

# Practice Alert

**PA25-IA-02**

**ISSUED DATE:** August 22, 2025

**TO:** ☒ Children's Division ☐ Contracted Staff

**FROM:** Sara Smith, Children's Division Director

**SUBJECT:** **Safety Planning**

**OVERVIEW:**

When a Safety Plan is needed due to a safety threat(s) being present, Children's Division team members should first consider:

1. Whether the safety threat creates such imminent danger that an Immediate Safety Intervention Plan (ISIP) or a Temporary Alternative Placement Agreement (TAPA) is unlikely to eliminate the safety threat.
2. Whether the safety threat could likely be eliminated within 10 days using the ISIP (CD-263) or within 90 days using the TAPA (CD-295), as set out in [Section 1, Ch. 9, Safety Planning](#).

If the safety threat creates such imminent danger or the situation is so complex such that an ISIP or a TAPA is unlikely to eliminate the safety threat, the Safety Assessment decision is Unsafe, then the team member must immediately make a referral to the Juvenile Office requesting protective custody. Situations with considerable risk that must be carefully assessed for the presence of safety threats and imminent danger may include, but are not limited to:

- Fentanyl, heroin, methamphetamine, or cocaine use.
- Prior Children's Division involvement where the family has been uncooperative.
- The combined presence of a lack of parental protective capacities, child vulnerabilities, and complicating factors.
- Prior termination of parental rights.
- Significant history with the Children's Division and/or history with law enforcement.

If a short-term voluntary placement outside of the household would allow the family sufficient time to eliminate the safety threat or to provide sufficient time to ensure no safety threat exists, a diversion may be an appropriate alternative to protective custody. There are two types of diversion placements:

1. With the non-residential parent. This generally involves an ISIP, but there may be times when a TAPA is appropriate. For example, a TAPA may be helpful for a parent who has not yet established the legal ability to enroll their child in school or to seek medical care.
2. With a relative. This generally involves a TAPA, but there may be times when an ISIP is appropriate. This is discussed further below.

Neither an ISIP nor a TAPA is required to make reasonable efforts to prevent removal when emergency situations arise in which the child cannot safely remain in the home.

An ISIP is most commonly used in the following situations:

- When safety interventions are available and appropriate that would allow the child to remain safely in the home.
- When the child is able to safely temporarily reside with the non-residential parent.

These are not the only scenarios when ISIPs may be utilized. There may be times when a TAPA is not an option. When this occurs staff may utilize the ISIP.

Examples of this include, but are not limited to:

- The relative resides outside of Missouri but this is where the parent wishes their child to go and is an appropriate option.
- The parent agrees to voluntarily place the child with an appropriate relative but refuses to participate in an FCS case or sign the TAPA agreement.

If a child is diverted to a relative, but a TAPA is not put in place, staff must submit a referral to the Juvenile Office (CD-235). The referral does not require a recommendation for protective custody. The referral must include CD's recommendation regarding the care, safety, and placement of the child and the reasons for those recommendations.

At no time should staff knowingly leave a child in a situation where they will continue to have contact with the alleged perpetrator creating the safety threat. Staff should immediately consult with their supervisor to develop the most appropriate action steps. It may be necessary to do a diversion while waiting for the court process to occur in order to keep the child safe from further harm. If the parent/legal guardian has voluntarily placed their child but refuses to enter into an ISIP or a TAPA while waiting for the court to take action, staff should develop a plan with the diversion placement to identify the actions to take should the parent try to remove the child or do anything to further threaten the safety of the child.

Staff should review [Section 1, Ch. 9.3.2.10.1, When the Juvenile Officer Declines a Children's Division Referral](#). Staff must be proactive on following up with the Juvenile Office for a timely response to CD's referral and providing any additional information needed for the Juvenile Office to make a decision. If, after attempting to resolve the concerns of the Juvenile Officer around the sufficiency of the referral and the evidence available, the Juvenile Officer does not take further action, and the safety threat(s) to the child remain without further court intervention, the case must be staffed with a supervisor or higher-level manager to determine the most

appropriate next steps. The Children’s Division should clearly document the reasons the Juvenile Officer rejected the referral in the case record.

Staff are also reminded that all ISIPs and TAPAs must be entered in FACES on the Diversion/TAPA screen.

### NECESSARY ACTIONS:

- Review this Practice Alert with all leadership, supervisory, and investigative staff, and any other staff that are responsible for responding to CA/N reports.
- Review [Section 1, Chapter 5, Understanding and Assessing Child Safety](#)
- Review [Section 1, Chapter 9, Safety Planning](#)
- Circuit leadership to meet with their Juvenile Officers to discuss TAPA, safety planning policy, and expectations.

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<b>CHILD WELFARE MANUAL POLICY AND COLLATERAL DOCUMENTATION:</b> <a href="#">Section 1, Chapter 9, Safety Planning</a>	