

Family Functioning Assessment Guidance

This form provides guidance to the Child Protection Worker in assessing the child, the child's parents, home, and family. The guidance is intended to assist staff in facilitating a conversation with the family to identify strengths and areas of need relating to risk and safety, child well-being, services, and supports. Not all bullets listed under each section may be applicable. They are listed for consideration as each topic is being assessed; therefore, **documentation regarding every bullet is not required.**

This assessment of the family functioning is the critical first step in exploring the underlying causes that may have led to the Department's attention. After synthesis and analysis, use the information to develop a "big picture" understanding of the child and family. The Family Functioning Assessment aids in understanding how the identified safety, risk and overall functioning of the family provides for the safety, well-being, and permanency of the child.

Family Risk and Safety Concerns

This section should focus on why the Department is involved and what the current danger indicators are for the family (noted on the [Safety Assessment, 470-4132](#)). Talk with the family about the absence or presence of all current danger indicators identified (behaviors or conditions that describe a child being in imminent danger of serious harm). If no danger indicators were identified, please provide your rationale.

Risks identified during the assessment (noted on the Risk Assessment) and any other concerns that did not rise to the level of a danger indicator should also be included. Talk with the family about the risk level for their children and the absence or presence of factors that contribute to that risk level.

Parents and caregivers should be asked what they are struggling with or what they feel the risk and safety concerns are. Any information from collateral contacts that is relevant to safety and risk should be documented in this section as well. **Please do not include Protected Health Information in the narrative sections below; this information needs to be placed in the Redactable Information section.**

Family risk and safety concerns could include:

- Domestic violence
- Past history – parents' childhood trauma
- Substance use
- Sexual abuse
- Mental health
- Emotional abuse/criticism of child
- Physical abuse
- Lack of clothing or food
- Failure to provide proper supervision
- Dangerous home environment
- Failure to get medical or mental health treatment for a child
- Child testing positive for drugs
- Cognitive impairment
- Lack of formal or informal supports

Narrative of current danger indicators:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Narrative of risk factors:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Child Well-Being

This section should focus on the child(ren) and include the child's strengths, needs and vulnerabilities that impact the safety, well-being, and permanency of the child. Talk with the family about the vulnerabilities for the child that were noted on the Safety Assessment as well as any other vulnerabilities, strengths or needs of the child which are identified by the family. Be sure to include the child's voice. Any information from collateral contacts that is relevant to the child's well-being should be documented in this section as well. **Please do not include Protected Health Information in the narrative sections below; this information needs to be placed in the Redactable Information section.**

The child's strengths, needs and vulnerabilities that impact the safety, well-being, and permanency of the child could include:

- Ability to access protective relationships
- Child's age and developmental level
- Child's educational needs and school performance
- Child's health (do NOT include diagnoses or medication in this section)
- Child's mental health (do NOT include diagnoses, medication or engagement in services in this section)
- Relationship with parents and caregivers
- Child's view of self
- Child's view of parents and caregivers
- Relationship with peers and siblings

Narrative of child's strengths:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Narrative of child's vulnerabilities and needs:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Family Strengths, Services, and Supports

This section should focus on the strengths and needs identified for the child, child's parents or caregivers, home, and family. With the family, review the risk and safety concerns as well as the child's strengths, needs, and vulnerabilities that were identified in the two previous sections. Discuss the strengths and needs around parental capabilities that were noted on the Safety Assessment as well as any other protective factors present.

Talk with the family about strengths and needs of the child's parents or caregivers. Discuss supervision of the child, disciplinary practices, developmental enrichment opportunities, the physical and mental health of parents and caregivers and use of alcohol or drugs.

Talk with the family about strengths and needs around family interaction. Discuss bonding with children, expectations of children, mutual support within the family and relationships between household members.

Talk with the family about strengths and needs of the home environment. Discuss housing stability and habitability, safety in the community, income and employment, financial management, food and nutrition, personal hygiene, transportation, and learning environment. If permission to visit or evaluate the home is refused, document the reason in this section and talk with a supervisor about the necessity for the home visit and whether a court order should be requested.

Any information from collateral contacts that is relevant to the child's parents or caregivers, home, and family should be documented in this section as well. **Please do not include Protected Health Information in the narrative sections below; this information needs to be placed in the Redactable Information section.**

Family strengths and needs could include:

- Ability and willingness to set aside own needs for child when necessary
- Physical ability and energy to care for the child (do NOT include diagnoses or medication in this section)
- Mental capacity to care for the child (do NOT include diagnoses, medication or engagement in services in this section)
- Expectations of the child
- Disciplinary practice
- Structure/routine in place
- Substance use (do NOT include diagnosis or engagement in treatment services in this section)
- History of protecting the child when threat of danger is present
- Accurate perception of child including child's strengths and needs
- Ability to meet basic needs
- How the parent or caregiver feels about the child
- Safe home environment for the children
- Understanding of developmental stages
- Bond with the child
- Impulse control
- Child's presence in the community
- Supervision of child
- Select appropriate substitute caregivers

- Parents/Caregivers ability to communicate clearly and openly with each other
- Relationship between household members and extended family
- Development and enrichment opportunities for the child
- Housing stability and habitability
- Safety in community
- Income, employment, and financial management
- Transportation

Narrative of child's parents, home environment, and family strengths:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Narrative of child's parents, home environment, and family needs:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Recommendation for Services

This section should focus on the formal and informal services and supports that will address the strengths and needs identified for the child, child's parents or caregivers, home, and family.

Services and supports that address the strengths and needs of the child, child's parent or caregiver, home, and family include:

- Engagement of relatives and fictive kin
- Involvement with or referrals to domestic violence advocacy programs
- Referrals to treatment agencies – substance use, mental health and medical providers
- Involvement with or referrals to school services, AEA, childcare
- Involvement with or referrals to mentors, Parent Partner, community organizations, church
- Provision of information on financial support – work, TANF, social security, food banks, transportation assistance
- Involvement with or referrals to Non-Agency Voluntary Services
- Involvement with or referrals to Family Centered Services

Narrative of existing formal and informal services and supports:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Narrative of newly identified or referred services and supports:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)