



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES**

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**Manual Transmission Letter (MTL)
Family Programs Office: Statewide Policy Manual**

2008 – MTL #0509
01/17/08

TO: Barbara Legier, Deputy Director - Division of Child and Family Services – Central Office
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POLICY DISTRIBUTION: Enclosed find the following policy for distribution to all applicable staff within your organization:

0509 Nevada Initial Assessment

This policy is/was effective 01/18/08 and replaces the following policy(s):

The previously transmitted policy from 09/2007: 0509 Nevada Initial Assessment

Updates to the following areas have been made in this policy (policy page number/summary of change):

Pages 10-12, Section 0509.5.4 Reasonable Efforts to Locate a Family During the NIA Investigative Process

Page 13, Section 0509.6.5 Supervisory Responsibility, number 3.

NOTE:

This policy has been placed into the new Family Programs Office Policy Format. Please read the policy in its entirety and note any areas of Jurisdictional Action that are additionally required by your agency to be in compliance with the policy enclosed.

This is an **All STAFF MEMO** and it is the responsibility of the Agency Director listed above to disseminate the policy enclosed to appropriate staff within his/her organization and to ensure compliance.

0509.0 Nevada Initial Assessment

0509.1 Policy Approval Clearance Record

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Policy	This policy supersedes: 0509 Nevada Initial Assessment 09/07 200 Nevada Initial Assessment Policy 200 Family Risk Assessment Policy	Number of pages in Policy: 14 Date Policy Effective: 01/18/08
PART Review & Approval	____/____/____	Policy Lead: Marji Walker MSW, LSW and Caroline Thomas MSW,LSW
DMG Approval	01/05/07, 07/17/2007 & 07/19/07	Policy Lead: Betsey Crumrine, LCSW
Re-Formatting Revisions	09/24/07	Policy Lead: Betsey Crumrine, LCSW
DMG Approved Revisions	12/17/07	Policy Lead: Betsey Crumrine LCSW
DMG Approved Revisions		Policy Lead: _____
DCFS Administrator Approval:		Signature: On File
Review from Representative from the Office of the Attorney General:		Signature:

0509.2 Statement of Purpose

0509.1 Policy Statement: The Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) is a methodological process for interacting with a family for the purpose of identifying negative factors or conditions that are known to contribute to the likelihood of child maltreatment, as well as to determine the strengths and/or protective capacities that can help mitigate risk and safety threats. The assessment process results in a conclusion regarding the existence of present or impending danger.

0509.2 Purpose:

- A. The Nevada Initial Assessment Summary form is used for all investigations or assessments when a report is assigned to staff for investigation. The use of the Nevada Initial Assessment Summary form begins at the point of initial contact with a family and is concluded when a decision has been made to either provide child welfare services or to close the case.
- B. Safety intervention and decision-making is integrated and embedded in the Nevada Initial Assessment. The six areas associated with the Nevada Initial Assessment represent the fundamental areas of casework-family study that must be understood in order to effectively assess child safety (impending danger) at the conclusion of an investigation. Interviewing the family members and collaborative parties outlined in the Interview Protocol with the guidance of the Information Collection Standard should ensure that sufficient information is obtained to fully assess safety, protective capacities, and risk.

0509.3 Authority

NRS 432B.180, .190, .260, .300, .340
 NAC 432B.150, .155, .160, .180, .185, .260, .310

0509.4 Definitions

0509.4.1 Caregiver Protective Capacities: Means a parent's or caregiver's strengths or abilities to manage existing safety threats, prevent additional safety threats from arising, or prevent risk influences from creating a safety threat. Protective capacities may be grouped into three different categories that include: cognitive, emotional and behavioral (personal and parenting).

Cognitive protective capacity refers to the parent's ability to recognize hazardous conditions in a child's physical environment or recognize others who may present a threat to a child. Another cognitive capacity is the ability of the caregiver to defer his/her own needs in favor of the child's. It is specific intellect, knowledge, understanding and perception that results in parenting and protective vigilance.

Emotional protective capacity refers to the attachment or emotional bond between a child and their parent or caregiver. Attachment constitutes an emotional bond that provides motivation to protect and nurture a child. Consider how the attachment does or does not contribute to the increased safety of the child and the potential impact of disrupted attachment. It is specific feelings, attitudes, identification with a child and motivation that results in parenting and protective vigilance.

