

# Welcome to the Dad Allies Provider Learning Series

Insights Into the DCYF Dependency Process and  
How Fathers Can Navigate the System

Part 2: The Screening Process at Intake and  
How Safety is Assessed

September 28, 2023

Washington  
Fatherhood  
Council



# Fathers and Parenting

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We  
know  
that:

Child and family well-being improve when fathers are positively engaged in their children's lives.

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Fathers play a unique and important role in children's development.

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Fathers should have support and resources to become the fathers they aspire to be.

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Washington  
Fatherhood  
Council

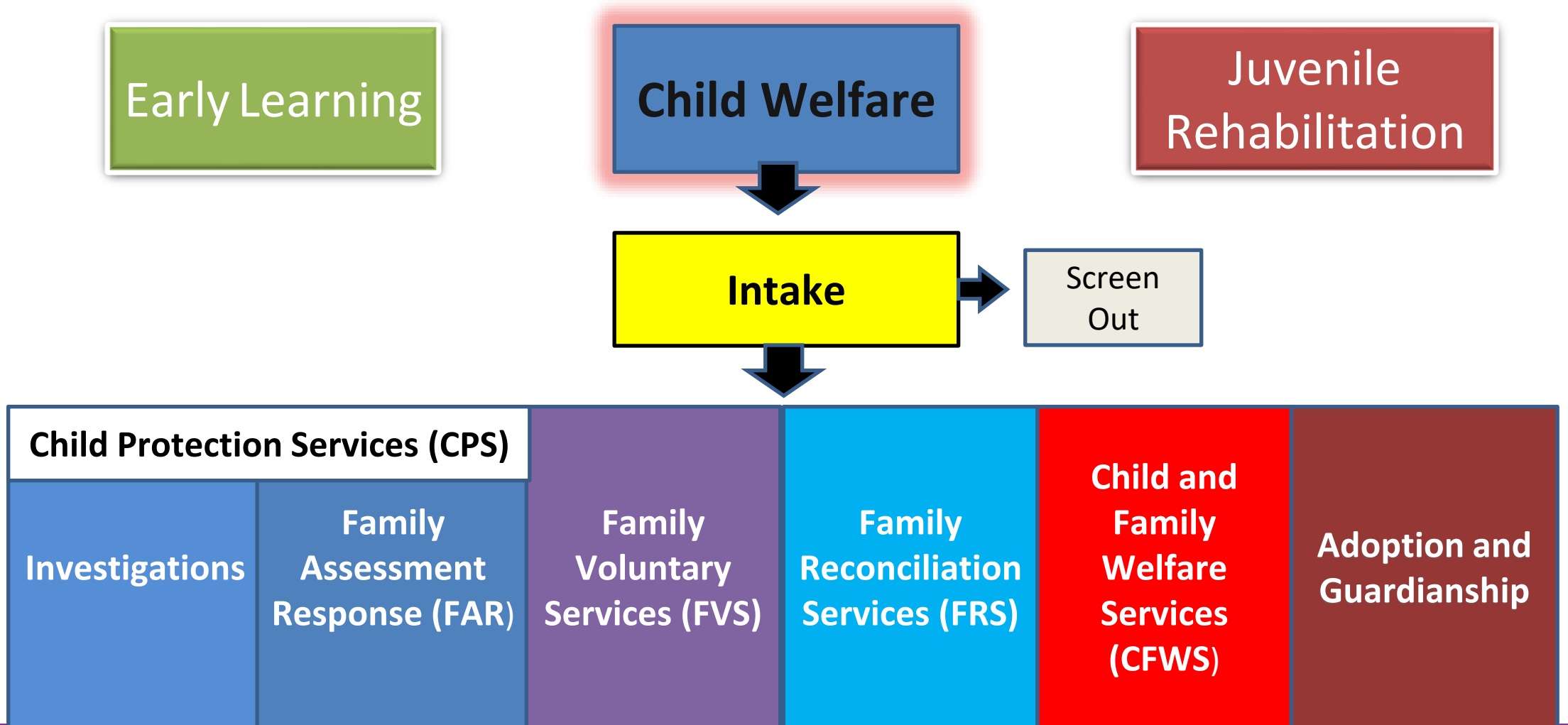


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Intake, Child Protective Services(CPS) (Investigation and FAR), Family Voluntary Services (FVS) and Family Reconciliation Services(FRS)



# Structure of DCYF



# All Cases Start at Intake



Step 1. Calling in the intake.



Step 2. Verifying if allegations meet WAC



Step 3. If the intake screens in a decision is made regarding what program it will be assigned to based on a set criteria.



# CPS PATHWAYS

## INVESTIGATIONS

- 24 (emergent) and 72 hour responses
- All sexual abuse and exploitation
- High risk physical abuse + children 3 and younger
- Emergent neglect
- Subjects identified and findings completed
- Children may be interviewed before notifying parents
- Does not carry cases through service delivery- typically closes or transfers to FVS within 60-90 days

## FAR

- 72 hour response
- Low risk physical abuse over the age of 3 and above.
- Non-Emergent neglect
- No subjects identified and no findings completed
- Voluntary- families can choose FAR or an Investigation
- Request parent permission to interview children
- Children may be interviewed with their parents present (Exception safety and DV cases)
- Closes by the 45<sup>th</sup> day unless there is permission by the parent to leave open until the 120<sup>th</sup> day.
- May be left open beyond the assessment period for service delivery

CPS  
pathways are  
more the  
same than  
different

Focuses and  
Assesses Child  
Safety using a  
Safety Framework  
tool \*\*\*

Assesses Risk using  
Structured  
Decision-making  
tool.

