



Safety Planning Tool (Family Plan for Enhancing Safety): Steps to consider before using this tool

This child-centred tool can be used to enhance safety of spending time arrangements where domestic abuse has been identified but the severity and likelihood of ongoing domestic abuse is low.

This tool may be appropriate where:

- The child has expressed a wish to spend time with the other parent and your child impact assessment together with the Safe Contact Indicator has been applied and indicates safe and beneficial spending time arrangements may be resumed or started.
- Coercive control is NOT current
- A parent has successfully completed a Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme (DAPP) or the risk has otherwise reduced and therefore a DAPP is not required.

This tool is not appropriate where:

- The child impact assessment and Safe Contact Indicator indicates direct spending time arrangements are likely to be unsafe.
- Domestic abuse is assessed as high risk, coercive control is ongoing or where a parent meets the threshold for DAPP but is not suitable to attend (for example, does not accept Findings of Fact made by the Court or does not accept responsibility for the domestic abuse).

The tool can be used at any point in your assessment, to inform your analysis of the child/ren's current circumstances, wishes and feelings.

If there is an indication from using the tool that safe planning is not possible, consideration will need to be given to how else to progress, using the [Domestic Abuse Practice Pathway](#).

**Making a 'Family Plan for Enhancing Safety':
Tool for Completion with Children and Families**



If safe and beneficial spending time arrangements can be progressed, you will need to consider how and what needs to be included in a Family Plan for Enhancing Safety. This plan should be reviewed upon receipt of new information or when circumstances have changed.

You need to ensure that the child/ren/ young person (depending on their age and development) and both parents work together to agree this Family Plan for Enhancing Safety. Once the Family Plan for Enhancing Safety has been agreed, shared with and endorsed by the Court, this should form part of the final Child Arrangements Order. An example of a Family Plan for Enhancing Safety is below.

You may wish to consider some of the following questions;

- Have the child's views been listened to and incorporated, where possible, into the Family Plan for Enhancing Safety?
- Does the child have any identified disabilities/ additional needs/ vulnerabilities that require particular arrangements or facilities to be able to participate?
- Does the child have any identified needs/ commitments relating to any religious/ cultural/ social or extra circular activities which need further consideration?
- Should the child be collected from school to prevent direct contact between parents?
- Should arrangements take place in a public place? If so where?
- Is there a safe identified adult, who is familiar to the child, who can support handovers and/ or be present throughout?
- Does the child have a means to communicate with the other parent or an identified 'safe' adult, i.e. mobile phone?
- Should arrangements take place at a structured event e.g. football/ swimming?
- Does communication between parents need to be limited/ structured? Use of email, Family Wizard, intermediary?
- Does one parent need to apologise to the other parent and/or child?
- How will spending time arrangements be suspended or changed if there are any incidents or concerns?
- Are additional safety strategies needed to manage co-existing risk factors such as substance/ alcohol misuse or poor parental mental health?
- What will it look like if the Family Plan for Enhancing Safety is working?
- What will it look like if the Family Plan for Enhancing Safety is not working?



- Does the family know how to seek support if the safety plan breaks down? Have we signposted them to relevant services and community resources?
- When will the plan be reviewed and by who?

Our Family Plan for Enhancing Safety

What are our family strengths?	Do we have any worries?	How will we feel when these worries are fixed?	What have we agreed and how will it work?
<p><i>EXAMPLE:</i></p> <p><i>Mummy and Grandma are good friends and we like going to Grandma's house.</i></p>	<p><i>We remember when Daddy got cross at Mummy, when picking us up on a Saturday. It made us feel scared, so sometimes we don't want to go to bed on Fridays</i></p>	<p><i>We won't feel worried going to bed on Friday night and will be excited to see Daddy on Saturday morning</i></p>	<p><i>We are going to stay with Grandma after school on Friday so Daddy can pick us up from her's on Saturday morning.</i></p> <p><i>Mummy and Daddy are going to have a special email address just to talk about us and the time we see Daddy.</i></p>

References

1. Sturge. C & Glaser. D (2000) *Contact and Domestic Violence: The Experts' Court Report* in Family Law 615 (September)
2. **Safe Lives 'DASH' Risk Checklist**, available at:
3. <https://safelives.org.uk/practice-support/resources-identifying-risk-victims-face> (including alternative language versions)
4. **The Parent's Handbook**, Women's Aid: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/the-parents-handbook/making-a-safety-plan/>
5. Safety Advice, Refuge Charity: <https://www.refuge.org.uk/get-help-now/safety-planning-living-with-partner/>