

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

**COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT PLANNING MODEL – I.S.
REUNIFICATION ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS**

GENERAL INFORMATION

A Reunification Assessment is a structured review to support and document a child's reunification readiness decision, including a review of child safety, compliance with court orders, family conditions and dynamics, resources, strengths and protective capacities, child vulnerability and interventions needed.

The guiding question at reunification is: Are there safety threats to the child within the family that require external control and, if so, what controls are necessary? At reunification, it is not necessary that the threats have totally disappeared, but rather that they have been altered or reduced to a level at which control within the family is probable. A child can return to a home where threats of serious harm exist if these threats can be controlled within the family.

A Reunification Assessment is completed when reunification with the removal family is being considered and the child has been placed out of the home for 30 days or more. It is completed whether the child has been in a legally authorized out-of-home placement (including custody with relative/kin) or was placed out of the home as a result of an out-of-home safety plan. The Reunification Assessment is completed regardless of the reason the child was placed out of the home and/or the custody status. If the child has been placed out of the home for less than 30 days, the information regarding the child's reunification shall be captured in the Safety Re-Assessment section of the Family Assessment or Case Review. However, nothing prohibits the completion of a Reunification Assessment when a child has been placed out of the home less than 30 days.

If a child is in PCSA custody based upon the execution of a 30 day Agreement for Temporary Custody of a Child and there have been no extensions of this agreement, a Reunification Assessment will not be required when the child is returned. Information regarding this child's reunification shall be captured in the Safety Re-Assessment in the Family Assessment or Case Review. However, if the Agreement for Temporary Custody of a Child is extended beyond the initial 30 days, a Reunification Assessment is required.

Although a Reunification Assessment may be completed at any time the PCSA deems appropriate or the case warrants it, regardless of the number of days the child is placed out of the home, there are times at which the Reunification Assessment must be completed:

- At the Safety Re-Assessment, if the safety response is modify or discontinue and the child has been placed out of the home for more than 30 days
- Within 30 days prior to any court hearing where the agency is anticipating the child will be returned home
- When reunification for the child is being considered (outside the documented case review process)

Completion of the Reunification Assessment is not required when placement is being considered with an individual that was not the removal home. The home evaluation (relative/kin approval process) for the individual being considered as a placement option would be completed to ensure the appropriateness of placement.

INSTRUCTIONS

Section 1: Identifying Information

Enter the case name, agency case number, court number, agency, caseworker and date of the caseworker's signature.

Reunification is being considered with the following individuals:

Write the names of the individual(s) with whom reunification is being considered.

List the name and age of each child for whom reunification is being considered.

Write the name and the age of each child for whom reunification is being considered.

Section 2: Assessing Past and Present Safety

The rationale must address each response. For the questions that may apply to more than one child/adult, the caseworker will answer the question by the child/adult if the response would be different.

A. What were the original safety issues that resulted in the child(ren)'s placement?

Describe the safety threats identified on the initial safety assessment that placed the child(ren) in immediate danger of serious harm and could not be controlled by an in-home safety plan. Include an explanation of why the family's protective capacities were not sufficient for the child(ren) to remain in the home with a safety plan.

B. Have the original safety issues been altered or reduced to a sufficient level whereby control within the family is probable?

Select Yes or No.

If Yes, describe how the original safety threats identified in the initial safety assessment have been reduced or eliminated sufficiently to manage immediate threats of serious harm to the child(ren).

If No, describe whether there have been any changes, positive or negative, to the original safety issues identified on the initial safety assessment or in the family's protective capacities to control the identified safety issues.

C. Were there other safety issues identified after the child(ren) came into placement that necessitated or contributed to the continuation of the placement?

Select Yes or No

If Yes, describe new or additional safety threats that were identified in the family that have prevented reunification.

If No, further explanation is not required for this question.

D. Have the safety issues identified in Question C been resolved or reduced sufficiently whereby control within the family is probable?

Select Yes, No or N/A

If Yes, describe how the family's protective capacities have increased to a level sufficient to reduce or eliminate the new safety threats identified in Question C.

If No, describe what barriers in the family have prevented change or reduction of safety threats to a sufficient level where control within the family is likely.

If N/A, further explanation is not required for this question.

E. Are parent/guardian/custodian(s) in compliance with court orders?

Select Yes or No

If yes, describe what the court orders require and what action(s) the parent(s) is taking to comply with them.

