



QUARTER 1

PIP 1.1.1

CLARK

WASHOE

RURAL

# **Nevada's Child Welfare Safety Models**

## **Program Improvement Plan Item 1.1.1**

The State of Nevada has been diligently working towards improving the assessment of safety since the first Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Nevada has historically utilized ACTION for Child Protection through contractual funds or has received Technical Assistance from the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services (NRCCPS) to assist initial development of safety tools and policies. Currently, statewide, the following policies have been approved and implemented in the field:

- 0509 - Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA)
- 0510 - Nevada Safety Assessment
- 0511 - Risk Assessment

Nevada has made major progress in the development of policies, procedures and tools which are specifically focused on assessing and managing safety and risk factors for children during the initial investigation phase by determining level of danger and assessing the necessity of a removal. In the last Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) it was found that Nevada was in need of addressing safety throughout the life of the case more effectively and the state is in agreement with this need. In addition, the safety policies that have been developed statewide are most applicable to assessing biological parents and do not allow caseworkers to assess safety for out of home placements or the ability to assess safety ongoing. Due to the differences in the application of safety across the state, it has been determined that anything beyond what has been developed thus far, all policies and tools that will be developed for assessing safety throughout the life of the case will be addressed locally and a statewide model will not be adopted. Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) has partnered with Casey Family Programs to develop several safety assessments to be used in permanency cases and Washoe County Department of Family Services (WCDSS) and the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) has been partnering with the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services (NRCCPS) to develop the tools to be applied to assess safety throughout the life of the case. Described below is how each child welfare agency has addressed this PIP item. Please note that WCDSS and DCFS are adopting the same model. Some tools have already been developed and implemented, however all supporting documentation will be completed and submitted in Quarter 4 as required by the PIP due date.

## Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS)

Clark County began implementing the initiative of safety throughout the life of a case in 2009. This included a redesign of Child Protective Services (CPS) and Permanency policies and the inclusion of assessments strategically applied in stages of the case lifecycle (Matrix attached outlining the process).

1. *Out-of-Home Pre-Placement Safety Check*  
This tool is utilized to ensure that children are placed in a home that is assessed to be safe and with parents willing and capable of meeting the child's needs.
2. *Institutional Investigation Safety Check*  
This tool is utilized to evaluate the safety of children placed in out of home care and to determine if safety threats are present.
3. *In-Home Placement Safety Check*  
This is used to evaluate the safety of children in the home throughout the life of the case.
4. *Out-of-Home Placement Safety Check*  
This tool evaluates the safety of children in foster, relative or fictive kin placements and the caregivers' ongoing ability to meet the needs of the children placed in the home. The Out-of-Home Placement Safety Check has assisted workers in standardizing how assessments are made in out-of-home placements. Prior to the development of this tool, the Nevada Safety Assessment was used. The Nevada Safety Assessment was primarily developed to assess safety for the biological parent and did not address some of the safety concerns regarding the caregiver, such as the caregiver's stress level in meeting the child's needs, the caregiver's need for additional training and or support to parent the child, or the safety threats that new children being placed in the home can cause. Especially as household conditions are expected to be at a higher standard than is expected of the biological parent's home.
  - *Placement Support Plan-Safety Check*: Assists with supporting caregivers.
  - *Visitation Safety Check*: Assists caseworkers in developing appropriate visitation plans for parents. Workers have also found the this tool helpful in being able to assess the parent's behavior during visitation to assist them in being able to determine baseline behavior for visitations and making decisions about the appropriate level of supervision required. Workers are required to review the Visitation Safety Check with their supervisor at monthly one-to-one supervision. The intent is to support a visitation plan that maintains family connections.

These new tools thus far have given workers a way to have conversations with care providers about their needs in caring for the child in alternative care and provide additional support when needed. It has also been found that these have been helpful for out-of-home staff in ensuring that a safety threats truly exists that warrants a removal and workers have indicated that it is assisting them with distinguishing between standard of care concerns and true safety threats. This is leading workers to have more Child and Family Team meetings to discuss concerns and develop plans for addressing concerns instead of removing children unnecessarily from placement providers. Clark County will continue to address any addition tools that may be useful in assisting workers in assessing safety throughout the life of the case.