Gathers  
information by  
interviewing  
children, parents,  
collateral contact  
and collecting  
records

Can offer services  
if needed (FAR for  
up to 120 days or  
Investigations  
transfers to FVS)

# Voluntary Programs

## **Family Voluntary Services-Case Plans and Offer Services to prevent removal or return home for children on Voluntary Placement Agreements**

- Primarily transfers from Investigation on high-risk cases or cases that have safety threats.
- Occasionally families call and ask for services
- Continues to Assess Safety
- Develops a case plan with the family and provides services







# Voluntary Programs



## **Family Reconciliation Services-Request for Services due to Conflict in the Home Ages 12-17**

- Primarily starts with a family requesting services
- Occasionally transfers from CPS (Investigations or FAR)
- Completes global assessment of the family to assess if/what services are needed

# What can you do?

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- It's helpful if you are an established parent-get paternity before we are involved.
- If you don't know who the caseworker call the local office and ask.
- Don't assume bad intent. We want the truth and to keep families together if at all possible.
- Meet with the caseworker ASAP and be open with them.
- Be willing to complete services if you need help with something and ask for what you need. None of us can do this alone.
- If you don't understand something ask again until you do.
- Focus on your child's needs.
- Don't give up. Remember you are as important to your child as the mother.



# DCYF Safety Framework



# Learning Objectives for this presentation

- Become familiar with **terminology** and definitions used throughout the DCYF safety framework.
- Understand the **purpose** of each step within the safety framework
- Learn the history as to why the safety framework was developed, what other safety assessment frameworks are used in WA state and how it has evolved within the larger work in child welfare



# What is the purpose of having a Child Safety Framework?



- Informs and guides child safety decisions throughout the life of a case
- Provides precise language and clear definitions
- Strengthens child safety assessment and planning
- Will guide appropriate placement decisions using critical thinking and standardized tools to reduce bias.



# Child Safety Framework is continuous & fluid

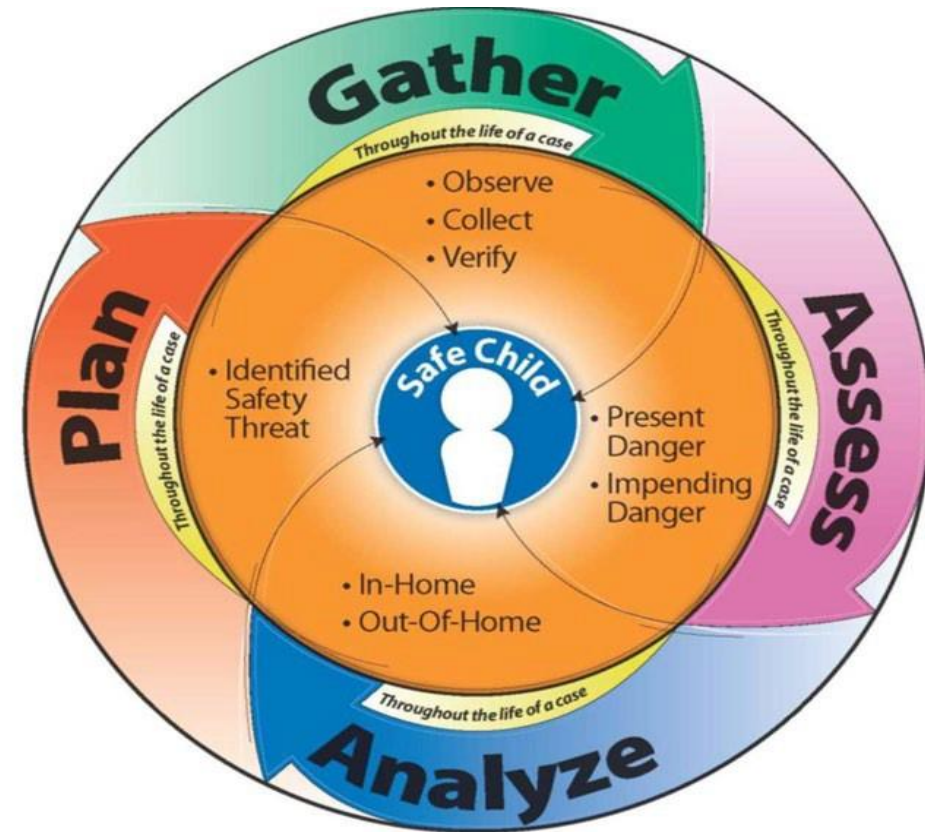
This graphic provides a high level overview of how professionals in all program area continually assess safety throughout the life of a case.

**G**ather

**A**ssess

**A**nalyze

**P**lan

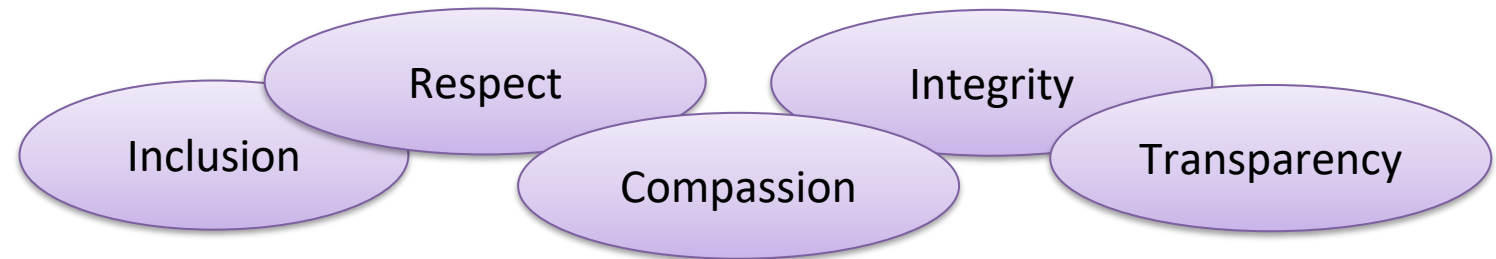


# Strengthening Child Safety Practice



Child safety is DCYF's first priority and must be assessed continuously throughout the life of a case

Discussions about safety can be hard. DCYF is committed to a standardized framework to reduce bias and increase critical thinking while honoring agency values.



