

Family Risk Assessment Protocol (FRAP): Supplementary Assessment Content Guidelines

The Family Risk Assessment Protocol (FRAP) is a family based study conducted at the point when a family becomes known to CPS with the purpose of identifying the presence of maltreatment, risk influences, safety threats and protective capacities. This evaluation is used as a basis to determine who ongoing child welfare will serve.

The FRAP focuses information collection and documentation on six assessment questions. The six fundamental questions are used to determine who will be served. Rigorous information collection and thorough documentation related to the six assessment questions is crucial for making effective decisions regarding who to serve.

Purpose for the Assessment Content Guidelines

The intended use of the assessment content guidelines is as follows:

Caseworkers/ Social Workers

1. The assessment content guidelines may be used to prepare for conducting interviews with family members and collaterals.
2. The assessment content guidelines may be used throughout the information collection process to help assure that sufficient information is obtained related to each of the six assessment questions/ categories of study.
3. The assessment content guidelines should be reviewed when documenting the six assessment questions. The use of the assessment content guidelines will be helpful to assure that all significant case information is recorded and described in adequate detail.

CPS/ Child Welfare Supervisors

1. The assessment content guidelines may be used by supervisors when reviewing the Family Risk Assessment Protocol to determine the sufficiency of case information for CPS/ child welfare decision-making.
2. The assessment content guidelines may be used by supervisors when preparing for and providing consultative supervision.

Family Risk Assessment Protocol

The Family Risk Assessment Protocol is a neutral family centered evaluation. Information collection/ interviews should therefore be conducted in a neutral manner. Focused information collection that proceeds along a specified interviewing order and is consistent with practice protocol will result in an assessment where the family reveals itself in terms of areas of effectiveness and ineffectiveness. The interview order and practice protocol will enhance information collection that is important to gather and document for the purposes of child welfare decision-making.

When documenting family information related to the six assessment questions of the Family Risk Assessment Protocol, specify what information has been gathered concerning child, caregiver and family functioning, both positive and negative.

As you record the positive and negative conditions, you consider their effect in the family with respect to implications for risk of maltreatment, safety threats and a family's capacity for child protection.

Your information collection, documentation and analysis of family conditions associated with the six assessment questions will consider variation in caretaker, child and family functioning along a continuum:

- Strengths and enhanced functioning
- Appropriate level of functioning
- Acceptable/ appropriate functioning is inconsistent; sporadic
- Appropriate level of functioning is unpredictable
- Level of functioning is usually Inconsistent, unreasonable and inappropriate
- Dysfunctional

There are specified safety factors that are related to each of the six assessment questions. Your analysis of documentation should result in a determination of whether family conditions pose a safety threat. When evaluating if negative conditions identified in the family assessment are consistent with the definitional requirements of one or more of Nevada's 16 standardized safety factors, it is important to consider the criteria for the safety threshold:

- Behavior, emotions, perceptions, etc. that are *out of control*
- The threat exists in the presence of a *vulnerable child*
- The safety threat will likely become active- *now over the course of the next several days*
- There are *immediate* implications for *severe harm* to a child
- Assessment documentation clearly supports and justifies how negative family conditions meet the safety threshold and safety factor definition(s).

Family Risk Assessment Protocol

1. **Maltreatment:** *What is the extent of the child maltreatment and your finding?*

Maltreatment Assessment Content

Maltreatment refers to actual maltreating behavior and the current physical and/or psychological effects... what is occurring or has occurred and what are the results, e.g., hitting, injuries.

A finding of abuse and neglect is based upon information gathered related to indication that maltreatment has or is occurring. This is a factual discussion and relates the maltreatment to the laws and regulations.

When there is no indication of abuse or neglect, the Maltreatment question should describe what was found in relation to the allegation(s) that were made in the referral and how the determination was made.

2. **Nature:** *What are the circumstances surrounding the child maltreatment?*

Nature Assessment Content

Nature refers to the circumstances that accompany or surround the maltreatment:

▪ **Circumstances**

Thoroughly describe the event(s) leading up to and influencing child maltreatment. Consider and seek understanding regarding what was going on with the family, the caretaker(s) and/or the child (ren) that contributed, caused or result in abuse and/or neglect. It is important to include the caretaker(s)' explanation for what occurred related to the maltreatment.

Relevant Areas of Assessment:

- No surrounding circumstances
- Consistent with caretaker explanation
- First time occurrence, unintentional, event of situational related
- Substance usage or DV accompanying maltreatment
- Deliberate
- Use of an instrument
- Circumstances are unknown

▪ **Duration of maltreatment**

How long has maltreatment been occurring? Is maltreatment an isolated incident or chronic in nature? The duration of the maltreatment is an important influence on the likelihood of maltreatment occurring again in the future. It is necessary to note however, that the duration of maltreatment is not in itself a determinant of the severity of maltreatment that may occur (i.e. chronic neglect situations). Worker analysis should also consider the extent or severity of maltreatment that has already occurred.

Relevant Areas of Assessment:

- Isolated incident
- History of maltreatment; previous CPS involvement; progressing in severity
- Has occurred over a period of time without serious results
- Long term with serious results

▪ **Caretaker Reaction**

It is important consider the caretaker(s)' reaction to the maltreatment. Are caretaker(s)' remorseful? Do caretaker(s)' justify the maltreatment? Like the duration of maltreatment, the caretaker reaction to the maltreatment is another indicator of risk and depending on circumstances may be an indication of an unsafe child.