### **Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) and the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS)**

A collaborative team was established to address this item including the NRCCPS, WCDSS, and the DCFS. Specific members of the team include Wayne Holder (NRCCPS), Clint Holder (NRCCPS) and Mike Capello (NRCCPS), Otto Lynn (Project Lead), Jim Durand (Project Director for ACF PII Grant), Program Specialists Dave Nason and Dena Negrón, Dorothy Meline (consultant) and Betsey Crumrine (rural region manager).

The group was tasked with the development, implementation and revision of a safety model applied throughout the life of the case. Assessment and tools addressed during this project include the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) tool, Present Danger Assessment, Present Danger Plan, Impending Danger Safety Threats and Caregiver Protective Capacities Assessment to be embedded in the NIA, Safety Plan Determination, and Conditions for Return. These tools comply with Nevada Revised Statute, Nevada Administrative Code, State Policy, and promising practices in other states and jurisdiction.

The group met bi-weekly during the months of November 2010 – February 2011 to discuss, revise and improve these recent tools that are currently used to assess the safety of children in the Washoe County and Rural areas of Nevada. The modifications and improvements will further make it evident which families will be identified not only as families with Present Danger for children in the home, but also families who will need services due to the Impending Danger safety threats directly embedded in the document for the caseworker to examine and complete immediately upon writing the NIA. The NIA will then drive services for families to ensure the impending danger threats are identified, the safety threats mitigated, and the caregiver protective capacities are strengthened.

The initial stages of the model design and tool development has been completed. The

implementation and training will need to be established with in the PIP timeline of Quarters 4 and 5. Supervisory consultation guides and tools will be completed to support the supervisory oversight of the safety assessment throughout the life of the case. The revised tools listed above will be installed in the UNITY system.

*More specifically the model is described below and a flow chart of the model has been submitted with this PIP item.*

WCDSS and DCFS will be adopting the Safety Assessment and Family Evaluation (SAFE) model. This model will support the transfer of learning and assessment of safety throughout the life of the case. The following tools are under development to carry out this model:

1. Present Danger Assessment Tool: The initial safety assessment
2. Present Danger Plan: If present danger exists, this plan must be developed
3. Nevada Initial Assessment: (including the Impending Danger Safety Assessment): This assessment (investigation) of the child abuse and neglect allegations which will include an assessment of impending danger safety threats and parental protective capacities.
4. Nevada Safety Plan Determination for Impending Danger: If Impending danger threats are identified in the NIA, this analysis must be done to determine what type of safety plan is appropriate in order of least restrictive, i.e., in home safety plan, relative/fictive kin safety plan or foster care.
5. Nevada Safety Assessment: In home safety assessment when impending danger threats exist
6. Protective Capacity for Family Assessment (PCFA): The PCFA begins after the determination has been made to provide a family with ongoing CPS interventions. The PCFA represents the first essential ongoing CPS intervention with families where children have been identified as unsafe. The PCFA provides ongoing workers with a structured approach for engaging and involving caregivers and children in a case planning process. The concept of caregiver protective capacities is central to the design of the PCFA. It is through the understanding and use of the concept of caregiver protective capacities that case workers and caregivers can formulate case plans that enhance family member functioning and caregiver role performance and in doing so reduce impending danger. The PCFA is designed to focus intervention on family engagement, the family's perspective and "world-view" family needs, family strengths and collaborative problem solving. When children are identified as unsafe, the ability to create safe environments exists within the family. Necessary change and sustainable change in caregivers and children are more likely to occur when families are involved, invested and able to maintain self-determination and personal choice. A large part of the PCFA incorporates the Stages of Change Theory (Pre-contemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action and Maintenance) as a way to understand and intervene in human change. Motivation and readiness are related concepts also associated with states of

change and in the involuntary client. In addition, PCFA uses practice methods consistent with the "spirit" of active efforts.

7. Conditions for Return: Will include specific caregiver protective qualities that need to be enhanced or specific tasks which need to be accomplished so that safety threats can be mitigated.
8. Protective Capacity Progress Assessment: This assessment will occur every 3 months prior to the case plan Child and Family Team meeting and will evaluate progress made over the last 3 months toward identified reunification goals.
9. Confirming Safe Environments: This safety assessment will be used to assess the safety of children in out of home placements throughout the life of the case.

