

Joe Lombardo  
Governor



Richard Whitley, MS  
Director

# DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES  
*Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.*



Marla McDade  
Williams, MPA  
Administrator

MTL # 0211 - 10042024

TO: Jill Marano, Director – Clark County Family Services  
Laurie Jackson, Social Services Manager V – DCFS -District Offices  
Ryan Gustafson, Division Director – Washoe County Human Services Agency

FROM: Betsey Crumrine, Deputy Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services

## POLICY DISTRIBUTION

Enclosed find the following policy for distribution to all applicable staff within your organization:

### 0211 Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA)

This policy is/was effective: 10/04/2024

- This policy is new. Please review the policy in its entirety
- This policy replaces the following policy(s): MTL # \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Policy Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- This policy has been revised. Please see below for the type of revision:
  - This is a significant policy revision. Please review this policy in its entirety.
  - This is a minor policy revision: (List page number & summary of change):
  - A policy form has been revised: (List form, page number and summary of change):
- This policy has been reviewed for statewide compliance.

## NOTE:

- Please read the policy in its entirety and note any areas 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 person listed above to disseminate the policy enclosed to appropriate staff within his/her organization and to ensure compliance.
- The most current version of this policy is posted on the DCFS Website at the following address: <http://dcfs.nv.gov/Policies>  
Please check the table of contents on this page for the link to the chapter you are interested in.

## CC:

Wonswayla Mackey ([won@clarkcountynv.gov](mailto:won@clarkcountynv.gov))  
[DFSPandP@Clarkcountynv.gov](mailto:DFSPandP@Clarkcountynv.gov)

Maria Hickey ([mhickey@dcfs.nv.gov](mailto:mhickey@dcfs.nv.gov))  
Kim Martin ([ksmartin@washoecounty.gov](mailto:ksmartin@washoecounty.gov))

**0211 Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA)**

**Policy Approval Clearance Record**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Statewide Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Policy <input type="checkbox"/> DCFS Rural Region Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> New Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Modified Policy – reformatted 2/2019 <input type="checkbox"/> This policy supersedes:
Date Policy Effective:	03/26/2018
Attorney General Representative Review:	06/26/2018
DCFS Deputy Administrator Review:	10/04/2024
DMG Original Approval	3/26/2018
DMG Approved Revisions	N/A

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

**Policy Statement and Purpose:** The Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA) is a core component of permanency services and provides a guide to effective implementation of a structured intervention. The purpose of the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA) is to engage caregivers in a partnership to address safety concerns, permanency and child well-being while assessing their protective capacities.

**AUTHORITY**

**Federal:** [Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act](#)

**NRS:** [NRS 432B](#)

**NAC:** [NAC 432B](#)

**Other:**

**DEFINITIONS**

**Caregiver:** Adults who have primary and/or daily responsibility for the supervision, care, and protection of a child in the family’s home. This can include parents, stepparents, adoptive parents, relatives, companions of the child’s parent, or any adult who is a member or associate of the family network, and is judged to have, and continues to have, responsibility for a child’s supervision, care, and protection with respect to the child’s place of residence or living situation. This definition does not include foster parents or relatives who are providing protection through a Safety Plan, such persons are considered safety service providers. Those alleged to have maltreated a child may be included as caregivers.

**Case Plan:** A written document which sets forth goals related to what must change to restore caregivers to their protective responsibilities in the family. Goals are developed with caregivers and are directed at enhancing diminished Caregiver Protective Capacities. The case plan identifies change related services expected to contribute to goal achievement. The case plan includes identification of change related service providers and the level of effort required for case plan success. The case plan is initially completed after the PCFA and updated after each PCFA.

**Case Plan Meeting:** A meeting where the permanency worker facilitates conversations, discussions, and negotiations related to finalizing case plan goals, and encouraging a mutually acceptable approach to making changes, which gives content and form to the case plan. The permanency worker conducts a case planning meeting to confirm and finalize the case plan.

**Case Planning Stage:** The fourth and final stage of the PCFA. During this PCFA Stage, the permanency worker engages caregivers and other family members to develop and finalize case plan goals and case plan treatment services that logically contribute to goal achievement. It is during the case planning stage that the permanency worker, in collaboration with caregivers, attempts to agree upon what must change and what goals will achieve change.

**Discovery Stage:** The third PCFA Stage. This stage is the most substantial part of the PCFA, and involves engaging caregivers to consider change, considering enhanced and diminished Caregiver Protective Capacities, and identifying what must change. During this stage, permanency workers emphasize caregiver self-determination and mutuality with respect to agreement about what must change. The permanency worker seeks to create a working partnership with the caregiver.