# Child Safety

Children are **SAFE** when there are no *present* danger or *impending* danger threats *OR* the caregiver's protective capacities control all known safety threats

Children are **UNSAFE** when they are vulnerable to present or impending danger *AND* caregivers are unable or unwilling to provide protection







# RISK *of* Maltreatment

The likelihood (chance, potential, prospect) for parenting behavior that is harmful and destructive to a child's cognitive, social, emotional and/or physical development and those with parenting responsibility are unwilling or unable to behave differently.



# Risk Factors and Safety Issues



- **Risk Factor**: A situation that can be linked with a harmful result over time.
- **Safety Issue**: A situation that is linked with a major harmful result in the near future.



# Present Danger

Present danger is *immediate, significant,* and clearly observable *severe harm* or *threat of severe harm* occurring in the present

Present Danger is assessed at every contact DCYF has with a child.



# Present Danger



- ✓ Immediate and significant
- ✓ Clearly observable
- ✓ Occurring in the present
- ✓ Child **MUST** be protected from the present danger
- ✓ Child may or may not need ongoing protection – Assess for **Impending Danger**



# Impending Danger

Parenting **behavior** that is harmful and destructive to a child's cognitive, social, emotional or physical development *that is likely to occur in the immediate or near future* that **could result in** one or more of the following outcomes:

- ✘ Serious or severe harm
- ✘ Injury requiring medical attention
- ✘ Life endangering illness
- ✘ Death



# Present Danger

Present Danger threats are controlled by immediate protective actions

Protective Action Plans are limited in scope and time; we do not have all the information but we cannot walk away without taking action

# Impending Danger

Impending Danger threats are controlled by safety plans

Safety plans are developed with families and other child safety supports

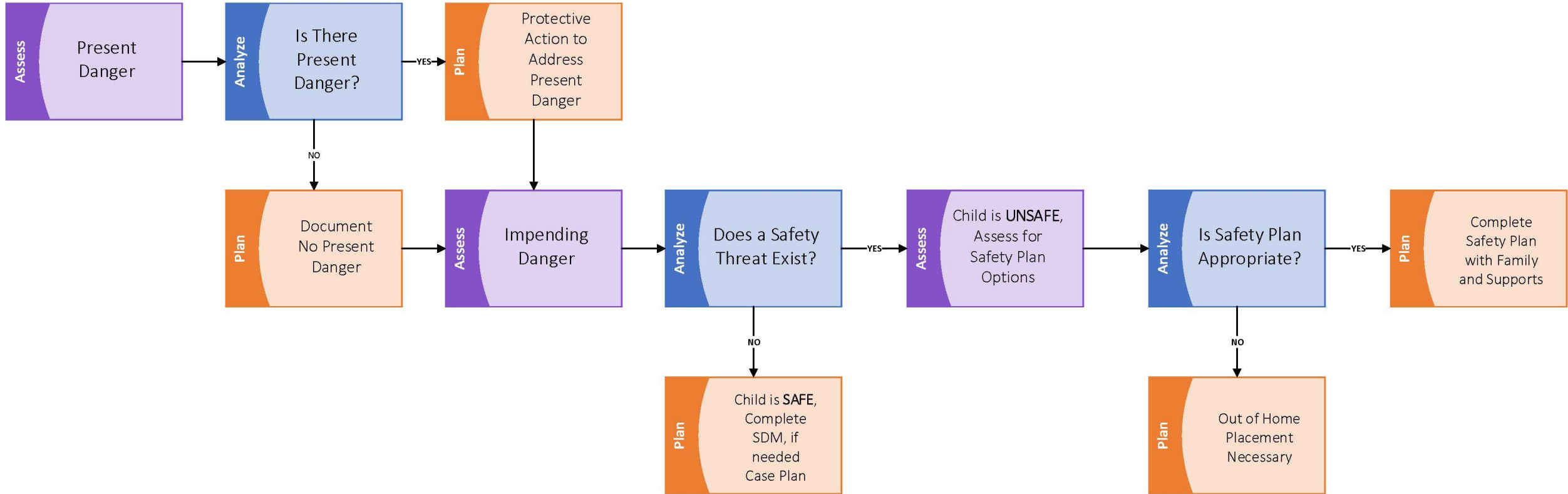


# Protective Capacities



**Behavioral, cognitive and emotional** characteristics that can *specifically and directly* be associated with a **person's ability** and **willingness** to care and keep a child safe.







## Task

Gathering Information (6)

Identification of Safety Threat (17)

Identification of Threshold Criteria (5)

Safety Plan Analysis (4)

## Purpose

Comprehensive information required to complete a global assessment, identify impending danger and develop quality plans

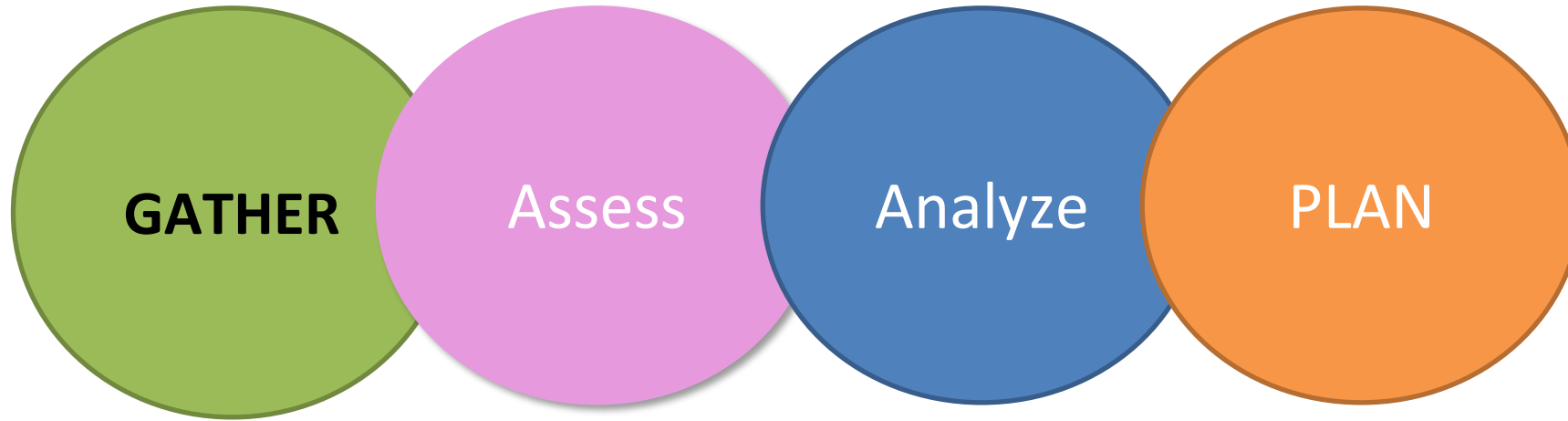
To identify the domain of concern which will help support specific catered plans to mitigate the threat to safety

