



Talking to children:

Hearing what a child has to say is an important part of Communities' assessment. Meetings give families an opportunity to hear about their child's views, what makes them worried or happy, and what they want to see in their family to keep them safe.

Signs of Safety uses tools, like The Three Houses, to ask the children's views. Words and Pictures is another tool used to help children understand why Communities and other adults are worried about them, and to help them understand safety plans.

What happens after the meeting?

Everyone who was at the meeting will get a copy of the notes, so they are clear about what was talked about and what needs to happen.

If people who were at the meeting have any questions, it's important they speak to the child protection worker.

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If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service. For more information visit:
<https://relayservice.gov.au/>

This publication is available in other formats that can be requested at any time.

Safety plans:

The purpose of a safety plan is to show how the family will achieve the safety goal. The safety plan should be family-owned and include the family's ideas about how they will keep their children safe. The safety plan will include a danger statement and a safety goal. It should clearly outline what everyone in the safety network has agreed to do to keep the child safe in the future.


Safety plans should include things that can be observed, such as behaviours, so that everyone can tell when a safety plan is working. Communities should be clear about what may happen if the safety plan is not followed. As the child protection authority in WA, Communities needs to agree to the plan.

There are also times when immediate safety planning is required to keep a child safe. An immediate safety plan may only be needed for a short time, while child protection workers undertake action to see whether longer term safety planning is required.

Safety plans might change over time as a family's situation changes. The safety plan should be reviewed regularly, and whenever there are big changes in a family.

Signs of Safety Meetings





The Child Protection and Family Support division at the Department of Communities (Communities) operates under the *Children and Community Services Act (2004)*. When Communities works with families, our aim is to support parents, families and communities to keep children safe at home. If the decision is made for a child to come into care, we will try to keep children with their extended families. If this isn't possible, Communities will try to maintain children's connections to family, community, country and culture.

You can read and download a copy of the *Children and Communities Services Act (2004)* at www.legislation.wa.gov.au.

What is a Signs of Safety meeting?

Signs of Safety is used in child protection systems around the world to assess risks to children. Communities holds Signs of Safety meetings to talk about how to make sure a child is safe. The meetings assess risk, look at worries and strengths for a child and their family, and make a plan about a child's safety.

Important people in a child's life, including the child themselves, can come to the meetings. Family members, friends, support services, lawyers, teachers and doctors are all welcome. Aboriginal families are encouraged to bring Aboriginal elders or professionals from Aboriginal agencies who might want to come to the meeting.

What happens at a meeting?

The meetings are led by a person who works for Communities who will discuss their role with the family. This person is not involved in decision making about the family.

Everyone at the meeting talks about what is working well (strengths and safety) and what they are worried about in relation to the child and family. The family and child protection workers will come up with a danger statement: a statement that clearly explains what the worry is for the child if nothing changes.

For each danger statement, a safety goal will also be created. The safety goal is what the family needs to achieve so that everyone, including the child protection workers, knows the child will be safe. One of the outcomes of a Signs of Safety meeting may be creating a safety plan.

Everyone at the meeting can also be involved in working out who will be in the child and family's safety network. A safety network is a group of strong and safe people who can help the parents keep the children safe in the future, even after Communities has stopped working with the family.

The person leading the meeting will take notes on what everyone talks about. An Aboriginal Practice Leader from Communities may also be included to support the meeting.

At the meetings, everyone will be asked questions that relate to four key areas:

1. What are we worried about in relation to the child and family?
2. What is working well in the family?
3. What needs to happen to make sure the child is safe in the future?
4. How safe is the child, from 0 (very unsafe) to 10 (safe).