Behavioral protective capacity can include meeting the basic needs of the child and protecting the child from others as needed for child safety. Physical protection might mean the ability to physically isolate the child or to mediate conflicts that could escalate into harmful situations. In addition, the caregiver must address forms of personal behavior or conditions that may contribute to the child being unsafe, such as: alcohol and drug abuse, selection of dangerous partners, and mental health issues. It is specific action, activity, performance that is consistent with and results in parenting and protective vigilance.

0509.4.2 Child Maltreatment: Encompasses physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. Child maltreatment occurs as a result of parenting behavior harmful or destructive to a child's cognitive, emotional, social or physical development.

0509.4.3 Child Welfare Services (CWS): As defined by NRS 432B.044, includes, without limitation: 1) Protective services, investigations of abuse or neglect and assessments; 2) Foster care services, as defined in NRS 432.010; and 3) Services related to adoption.

0509.4.4 Impending Danger: A family situation or household member's behavior that is determined to be out-of-control and will likely result in serious harm to a child. [This was previously known as "foreseeable danger"].

0509.4.5 Information Collection Standard: Refers to the six critical areas that are used for assessing and analyzing family strengths, risk of maltreatment and child safety. These are: 1) surrounding circumstances accompanying the maltreatment; 2) child functioning on a daily basis; 3) adult functioning with respect to daily life management and general adaptation (including mental health functioning and substance usage); 4) disciplinary approaches used by the parent; 5) the overall, typical, pervasive parenting practices; and 6) the extent of maltreatment.

0509.4.6 Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA): The information gathering process necessary to identify family safety, strengths, and risk of maltreatment.

- 0509.4.7 Nevada Initial Assessment Summary:** The consolidation of the information collected related to the six areas of functioning.
- 0509.4.8 Observable:** Dangerous, real, can be seen, can be reported, and is evidenced in explicit unambiguous ways.
- 0509.4.9 Observable and Specific:** A family condition is observable when it can be clearly described and articulated.
- 0509.4.10 Out of Control:** A behavior or condition may be defined as out of control if credible information suggest that a caregiver or a child's family system lacks the internal inhibitions to prevent actions that pose a threat of serious harm to a child or otherwise knowingly chooses to engage in behavior that poses a threat of serious harm to a child. Examples of a behavior or condition that may be deemed to be out of control include, but are not limited to: a physiological, neurological or psychological condition (e.g. an addiction, mental illness, mental retardation, or domestic violence); or a strong belief system that to the caregiver justifies an action (e.g. belief that harsh and dangerous physical punishment is necessary or justifiable).
- 0509.4.11 Present Danger:** An immediate, significant, and clearly observable family condition that is actively occurring or "in process" of occurring at the point of contact with a family; and will likely result in serious harm to a child.
- 0509.4.12 Re-certification:** Of initial safety assessment occurs when the original safety decision at the point of initial contact was "safe" and no subsequent safety threats were identified at the conclusion of the investigation. The caseworker re-certifies that there is no change in the original safety assessment by signing and dating the Nevada Safety Assessment. It is then submitted to the supervisor for review and approval. Note: If during the investigation new safety threats are identified, re-certification is not appropriate and a new safety assessment must be completed.
- 0509.4.13 Re-assessment of Safety:** Means that a new safety assessment is completed for all children in the family (NAC 432B.185) at all required milestones.
- 0509.4.14 Risk Assessment:** The Risk Assessment (based on the Children's Research Center and California Structured Decision Making Model) identifies families, which have low, moderate, high, or very high probabilities of future abuse or neglect. This assessment does not predict recurrence, but assists the caseworker in assessing whether a family is more or less likely to have another incident without intervention.
- 0509.4.15 Risk of Maltreatment:** The likelihood of future maltreatment based on the current condition of the family. Risk indicates conditions and/or circumstances in a family that contribute to the likelihood of occurrence or re-occurrence of maltreatment.
- 0509.4.16 Safe Child:** A child may be considered safe when there are no present or impending threats of serious harm or there are sufficient caregiver protective capacities to prevent harm.
- 0509.4.17 Safety Assessment:** The process for evaluating family functioning to determine if there are negative family conditions that are out-of-control and therefore pose an imminent safety threat (present or impending danger) to a child.