**CCDFS Safety Through The Life of the Case Matrix**  
**\*\*ALL OF THE SAFETY DECISION POINTS REQUIRE A SUPERVISORY CONFERENCE AND SUPERVISORY APPROVAL\*\***

Safety Decision Points	Nevada Safety Assessment	Out of Home Pre Placement Safety Check	In Home Placement Safety Check	Out of Home Placement Safety Check	Institutional Investigation Safety Check	Visitation Safety Check	Timeframes
1. Within 24 hours after the investigator sees/interviews the alleged child victim	X						Within 24 hours after initial contact with the alleged child victim
2. Anytime the agency is considering removal of a child from his/her parents	X						Within 24 hours after contact with the child and parent
3. Whenever evidence or circumstances suggest that a child's safety may be in jeopardy	X		X If safety threat is coming from parent during in home services	X If safety threat is coming from out of home caregiver			Within 24 hours after contact with the child whose safety may be in jeopardy
4. At the conclusion of the formal investigation, unless a service case is opened	X						At the time of submitting formal investigation closure approval to the supervisor
5. Before each permanency court review	X						Submit safety assessment prior to every 6 month review at the same time the worker is submitting their court report for supervisor approval on the home of the parent
6. Any time a significant event occurs in the household e.g., marriage, birth, death, major illness in the parents home	X						Within 24 hours of the knowledge that a significant event occurred
7. Prior to supervisory approval for case closure	X						Must be submitted to supervisor prior to the case closure CFT and recommendation to the court for Wardship or Formal Supervision to be terminated.
8. Before the commencement of an unsupervised visit in home of parent or guardian	X					X	Must be completed prior to any CFT or court review requesting unsupervised visitation with parent
9. Before returning a child home	X						Must be completed prior to any reunification CFT on the home of the parent

