and protective capacity while focusing on culturally responsive services, physical health, social-emotional needs and safety of the child. For additional information visit [Minnesota's Best Practice Guide for Responding to Prenatal Exposure of Substance Use](#).

## **Prevention services**

The child protection In-Home Family Support Plan has been updated to reflect requirements for prevention services as part of the FFPSA. If a family is being provided prevention services (currently Motivational Interviewing and Parents as Teachers) as part of FFPSA, the services must be selected in the set-up screen and reflected within the goals and services section of the In-Home Family Support Service Plan. The In-Home Family Support Plan must be signed and activated before an agency will be able to claim Title IV-E prevention services. For more information regarding FFPSA Prevention Services in Minnesota, visit the Prevention Services page on [PartnerLink](#) (formerly CountyLink ) or the [Minnesota Child Welfare Training Academy FFPSA site](#) for training and resources.

## **Reason for ongoing services**

The reason for ongoing services section should include the safety and complicating factors identified in the Safety Assessment, along with the determined SDM risk level. For more information, reference the [Structured Decision-Making Policy and Procedures Manual](#) for the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

This section should be clear, non-judgmental and practical so that the everyone clearly understands why child protection case management services will be provided. Briefly describe the specific behaviors, individuals, complicating factors and/or circumstances related to the safety threat and decision identified in the Safety Assessment. This section may also include any safety concerns expressed by the family.

Caseworkers should use the Safety Assessment consistently whenever there is a change in family circumstances, or a decision is made about safety. Based on any safety factors, complicating factors and protective capacities

identified, caseworkers should develop a revised safety plan with the family, and Tribe when applicable, using a collaborative, strengths-based approach.

## **Goals and services – Family and child safety and well-being**

Caseworkers and supervisors will notice several changes in the Goals and Services section of the new In-Home Family Support Plan. [Minnesota Rules 9560.0228](#) requires a child protection service plan to include achievable goals and “specific services expected to ameliorate the conditions that present harm to children.” One of the goals in updating the in-home child protection service plan was to improve consistency and strengthen the plans developed between caseworkers and families. The Goals and Services section is separated into two narrative boxes: one for family and one for child(ren).

It is important for caseworkers to have a strength-based, family-centered approach to develop strategies and goals focused on behavior change and enhancing child safety and well-being. It is important to remember that goals are not services but are accomplishments and changes in conditions, skills and/or behaviors. When service plans are developed in partnership with families, it empowers families while also focusing on child safety.

Goals should be developed in partnership with the family and be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-limited), family-centered and written in the family’s language. Goals should be related to child safety and built upon a family’s cultural strengths and supports. Caseworkers do not have to provide lengthy responses to address SMART goals. Some situations will be more complex than others and may require more narrative information. Goals and services should be clear and descriptive but do not have to be overly complicated.

When a child is eligible for Title IV-E prevention services under FFPSA, there must be child specific goals and strategies so that the child can remain at home safely and prevent out-of-home placement. In addition to the information in the service plan, a child’s eligibility must be established in SSIS.

Caseworkers should complete an overall assessment of a child’s well-being by talking directly with the child, the family and/or service providers. There may be times that a child has additional needs that a family may need support with; these needs may be unrelated to the child safety concerns as outlined in the safety goal. Services should be offered for any unmet well-being needs, although these needs may not be reasons for a child protection case to remain open or prevent case closing.

## **Additional considerations**

Under this section of the new In-Home Family Support Plan, workers will find four text boxes to complete, including two new topics which are listed first:

Describe agency efforts to locate and access culturally and linguistically appropriate and responsive community services and/or resources for the family

If ICWA and MIFPA apply, describe the agency’s active efforts to contact and engage the Tribe(s) to jointly develop this plan, to obtain and support services, and to collaborate with tribal worker(s)

We could not agree on these services

What will happen if parent or caregivers are unable or unwilling to achieve the family and child safety and well-being goals?

Caseworkers should engage with families to understand how their cultural beliefs, race and ethnicity are incorporated in the family functioning. Individual families have their own structure, language, beliefs and roles which must be considered when locating culturally and linguistically responsive services.

Families should be provided with services that are child centered, family focused and culturally responsive to achieve safety, well-being and permanency for children. An example may be if a caregiver identifies as American Indian and they prefer to participate in treatment for substance use disorder through traditional healing with their identified Tribe or American Indian organizations instead of their local county agency. Efforts to locate and access culturally and linguistically responsive services, including interpreter services, should be documented in the In-Home Family Support Plan.

When an agency has reason to believe or know a child may be American Indian, it should ensure active efforts to prevent the removal of a child and prevent the break-up of a family. Active efforts start the moment an agency works with a family, through case assessment/investigation and ongoing case management until completion of a case. Agency staff are responsible for actively engaging, assisting and jointly working with a family's and child's Tribe(s) with the development of case plan goals, services, recommendations and placement. Agency efforts to engage with the Tribe and other active efforts will be documented within the In-Home Family Support Plan.

Families involved with the child protection system may not actively seek out services although they are open to receiving services. There may be times when caseworkers and families do not agree on recommended services. Caseworkers should have meaningful engagement with parents and caregivers to understand their perspective and ambivalence towards a service. It is important to remember that refusal to participate in a service does not necessarily mean a child is unsafe or at risk of future maltreatment. When safety concerns continue to exist, caseworkers should consult with their supervisor and county or Tribal representative for additional guidance.

What will happen if parent or caregiver behaviors do not change to reduce the risk of abuse or neglect concerns? [Minnesota Rules 9560.0228](#) requires child protection service plans to address what would happen if a parent or caregiver does not achieve their protective services plan. This is commonly referred to the "bottom line" for families involved with child protective services.

### **Activate service plan**

Remember to set the status of your service plan to "active" once it is complete. This will be especially important for claiming Title IV-E Prevention Services. The status date to activate it should be the date the family signed the service plan.

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