If No, explain why parent(s) are not in compliance with court orders.

Section 3: Assessing Reunification Readiness

The rationale must address each response. For the questions that may apply to more than one child/adult, the caseworker will answer the question by the child/adult if the response would be different.

A. Does the child(ren) demonstrate an acceptance of the reunification plan?

Select Yes or No

If Yes, describe each child's verbal and/or behavioral demonstration of their acceptance to be reunified with the family.

If No, describe each child's negative response to the prospect of being reunified with the family.

B. Does the parent/guardian/custodian demonstrate an acceptance of the reunification plan?

Select Yes or No

If Yes, describe the parent(s)/guardian(s)/custodian(s) verbal and/or behavioral demonstration of his/her acceptance and ability to participate in the reunification plan, including an understanding of what they need to do to reduce or eliminate safety issues in order to keep the child(ren) safe.

If No, describe how the parent/caretaker has expressed unwillingness to have the child(ren) reunified with the family.

C. Does the parent/guardian/custodian have the capacity to provide for the child(ren)'s basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, shelter, medical care)?

Select Yes or No

If Yes, describe the resources the family will use to ensure that basic needs of the child(ren) are met; including how the family will respond if/when unforeseen expenses or circumstances arise that could threaten provision of basic needs to the child(ren).

If No, explain what issues need to be addressed by the family to meet the child(ren)'s basic needs and how the family plans to resolve them.

D. Are the parent/guardian/custodian and/or other household members willing and able to use their protective capacities, resources and strengths to provide sufficient support to the child(ren)?

Select Yes or No

If Yes, describe what protective capacities, resources and/or strengths are available to the parent/guardian/custodian, including other household members, and how they will be used to support the reunification.

If No, describe what resources or supports the family is unwilling or unable to use in support of the child(ren)'s reunification. Indicate what assistance the family needs to increase protective capacities, resources and strengths to levels that will be sufficient for the child(ren)'s reunification with the family.

E. During visits, has the parent/guardian/custodian demonstrated an ability to meet the child(ren)'s need for safety in a manner that suggests safety threats are not expected to emerge by the child(ren)'s presence within the family?

Select Yes or No

If Yes, describe the protective capacities the parent/guardian/custodian has demonstrated in support of the child(ren)'s safety needs. Describe what the parent/guardian/custodian has verbalized or demonstrated regarding whether safety concerns can be recognized and controlled by the parent/guardian/custodian when the child(ren) is/are returned to the family.

If No, explain how the parent/guardian/custodian has verbalized or demonstrated that he/she will be unable to recognize and/or control any safety issues that might emerge when the child(ren) is/are returned to the family.

F. Are there any issues or concerns related to other children or adults in the family that may impact the child(ren)'s return?

Select Yes or No

If Yes, identify the issues or concerns related to other children or adults currently in the household who were not present at the time of the initial removal and their impact upon reunification.

If No, further explanation is not required for this question. Write N/A in the rationale box.

G. Describe how the family dynamics will change when the child(ren) returns.

Describe what effects, positive and/or negative, the child(ren)'s return will have on the family's structure and dynamics; e.g., how the child(ren)'s return will impact family interactions, the family's functioning and the family's relationships with one another.

Section 4: Reunification Decision

The rationale must address each response. For the questions that may apply to more than one child/adult, the caseworker will answer the question by the child/adult if the response would be different.

A. Is reunification recommended?

Select Yes or No.

Consider the past and present safety issues, family's reunification readiness, each child's vulnerability, family and community protective capacities, family cooperation and motivation, agency monitoring capacity, past history, accessibility, resources available and court authority in relationship to unresolved safety issues.

If Yes, explain why reunification is recommended based on the above considerations.

If No, explain why reunification cannot be recommended. If No is selected, skip to Section 5).

B. Are interventions needed to support the child(ren)'s reunification?

Select Yes or No

If Yes, describe specific actions which will be put in place to ensure safety and support for each child who is reunified with the family.

If No, explain why no interventions are required.

A case plan amendment must be completed to reflect a child's reunification. If the interventions stated above are not already identified in the case plan, the amendment must also reflect these additional services.

Section 5: Signatures

Worker and supervisor sign and date the reunification assessment where indicated.

Comments

Supervisor provides comments where indicated.