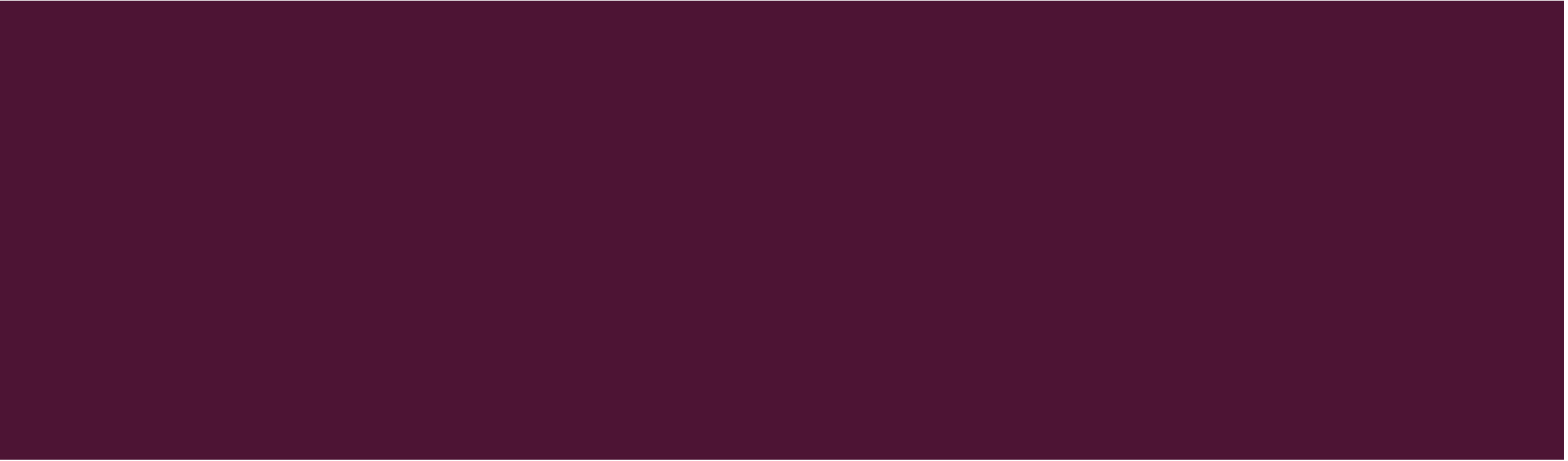

CHILD WELFARE 101:

THE BASICS ABOUT CPS AND PERMANENCY PLANNING



THE PURPOSE OF CPS

- Prevent, Identify & Treat Child Abuse and Neglect
- Assess Safety
- Ensure Safety of the child
- Assess family strengths and needs
- Provide services to eliminate the conditions or behaviors that attributed to safety risks or safety threats to the child

DEFINITIONS

Alleged Victim

- The child who has allegedly been abused or neglected

Sibling

- The child who is the brother or sister to the alleged victim

PRFC

- A Child's parent, legal guardian, custodian, foster parent, or a person 18 years of age or older who resides in the home with the child

Alleged Perpetrator

- The adult who allegedly abused or neglected the child

Third Party Perpetrator

- Someone other than the PRFC, who committed child abuse or neglect

Collateral

- A person who is not a PRFC and who has pertinent knowledge about the family's functioning or information about the child abuse or neglect

THE CPS HOTLINE PROCESS

The Call

- Someone makes a child abuse or neglect report to the hotline at 800.522.3511
- The hotline gathers sufficient information pertaining to the household demographics, family's functioning, and the child abuse and neglect

The Assessment

- Determine if the allegations meet the definition of child abuse or neglect to be assigned as investigation or screened out as a report only
- Determines response time based on the child's vulnerability, child welfare history of the family, severity of allegations, victim's location/perpetrator access
- Determines type of investigation (in-home, foster home, or child care center/home)

The Disposition

- Priority One: The report indicates the child is in present danger and/or at risk of serious harm or injury and requires a SAME day response
- Priority Two: The response time can be 2 to 5 days and is established based on the vulnerability and risk of harm to the child

The Response

- CPS makes contact with the family in the timeframe given by the Hotline
- Assesses safety for the child

TYPES OF ALLEGATIONS

- Threat of Harm
- Failure to Protect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Death
- Near Death