Relevant Areas of Assessment:

- Caretaker remorseful
- Caretaker does not accept responsibility
- Denies maltreatment occurred; blames others
- Maltreatment is justified by caretaker

3. **Child Functioning:** *How do the children function on a daily basis?*

Child Functioning Assessment Content

Child Functioning is concerned with how the child predominately acts day in and day out. It is important to emphasize that the assessment should target a child's pervasive and/or routine functioning, rather than the child's response to CPS intervention.

Assessment should include a consideration for a child's *physical, behavioral, emotional/ temperament and cognitive* functioning.

Relevant Areas of Assessment include:

- Capacity for attachment; attachment and bonding with other family members
- Academic performance (if applicable)
- Interaction with peers
- Hobbies and general activities
- Verbal and non-verbal communication; responsiveness to others
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Motor skills
- Perceptions of self; perceptions of others
- Expressions of feelings and emotions
- Self control

When gathering, documenting and analyzing child functioning information, consider the child's behavior, emotions, temperament, physical and cognitive functioning in terms of consistency, reasonableness, appropriateness with age and/or illustrative of the norm of expected development.

4. **Adult Functioning:** *How do the adults (primary caregivers) function on a daily basis?*

Adult Functioning Assessment Content

Adult General Functioning is concerned with how the adults in the family feel, think, and act on a daily basis with respect to life events and life management.

When completing information gathering and documentation related to Adult Functioning, focus on how the caretaker functions generally, rather than in relation to their response to intervention. Further it is important to distinguish between a caretaker's individual adult functioning separate from the parenting role. The Adult Functioning assessment question deals only with an adult caretaker's routine behaviors, emotions, temperament and cognitive functioning that is illustrative of who that person is as an adult. Note strengths.

Among the issues for consideration pertaining to adult functioning are as follows:

Relevant Areas of Assessment:

1. Behavioral Patterns

- Substance usage; substance misuse; dependency
- Self Control; impulsivity; aggression; violence
- Relationship/ interaction with others; social isolation
- Communication
- Flexibility
- Adherence to social norms

2. Emotional Patterns

- Coping; stress management; stressors unmanageable
- Emotional control
- Stability
- Mental Health

3. Cognitive Patterns

- Problem solving
- Judgment and decision-making
- Reality orientation
- Thought processing
- Cognitive functioning
- Self-concept; self awareness; self esteem

4. Life Management Patterns

- Home management
- Employment
- Accessing resources
- Finances
- Self care
- Physical health
- Sense of purpose
- Control of personal habits

5. **Parenting-General:** *What are the general parenting practices in this family?*

Parenting General Assessment Content

Parenting – General explores the general nature and approach to parenting. When considering this assessment question, it is important to keep focused on the overall parenting that is occurring and not a specific maltreatment incident or disciplinary approaches, which may influence your study and analysis pertaining to this question. Note parenting strengths.

Among the issues for consideration pertaining to parenting-general are as follows:

Relevant Areas of Assessment:

1. Parenting style

- Source of parenting style
- Expectations
- Consistency in parenting
- Tendency toward positive parenting
- Control in parenting role

2. Feelings and perceptions about being a parent

- Reasons for being a parent
- Degree of satisfaction in caretaker role
- Motivated as a parent

3. History of parenting

- Parenting successes
- Perceived parenting challenges, struggles or failures
- History of protective behavior

4. Perceptions of children

- Viewpoint of child and influence on parenting practice

5. Emotional caregiver protective capacities

- Empathetic
- Demonstration of attachment and bonding
- Nurturing
- Sensitivity to child
- Aligned and supportive of child

6. Behavioral caregiver protective capacities

- Caretaker(s) ability to set needs aside in favor of the child
- Responsive
- Provides basic care
- Acts on child's strengths, limitations and needs
- Protectiveness
- Parenting skill

7. Cognitive caregiver protective capacities

- Recognition of child's needs
- Adequacy of parenting knowledge
- Understands child's strengths, limitations and needs

6. Parenting- Discipline: *What are the disciplinary practices in this family?*

Parenting Discipline Assessment Content

Parenting -- Discipline focuses attention and evaluation on discipline only. This is a very distinct category of study, which targets and isolates one aspect of parenting: the disciplinary approach. No other parenting practices or issues are to be considered with respect to this assessment question. There are three general overriding areas of assessment pertaining to parenting discipline that must be understood by the completion of the assessment process:

1. What is the caretaker(s)' typical approach to discipline?

Relevant Areas of Assessment:

- Disciplinary approaches are varied; creative; effective
- Discipline is inconsistent
- Avoids or abstains from apply disciplinary approaches
- Use of negative approaches
- Lack parenting knowledge related to disciplinary approaches
- Harsh discipline; non-discriminating discipline
- Unpredictable patterns

2. How do caretaker(s) maintain themselves when carrying out disciplinary measures?

Relevant Areas of Assessment:

- Maintains self control
- Discipline is applied if fair and just ways
- Holds reasonable expectations for child's capacity
- Sometimes reactive and when disciplining
- Indications that caretaker may occasionally lose control
- Discipline may sometimes occur as a result of anger or frustration
- May deliberately vent anger and frustration out on the child

3. What purpose does the discipline service for both the child and caretaker(s)?

Relevant Areas of Assessment:

- Recognizes child's growth and control needs
- Appropriately balances setting boundaries and teaching
- Attempts to balance teaching and punishing
- Views discipline as primarily punishment
- Demonstrates disciplinary expectations that child cannot meet
- Discipline is used as a method for intimidation, control and compliance
- Discipline is viewed as the primary, essential function of parenting