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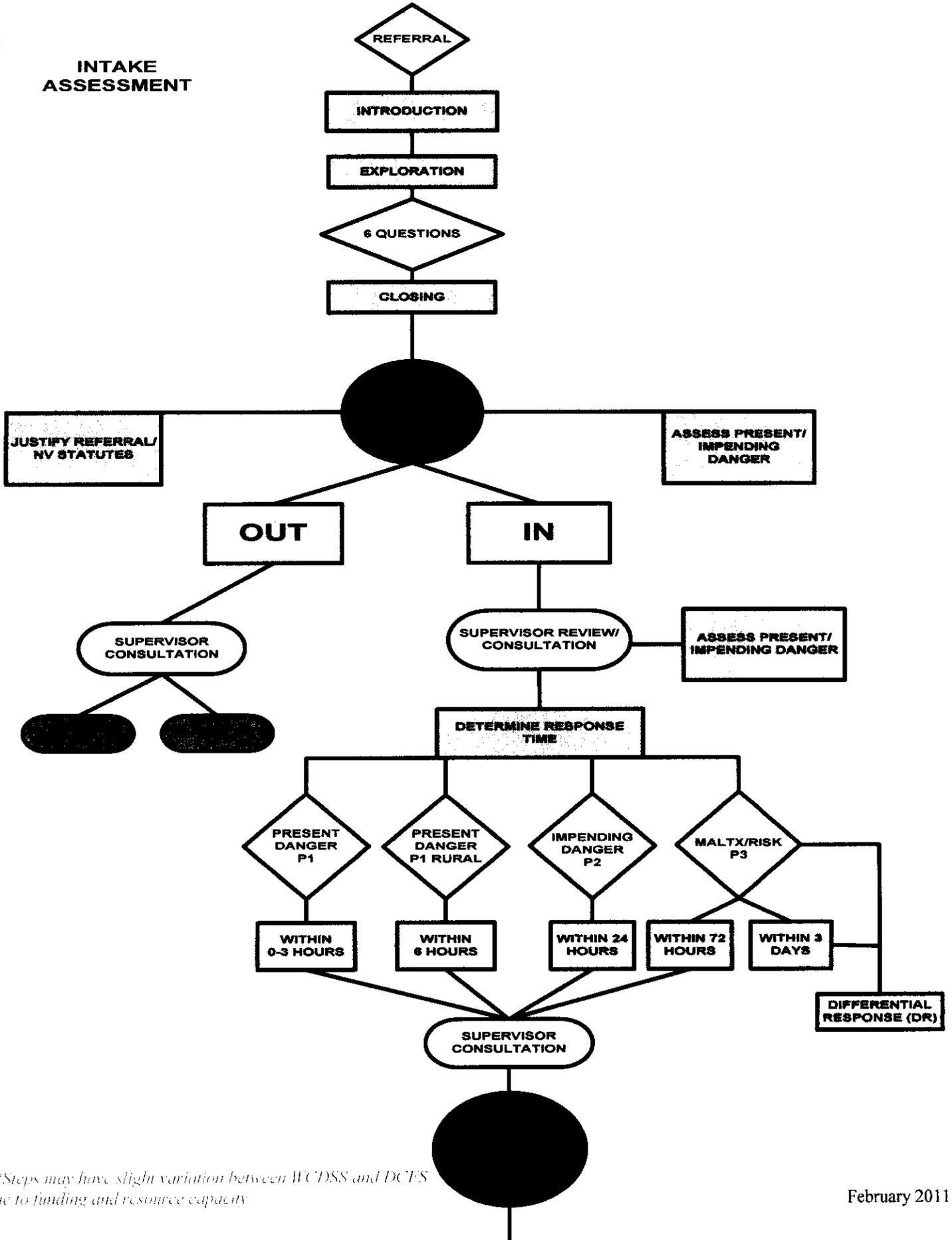
Safety Decision Points	Nevada Safety Assessment	Out of Home Pre Placement Safety Check	In Home Placement Safety Check	Out of Home Placement Safety Check	Institutional Investigation Safety Check	Visitation Safety Check	Timeframes
10. After 30 days of returning the child to the parents home	X						Must be completed by after 30 but within 45 days from the child being returned to the parents home
11. Prior to the placement of a child in an out of home placement by placement team		X					Must be completed by placement specialist prior to placing a child in out of home placement
12. Upon Completion and Review of NCFAS Assessment with Parents			X				Must be completed by in home worker approximately 3 weeks from case assignment after NCFAS completion
13. Every 30 days at Case Plan Review			X				Must be completed prior to initial 30 day Case Plan Review CFT
14. 30 days after formal case plan				X			Must be completed prior to initial 30 day Case Plan Review CFT
15. 7 days after any change of placement of a child into the home				X			Must be completed 7 days after but within 10 days of placement change
16. Every three months at Case Plan Review				X			Must be completed prior to every 90 day Case Plan Review CFT
17. Any time a significant event or change occurs that affects the out-of-home caregiver of the child including, without limitation, a birth, marriage, death, or major illness				X			Within 24 hours of the knowledge that a significant event occurred
18. Within 24 hours after the investigator first observes the alleged child victim(s) (ACV) upon receipt of a maltreatment report in an institutional setting	X				X		Within 24 hours after initial contact with the alleged child victim

**CCDFS Safety Through The Life of the Case Matrix**  
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Safety Decision Points	Nevada Safety Assessment	Out of Home Placement Safety Check	In Home Placement Safety Check	Out of Home Placement Safety Check	Institutional Investigation Safety Check	Visitation Safety Check	Timeframes
19. When a child is removed from his/her parents at the 48-hour CFT						X	Must be completed at or before the 48 hour Safety Decision Team Meeting
20. Prior to making changes to the visitation arrangement (Examples: Supervised to Unsupervised; Discontinue Visitation; Unsupervised to Supervised)						X	Must be completed prior to any CFT or court hearing recommending changes to visitation
21. Every month at case staffing meetings between supervisor and caseworker						X	Must be completed by the worker prior the workers one to one with supervisor in order to review with supervisor
22. Other: Supervisory Request	X	X	X	X	X	X	Within 24 hours of a request by the supervisor to complete the safety assessment unless otherwise advised by your supervisor

