

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Technical Assistance Site Report

Prepared for South Carolina Department of Social Services
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The Use of Safety Concepts When Invoking Court Authority

Technical Assistance

The South Carolina Department of Social Services requested one day of technical assistance to support their efforts to improve Department efforts in safety intervention. The technical assistance consisted of a presentation for CPS, foster care and adoption supervisors and county attorneys. The focus of the presentation was to assist supervisors and attorneys to better understand safety and risk issues.

Site Visit

Wayne Holder, Project Advisor for NRCCPS, presented “Risk and Safety in Child Protective Services” at a legal seminar December 3, 2004. A growing concern exists in SC as it does across the country about the need to cross train safety concepts with legal and child service audiences. Given that the state of the art of child safety intervention has occurred in just over a decade it is understandable that attorneys who represent CPS often are not fully informed about how CPS safety intervention works or how cases can be introduced into court based on safety concepts.

The NRCCPS presentation framed safety intervention within the context of the Adoption and Safe Families ACT and the federal Children and Family Services Review. The concept of child safety as related to CPS intervention was defined with particular emphasis on application of a safety threshold. Differences between risk of maltreatment and threats of serious harm (safety) were explored followed by consideration of differences between safety plans and case (treatment) plans. Discussion included what specific within child safety intervention is relevant to invoking court authority and how that can be done.

Next Steps

- The SC TA request indicated that additional technical assistance will be considered related to safety intervention. At this time the nature of that service has not been clarified.