ORDER OF INTERVIEWS

Alleged
Victim(s)

Sibling(s)

PRFC-Non
Offending

PRFC-
Alleged Perp

Collaterals
(must include
Reporter)

CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

- Face to Face in the child's home or neutral setting if deemed necessary for safety
- Developmental level should be assessed
- Address all allegations and current safety
- Cover all AOCS information regardless of allegations
- Body Observation per policy
- Medical exams when determining abuse/neglect
- Family interaction observations

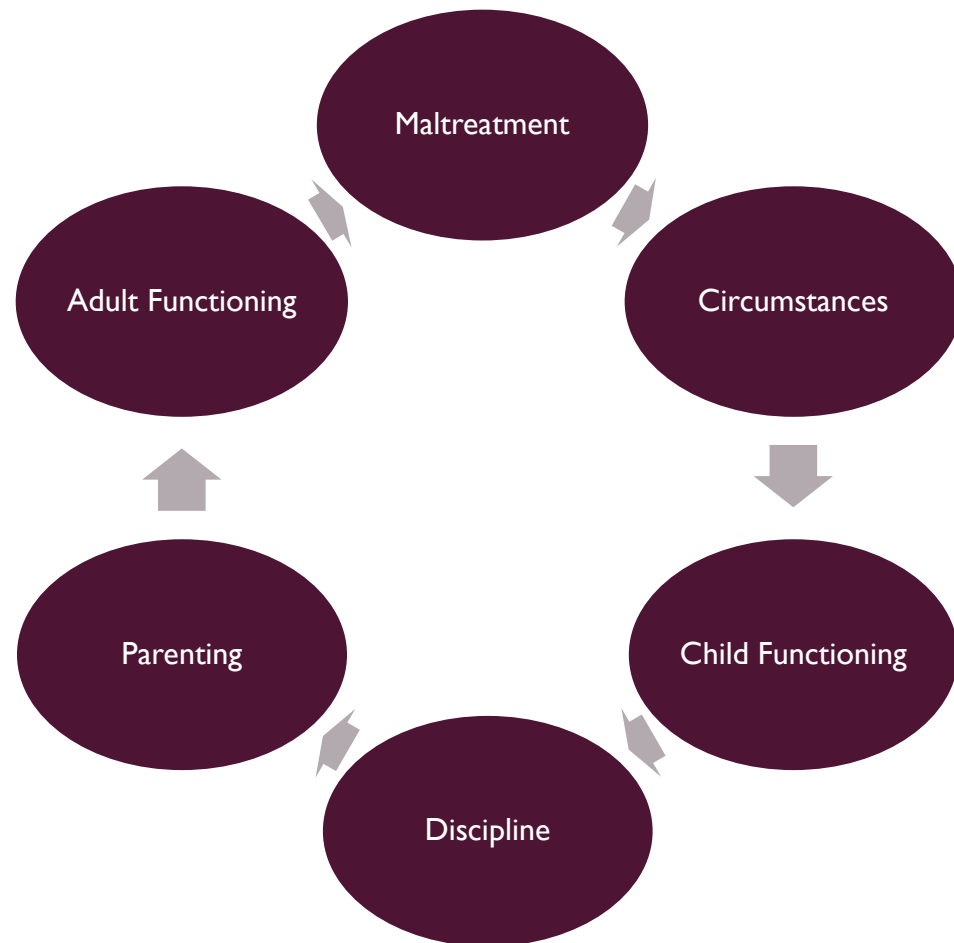
HOME VISIT

- Unannounced
- Observe the home's physical setting and state
- Observe physical appearance of child, including hygiene, affect, and injuries
- Observe/document sleeping arrangements for all children
- Discuss co-sleeping with every PRFC for children 12 months of age and younger regardless if they deny co-sleeping.

ASSESSMENT OF CHILD SAFETY (AOCS)

- Safety evaluation is an on-going process that begins at the centralized hotline and continues all the way through to case closure
- Program designation does not dictate whether or not you are assessing safety. Safety is everyone's primary function
- Information contained is to support the safety decision
- Information must be sufficient to support safety decision and determine protective capacities
- Used to review the family's situation

WHAT INFORMATION IS GATHERED IN THE AOCS?



APPLYING THE SAFETY THRESHOLD

- ❖ Severe
- ❖ Out of Control
- ❖ Observable
- ❖ Vulnerable
- ❖ Imminent

WHAT IS A FINDING?