WCDSS AND DCFS PROPOSED OUTLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAFETY MODEL  
**Safety Assessment and Family Evaluation (SAFE)**

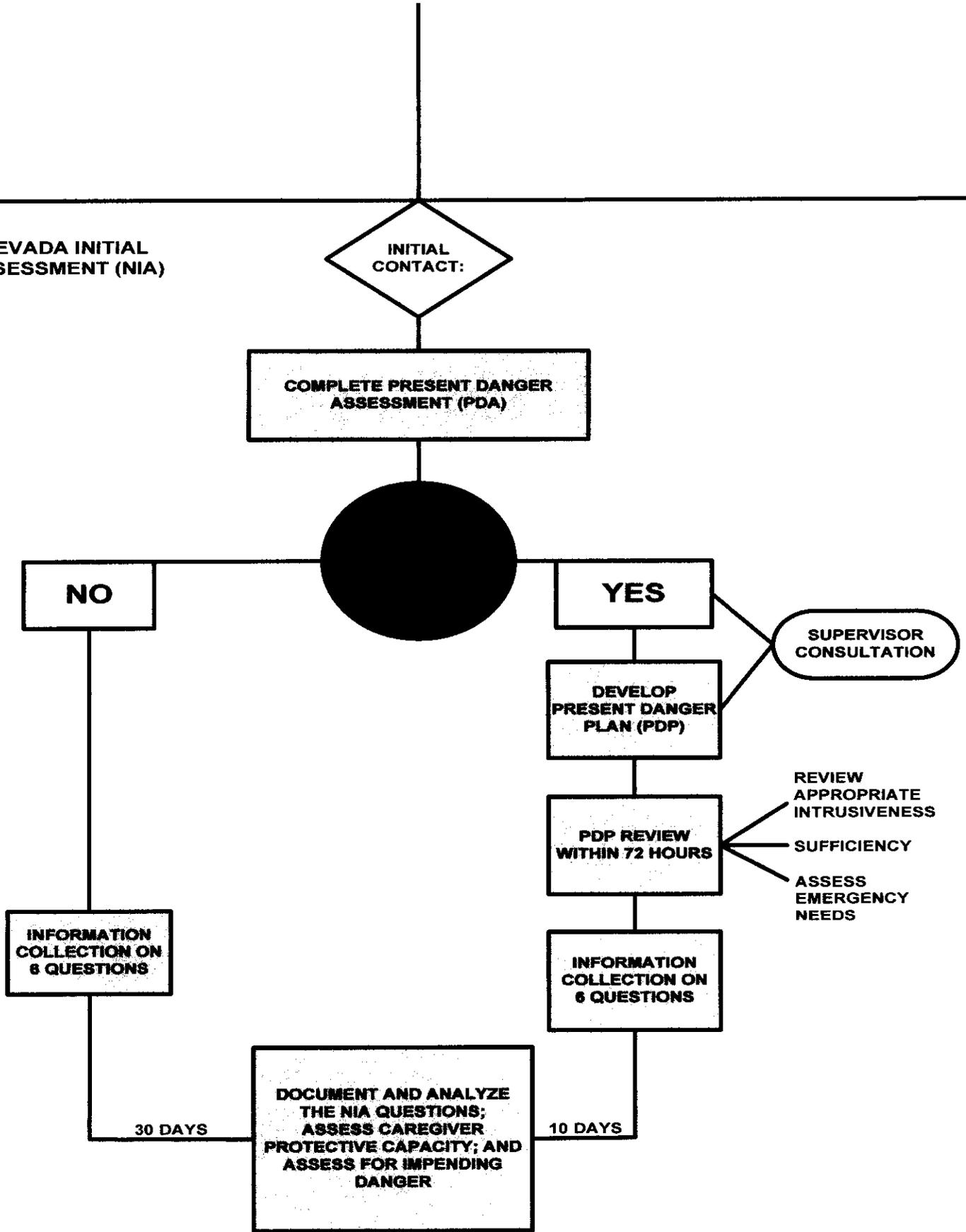
**INTAKE ASSESSMENT**



*\*\*Steps may have slight variation between WCDSS and DCFS due to funding and resource capacity*