- 0509.4.18** **Safety Assessment Conclusion:** The conclusion that a child is safe or unsafe based upon the assessment of safety threats, and evaluation of child vulnerability and caregiver protective capacities.
- 0509.4.19** **Safety Intervention:** The action taken to respond to and manage threats to child safety.
- 0509.4.20** **Safety Plan:** A time-limited, written plan that is put into place upon contact with the family when present and/or impending danger is manifested to ensure immediate protection of a child. The safety plan must be sufficient to manage and control safety threats, based on a high degree of confidence that it can be implemented and sustained.
- 0509.4.21** **Safety Threshold for Danger:** The point at which a threat of harm suggests that a child is in imminent danger of serious harm. While risk of maltreatment considers harm on a continuum from mild to severe, safety threats (present and impending danger) are associated with maltreatment and actual or potential threat of serious harm to a child. Concern for child safety occurs when negative family circumstances and/or family member behaviors, emotions, perceptions, motives, etc., become intense and extreme to such a degree, that they cross over a threshold and cease being merely a risk influence, and become a safety threat. The safety threshold for danger is what differentiates a negative family condition from being a safety factor verses a risk factor. Family behaviors and conditions cross the threshold of safety when they meet the following criteria:
- Out-of-control:** (*see definition*);
- Severe:** Severity is fundamental to the definition of safety and refers to the effects of maltreatment that has already occurred (present danger) and/or the prudent judgment regarding the likelihood of severe effects of maltreatment based on the vulnerability of a child and the threat of danger that exists in a family (impending).
- Imminent:** In the context of safety intervention, imminence refers to threats to child safety that are likely to become active. There is a degree of certainty that the negative condition(s) that threaten child safety will emerge or re-emerge.
- Observable and Specific**
- 0509.4.22** **Serious Harm:** Includes the threat or evidence of serious physical injury, sexual abuse, significant pain or mental suffering, extreme fear or terror, extreme impairment or disability; death, substantial impairment or risk of substantial impairment to the child's mental or physical health or development.
- 0509.4.23** **State:** The Family Programs Office (FPO) at the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS).
- 0509.4.24** **Unsafe or Not Safe Child:** A child is considered unsafe when present or impending danger threats exist and cannot be managed by the caregiver/ family's protective capacities.
- 0509.4.25** **Vulnerable Child:** A child who is unable to protect him/herself and dependent on others for protection.

0509.5 Procedures

0509.5.1

Overview of the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA): The investigation process initiates the collection of information to determine whether safety threats exist for a child, whether or not maltreatment has occurred, whether there are risk factors present in a family, and helps to inform decision-making about whether or not the case should be opened or closed. This information collection and subsequent assessment is known as the Nevada Initial Assessment. The NIA evaluates the information gathered and reaches a conclusion about the investigation that is recorded on the "Investigation Summary."

A. Process: The Nevada Initial Assessment process includes:

1. The Interview Protocol
2. The Information Collection Standard (6 areas of consideration)
3. Safety Assessment (assessing present and impending danger)
4. Risk Assessment
5. Nevada Initial Assessment Summary

B. Planning and Preparation for Conducting the Nevada Initial Assessment: Prior to initiating contact with the family, planning should occur regarding the most effective and efficient way for completing the assessment.

1. Review existing relevant information known about the family:

Information gathered during the intake process.

Police and/or medical reports.

Consider information that suggests that there is either present or impending danger.

Consider prior history, previous referrals/ reports, and any previous investigations.

Consider information in the report that is unknown and may have implications for interviewing information gathering. An example is a report from reporting party who does not know the family or household composition, but has reported seeing the five year old child playing unsupervised next to a busy highway intersection. The worker would need to obtain information from the family regarding the household composition.

Consider information that suggests that you may need to conduct multiple interviews. Anticipate challenges to information gathering and attempt to accommodate those as is feasible.

Examine the need for a supervisor consultation prior to initiating contact with the family.

A. Initial Contact: Nevada Initial Assessment information gathering and decision-making begins at the point of direct CPS involvement with a family.

1. Introductions with the family must include worker identification, agency purpose, reason for involvement, summary of the referral/allegations being made about the family, purpose for conducting the Nevada Initial Assessment, and enlisting the family's assistance in completing the assessment.