- Substantiated
- Unsubstantiated
- Ruled Out
- Unable to Locate
- Failure to Cooperate



WHAT IS A CHILD SAFETY MEETING?

- A meeting to determine where a child will be safe in the least intrusive and restrictive placement
- Involves the family, their supports, and child welfare
- Led by a trained Facilitator, who is not the caseworker, to guide the process and conversation
- Empowers the families to help themselves
- Ensures the family is part of the TEAM



TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS



Family Centered Services (FCS)

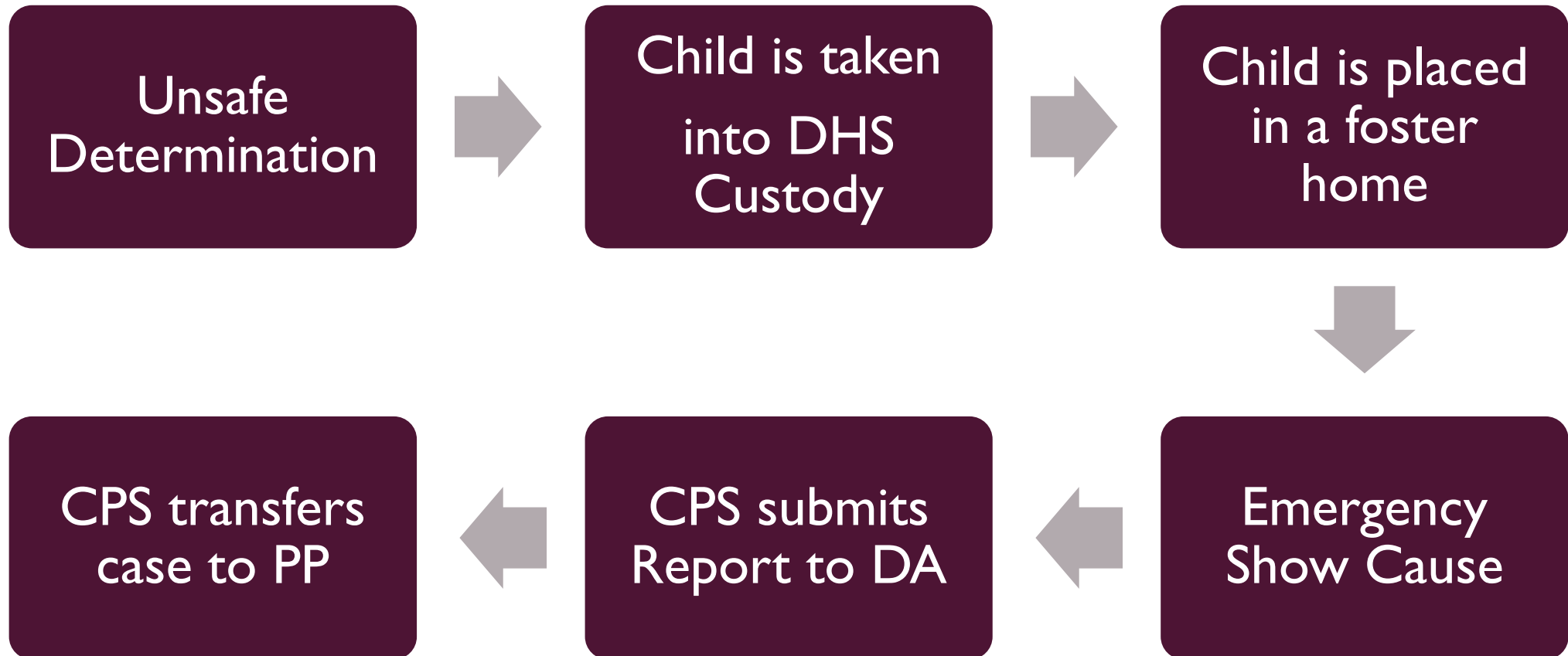


Court Supervision



Permanency Planning

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?



PERMANENCY PLANNING

- The purpose of permanency planning is to develop an appropriate plan addressing the child's immediate and long-term needs for **safety, permanency, and well-being**. It begins **immediately** upon establishing contact with a family and continues until the child is safely returned to the home or other safe, permanent placement is finalized.



WHAT IS PERMANENCY?

