TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

Voluntary Caregiver Manual

August 2026

Table of Contents

Voluntary Caregiver Manual 1

Table of Contents i

Who is a Voluntary Caregiver? 1

Do I have Legal Custody? 1

What is an Authorization Agreement for a Non-Parent Relative or Voluntary Adult Caregiver? 2

Why is a Family-Initiated Safety Placement Needed? 2

What should I expect when the child lives with me? 3

How long will the child stay with me? 3

At Placement You'll Receive: 4

Expenses: 4

What Could Happen in a CPI Investigation? 4

What about my relationship with the parents? 5

When do I need to talk to the CPS/CPI Caseworker? 5

What should I do for the child's parents? 6

What must I do for the child? 6

What if the child has special needs? 6

Will the caseworker visit my home? 6

When does the child visit his or her parents? 7

Can I discipline the child? 7

Allowable Forms or Discipline 8

How will I know when the PCPS ends? 8

How You'll Know 8

If the Child Is Returning Home to the parent 8

If the Child Will Stay with You Without DFPS Involvement 8

What Happens Next 9

What kind of help is available? 9

Will CPS/CPI pay for childcare? 10

Federal Government Assistance 10

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) 10

Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) 10
Important Terms 13
Safe Sleep 15
Poison Prevention: 16
TV & Furniture Tip Overs 16
Car Safety 17
Water Safety 17
Gun Safety 17
Websites and resources 18
Closing 18

Thank you for opening your home to a child at risk of being abused or neglected. It's a big decision, and the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) hopes this booklet will help you understand your role in keeping the child safe and cared for temporarily.

Note: The "Important Terms" section on pages 14-16 of this booklet defines important terms used throughout this manual.

Who is a Voluntary Caregiver?

A voluntary caregiver is someone who agrees to take care of a child while

The parents are involved in an investigation or receiving Family Based Safety Services (FBSS). A voluntary caregiver must already have a long-standing and significant relationship with the child. The parent or guardian places their child in your home and the child is not in DFPS custody. This is called a Family-Initiated Parental Child Safety Placement (PCSP). A caseworker will visit you either before or at the time the parent places their child in your home to make sure the child is safe. You will need to give the Child Protective Investigations (CPI) or Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworker the following information:

- Your birth date.
- Your Social Security number.
- A picture ID (such as a Texas Driver's License).
- All names you have used before.

CPI or CPS must complete criminal and abuse or neglect history background checks on everyone who lives in your home 14 years of age or older. CPI or

CPS will decide if anything it finds might affect the child's safety. CPI or CPS must also visit your home to check for safety issues.

Do I have Legal Custody?

No, you do not have legal custody of the child. DFPS does not either. This is a temporary voluntary placement by the parent. The parent has custody of the child. That means you will want to ask the parents to help:

- Enroll the child in school and after-school activities.
- Approve medical treatment and to pay for it.
- Help develop a plan to ensure the child's medical, educational, and basic needs are met.

You may be able to use an "Authorization Agreement for

Nonparent Relative or Voluntary Adult Caregiver" if you are caring for a child as a voluntary caregiver.

What is an Authorization Agreement for a Non-Parent Relative or Voluntary Adult Caregiver?

This is an agreement between the parent of the child and you when you are an adult who is caring for a grandchild, sibling, niece, or nephew. You can even use this agreement when CPI or CPS is not involved with the family. This agreement gives you the authority to do essential tasks while caring for a child, such as:

- Get medical treatment or insurance coverage.
- Enroll the child in school or daycare.
- Give permission for the child to play sports or be in academic clubs.
- Get the child a learner's permit, driver's license, or state ID card.
- Give permission for the child to get a job.
- Apply for and receive public benefits for the child.

This agreement does not give you legal "custody" of the child, and the child's parent can cancel it at any time. This agreement does not prevent a parent from taking a child home. It simply makes it easier for a relative to get services and do other important tasks for the child.