**Introduction Stage:** The second stage of the PCFA. Beyond accomplishing the confirmation of the change in case responsibility and introducing the permanency worker to the family, the essential purpose of this stage is to introduce the PCFA to caregivers, which means explaining what the PCFA is, how it is expected to work, and what the outcome can be. The Introduction Stage reviews with caregivers their experience thus far in intervention, seeks to engage them, and prepares caregivers for proceeding with the Discovery Stage.

**Preparation Stage:** The first stage of the PCFA. This stage occurs in conjunction with the case transfer staffing. This stage prepares the permanency worker to gain an understanding of the family in general, and the decisions that form the reason for AGENCY intervention. This stage results in the permanency worker being prepared to conduct the Introduction Stage meeting.

**Protective Capacity Family Assessment:** An interpersonal, interactive assessment that engages caregivers in a partnership to clarify what must change to enhance Caregiver Protective Capacities, and ultimately achieve safety, permanency, and child wellbeing. Fundamental to the PCFA are self-determination and mutual agreement about the best methods to proceed to restore caregivers to their protective responsibilities.

**Safety Managers:** A professional who collaborates with permanency workers to ensure that safety plans are implemented in accordance with their design. A Safety Manager may also coordinate safety services. While a Safety Manager can be deeply involved in the safety intervention, the responsibility for the Safety Plan remains with agency staff.

**Safety Services:** Actions, activities, and/or direct services implemented to address the safety categories and achieve the purpose of the safety plan, which is to control impending danger.

**Safety Service Providers:** Family network members, volunteers, paraprofessionals, professionals and Safety Managers who are assigned to carry out safety services as designated within a safety plan. Safety service providers must be determined to be suitable to perform the duties and responsibilities identified within a particular safety plan.

**State:** An alternate word for the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) or Family Programs Office (FPO).

**Treatment Service Providers:** Professionals within the community who provide remedial and rehabilitative intervention, which supports growth and change for the caregiver, and meets the unmet needs of children, e.g., mental health services, substance abuse services, domestic violence and anger management services, individual and family counseling, child development and behavior management services, or employment and life management services. Treatment Service Providers are involved to encourage, support, and promote change related to enhancing diminished Caregiver Protective Capacities and meeting children's needs to achieve case plan goals.

## **STANDARDS/PROCEDURES**

### **Completing the PCFA when Caregivers are Resistant to Participate:**

1. The permanency worker's responsibilities are as follows:
  - a. In cases where caregivers are highly resistant throughout the PCFA process, identify desired outcomes and develop case plan goals while continuing to motivate caregivers to participate with the caseworker.
  - b. Consultation, per agency business practice, with the permanency supervisor regarding:
    - i. Ongoing child safety concerns;
    - ii. Development of case plan goals and the case plan;

- iii. How to proceed with facilitating the case plan.
- c. When caregivers refuse to participate in the PCFA process, make concerted efforts in consultation with the permanency Supervisor to contact caregivers and attempt to engage them.
- d. Document all contact efforts in UNITY under case note type "PARENT CONTACT" within five (5) business days.

### **Safety Management:**

1. The permanency worker's responsibilities are as follows:
  - a. Maintain primary responsibility for assuring that safety plans are sufficient and safety management occurs as expected by maintaining weekly communication with Safety Service Providers or Safety Managers and weekly oversight of the safety plan.
  - b. In cases that involve a Safety Manager, communicate, consult, and collaborate with the Safety Manager weekly to ensure that the safety plan is implemented effectively.
  - c. Make contact with Safety Service Providers within five (5) business day of the case transfer staffing.
  - d. Safety management during the PCFA includes the following:
    - i. Review the safety plan with caregivers and ensure that the expectations for the safety plan are clear.
    - ii. Discuss the caregiver's opinions regarding the need for and or the sufficiency of a safety plan.
    - iii. Make personal contact, which can include, email, text message, or phone, with Safety Managers and Safety Service Providers.
    - iv. Coordinate with community service providers to confirm the provision of safety services.
    - v. Determine if safety services remain accessible and appropriate.
    - vi. Ensure that visitation is occurring as planned.
    - vii. Contact with the children as an expectation of safety management.
    - viii. Adjust safety plan as needed based on safety management.

### **Preparation Stage:**

1. The caseworker and supervisor will begin by reviewing all relevant and available information collected by the NIA worker for sufficiency in preparation of case transfer.