What is it NOT?

- NOT just a physical place or placement
- NOT just a legal outcome

Permanency Defined

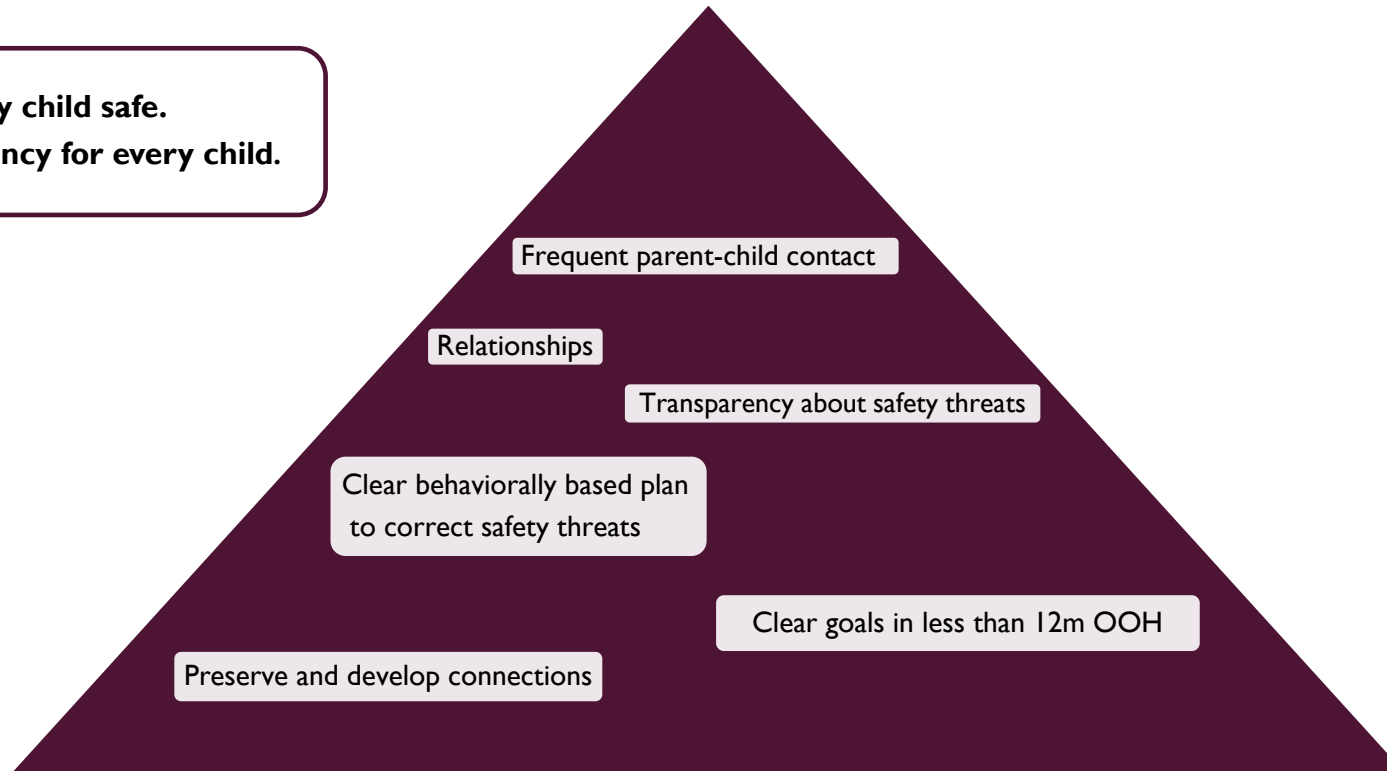
- At least one adult in parenting type relationship
- Mutual understanding relationship is intended to last forever
- Unconditional commitment by adult(s)
- Identifying belongingness – “MY son”, “MY grandmother”
- Known & understood by people in your world