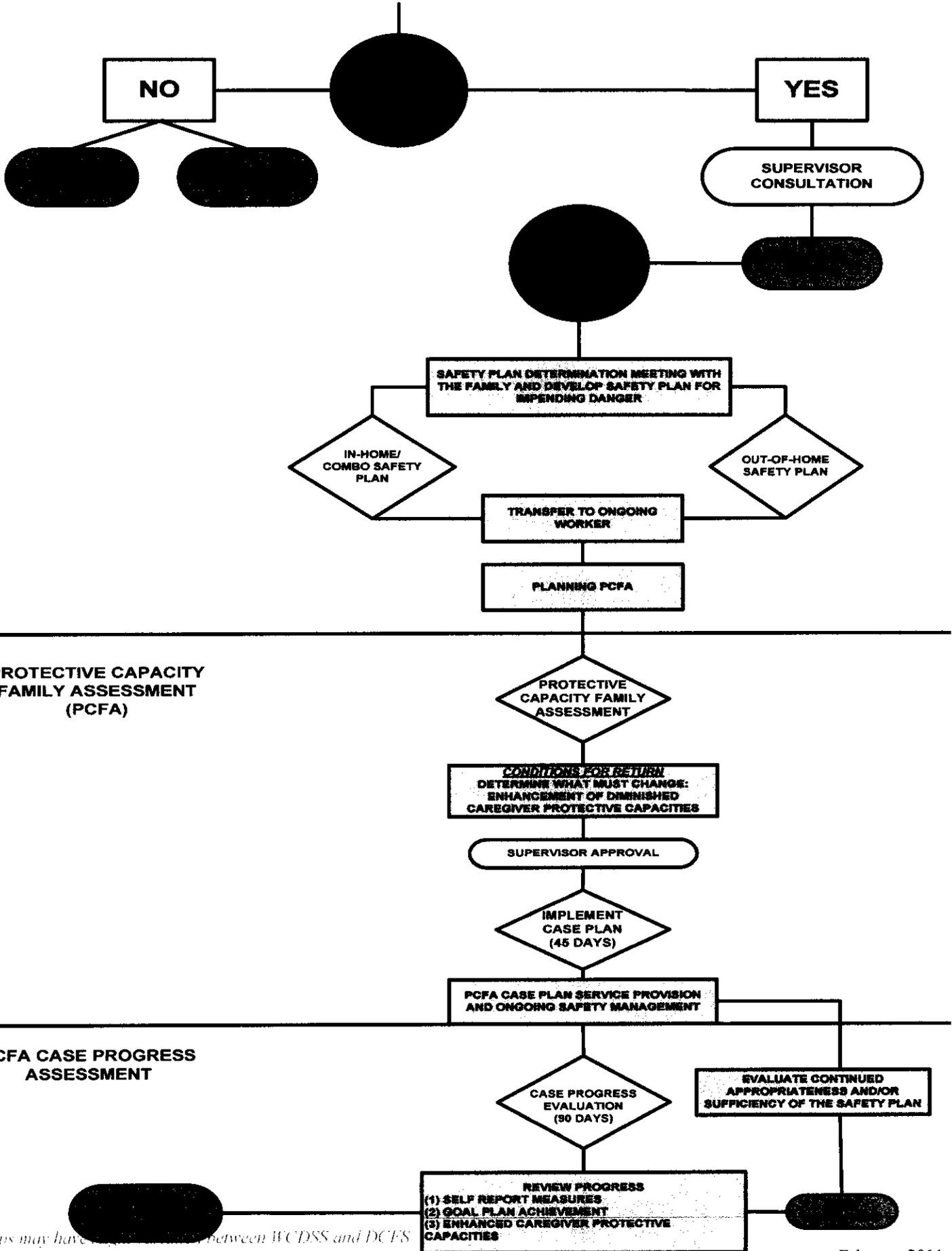
WCDSS AND DCFS PROPOSED OUTLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAFETY MODEL

NEVADA INITIAL ASSESSMENT (NIA)



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WCDSS AND DCFS PROPOSED OUTLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAFETY MODEL



*\*\*Steps may have been modified between WCDSS and DCFS due to funding and resource capacity*