

**ARE YOU A VOLUNTEER WHO WANTS TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE REUNIFICATION PROCESS? HERE’S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:**

The Department of Family Services adopted the “SIPS” model. SIPS stands for Safety Intervention and Permanency System.

The Purposes of SIPS as an Intervention System are: (1) to identify unsafe children in need of protection; (2) to enhance caregiver protective capacities and restore caregivers to their protective responsibilities; (3) to create safe homes; and (4) to achieve child permanency by restoring caregivers back to their protective role.

These core SIPS concepts used throughout the life of the case.

Present Danger - An immediate, significant, and clearly observable family condition that is actively occurring or in process of occurring at the point of contact with a family and will likely result in serious harm to a child, therefore requiring a prompt CPS response.

Impending Danger - A state of danger in which negative family conditions and/or diminished *Caregiver Protective Capacities* pose a threat which may not be currently active but can be anticipated to have severe effects on a child at any time in the near future

Caregiver Protective Capacities - A caregiver’s individual and parenting characteristics that specifically and directly can be associated with being protective of one’s children (Enhanced-Safe) or can be associated with contributing to a “state of danger” that a child is routinely exposed to (Diminished - Unsafe).

Vulnerability of the Child – Judged according to age, physical and emotional development, ability to communicate needs, mobility, size, and dependence and susceptibility.

Nevada Initial Assessment (NIA)**:** Used to determine which families DFS should serve and what is the least intrusive and most appropriate approach.

Safety Plan Determination (SPD):Development of the least intrusive situation that ensures child safety as DFS begins and continues their interventions with the family. It describes how *Impending Danger* is manifesting in the family, analyzes the residence, caregivers, and resources which can support and allow an in-home safety plan, determines if an out -of-home safety plan is necessary, and rules in or out the use of relatives or fictive kin.

Conditions for Return:Defined behaviors and circumstances that must exist in the home that would allow for an in-home safety plan – managed by DFS -- that is sufficient, feasible and sustainable to control the *Impending Danger* that remains in the home.

Protective Capacities Family Assessment (PCFA):A structured meeting between DFS and the caregivers that is intended to engage caregivers in a partnership that seeks their involvement in determining what must change, resulting in the development of the individualized Case Plan Goals that target the enhancement of diminished *Caregiver Protective* *Capacities.*

Protective Capacity Progress Assessment (PCPA)**:**  A structured meeting between DF and the caregivers that occurs on a scheduled basis following the PCFA and the implementation of the Case Plan (at least every 90 days and before all court reviews), which (1) measures the caregiver behavior change; (2) assesses whether the Safety Plan continues to be necessary; (3) ensures that Case Plan Services are working effectively; and (4) examines *Conditions for Return* to determine whether those conditions have been met.

In sum, SIPS will allow a child to return home before a case plan is completed. Instead of checking off tasks for the parents to complete, DFS looks at the family functioning as a whole, and whether the parents can keep the children safe, either with or without help in the home.

**STILL HAVE QUESTIONS? WE ARE HERE TO HELP:**

* Call or email our Volunteer Coordinator at the Pro Bono Project: Josie Techau, (702) 386-1514 or htechau@lacsn.org
* Check out the resources on our website: <http://www.lacsnprobono.org/resources-and-training/childrens-attorneys-project/>
* Call or email your mentor. Don’t know who your mentor is? Email our Pro Bono Project CAP Liaison Carmen Ramirez for a virtual introduction: CRamirez@lacsn.org
* Attend a support luncheon.
* Keep an eye out for a lunchtime CLE.