Case Plan Goals

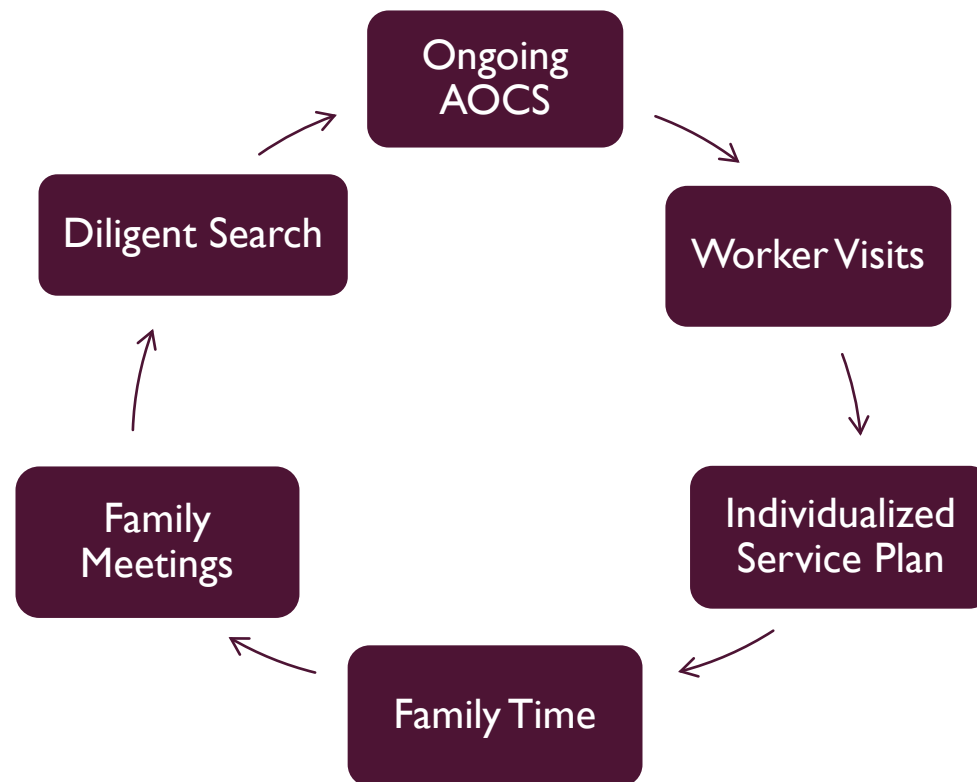
- Return to Own Home
- Guardianship
- Adoption
- Planned Alternative Permanent Placement

FOUNDATION FOR PERMANENCY SUCCESS

Goal 1: Keep every child safe.
Goal 2: Achieve permanency for every child.



PERMANENCY PLANNING TOOLS & PROCESSES



PERMANENCY PLANNING TOOLS & PROCESSES

- **Ongoing AOCS**

- Completed within 60 days of removal & prior to reducing Family Time restrictions, beginning Trial Reunification, and case closure into reunification
- Includes direct observations, reports from professional service providers, input from collaterals, etc.

- **Worker Visits**

- Required monthly minimum with parents and children

- **Diligent Search**

- Ongoing process of identifying and contacting kinship connections

FAMILY MEETING CONTINUUM

The Family Meeting Continuum is designed to ensure children and families are involved in making decisions about their lives. Each meeting is facilitated by a trained specialist who will remain with the family throughout their involvement with Child Welfare Services (CWS).

- Early, frequent, and quality engagement is vital to promoting safety, permanency, and well-being.
- Designed to ensure children and families are involved in making decisions about their lives.
- Provides consistency in caseworker.

Previous Process	Current Process
• Held every 6 months • Lacked formal and consistent facilitators	• Held every 60 days for first 12 months, then every 90 days • Specially trained facilitators assigned to cases

FAMILY TIME

Essential for Child's Well-Being

- Maintains parent-child attachment
- Reduces sense of abandonment
- Preserves sense of belonging