### **Introduction Stage:**

1. General Overview:
  - a. The Introduction Stage is an orientation for caregivers regarding permanency services generally, and the PCFA process specifically.
  - b. As an orientation, the Introduction Stage seeks to empower caregivers with information regarding the reason and purpose for intervention, with a definition of roles and expectations, and the establishment of the nature of the interaction between the permanency worker and caregivers.
2. The permanency worker's responsibilities are as follows:
  - a. Consult with the permanency supervisor prior to initial contact with caregivers.
  - b. Initiate the Introduction Stage with a face-to-face meeting with the caregiver within five (5) business days of the case transfer meeting.
  - c. Attempt to complete the objectives of the Introduction Stage during one (1) face-to-face meeting with caregivers. It may be appropriate to proceed into the Discover Stage during the face-to-face meeting if the Introduction Stage objectives are met and the permanency worker determines this to be appropriate and in the best interest of the caregiver. The Introduction Stage objectives are as follows:
    - i. Emphasize working in partnership with caregivers to address the reasons their case was opened for permanency services.
    - ii. Help caregivers understand the differences between the Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA) process, the PCFA process, and permanency services.

- iii. Help caregivers understand the permanency worker's role with respect to facilitating change.
    - iv. Help caregivers understand what is expected of them as they begin the PCFA process.
    - v. Understand the perspective of caregivers regarding agency involvement.
    - vi. Establish for caregivers a thorough understanding of the reasons for permanency services and review and clarify the agency's position regarding impending danger.
    - vii. Discuss the results of the Safety Plan Determination (SPD) and confirmation of the sufficiency of the safety plan.
    - viii. In cases involving out-of-home placement, discuss Conditions for Return (CFR) and elicit caregivers' understanding and agreement.
    - ix. Explain the PCFA process and case plan development.
    - x. Seek a commitment from caregivers to participate in the PCFA process.
  - d. Document the Introduction Stage on the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA) and in "PARENT CONTACT" or "CHILD CONTACT" UNITY case note type as applicable within five (5) business days of any action during the Introduction Stage.
3. The permanency supervisor's responsibilities are as follows:
  - a. Prepare and assist permanency worker in completing the Introduction Stage of PCFA by:
    - i. Clarifying and differentiating permanency worker role and expectations.
    - ii. Debriefing strategies to seek feedback from caregivers.
    - iii. Discussing the impending danger threats that were identified in the NIA.
    - iv. Discussing the safety plan that was put into place by the NIA worker.
    - v. Debriefing how to review the PCFA process with the caregivers and support a client-centered approach.
    - vi. Discussing strategies on gaining commitment from caregivers to participate in the PCFA process.
    - vii. Ensuring all parents, including identified non-custodial and/or putative father are considered.
      1. This must occur regardless of parent's location and/or involvement.
  - b. Debrief Introduction and prepare for Discovery.
    - i. Debrief and consult with the permanency worker after the Introduction Stage of the PCFA;
    - ii. Discuss next steps for the Discover Stage of the PCFA;
    - iii. Assist with issues associated with working through the Discovery Stage;
    - iv. Assist staff in engaging and interviewing caregivers, help staff target diminished and existing Caregiver Protective Capacities to address;
    - v. Assist staff on techniques for identifying and building discrepancy with caregivers regarding what must change.
  - c. Provide support and ensure the permanency worker is following the PCFA process and entering applicable information in the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA).
  - d. Staff cases weekly or as needed with the permanency worker. Document all staffing with the permanency worker in "SUPERVISION" UNITY case note type within five (5) business days of any case staffing during the PCFA process.
    - i. Case notes regarding the Introduction Stage must include any guidance provided to staff for initiating the PCFA (e.g. addressing resistance, DV parents needing to be met with separately, etc.); any pressing safety management issues that must be addressed by the worker during the Introduction Stage, if applicable; and any debriefing of information and direction given regarding next steps within the process.

### **Discovery Stage:**

#### **1. General Overview**

- a. The intent of the Discovery Stage is to:
  - i. Identify and discuss with caregivers what must change with respect to diminished caregiver protective capacities associated with safety threats.
  - ii. Determine what caregivers are willing to address and change.
  - iii. Identify children's unmet medical, mental health, behavioral and educational needs and how to best address them.