To identify if a child is UNSAFE and is in impending danger

To assess information gathered to determine if an unsafe child is able to remain in the home with a safety plan



# Child Safety Framework



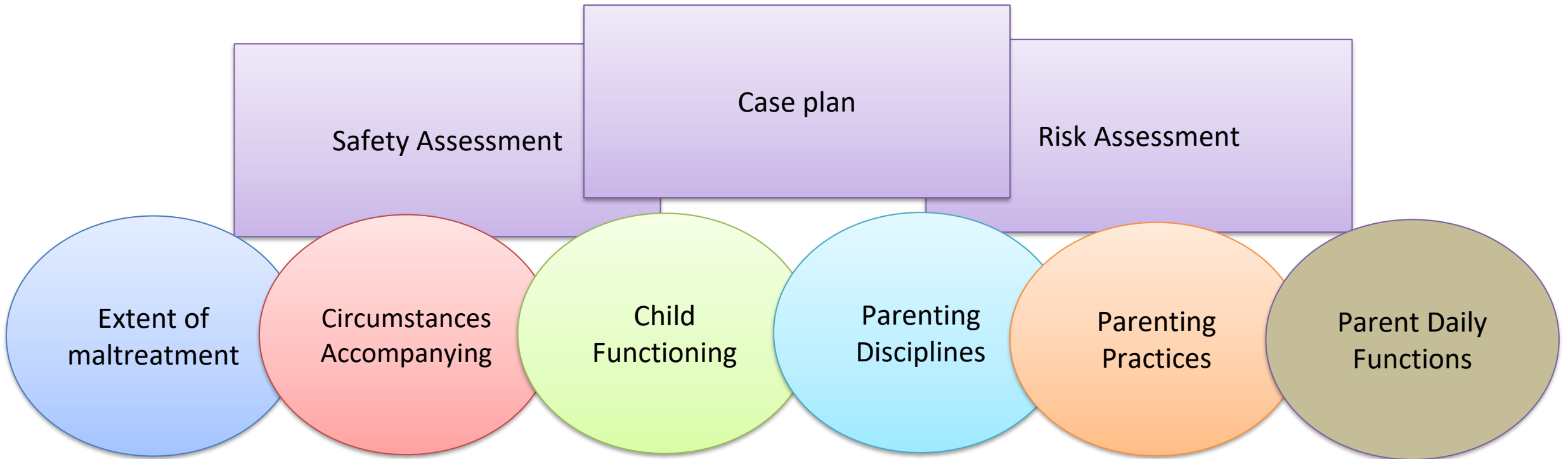
# Gathering Information

The Child Safety Framework uses **six** areas of focus when gathering information.

1. Extent of maltreatment
2. Circumstances accompanying the maltreatment
3. Child functioning
4. Parenting disciplines
5. Parenting practices
6. Parent daily functions (outside of the role of parental unit)