2. The *Parent's Guide to Child Protection Services* must be given to the parent(s) during the initial contact. The worker must tell the parent(s) or guardian that they have certain legal rights as explained in the *Guide* (Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act, Reauthorized 2003).
3. Throughout contact with family members, and as information collection proceeds, indicators of present or impending danger must be evaluated, and if danger exists, immediate actions must be taken to control the safety threat, (i.e., developing a safety plan or placement of the minor's protective custody). At the point of initial contact with a family or prior to the completion of comprehensive information gathering, the use of a safety plan or placement, is viewed as a temporary measure to assure child safety until the Nevada Initial Assessment process can be completed.

D. Interviewing Protocol: The family will be the primary source of information in what should be a neutral approach to gathering information. When circumstances permit, the family members should be seen in a specific order to gain the broadest understanding of the family's situation. The protocol is based on family-centered practice and identifies the *preferred* order for conducting family assessment interviews. However, consideration should be given to *present danger and the report allegation(s)* when deciding the specific order in which the family members will be interviewed. If the report indicates that the child is apart from the family, it may be more advantageous to interview that child as soon as possible in those circumstances.

If the interview protocol is not followed, justification for waiving the interview(s) or the order of the interviews must be documented in a UNITY case note.

1. The following outlines best practice for interviewing family members:

The identified child: The child is the first source of information about him or herself, the alleged maltreatment, and the family. A face-to-face contact with the victim of a report should be initiated first, if the report information indicates that the adults in the home pose a threat, or will not protect the child. Contacting a parent first could enhance family engagement if the circumstances indicate that there is a protective adult in the home or the adult is aware that the report has been made and is not resistive.

Other children in the home: Interviews must include all verbal children in the home and all non-verbal children must be seen. The interview objectives are to explore all areas of abuse/neglect with each child and to obtain corroboration and additional family information. If, during the initial contacts with the victim or another source, information is received that indicates that the victim or the other children may be unsafe, the caseworker should make contact with those children immediately. If the victim or other sources indicate that other children in the home are safe, a face-to-face assessment and interview of the child(ren) must occur before the investigation is completed.

Introduction with the caregivers: The caregivers should be the initial contact when the alleged child victim is found in the home, or when the child's safety would not be jeopardized. Attempts should be made to enlist the parents in assisting the caseworker/social worker to complete the assessment. Some ways in which parents may assist in the assessment is by providing contact information for family members and for professionals involved with the family, and by signing Release of Information forms to allow the agency to obtain verification and documentation of services.

The non-maltreating parent: The worker must interview and determine the protective capacities of the non-maltreating parent and other adults that live in the household. The interview should reflect interest in these individuals and obtain their perceptions of the family's functioning, identify their concerns, difficulties or family issues, and opinions.

The alleged maltreating adult: This interview includes parents and those performing parental duties that are alleged to be maltreating the child(ren). NRS mandates that the allegations contained in the report be shared with the person named in the report who may be a maltreating adult. An interest in and openness toward the person should be demonstrated. Sharing the maltreatment issue and what is known from previous interviews may reduce defensiveness and denial. This approach does not demand or depend on admissions.

Collateral contacts: The investigation and assessment process requires contacting additional collateral sources of information. "Collateral contacts" means any person or agency who is presently providing service to the child or family, or who has knowledge of the family's functioning or who may corroborate information provided by the family. Collateral contacts include, but are not limited to: school personnel, school nurse, teacher, teacher's aide, physician or other medical personnel, relatives or extended family members, neighbors, law enforcement, juvenile justice, or any other agency or person who can provide information related to the family. All collateral contact information must be documented in a UNITY case note.

Closing contact: A closing contact (i.e., letter, phone call or face to face visit) will be made with a parent when the results of the Nevada Initial Assessment indicate that ongoing service will not be provided by the child welfare agency. The closing contact provides information regarding the findings of the assessment and the referrals to community resources.

2. In situations where the child lives in two households and the allegations are about both caregivers, two separate Nevada Initial Assessments must be completed. If the allegations are specific to one home, a Nevada Initial Assessment should be completed relating to that household and those household members.

E. Information Collection Standard and the NIA Summary Form

The "Information Collection Standard" is the gathering of specific information or data about a family in six key areas that are fundamental to the family's functioning. This information is utilized throughout the investigation and assessment process known as the Nevada Initial Assessment. The collected information is recorded on the Nevada Initial Assessment Summary form.

The Nevada Initial Assessment process and Summary require caseworkers to collect, document, and analyze specific information about a family. Information gathering is a dynamic process and the number of interviews and the amount of time it may take to complete the interview and summary form will depend upon the necessary and available information that can be obtained from the family and used in the decision-making process.

