

Child Intervention:

What is a safety assessment?

What can I expect when Child Intervention is assessing my family?

When a report of child abuse or neglect is made, we look to see if it meets the legal definition of abuse or neglect as described in the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* (CYFEA). During a safety assessment, a caseworker will gather information to help us decide if your child is safe, according to the Act.

What is involved in a safety assessment?

- Your caseworker will visit your home, talk with you and everyone else living in the home, and speak with your children.
- Your caseworker will explain the reasons why they are involved with your family. They will talk to you about their concerns and ask you to share your views.
- During these visits, you may talk about what is going well, and where you and your family are struggling.
- For school-aged children, your caseworker will want to talk to them separately and alone. In most cases, your caseworker will tell you before the interview takes place.
- Sometimes you will not be told before your child is interviewed. This depends on what the worries are about their safety. In some cases, your caseworker also may take your child to another place to complete the interview without your permission.
- Your caseworker will also talk with other people about the safety of your child. This can include relatives, teachers, police and others in your community.
- If you are Indigenous, they may also speak with representatives from your band or community.
- Your caseworker is allowed to gather this information under Section 126 of CYFEA.

How long will this take?

The safety assessment can take 40 or more days to complete.

Why so long? Your caseworker may ask to visit your home several times to talk about the concerns and options to resolve them. Your caseworker may also talk privately with your children more than once, and speak with others connected to your child.

What is a safety plan?

If there are worries about your child's safety, your caseworker may talk to you about developing a safety plan.

A safety plan is when you and your caseworker talk about, and write down, your family's strengths and supports, and how you can use these to make sure your child is safe. This plan details what your family will do to help keep your child safe and at home.

You and your caseworker will agree on a plan. Then your caseworker will consult with their supervisor about all the information gathered and the final safety plan.

What happens next?

Your caseworker may ask you and your supports to participate in a Family or Natural Supports Meeting.

During this meeting, your caseworker will talk about the safety concerns for your child. You and your supports will talk about your worries for the safety of your child.

As a team, you will also talk about what may happen if these worries aren't resolved.

Your caseworker may want to stay involved with your family to make sure that the safety plan is working and your child is safe.

During the safety assessment, your caseworker may ask you to work with a specific agency or other community resources. This will help you increase the safety of your home and resolve concerns.

Based on all the information that's been gathered and the safety planning that's been completed, your caseworker and their supervisor will then make a decision about the safety of your child.

What happens if they decide my child is safe?

If a decision is made that your child is safe and any safety concerns have been addressed, then Child Intervention's involvement will end.

Your caseworker may help you connect with other support services for your family.

Talk to your caseworker if you have any questions or want to learn more about the supports available to you.

What happens if they decide my child is not safe?

If your caseworker and their supervisor decide that there are still safety concerns or a risk of harm to your child, your caseworker may

- Ask you to sign a Family Enhancement Agreement, or
- Apply to the courts for a Supervision Order.

If it is decided that the child is not safe in your care, your caseworker may ask you to

- Sign a Custody Agreement with Guardian or Youth, or
- Sign a Permanent Guardianship Agreement.

In some cases, your caseworker may apply for an Apprehension Order and then a Temporary Guardianship Order or a Permanent Guardianship Order, depending on the situation of your family.

Talk to your caseworker if you have any questions about these orders or this process.

If you are a member of a First Nation or Métis Settlement, your caseworker will also ask if you'd like them to contact your community's Band Designate or Métis Resource person.

They can work with you and your caseworker to provide valuable information about cultural resources, community connections or other supports to help you and your child.