DFPS staff may not notarize this agreement or any type of power of attorney form. These forms are for the family to fill out and complete on their own.

You can learn more about this form along with review frequently asked questions on the Texas Law Help website at: https://texaslawhelp.org/article/authorization-for-nonparent-care-of-a-child.

You can get this form on the agency website at: http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/site_map/forms.asp.

Why is a Family-Initiated Safety Placement Needed?

Family-Initiated Parental Child Safety Placement may be needed to keep a child safe while the child's parents deal with whatever issues are putting the child at risk of child abuse or neglect.

By law, CPI must investigate reports of child abuse or neglect by a parent or caregiver. We know all families have strengths. Families know their children best and want them to be safe. That's why CPI and CPS wants the family's help and may ask that you, the parent, and others to take part in a Family Team Meeting (FTM). Several things may happen at this meeting including:

- Everyone is encouraged to talk openly about child safety issues.
- You, the parents, extended family members, and other will make a plan to keep the child safe while the parent works on making their home safe.
- The parent may choose to place the child with a family member or close family friend.

Sometimes parents place their children with a relative or close friend before or after CPI gets involved with the family. If CPI is already investigating, you will get information about the child before you accept him or her into your home. This helps you decide if this would be a good decision for your family. A Safety Plan, called a Family-Initiated Parental Child Safety Placement Agreement and Safety Plan, might be put in place because of a Family Team Meeting or at other times during an investigation. A Safety Plan is a written agreement between CPI or CPS and the family. It outlines what needs to be done to make children safe right away. This might include parents placing children with a family member or good friend. If the family is working with Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS), these actions are usually in the Family Service Plan as well.

What should I expect when the child lives with me?

As a voluntary caregiver, you should follow the rules below:

- Provide a safe and loving home for the child.
- Sign and follow the Safety Plan agreement.
- Care for the child as written in the Safety Plan.
- If the parent agrees, you will get a copy of the Family Service Plan.
- If the parent does not agree, the caseworker will give you all the information about the services the child needs and how to get them enrolled.
- Go to all meetings on case-planning and decisions about the child in your care.
- Talk to the caseworker on a regular basis so you can help keep the child safe.
- Ask for information about the child from the caseworker that will help you care for the child.
- Let the caseworker know if there are any problems or if you have any questions.
- Provide supervision when the parent is with the child and encourage the parent to spend time with their child.

How long will the child stay with me?

A PCSP is meant to be a short-term plan. The length of time depends on what the family needs to do to keep the child safe. In most cases, the goal is for the child to return home as soon as the family can safely care for them again.

Sometimes families need more time before a child can safely return home. If that happens, your caseworker will talk with both the parents and the caregiver about whether the PCSP should be extended.

A PCSP must be evaluated and updated by day 30, 60 and 90. If a PCSP is extended to 90 days or beyond both the parents and the parent’s attorney must agree and sign the form 2207 or a judge renders an order to continue the placement

At Placement You'll Receive:

When a Parental Child Safety Placement begins, your caseworker will meet with you and the parents to go over important information and paperwork. You will receive copies of the following items:

- Safety Plan/Parental Child Safety Placement (Form 2207)-Explains what safety concerns led to the placement and what steps are being taken to keep the child safe.
- Caregiver Manual-This guide explains your role, your rights and who to contact for help
- Caseworker and supervisor contact information-Names, phone numbers and email addresses so you can reach your DFPS team.
- Authorization Agreement for Nonparent care of a child (Form 2638, If applicable) Allows certain relatives such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, or adult siblings to make decisions about school or medical care. Your caseworker will help you understand if this applies to you.
- School Residency- Verifies the child's address with the caregiver so the child can stay enrolled in their current school during the placement. This letter should be provided ot the school immediately.

Expenses:

Voluntary caregivers agree to meet all the child's needs and expenses. You can ask the parent for money, clothes, and other items for the child. There are also other ways to get financial help. You will find more information near the back of this booklet in the "Federal Government Assistance" and "Finding Help in Texas"

What Could Happen in a CPI Investigation?