The six areas that are fundamental to the assessment must be considered with each contact during the course of information gathering. The six assessment areas include the following and must be recorded in the Nevada Initial Assessment Summary form:

1. What are the circumstances surrounding the child maltreatment?

The caregivers' response to CPS

The caregivers' explanation of what happened, the injuries and related conditions including the child's condition

History and duration of the situation

Co-existing factors and conditions such as substance abuse, domestic violence or mental health

Contextual issues such as use of instruments, acts of discipline, threats, caregiver intentions, etc.

1. How do the children function on a daily basis?

This includes exploration of the following factors for all children in the home:

- Behavior
- Cognitive abilities
- Social Relations
- Emotions
- Physical
- Temperament
- Development
- Vulnerability

1. How do the adults (primary caregivers) function on a daily basis?

Behavioral, emotional, physical, social and cognitive functioning

- Reality orientation (mental health)
- Life management
- Problem solving
- Communication
- Social Support
- Mental health
- Substance abuse
- Criminal history
- Current and previous relationships

1. What are the general parenting practices in this family?

This includes an exploration of over all parenting practices and what influences them:

- Age and child appropriate
- Sensitive to child's needs and limitations
- Realistic in view of circumstances and intentions
- Creative
- Satisfaction and motivation
- Reasonable expectations
- Parenting style
- Parenting history

5. What are the disciplinary practices in this family?

Focus is placed on the socialization, direction giving, guidance, punishment, reward, and teaching practices apparent in the family:

Caregiver intention
Caregiver self-control
Purpose of disciplinary action
Relationship to child's needs or caregiver's needs
Methods
Flexibility
Appropriateness

5. What is the extent of child maltreatment?

The kind and specific description of the maltreatment
The severity of the maltreatment
The specifics of the events, injuries and conditions present
The conclusion reached by the worker confirming the maltreatment

0509.5.2 Case Opening Decisions: The basis for the decision to open for ongoing CPS includes:

Sufficient information collection related to the six Nevada Initial Assessment Areas
Completion/documentation of the Investigation Summary
Completion of the Nevada Safety Assessment
Establishment of a continuing safety plan if appropriate
Completion of the Risk Assessment

A. Case Opening Options: Once information collection, documentation and analysis have occurred regarding protective capacities, risk and the determination of present and impending danger, the following assessment decisions will be made:

1. Families that child welfare agencies serve at the conclusion of the Nevada Initial Assessment:

Families where children are identified as being unsafe at the close of the investigation, because other considerations like, protective capacities and adult functioning are not sufficient to mitigate risk for a vulnerable child.

High to Very High risk factors have been assessed.

1. Families that child welfare agencies are not required to serve and cases that can be closed at the conclusion of the Nevada Initial Assessment process:

Families where no safety threats have been identified. The results of the NIA indicate that there may be the presence of negative conditions perhaps influencing risk of maltreatment, BUT there is NO impending danger.

Risk rating is low or moderate, without any identified safety threats.

Safety threat(s) may exist, however the family refuses voluntary services, and a staffing with the supervisor and/or legal representative document that the agency does not have the ability to intervene through a petition.

Safety threat(s) may or may not exist and the family may have moved without leaving a forwarding address or their whereabouts may have never been known since the report to the CWS agency. When reasonable attempts to locate the family have been made and

documented in UNITY the NIA must be concluded (with as much information the caseworker has) within the prescribed time frame.

Risk rating is very high, and a staffing with administration and/or legal representatives document that the agency does not have the ability to intervene through a petition.

Supervisors maintain the discretionary judgment to override the decision to not serve a particular family. Based on a review of assessment, documentation and consultation with the assigned caseworker/social worker, a supervisor may determine that there is a prudent need to provide child welfare services to families where there are risk influences but no safety threats.

0509.5.3 Reasonable Efforts to Locate a Family During the NIA Investigative Process Must Include:

- A. Inability to Contact Alleged Victims. If a case is initiated by an CWS agency, consistent with the Intake Policy and no face to face contact with the child and family has been made within the designated response time, face to face contact must be attempted the next business day and each consecutive business day until the supervisor of the case manager determines that a resolution has been achieved.

Attempts to locate the victim should include, but are not be limited to; contacting the local School District for current or any forwarding information on any of the children in the home, contacting the referent for any additional information or leads on anyone else who may know how to contact the child, unannounced visits to the residence, attempting contact at any public place the alleged child victim is known to frequent and/or contacting caregivers at their place of employment.