2. The permanency worker's responsibilities are as follows:
  - a. Staff the case with the permanency supervisor to debrief and to prepare for the Discovery Stage.
  - b. Conduct a sufficient number of individual meetings, face-to-face is preferred with each caregiver to complete the Discovery Stage as approved through consultation with a supervisor. Sufficiency is based on case circumstances and due diligence to achieve the Discovery Stage facilitative objectives.
    - i. The Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA) must be completed in order to complete the case planning meeting and case plan.
  - c. Meet the objectives of the Discovery Stage before proceeding to case planning. The objectives are to:
    - i. Identify existing caregiver protective capacities that may be used to promote change that establishes safety and permanency for children.
    - ii. With caregivers, examine the relationship between diminished caregiver protective capacities and impending danger; create discrepancy related to problems, and raise awareness regarding the need for change.
      1. This includes an examination of the needs of caregivers and identifying ways in which caregivers may be supported.
    - iii. Seek agreement from caregivers regarding what must change and elicit their input for the development of case plan goals that describe what change looks like related to the enhancement of diminished caregiver protective capacities.
      1. It is important to get the caregiver to describe in their own words what change looks like if a diminished caregiver protective capacity is enhanced.
    - iv. Fully examine the needs of children and identify ways in which caregivers may be supported to meet the physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and social needs of their children.
      1. Permanency worker will partner with caregivers to discuss the need for professional evaluations; the rationale; resources that are available; the process of the evaluation; the anticipated information to inform planning for the child; and specific arrangements which can include caregiver involvement.
    - v. Identify caregiver's stage of change in relation to what must change.
  - d. Document the Discovery Stage on the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA) and in "PARENT CONTACT" or "CHILD CONTACT" UNITY case note type as applicable within five (5) business days of any action during the Discovery Stage.
  - e. If at the conclusion of the Discovery Stage, the permanency worker concludes that the child is safe, proceed with the next steps for moving toward case closure including completing a safety assessment in UNITY.
3. The permanency supervisor's responsibilities are as follows:
  - a. Staff the case with the permanency worker to debrief and to prepare for the Discovery Stage.
  - b. Provide support and ensure the permanency worker is following the PCFA process and entering applicable information in the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA).
    - i. Regular staffing, based on agency business practice, to debrief and check for sufficiency of information collection with the permanency worker while in the Discovery Stage should occur to determine the next steps. Document all staffing with the permanency worker in "SUPERVISION" UNITY case note type within five (5) business days of any case staffing during the PCFA process.
    - ii. Case notes regarding the Discovery Stage must include any discussion of enhanced and diminished protective capacities; guidance for conducting Discovery Stage meetings (e.g. dealing with client resistance, approaches for raising caregiver self-awareness, assessment of child's needs); safety management issues/concerns that must be addressed (as applicable); and any debriefing of information and direction given regarding next steps within the process.
  - c. Supervisory review and approval of the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA) must occur within the Agency's designated timeframe.
    - i. Approval of performance and decisions in the PCFA is designated on the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA).
    - ii. A case note must be entered as a "SUPERVISION" UNITY case note type when the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA) is approved.

- d. Prepare for transition to the Case Planning Stage of the PCFA.

### **Case Planning Stage:**

#### **1. General Overview**

- a. The Case Planning Stage follows directly from the conclusions drawn about what must change through the Discovery Stage of the PCFA.
- b. The objectives of the Case Planning Stage are:
  - i. Prioritize the outcomes that drive the development of the case plan focused on the next ninety (90) calendar day service period.
  - ii. Develop criteria-based goals that the caregiver and/or other family members agree to achieve, or make progress toward, over the next ninety (90) calendar days.
  - iii. Identify a specific approach to change (i.e., services, treatment providers, service arrangements) that include the caregiver, and are used by the permanency worker and other service providers to support the change process, and that are incorporated into an individualized change-focused case plan.
  - iv. Children fourteen (14) years or older are required to have an independent Living case plan developed (refer to [801 Youth Independent Living Program policy](#) for specific timeframes).
- c. The decisions that must be addressed during the Case Planning Stage, based on the conclusions of the Discovery Stage of the PCFA, are:
  - i. What caregiver protective capacities and child well-being needs are selected to drive the development of the case plan?
  - ii. What goals do the caregivers and/or other family members want, agree to, must achieve, and that ultimately moves them closer to enhancing caregiver protective capacities while meeting child needs?
  - iii. What approach to change supports the caregiver and other family members in achieving the case plan goals?
  - iv. Who facilitates participation and progress with respect to the case plan (i.e., permanency worker versus other treatment service provider)?
  - v. What is the caregiver's stage of change with respect to achieving each case plan goal?
- d. The Case Planning Stage involves one (1) face-to-face meeting.
  - i. Some cases require separate Case Planning Meetings with individual caregivers when deemed necessary by the permanency worker and permanency supervisor.