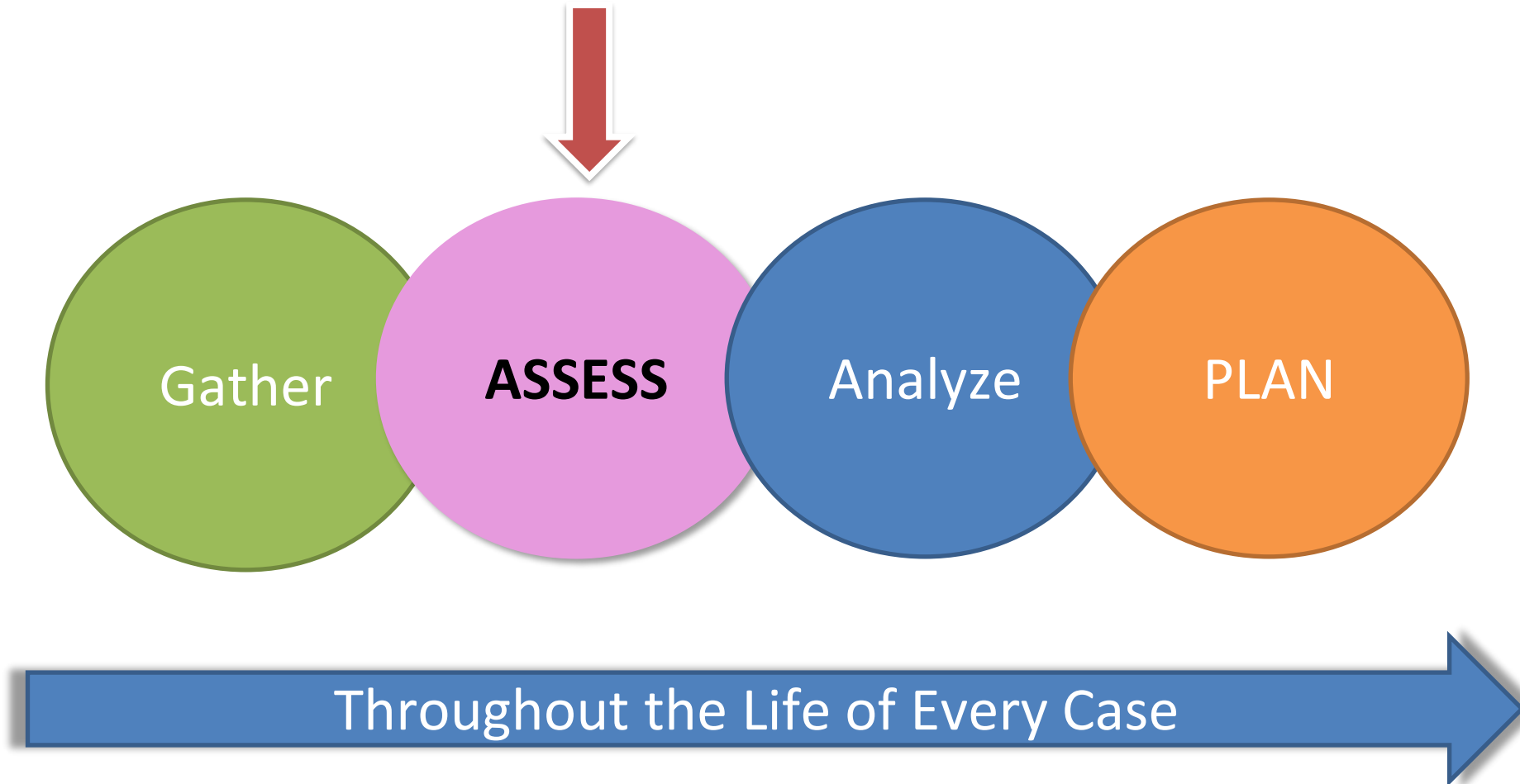
# Gathering Information



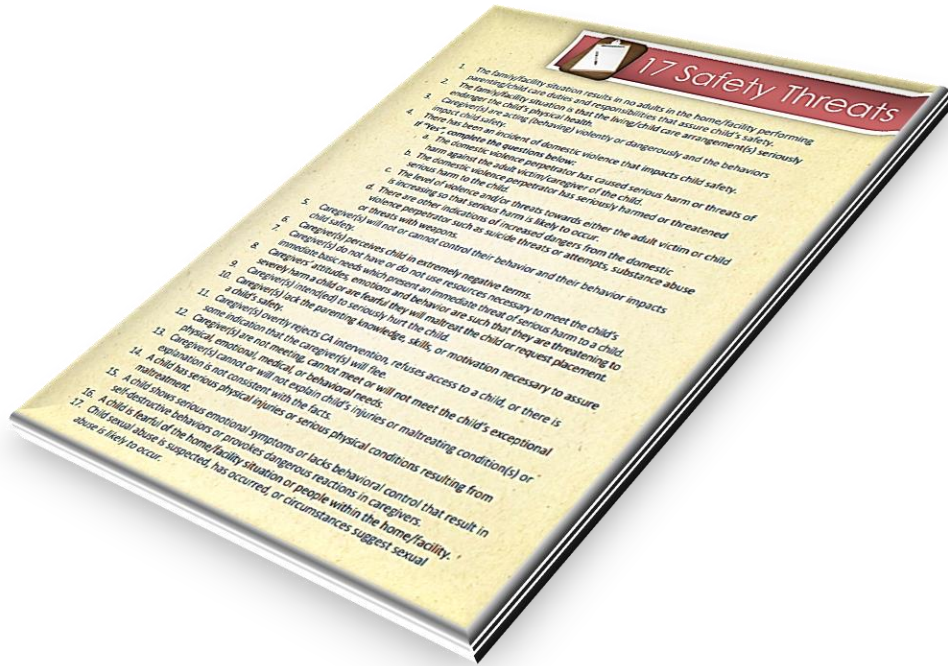
The same information is used to capture a global assessment around safety, risk and case planning needs.



# Child Safety Framework



# Safety Threat



DCYF currently has 17 safety threats defining different categories related to...

Family *behavior, conditions* or *circumstances* that create **present** or **immediate danger** resulting in *severe impacts* on the child.



What is the **purpose** of the plan and why are there **more than one** type of plan?



