

1304: CHILD SAFETY PLANS

In circumstances where a Child Welfare Specialist substantiates neglect or abuse following an investigation, DHS may implement a “safety plan” for the child. The safety plan is developed and implemented in agreement with the family without court intervention and addresses actions to be taken to control any identified safety threat. With the family's permission, supportive persons, such as neighbors, friends, volunteers, extended family members, tribal representatives, and other culturally relevant supports may be involved in the safety planning process. Safety plans may result in the child staying with a person or persons other than the person legally responsible for the child (i.e. biological/adoptive/legal parent) on a short-term basis.

Infants and toddlers in a safety plan are not in DHS custody and the biological/adoptive/legal parent retains all parental rights. When SoonerStart receives a referral from DHS for a child whose family is participating in a safety plan, the biological/adoptive/legal parent should be the person to sign all consents for evaluations and services including the IFSP and any releases of information. The biological/adoptive/legal parent must sign a release of information for the assigned safety plan caregiver to participate in and/or receive other information regarding SoonerStart services. The biological/adoptive/legal parent should also sign a release of information for the assigned DHS case worker to receive information if DHS has not provided a **Request for Non-Directory Educational Records release form (DHS Form 04MP070E) Appendix MM.**

Upon receipt of the referral of a child identified to be participating in a safety plan, the Resource Coordinator will contact the person with whom the child is living to explain the SoonerStart process and arrange for a screening or eligibility evaluation. The RC should inform the current caregiver that written consent is required from the biological/adoptive/legal parent and that he/she will need to be present at the scheduled appointment. The Resource Coordinator will also contact the biological/adoptive/legal parent(s) to explain the SoonerStart process and the need for their written consent and attendance at the scheduled appointment and any subsequent appointments. In the event that the biological/adoptive/legal parent cannot be located after two attempts, the current caregiver of the child may be presumed to be the “parent” based on the definition of parent in the IDEA Part C regulations (“person with whom the child lives..”).

If either the safety plan caregiver or the biological/adoptive/legal parent’s contact information is not available on the DHS written referral, the RC should contact the Child Welfare specialist for the additional information before the referral is taken.