#### **2. The permanency worker's responsibilities are as follows:**

- a. Make concerted efforts to arrange the Case Planning Meeting within five (5) business days following the completion of the PCFA.
- b. Draft criteria-based case plan goals based on Discovery Stage information for review by a permanency supervisor in preparation for the Case Planning Meeting.
  - i. Goals must comply with criteria and provide clear direction for change.
    1. Case plan goals should focus on increasing the diminished protective capacities that must influence impending dangers.
    2. Identify the diminished protective capacities and describe in the caregiver's own words what their behaviors, thoughts, and feelings would look like if enhanced.
  - ii. The case plan goal criteria are to be SMART (refer to [0204 Case Planning](#) policy), and case plan development requires goals and objectives that are:
    1. Specific. The family should know exactly what must be completed or changed and why.
    2. Measurable. Everyone should know when the goals have been achieved. Goals will be measurable to the extent that they are behaviorally based and written in clear and understandable language.
    3. Achievable. The family should be able to accomplish the goals in a designated time period given the resources that are accessible and available to support change.
    4. Realistic. The parent(s) and family participate in the development of feasible goals.

5. Time limited. Time frames for goal accomplishment should be determined based on an understanding of the family's risks, strengths, ability and motivation to change. Availability and level of services also may affect time frames.
  - c. Consult with a permanency supervisor to review case plan goals and the drafted case plan prior to the Case Plan Meeting.
    - i. The permanency worker and permanency supervisor must use PCFA documentation during consultation to discuss what needs to be accomplished during the Case Planning Meeting.
    - ii. The consultation produces an agenda, facilitative objectives, discussion points, and covers logistics such as where the Case Planning Meeting occurs, who attends, and how to proceed.
    - iii. Review draft case plan goals to ensure that they meet criteria. Supervisor consultation results in the permanency worker being prepared, having received the endorsement from the permanency supervisor, to review the draft goals with the caregiver during the Case Planning Meeting.
  - d. As a result of the Case Planning Meeting, finalize the case plan and focus on permanency services that are expected to occur during the ninety (90) days between the case plan start date and the Protective Capacity Progress Assessment (PCFA). Subsequent case plans are developed following review of progress in the PCFA.
  - e. Within five (5) business days of the Case Planning Meeting:
    - i. The Case Plan Attachment – PCFA must be completed and ready for attachment to court documentation.
    - ii. The case plan must be input in UNITY.
    - iii. Submit the case plan to permanency supervisor for review and approval.
  - f. Provide a copy to the caregiver, place a copy in the case record and file with the court.
  - g. Document Case Planning Meeting in case notes within five (5) business days of the action.
3. The permanency supervisor's responsibilities are as follows:
- a. Prepare for Case Planning Meeting.
    - i. Aid permanency worker in identifying what must change and case planning.
    - ii. Review documentation in preparation for consultation.
    - iii. Assure permanency worker has an understanding of the relationship between diminished caregiver protective capacity and impending danger in the family.
    - iv. Verify caregiver involvement in case planning.
    - v. Support goal writing: review goals to ensure clarity, understandability and logical fit with what must change.
    - vi. Ensure documentation is accurate and timely.
  - b. Provide support and ensure the permanency worker is following the PCFA process and entering applicable information in the Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA).
  - c. Review and approve the Case Plan Attachment – PCFA and case plan screens in UNITY.
    - i. If more actions are required, assist the permanency worker with direction in what is required.
    - ii. When approved, direct the permanency worker to distribute the case plan to caregivers and other involved participants.
  - d. Staff cases weekly or as needed with the permanency worker. Document all staffing with the permanency worker, including the Pre-Case Planning Meeting staffing, in "SUPERVISION" UNITY case note type within five (5) business days of any case staffing during the PCFA process.
    - i. Case notes regarding the Case Planning Stage must include review of PCFA form; any safety management issues; guidance given for the Case Planning Meeting and/or preparation for court; and any debriefing of information and direction given regarding next steps within the process.
    - ii. A case note must be entered when the completion of the Case Planning Stage is approved.

### **Submitting a Case Plan to the Court**

1. Case plans should be submitted to the court per [0204 Case Planning](#) policy and procedure.



## **JURISDICTIONAL ACTION**

**Development of Internal Policies:** Each Jurisdiction shall develop their own protocol and maintain a record for implementing this policy and ensuring compliance.

**Supervisory Responsibility:** Supervisors shall ensure staff follow the Parental Capacity Family Assessment policy and procedures in its entirety.

## **STATE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Compliance with this policy will be monitored via State Agency's quality assurance process.

## **POLICY CROSS REFERENCE**

**Policies:**

[0204 Case Planning](#)

[801 Youth Independent Living Program Policy](#)

**History and Updates:** This is a new policy effective 9/1/2018, reformatted 2/2019 and reviewed 10/04/2024.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

FPO 0211A – Protective Capacity Family Assessment (PCFA)

FPO 0211B – New Caregiver Assessment (NCA)