PROTECTIVE ACTION  
PLANS



SAFETY PLANS



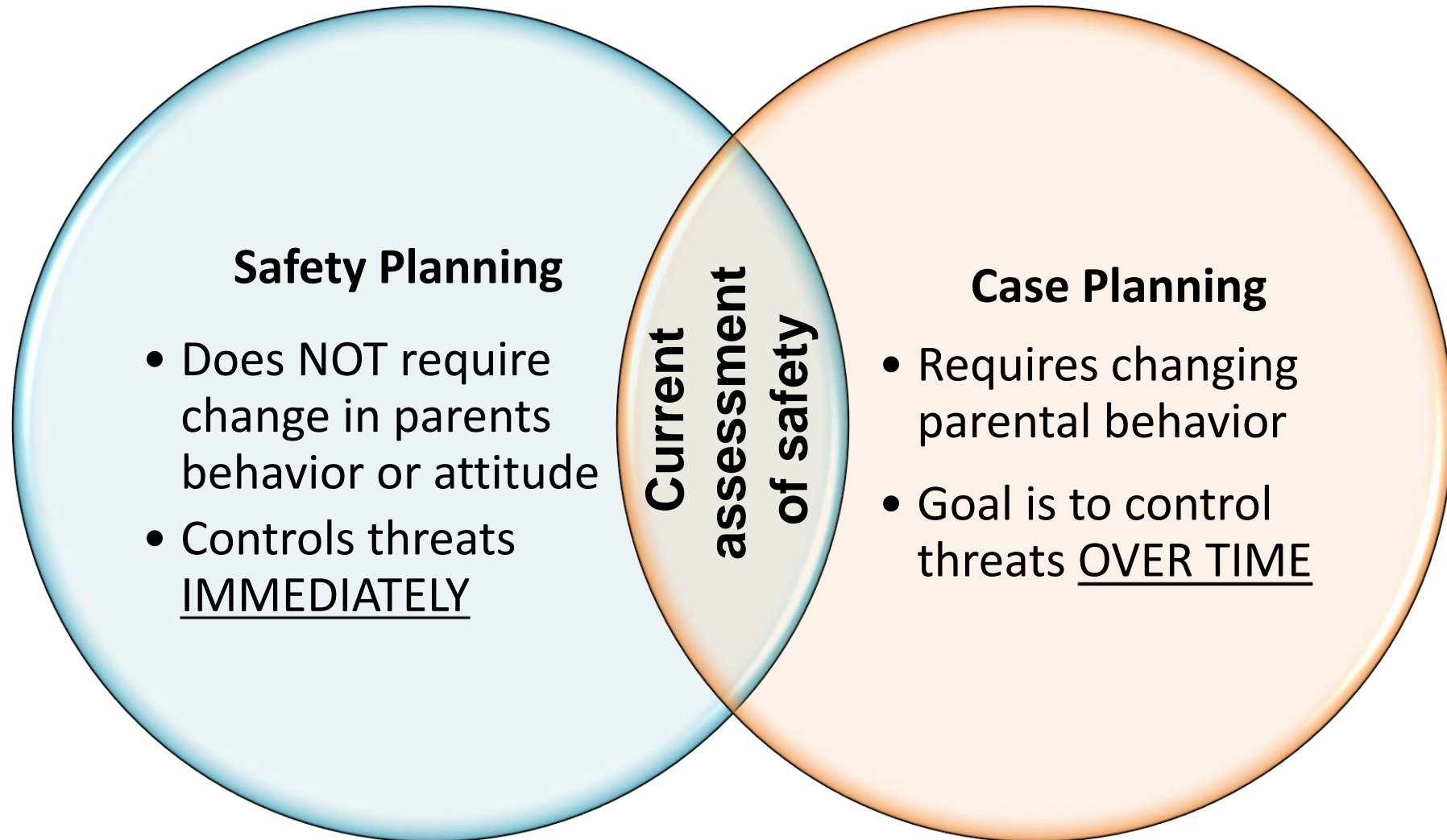
CASE PLANS

Original: December 19, 2022  
Revised Date: August 29, 2023

**Child Welfare Programs Division**

*Jasmine Hodges, Statewide Safety Program Manager*

[www.dcyf.wa.gov](http://www.dcyf.wa.gov)





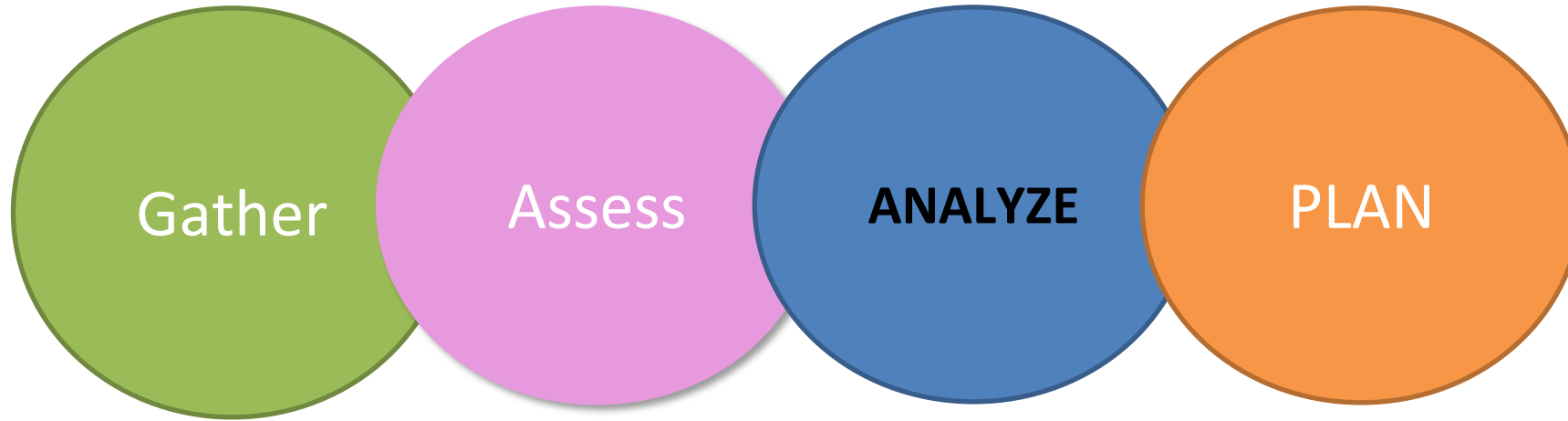
# Safety Threshold

In order to determine that a threat exists, the following **five** criteria must be met:

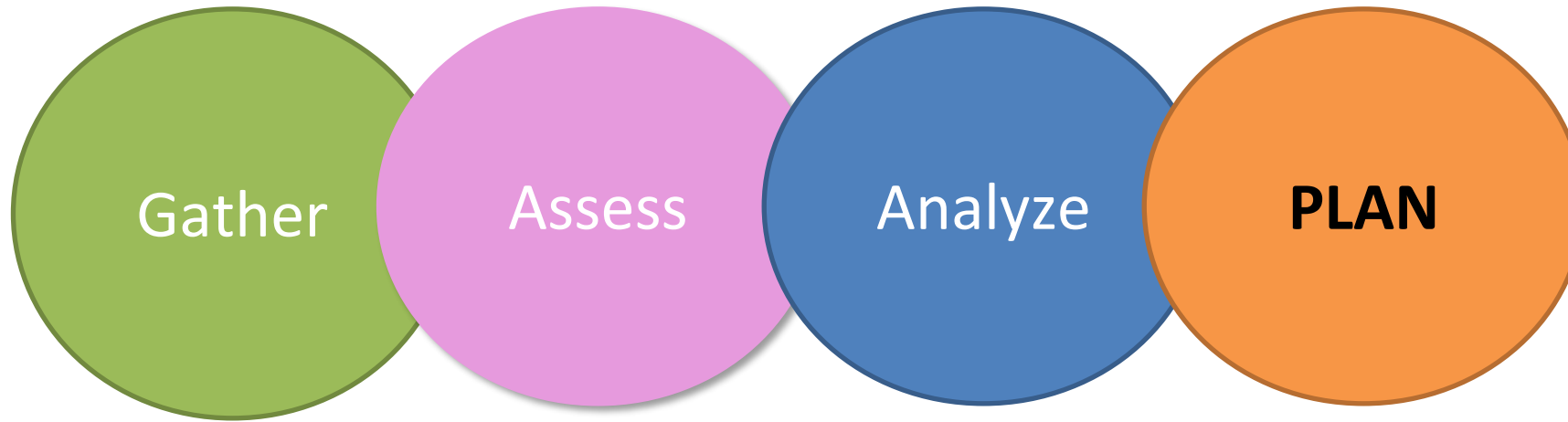
1. Severe impacts on the child
2. Occurring immediate or in the near future
3. Out of control
4. Vulnerable child
5. Observable and specific