1. If the report indicates the child is in present and/or impending danger (current injuries, failure to thrive, severe medical problems, sexual abuse) and the child cannot be found, the social worker must immediately notify his or her supervisor and continue to make daily "persistent efforts" to locate the child. An allegation including present and/or impending danger requires all nine "persistent efforts" be made in attempting to locate the child and/or family before a determination of "Unable To Locate" can be considered.
2. "Persistent efforts" include those continual actions to obtain information regarding the child and family, and include, but are not limited to the following contacts:

Attempts to locate and meet with the child at school;

School facility, school district and/or Pupil Accounting for school enrollment information;

Teachers and/or teachers aides, past and present;

Agencies that may have provided services to the family (e.g., Nevada State Welfare Division, Housing Authority, electric company)

Individuals who may know the family, such the landlord, reporting party, and/or neighbors;

Visitation to the family's last known address and communication with neighbors in the area to inquire about the family's new location.

Law enforcement to obtain any known information regarding the family and possible location(s);

Postal service for information on a forwarding address and send a letter to the client's last known address with a notation "ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED" on the envelope;

Depending upon the allegation, alerting the hospital(s), the child's physician, the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program or other appropriate medical program, to notify the child welfare agency upon contact with the child or family.

B. Inability to Contact the Parent/Guardian.

1. Contact Cannot be Made with Parent/Guardian, Interview with Child Complete

Each jurisdiction will need to develop procedures to follow in this circumstance. If there is concern for child safety, "persistent efforts" (defined above) to locate the parents should focus on calling the place of employment to arrange a visit, unannounced home visits, requesting law enforcement assistance or sending a letter to the parents to initiate contact.

2. Contact Cannot be Made with Parent/Guardian and Child

Each jurisdiction will need to develop procedures to follow in this circumstance. If there is concern for child safety, "persistent efforts" to locate the child and family must be made and documented daily until the supervisor determines there has been a resolution.

3. Family's Whereabouts Unknown. If within one week from the time of assignment a minimum of 4 different "persistent efforts" are made to locate the family and all are unsuccessful, the caseworker should discuss the report with the supervisor to determine which additional actions should be taken to locate the family.

4. If after reasonable attempts to locate the family are made and documented, the investigation must be concluded within the prescribed time frame. In this instance it will most likely not be possible to complete the investigation procedure process (which includes the NIA, Safety Assessment and Risk Assessment). Caseworkers should document as much information they have about the family and then select the "Unable to Locate" option in the Determination of Investigative Status window (CFS045). In dialogue box, CFS045P, workers will need to document efforts made to locate the family. After doing so the caseworker will be allowed to bypass (if needed) the NIA, Safety and Risk Assessment and Allegation finding windows. When Unable to Locate is chosen all allegations without findings in this investigation will automatically be set to Unsubstantiated. The NIA, Safety and Risk Assessment windows will NOT need to be completed to conclude the investigation.

0509.5.5 Timelines:

Table 0509.1: Timelines for Nevada Initial Assessment Policy

Requirement	Deadline	Starting Date	Responsible Party	Actions to be Taken
Complete NIA in UNITY for each investigation	Within 45 days of initial contact.	Date of Initial Contact	CPS Investigator	Open or close case at conclusion of NIA

0509.5.6 Forms:

FPO 0509A: Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) is a UNITY document. A paper copy of the NIA is provided as attachment 0509.9.1 for information purposes only.

FPO 0509B: Nevada Initial Assessment Supplementary Content Guidelines are instructional guidelines for the NIA and are provided as attachment 0509.9.2.

FPO 0509C: Nevada Initial Assessment, Safety and Risk Assessment Table is included as a cross reference for timelines related to the NIA, Safety Assessment and Risk Assessment documents.

0509.6 Jurisdictional Action

0509.6.1 Development of Internal Policies: All three jurisdictions will follow this statewide collaborative policy as written.

0509.6.2 Timelines: See requirement for case file locations in 0509.6.4, Table 0509.2 below.

0509.6.3 Tools & Forms: All three jurisdictions will use the UNITY form in conjunction with this policy.

0509.6.4 Documentation: The NIA is located in UNITY and is completed after the initial safety assessment has been performed, but prior to the conclusion of the investigation. If another report is received on the same family within 45 days of the previous report, all new information may be added to the existing NIA (reference the new information using the new report number). A completed copy of the NIA must be maintained in UNITY.