Fundamental to Permanency

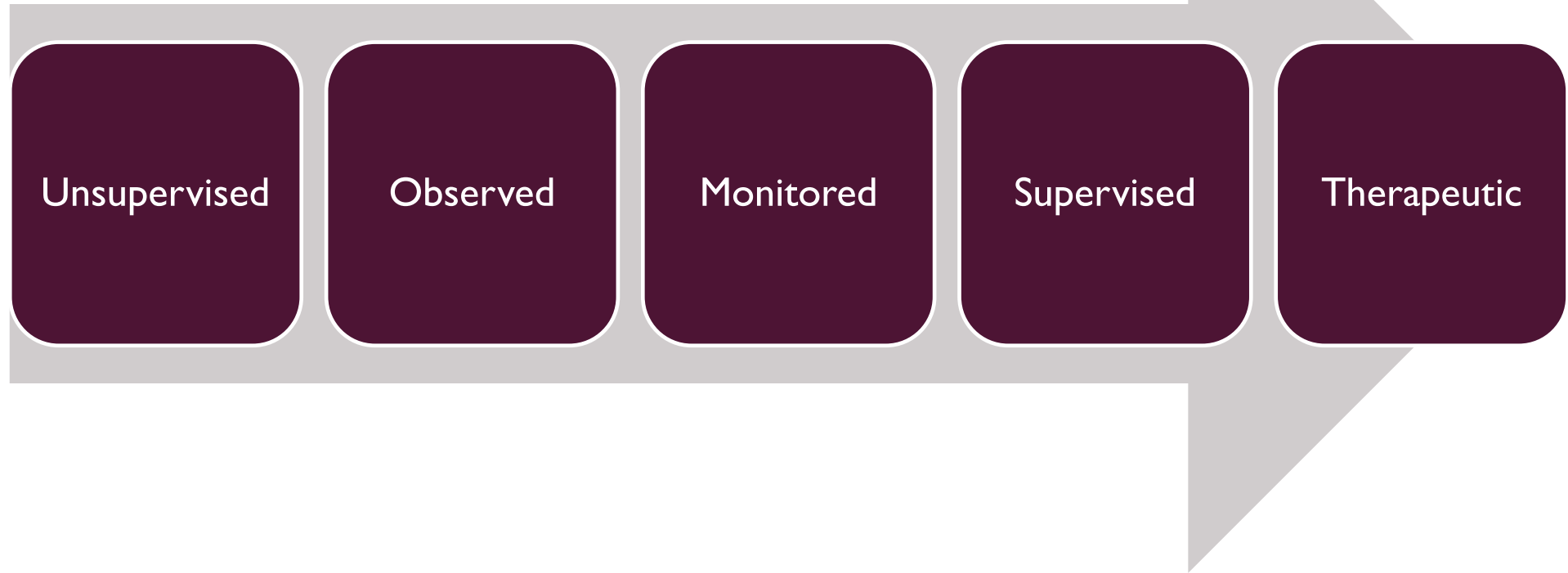
- Promotes timely reunification
- Assists in decision-making process to consider alternate permanency plans

Maintains Family Connections

- Supports maintenance of family & medical history, cultural significance, etc.
- Regardless of outcome, connections retain significant importance

