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The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program

204: Assessing Safety in Out-of-Home Care Updates

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Ground Rules

- Be on time
- Training schedule: 9 – 12
- Document your presence - sign-in sheet
- Provide constructive/motivational feedback
- Be respectful
- Take risks
- Practice makes permanent
- Ask questions
- Focus on learning - no cell phones/text messaging

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Name Tents

County	Name	Unit/ Department
Length of time in current position		Present Danger Assessment / Alert to Affiliated Counties

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Learning Objective

- Participants will be able to:
 - Describe changes to the Out-of-Home Care Safety Assessment and Management Process since April 2011.

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Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Out-of-Home Care Definitions
- Present Danger
- Interval Policy
- Communicating Safety Concerns
- Workshop Closure and Evaluations

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Definitions



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Caregiver of Origin

- The adult(s) who holds the primary responsibility for the child's care and safety.
- A person who operates in the capacity of a child's birth parents.
- Resides with the child.
- Does NOT include people who care for a child temporarily.

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Informal Care

- Child is not in the custody of County Children and Youth Agency.
- Child goes to live with an alternate caregiver temporarily.
- Arrangement made by the parents or agreed upon by the parents and County Children and Youth Agency.

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Informal Care Considerations

- Are there dependency issues that necessitate the filing of a dependency petition?
- Does the informal living arrangement caregiver(s) wish to be approved as a resource family?
- Considering the definition of "informal care", is the intent that the informal living arrangement becomes a permanent arrangement? If so, is the caregiver(s) now considered the "caregiver(s) of origin"?

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Informal Care Considerations, cont'd

- Are there sufficient supports for the informal living arrangement caregiver to maintain the placement on a longer basis (e.g. childcare, financial support, etc.)?
- Does the informal living arrangement caregiver(s) have the legal authority to make medical and educational decisions regarding the child?

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Action Planning:

- Take a moment to identify:
 - Something new I learned was...
 - I will incorporate this new knowledge into practice by...

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Present Danger Defined

- An immediate, significant, and clearly observable family condition (severe harm or threat of severe harm) occurring to a child/youth in the present tense, endangering or threatening to endanger a child and therefore requiring prompt response.

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Safety Responsibility Standard

- In no instance should a child be placed in or remain in an informal or formal placement setting if Present Danger is apparent and cannot be immediately addressed.

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PRESENT DANGER: DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

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Documenting Present Danger Assessments

- Key transition points for children in out-of-home care:
 - At the time of the initial placement and
 - At the time of any subsequent placement changes.

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County Policies Surrounding Present Danger Assessments:

- State provided Present Danger Assessment Worksheet (or comparable tool) **OR** structured case note
- The county worker, a qualified worker, or the private provider worker is required to conduct and document a Present Danger Assessment at the key points.
- Counties should establish policy surrounding completion of the Present Danger Assessments.

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Interval Updates

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Out-of-Home Care Safety Assessment Intervals

- The Out-of-Home Care Safety Assessment Worksheet must be completed at the following intervals:
 - Within 60 days, or 2 months, from the date of placement in the current setting.
 - Within 180 days, or 6 months, from the previously completed worksheet.
 - Within 72 hours upon the identification of evidence, circumstances, or information that suggests a negative change in the safety indicators yet the child remains in the home.

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Old Interval #3

- Within 72 hours upon the identification of evidence, circumstance, or new information that suggests a change in the child's safety. This includes:
 - New adult household members who are in the home longer than 30 days within the calendar year. Note: young adults who are already family members but are returning home from college would not be included in this interval.
 - Whenever there is a significant loss/change in the household that may impact child safety e.g. separation, divorce, serious illness, death, etc.

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Old Interval #3, cont'd

- Information is received from another county that may impact a child's safety.
- In conjunction with a Regional Office investigation:
 - If the child remains in the home throughout the time of the investigation.
 - If the child is returned to the home following an investigation.

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**Concerns about
Other Children in
the Home**

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**Characteristics of Safety and a Safe
Environment**

- An absence of or control of threats of severe harm.
- Presence of caregiver protective capacities.
- A safe home is experienced as a refuge.
- Perceived and felt security.
- Confidence in consistency.

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Information Explored to Identify Characteristics of Safety and a Safe Environment

- How the children are behaving in the home.
- How caregivers are performing.
- How the family is operating.
- The caregiver's capacity to sustain continued safety.
- How community connections sustain continued safety.

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Considerations for County Alert Process Policy

- The agency policy should include:
 - Who will be notified?
 - Who will be responsible for notification?
 - What will be communicated?
 - How will notification take place (verbal, written, etc.)
 - How will the notification be documented?
 - Where will notification be documented?
 - Where will records be maintained?
 - What timeframes will be associated with notification?

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Outstanding Questions...
REVIEW OF ACTION PLAN

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WRAP-UP AND EVALUATIONS

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