Documentation of casework activity and contact with individuals is required in written narrative form to be recorded in UNITY Case Notes. The documentation should be objective, accurate and be a complete record of case activities, including, but not limited to; investigation, collateral contacts, assessments, identified needs, services offered or provided, scheduled visitation, CPS case planning, and supervisory oversight and/or consultation.

- A. Case File Documentation (paper):** Documentation also includes obtaining appropriate verification, such as a birth certificate, Social Security Number, medical report, as appropriate for the case. These types of documentation must be maintained in the case file or scanned into the computer system. (See 0601 Documentation Policy).

Table 0509.2: Case File Documentation for Nevada Initial Assessment Policy

File Location	Data Required
Any and all records obtained that were not generated by the child welfare agency. Examples include but are not limited to, medical, mental health and educational records, social security number and birth certificate.	Jurisdictions must identify and communicate to DCFS Central Office FPO policy lead the exact location in the case file where these documents can be found within 60 days of distribution of this policy.

B. UNITY Documentation (electronic):

Table 509.3: UNITY Documentation for Nevada Initial Assessment Policy

CFS242	Referral Narrative
CFS340	NIA
CFS061	Family Assessment Strengths and Risks
CFS341	NIA Directory
CFS044	Investigation Detail
CFS610	NIA Report

0509.6.5

Supervisory Responsibility: Supervisors have the responsibility for consulting, analyzing, and providing oversight for the Nevada Initial Assessment and making appropriate recommendations.

- A.** Supervisory consultation must occur at the following points in the case process:
1. At the point of initial contact if present danger has been identified and immediate safety intervention is indicated.
 2. At any point during information collection (as needed) to assist staff with obtaining information and interviewing and to assure the sufficiency of information for decision-making.
 3. At the conclusion of the information gathering process, a supervisor must consult with the worker regarding the sufficiency of information related to the six assessment areas and/or the sufficiency of efforts made to locate a family who has a determination of "Unable to Locate."
- B.** Supervisors will refer to the Supplementary Assessment Guidelines when reviewing and judging the sufficiency of case information contained in the Nevada Initial Assessment Summary and the Risk Assessment.
- C.** The determination that a child is unsafe is fundamentally a departmental decision. Supervisory review and/or consultation are mandatory for documenting the Nevada Safety Assessment, Nevada Initial Assessment Summary, and the Risk Assessment. Supervisory approval must be received before the final determination is made regarding the agency's need to provide ongoing services or close a case.

- D. A supervisor will provide consultations regarding the completion of the Nevada Initial Assessment prior to the decision to reunify and prior to case closure.

0509.7 State Responsibilities

0509.7.1 Participants in Policy Development

- A. **FPO Staff:** CPS Investigative FPO Specialists
- B. **Jurisdictional Representatives:** CPS Directors, Managers, Supervisors
- C. **Stakeholders:** None

0509.7.2 Technical Assistance

- A. **Requesting Technical Assistance:** ACTION for Child Protection, National Resource Center (NRC)
- B. **Relaying TA Information:** ACTION for Child Protection, NRC
- C. **Evidenced Based Practice:** ACTION for Child Protection, NRC

0509.7.3 Clearance Process

- A. This policy was approved by the DMG on 07/19/2007. Revisions were approved by DMG on 12/17/07.
- B. This policy was placed into the new policy manual format and distributed on 09/25/2007. This policy was redistributed on 01/17/08.
- C. This policy goes into effect on 10/01/2007.

0509.7.4 State Oversight

- A. QI Reviews will occur in all three jurisdictions to assure the NIA is being documented in accordance with timeframes established in this policy.
- B. Targeted QI reviews will occur if deemed necessary at a later date.

0509.8 Policy Cross Reference

0509.8.1 Policies

0506 Intake
0510 Nevada Safety Assessment
0511 Risk Assessment
0601 Documentation

0509.9 Attachments

- 0509.9.1 **FPO 0509A:** Nevada Initial Assessment (*a UNITY document*)
- 0509.9.2 **FPO 0509B:** Nevada Initial Assessment Supplementary Content Guidelines
- 0509.9.3 **FPO 0509C:** Nevada Initial Assessment, Safety and Risk Assessment Table