FAMILY TIME

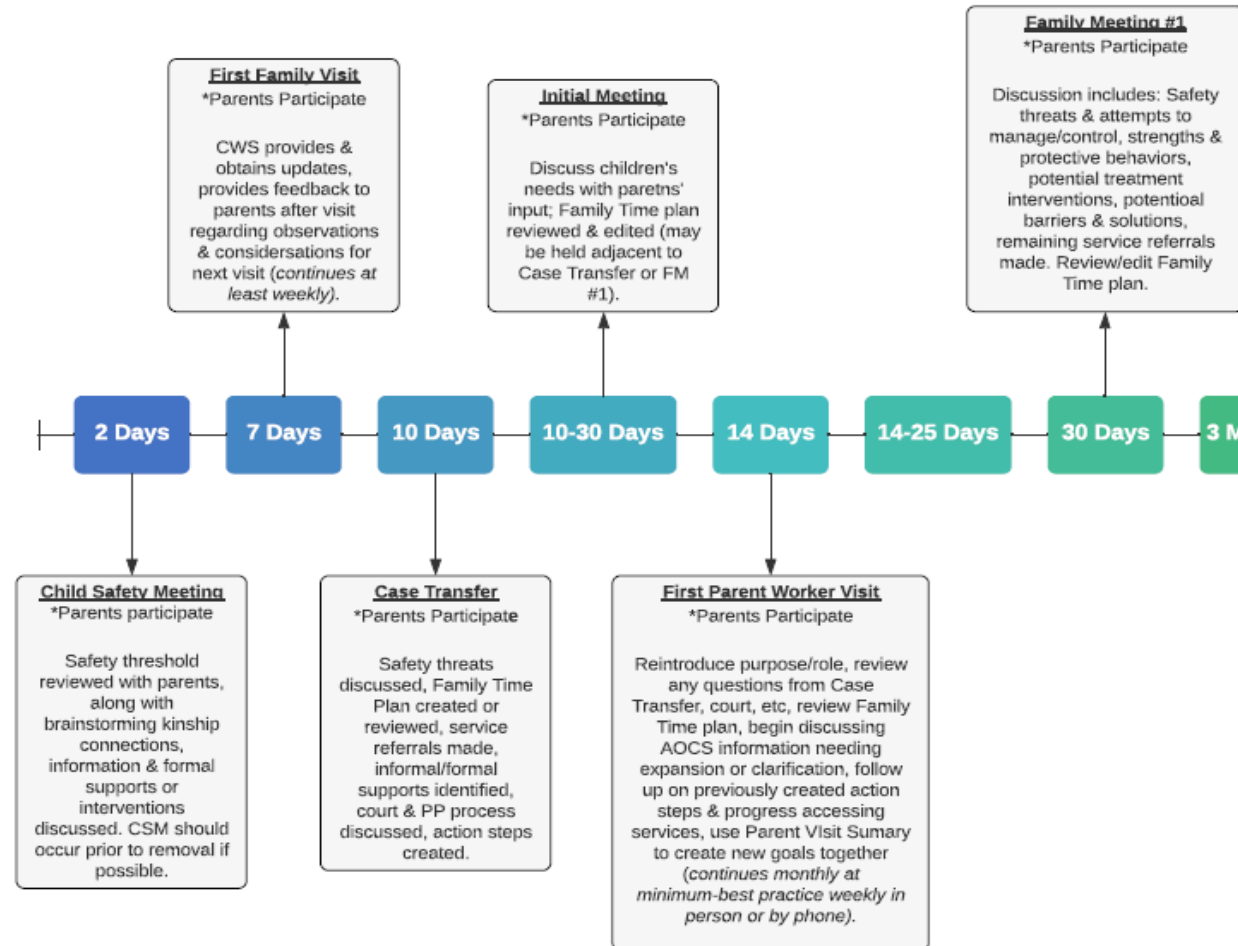
Presumption of unsupervised as the starting point, more restrictive levels of supervision must be supported by identifying specific safety threat.



FAMILY TIME – LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

	Unsupervised	Monitored	Observed	Supervised	Therapeutic
	Parent(s) can be alone with child. No monitor is present during family time. <i>Example: Day and Overnight family time; family time at the kinship placement</i>	Family time where the monitor may be present for a portion of family time. Parent(s) would have some time alone with their child. <i>Example: Family time at the park or the parents' home where the specialist or monitor may supervise the family time for 15 minutes then leave the child with the parent(s) for 30 minutes and then return to observe the last 15 minutes.</i>	Family time where the monitor is close enough to observe family time but is not required to hear everything said between the parent(s) and child. Parent(s) may have some time alone with their child if the monitor ensures certain conditions are satisfied. <i>Example: Parent(s) can take the child to the bathroom alone. Parent(s) can play with the child at the playground while the monitor observes from a distance.</i>	Child may not be removed from the presence of the monitor. Parent(s) cannot be alone with their child. <i>Example: Parent(s) must be within hearing distance and intervention distance of the monitor and cannot be alone with the child under any circumstance.</i>	Family time in the presence of a mental health professional. Parent(s) cannot be alone with their child. <i>Example: Parent(s) must be in the presence of a professional and all aspects of their time together are determined by the professional.</i>
Safety Assessment	Unsupervised family time would be used when the specialist determines no safety concerns exist that prohibit the parent(s) and child from being alone during family time. This stage may be used while the child is in care and immediately prior to reunification.	Monitored family time would primarily be used when the specialist determines that there is a low level of concern for the child's safety but parent(s) still need parental education, coaching, and skill-building.	Observed family time would be used when the specialist determines there is a moderate level of concern for the child's safety and coaching, education, and skill-building are necessary. Family time assessment determines safety factors that must be addressed in family time plan.	Supervised family time would most likely be used if there is a high level of concern assessed for the child's physical or emotional safety during family time.	Therapeutic family time would be highly structured used when it is necessary to work with the child and parent(s) to process fears, doubts, trauma, or lack of relationship.
Family Time Location	Parent(s) and specialist determine family time location.	Family time location is a community based or "home-like" setting and offers parent(s) the opportunity to develop parenting skills or improve parent-child interactions. Family time may occur in more than one place, including appointments with therapists or other professionals, and continue at the parent(s) home, relative's home, or other community setting.	Family time location is a home-like setting to offer parent(s) the opportunity to develop parenting skills and improve parent-child interactions, as well as manage safety concerns. Locations may include parent(s) home, relative's home, professional's office, park or other community settings.	Family time location would ensure highly structured family time. Locations may include the CW family time room, professional's office or other secure location.	Family time location would allow for structured and therapeutic time together. Location would be a mental health professional's office or other location determined appropriate by the professional.
Monitor's Role	No monitor. Parent(s) provides feedback about family time.	Monitor's role is primarily to aid the parent(s) in problem solving if issues arise. The monitor may also offer the parent(s) education, coaching, skills building and support to achieve permanency goals. Monitor may drop in during family time to ensure family time is going well and that the parent(s) or child does not have any concerns.	Monitor's role is to observe interactions between the parent(s) and child; ensure that the child is safe; and offer the parent(s) education, coaching, and skill-building. Monitor and parent(s) would know the conditions required to maintain safe family time and under what conditions the monitor may intervene.	Monitor's role is to listen to and closely observe all interactions between the parent(s) and child and intervene if needed. Parental coaching could be offered, but the primary concern would be child's safety. Monitor and parent(s) would know the conditions required to maintain safe family time.	Monitor's role is to work with the child, parent, and family to provide guidance for transition into a healthy relationship through specialized services and techniques. Monitor and parent would know the conditions required to maintain safe family time and build relationship.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICE PLANS

