

Characteristics of a Safe Environment

An absence of or control of threats of severe harm - a safe environment does not contain active threats to child safety. If any threats do exist, they are being effectively managed and controlled by the caregiver. This control should be easily observable and sufficient time should have elapsed to conclude this status is absolutely confirmed.

Presence of caregiver protective capacities - a safe environment exists because those caregivers with the assigned task of providing a safe home are assuring that protection is occurring, available, and ongoing. Caregiver protective capacities must be confirmed at case closure as observable, functioning, and effective.

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A safe home is experienced as a refuge - A safe environment as a refuge for a child is the first and most obvious place a child thinks of and goes to be safe. Confirming a home as a refuge requires sufficient time where continual protective care can be confirmed and observed by the caseworker.

Perceived and felt security - a safe environment is perceived and felt by a child as a place of security. This translates into how they view and feel about their protectors, their parents, or caregivers.

Confidence in consistency - a child needs to be able to count on a home remaining safe. For a case to be closed, the caseworker needs to have decided that there is a likelihood that the changes that have occurred will likely remain.