

8. Develop an Action Agreement

Once the parents and the caseworker have explored services and activities that may assist the family in meeting the Expected Outcomes or meeting a child's specific needs and developed the Child Welfare Case Plan, the caseworker develops an Action Agreement with the family. An Action Agreement is a time-limited written document between Child Welfare and a parent or both parents that identifies one or more of the services or activities in which the parents will participate to achieve one or more of the Expected Outcomes. The Action Agreement is developed as a subset of the case plan, but it is a stand-alone, time-limited agreement. The caseworker should develop sequential action agreements when parents need to take smaller steps to achieve progress. So long as sufficient resources are available, the Action Agreement must use culturally appropriate services and service providers whose interventions are focused on the parent's achievement of the Expected Outcomes that are identified in the case plan. Also refer to the requirements for securing culturally competent services for an Indian child and his or her parents in Section 5 of this chapter, in Determine Appropriate Actions, Services and Activities.

Procedure

- It is the caseworker's responsibility to make sure the Action Agreement addresses and includes:
 1. At least one of the Expected Outcomes in the case plan.
 2. The specific activities or services required to achieve the Expected Outcome.
 3. The specific services or activities related to the specific change that is being sought.

For example, if there is not a specific parenting deficiency that resulted in an unsafe child, a parent-training class would not be an appropriate service to achieve change. The activities and services should be individualized and relevant to the diminished protective capacities of the parent which were identified in the Protective Capacity Assessment findings in the case plan.

 4. Services that are as culturally appropriate as possible, given Child Welfare's resources. This may include locating a service provider who speaks the parents' language, a service provider of the same ethnicity/race as the parents, or a service provider who is familiar with the parents' cultural background.
 5. The services are clear, succinct and manageable. The parents need to understand what the services are, and how those services relate to keeping the child safe.
 6. The participants and responsibilities of each person.
 - a. The Action Agreement must describe the responsibilities of the parents and Child Welfare.
 - It is important for the caseworker to follow through with any responsibility listed for Child Welfare.
 - It is also important for a caseworker to make sure that anything listed as a Child Welfare responsibility, is something that can be done by Child Welfare. If there is a question to if Child Welfare can do a particular activity, for instance, pay for a service, the caseworker should consult with his or her supervisor.

7. The start and completion dates.
 - a. The Action Agreement needs to list an anticipated start date, for instance, if part of an agreement is that the parents will enter into alcohol and drug treatment, the anticipated date that would begin would be listed, with an anticipated completion date, based upon the assessment of the service provider.
 8. Indicate if a particular service or activities is an order of the court (if applicable) that relates to the Expected Outcome or specified activities or services.
 9. Have the Action Agreement translated into a language the parents understand, if the primary language of the parent is other than English.
 10. Complete a CF 0010 A to request translation and refer to the Child Welfare AR 06 002 dated 6/30/06 located at http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/ar/2006/cw_ar_06_002.pdf
- Make sure the Child Welfare Case Plan, petition, and Action Agreement are all related to one another and connected to the safety threats of the child. The Action Agreement should not include a required activity of the parents that is not linked back to the safety threat to the child that brought the family to the attention of Child Welfare.
 - Document the method of measuring progress.
 1. The Action Agreement includes how the parents' enhanced protective capacity will be measured. Methods for measuring progress may include professional assessments, observations of changes in behaviors, conditions or circumstances by family or other community members, or demonstrated changes in behaviors, conditions or circumstances for instance parents making and keeping appointments, having residential stability or employment stability.)
 2. The parents need to understand how progress will be measured at the onset of the Action Agreement.
 - Indicate the date the agreement will be reviewed.
 1. The Action Agreement is time-limited. Over the life of a case, the caseworker may develop several sequential Action Agreements with the family. Each agreement needs to relate to the safety threats to the child, and are not used to change the expectations placed upon the parents.
 - Obtain agreement and signatures.
 1. The Action Agreement is signed by the parents and by the caseworker. The Action Agreement also lists the date to review, and if necessary, update the Action Agreement. Again, it is important to follow through with this review as a way to monitor compliance with services and assess the parents protective capacity.
 - Discuss the reasons Child Welfare is involved with the family as a routine part of your caseworker contact. In doing so, ask the parents about how they are doing on making the changes necessary to eliminate the safety threats to the child. It is important, if at all possible, for the parents to understand why Child Welfare is involved and to agree what needs to change for Child Welfare to no longer be involved with the family. It is also important to note, regardless of the understanding by the parents or the belief by

the parents that the child is safe, it is the caseworker's ultimate responsibility to ensure that the Action Agreement put in place works toward achievement of the outcomes that result in parent's ability to provide safety for the child.

- When the child is in the parents' home and parents are unable, or unwilling to participate in the development of an Action Agreement the caseworker must immediately reassess the parents' ability and willingness to keep the child safe in the family home and whether more intrusive interventions are required. Parents **must** continue to participate in services and activities related to child safety when the child remains in the parents' home with an ongoing safety plan.



Forms and References

Forms

- CF 1147 Action Agreement
http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CF_1147.doc
- CF 0010A Translation Request
http://dhsresources.hr.state.or.us/WORD_DOCS/CE0010a.doc

References

- I-B.3.1 Developing and Managing the Case Plan
http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-b31.pdf