

VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
FAMILY SERVICES DIVISION
SDM® ASSESSMENT OF DANGER AND SAFETY

r. 06/09

Primary Caregiver: _____ MIS #: _____

Type: Initial Update Case closing Not required Date of Assessment: ____ / ____ / ____

District: _____ Social Worker: _____

Who participated in this assessment?

- Primary caregiver
- Secondary caregiver/adult (name): _____
- Children (names): _____
- Others (names and roles): _____

Is there a non-resident parent? If so, name(s): _____

(If a child is being removed from the current caregiver, also assess any non-resident parent if he or she will receive child protection).

Factors Influencing Child Vulnerability

Check all factors that may make it difficult for the child to protect him/herself from danger.

- Age 0-5 years
- Diminished mental capacity (e.g., developmental delay, nonverbal)
- Isolated from objective adults
- Diminished physical capacity (e.g., non-ambulatory, limited use of limbs)

SECTION 1A: DANGER

Mark all items for which it is reasonable to believe there is current danger or which present a serious and imminent threat to child's safety. Caregiver is an adult(s) in the household who is legally responsible to provide care for the child.

Yes No

- 1. Caregiver or other adult in household caused **serious harm** to the child or the child is in imminent danger of serious harm.
 - Serious injury
 - Threat of serious injury or retaliation
 - Domestic violence likely to injure child
 - Excessive discipline
 - Caregiver fears he/she will seriously harm child
 - Sexual abuse
- 2. Child is an **infant** and the **mother's use of drugs and/or alcohol** during pregnancy created imminent danger to the child.
- 3. Caregiver does not meet the child's current/imminent needs for **food, clothing, and/or medical or mental health care**.
- 4. The **living situation is physically hazardous** and immediately threatening to the child's health or safety, based on the child's age or development.
- 5. Caregiver did not protect or is **unable to protect** the child from actual serious harm or risk of serious harm (includes physical or sexual abuse) by others (even though he or she may be trying); OR caregiver does not provide **supervision** necessary to protect the child, based on child's age and development.
- 6. Caregiver's **explanation for the child's injury** is inconsistent with the type of injury or the caregiver minimizes the harm to the child, and it appears that the child's safety is of immediate concern.
- 7. Caregiver **does not provide access** to the child or there is reason to believe that the family is about to **flee** with the child, is keeping the child **isolated** from others to avoid the assessment, or is intentionally **coaching** the child.
- 8. There are **previous serious concerns** about safety, either a pattern or a single severe incident, AND the **current circumstances** are near but do not meet the threshold for any other danger item.
- 9. Other. *(Describe below.)*

Caregiver Context

Substance abuse Mental health concerns Domestic violence Other: _____

Mark all that apply. Remain alert to potential risk and/or needs in these areas when completing those assessments.

For all danger/caregiver context items marked "yes," provide facts that demonstrate presence of danger:

SECTION 1B: PROTECTIVE CAPACITIES

This section helps the family and the worker to identify strengths of the child, the family, the community, and others that may directly help to keep the child safe in the immediate future. Mark all that apply.

Child

- PC1. Child has the cognitive, physical, and emotional capacity to participate in safety interventions.

Caregiver

- PC2. Caregiver is able and willing to participate in creating and carrying out a plan to protect the child's safety.
- PC3. Caregiver is able and willing to use resources necessary to ensure safety.
- PC4. Caregiver has supportive relationships with one or more persons who are willing to participate in safety planning AND the caregiver is willing and able to accept their help.
- PC5. There is evidence of a healthy relationship between caregiver and child.
- PC6. Caregiver provides for child's basic needs.
- PC7. Caregiver has demonstrated effective problem solving.
- PC8. Caregiver exhibits self-control and puts the child's safety ahead of his or her own needs and wants.

Other

- PC9. Relevant community services or resources are immediately available.
- PC10. Other (describe): _____

For all protective capacities marked, provide facts that demonstrate presence of protective capacity:

SECTION 2: EFFORTS TO PREVENT REMOVAL

If dangers were identified, use this section to identify actions taken or planned that specifically and immediately address identified danger and related caregiver context. Discuss with caregivers and use the least intrusive actions that will achieve safety. Provide specific details and monitoring plan in the safety plan section of the safety mapping document.