Purpose – create steps to correct all underlying causes and safety threats identified in the AOCS

- Developed WITH the family
- Safety focused, not quality of life issues
- Success is based on behavior changes, not on compliance or completion of services.
- Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant, Time Specific

IDENTIFYING SERVICES & INTERVENTIONS

- Contracted service providers reduce financial burden
- Cultural considerations
- Ongoing training and education to support specific subject knowledge
- Internal experts
 - Mental Health Consultants, CWS Program Staff, Child Welfare Nurses, local service array etc.



COURT PROCESS

Emergency Custody

- Parents are informed of allegations in petition.
- Judge decides if sufficient information exists to keep child out of home
- CPS or FCS present

Adjudication

- Held within 90 days if District Attorney has filed petition alleging child is deprived.
- Parents have opportunity to agree or disagree to allegations.
- PP present, sometimes CPS or FCS

Disposition

- Recommended ISP is presented and ordered.
- Changes may be requested by court personnel to be ordered by judge.
- Can be held at same time as Adjudication

Review

- Typically held every 90 days to review progress towards achieving permanency plan.
- DHS makes recommendations as to custody, Trial Reunification, Termination of Parental Rights, Family Time, etc.
- DHS provides justification for recommendations through written report and verbal presentation of information

REUNIFICATION

- Goal is to reunify within 12 months
- Recommended when parents' behaviors & circumstances that made child unsafe are corrected or managed through a Safety Plan
- Family Time has successfully increased in length and frequency
- Court MUST give permission to reunify

TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

- DHS recommends TPR when RTOH no longer feasible due to continued unsafe behaviors despite efforts to support parents' changes; and/or when circumstances outlined in statute exist
- Parent engagement continues at same level.
- Petition for TPR filed by District Attorney or child's attorney
- Parent has a choice between a jury trial or bench trial (judge only).

GUARDIANSHIP

Why Guardianship?

- In family and child's best interest or preference
- Barriers exist to both Reunification and TPR
- Financial stipend is the same as Foster Care stipend (for funded guardianships)
- Title IV-E guardianships are funded and custody reverts to DHS if dissolved

Process

- DHS/CW recommends Guardianship as Case Plan Goal
- Internal CW Programs approval process (for funded guardianships)
- Child's attorney prepares and files legal documents
- Typically requires parents' agreement

PRACTICE STANDARDS

- ❖ We continually examine our use (misuse) of power, use of self, and personal biases.
- ❖ We respect and honor the families we serve.
- ❖ We listen to the voice of children.
- ❖ We continuously seek to learn who families are and what they need.
- ❖ We believe in the value of “nothing about us without us”.
- ❖ We maintain a child’s permanent connection to kin, culture, and community.
- ❖ We conduct our work and integrity at all levels of the agency.