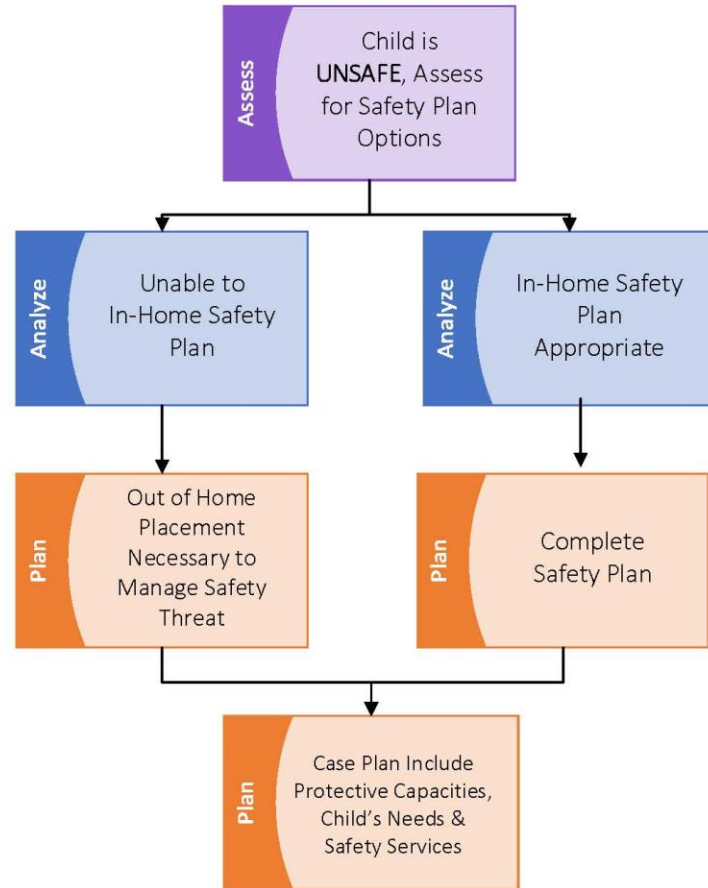
# Child Safety Framework



# Child Safety Framework



# Safety Plan Analysis



The Safety Plan Analysis is based on a guide that delves into four different domains:

- **There is a parent/caregiver or adult in the home.**
- **The home is calm enough to allow safety providers to function in the home.**
- **The adults in the home agree to cooperate with and allow an In-Home Safety Plan**
- **Sufficient, appropriate, reliable resources are available and willing to provide safety services and tasks.**