- 1. Actions by worker.
- 2. Actions by household members.
- 3. Actions by non-resident parent, extended family, friends, or others.
- 4. Use of community services for immediate help.
- 5. Alleged perpetrator leaves household voluntarily.
- 6. Caregiver takes child with him/her to a safe place.
- 7. Caregiver makes arrangements for child to stay temporarily in a safe place.
- 8. Legal action taken or imminent (arrest, restraining order, involuntary commitment).
- 9. Other (describe): _____

SECTION 3: SAFETY DECISION

- Safe: No dangers identified at this time; child appears safe.
- Safe with safety plan: A safety plan is in place that addresses the identified dangers, and if successfully carried out, will allow the children to remain in the home. May include informal placement with safe friend, relative, or non-resident parent as a temporary measure.
- Unsafe: A court order or voluntary care agreement with placement outside the home for one or more children is the only way possible to protect the child from immediate or serious harm.

Family Name: _____ MIS #: _____ District: _____
 Type: Investigation Assessment Date: ____/____/____ Worker: _____

Who participated in this assessment?

- Primary caregiver
 Secondary caregiver
 Children (names): _____
 Others (names and roles): _____

NEGLECT/RISK OF HARM

- | | Score |
|--|-------|
| N1. Current report is for neglect or risk of harm | |
| a. No | 0 |
| b. Yes | 1 |
| N2. Prior investigations/Ch. 49 assessments involving any adult currently living in the household (<i>assign highest score that applies</i>) | |
| a. None | 0 |
| b. One or more, <u>abuse</u> only | 1 |
| c. One or two for <u>neglect/risk of harm</u> | 2 |
| d. Three or more for <u>neglect/risk of harm</u> | 3 |
| N3. Prior ongoing case and/or custody (<i>do not include CHINS [C], truancy, or delinquency</i>) | |
| a. No | 0 |
| b. Yes | 1 |
| N4. Number of children involved in the current concern | |
| a. Current report is not for CA/N | 0 |
| b. One, two, or three | 0 |
| c. Four or more | 1 |
| N5. Age of youngest child in the home | |
| a. Two or older | 0 |
| b. Under two | 1 |
| N6. Primary caregiver provides physical care that: | |
| a. Meets child's needs | 0 |
| b. Does not meet child's needs | 1 |
| N7. Primary caregiver has a past or current mental health problem interfering with family functioning | |
| a. No | 0 |
| b. Yes | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Within 12 months | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than 12 months ago | |
| N8. Primary caregiver has a past or current alcohol or drug problem interfering with individual or family functioning (<i>mark applicable items and add for score</i>) | |
| a. Not applicable | 0 |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Within 12 months | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than 12 months ago | |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> Drug | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Within 12 months | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More than 12 months ago | |
| N9. Characteristics of children in household (<i>mark applicable items and add for score</i>) | |
| a. None of the child characteristics are present | 0 |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> Medically fragile/failure to thrive | 1 |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental or physical disability | 1 |
| d. <input type="checkbox"/> Positive toxicology screen at birth | 1 |
| N10. Housing (<i>mark applicable items and add for score</i>) | |
| a. Safe and stable residence or long-term shelter | 0 |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> Current housing is physically unsafe | 1 |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> No shelter or about to be evicted | 2 |

TOTAL NEGLECT RISK SCORE _____

PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE, EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT

- | | Score |
|--|-------|
| A1. Current report is for physical or sexual abuse or emotional maltreatment by caregiver or adult household member | |
| a. No | 0 |
| b. Yes | 1 |
| A2. Prior abuse investigations/Ch. 49 assessments involving any adult currently living in the household (<i>assign highest score that applies</i>) | |
| a. None | 0 |
| b. One | 1 |
| c. Two or more | 2 |
| A3. Prior ongoing case and/or custody (<i>do not include CHINS [C], truancy, or delinquency</i>) | |
| a. No | 0 |
| b. Yes | 1 |
| A4. Prior injury to a child resulting from CA/N | |
| a. No | 0 |
| b. Yes | 1 |
| A5. Primary caregiver's view of this abuse incident (<i>mark applicable items and add for score</i>) | |
| a. Neither b or c applies | 0 |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> Blames child | 1 |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> Justifies maltreatment of child | 2 |
| A6. Household violence, threats, or intimidation among adults in the past year | |
| a. None or one | 0 |
| b. Two or more incidents of household violence within the past year | 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intimate partner <input type="checkbox"/> Other adult | |
| A7. Primary caregiver characteristics (<i>mark applicable items and add for score</i>) | |
| a. Not applicable | 0 |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> Provides insufficient emotional/psychological support | 1 |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> Employs excessive/inappropriate discipline | 1 |
| d. <input type="checkbox"/> Over-controlling parent | 1 |
| A8. Primary caregiver has a history of abuse or neglect as a child | |
| a. No | 0 |
| b. Yes | 1 |
| A9. Secondary caregiver/adult has a past or current alcohol or drug problem interfering with individual or family functioning | |
| a. No | 0 |
| b. Yes, alcohol and/or drug (<i>mark all applicable</i>) | 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol <input type="checkbox"/> Drug | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Within 12 months <input type="checkbox"/> More than 12 months ago | |
| A10. Characteristics of children in household (<i>mark applicable items and add for score</i>) | |
| a. None of the child characteristics are present ... | 0 |
| b. <input type="checkbox"/> Delinquency/CHINS (C) history | 1 |
| c. <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental or learning disability | 1 |
| d. <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health/behavioral problem | 1 |

TOTAL ABUSE RISK SCORE _____

SCORED RISK LEVEL. Assign the family's scored risk level based on the highest score on either the neglect or abuse index, using the following chart.

Neglect Score	Abuse Score	Scored Risk Level
<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-1	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
<input type="checkbox"/> 2-4	<input type="checkbox"/> 2-4	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate
<input type="checkbox"/> 5-8	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-7	<input type="checkbox"/> High
<input type="checkbox"/> 9+	<input type="checkbox"/> 8+	<input type="checkbox"/> Very High

OVERRIDES

Policy Overrides. Mark yes if a condition shown below is applicable in this case. If any condition is applicable, override final risk level to very high.

- Yes No 1. Sexual abuse case AND the perpetrator is likely to have access to the child victim.
- Yes No 2. Non-accidental injury to a child under age 2.
- Yes No 3. Severe non-accidental injury.
- Yes No 4. Parent/caregiver action or inaction resulted in death of a child due to abuse or neglect (previous or current).

Discretionary Override. If a discretionary override is made, mark yes, mark the override risk level, and indicate the reason. Risk level may be overridden one level higher or one level lower with approval of supervisor and district director or designee.

- Yes No 5. If yes, override risk level (mark one): Low Moderate High Very High
 Discretionary override reason: _____

Supervisor (required for any discretionary override)
 Review/Approval of Discretionary Override: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

District Director (only required for discretionary override to lower risk level)
 Review/Approval of Discretionary Override: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

FINAL RISK LEVEL

- Low
- Moderate
- High
- Very High

PROTECTIVE CAPACITIES

Mark all that apply.

- PC1. The source of this report was the caregiver requesting help.
- PC2. Caregiver is aware of safety, risk, and need areas and is committed to working toward solutions.
- PC3. Caregiver has had at least two continuous years since the birth of his/her first child during which no CA/N reports were received.
- PC4. Caregiver, upon acquiring knowledge of the injury caused by another household member, took protective action.
- PC5. One or more willing and competent adults (other than the parents) routinely assist in caregiving.
- PC6. Family functioning supports strong coping skills and resiliency in times of stress.
- PC7. Caregiver demonstrates an ability to utilize necessary resources to address the child's specific exceptional needs.
- PC8. Caregiver has had at least two continuous years since the birth of his/her first child during which safe and stable housing was provided.
- PC9. Caregiver has carried out effective steps to protect the child from hazards in the home.
- PC10. Primary caregiver was identified as having mental health concerns, but has been following a treatment plan for at least six months and has at least significant symptom reduction.
- PC11. Caregiver was identified as having a substance abuse concern but has achieved at least six months' abstinence from substances.
- PC12. Caregiver demonstrates understanding of the impact of household violence on the child, and demonstrates strategies to protect self and the child from household violence.
- PC13. Caregiver demonstrates willingness to learn from others about managing and supporting the child.
- PC14. Caregiver has healthy child-rearing practices typical for his/her culture.

Describe facts that support risk items and protective capacities:

Did any participant disagree with any item on the assessment?

No Yes If yes, describe below.

#	Who	Different Point of View