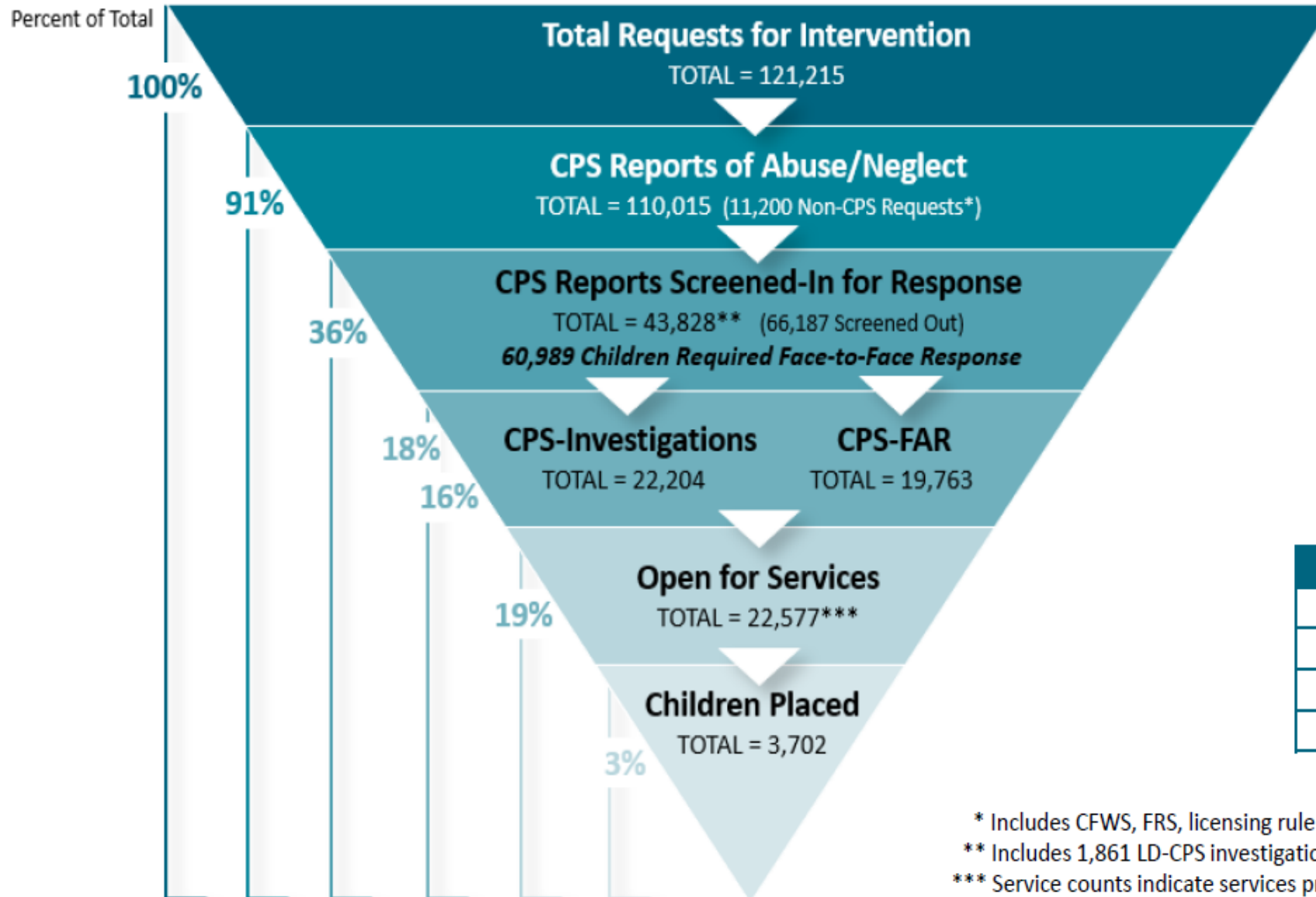
# Safety Plans

- Have an immediate effect, are accessible, and contain safety services and actions only.
- Will not be based on promissory commitment.
- Are developed with the family and are objective, clear, and understood by everyone.
- Control or manage impending danger threats to the child.
- Can be in-home or result in removal (out-of-home).

What role can you plan in safety planning?

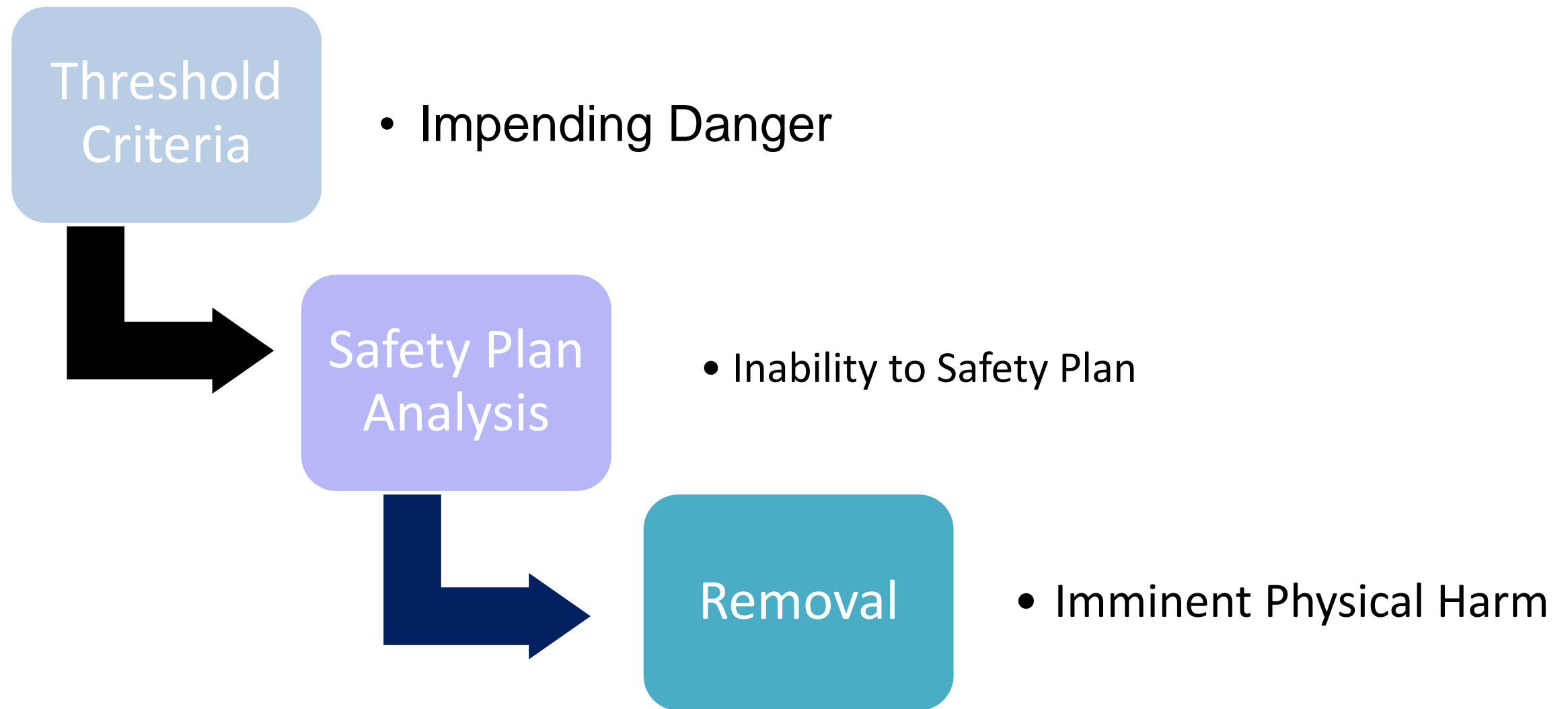


# Child Welfare Overview FY 2022



4,591	Exits from Placement
2,992	Reunifications
903	Adoptions
246	Guardianships
450	Other Exits

- \* Includes CFWS, FRS, licensing rule infractions, and other non-CPS intakes
- \*\* Includes 1,861 LD-CPS investigations on providers
- \*\*\* Service counts indicate services provided in addition to the CPS response



**Washington State Department of Children,**

**Youth and Families**

# **Literature/Best Practice Review**

**January 30, 2023**

Gailyn Thomas, Sam Steinmetz, Colin Cepuran, Leanne Heaton

- **Safety Assessment & Family Evaluation Model (SAFE)**
- **Structured Decision Making (SDM)**
- **Signs of Safety (SoS)**
- **Safety Organized Practice (SOP)**
- **Colorado Family Safety Assessment**
- **WA State DCYF Safety Framework**