A CPI investigation is usually finished and closed in 60 days, but it can take longer. CPI may close the case because it decides the child is safe and the likelihood of abuse or neglect in the near future has been reduced. CPI may offer CPS FBSS services to the family if it believes the child is still at risk of abuse or neglect at the end of the investigation. This means CPS will continue working with the family. A judge may decide to order a family to accept these services if they are unwilling to use them. In some cases, you may be asked to speak in court and go take part in meetings for case planning. Your CPS caseworker will make a Family Service Plan with input from the family if the family is getting Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS). The plan will outline:

- The situations that would make the child unsafe.
- The services CPS provides.
- The tasks, goals, and changes for the family as well as when they must be done.

CPS and the family will work on the goals and changes that will keep the child safe. You may need to:

- Provide daily care for the child and give the child a ride to appointments.
- Let people come to your home to provide services to the child.
- Sit in on visits with the parent and the child (if you agree).

FBSS cases are open for a limited time, usually 6 to 9 months. The CPS caseworker monitors the parents' progress and the safety and well-being of the child during that time. There are several options if the parents don't make the changes they need to make:

- The child can stay with you if you agree.
- If both parties agree, you may ask a judge to give you custody.
- The parent may sign the Authorization Agreement for Nonparent Care or Voluntary Adult Caregiver Form to give you permission to continue to care for the child.
- If the child is unsafe, a Judge may decide to give CPS custody.

What about my relationship with the parents?

Your relationship with the parents may change when you care for their child. You should talk with the caseworker and the parent about these changes and remind parents that they are still the mother and father of the child. It is okay to ask parents to pay for the child's daycare, clothing, diapers, food, etc. Parents may also help with the child's daily activities if the Safety Plan or Family Service Plan allows it. Remember you must follow the rules of the Safety Plan.

Feel free to talk with the caseworker about any concerns. It is also important to talk to the parents about the child's daily routine, favorite books, toys, food, and anything else that may help you keep to the child's routine and make the child feel as normal as possible. Children feel more secure when there is healthy communication among the adults who care for them.

When do I need to talk to the CPS/CPI Caseworker?

These are some examples of when you need to talk to your CPS caseworker, but there may be other times as well.

- Any emergencies involving the child.
- Any changes that may affect your ability to care for the child.
- If anyone moves into or out of your home.
- If you need a friend or other relative to help care for the child.
- If you are thinking about changing the child's school or daycare.
- Before making any changes to the child's placement.

Call the police and your caseworker if you feel you or the child is in danger from the parents. If it is after normal business hours, call the CPS Hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or the police at 911.

What should I do for the child's parents?

It is really important that you tell the parents you believe the situation can improve. This helps parents keep hope alive and stay motivated. Although it does not always work out, CPI and CPS wants children to return home if it is safe. Here are some ways you can help.

- Show parents how to relate to the child in positive ways, including how to listen and talk to the child.
- Help the parents get community resources.
- Help the parents understand the importance of visiting with their child.
- Help the parents understand better ways to discipline their child.
- Praise the parents for positive, effective interactions with their child.

What must I do for the child?

Take good care of the child and keep him or her safe (See the 'Keeping Children Safe Wherever You Go!' tip page in this manual).

- Meet the child's daily needs.
- Take the child to appointments or make other arrangements.
- Make sure the child gets medical and dental care, including therapy and
- preventive care.
- Enroll the child in school or make sure the child's original school knows
- the child is staying with you.
- Work with the school to make sure the child is doing well.
- Give children positive feedback and listen to what they think is important.
- Encourage the child to express his or her emotions.
- Use positive discipline with the child (talk with the caseworker about ways
- to discipline).
- Try not to say bad things about the parents to the child.

What if the child has special needs?

Talk to your caseworker. Your caseworker can work with you and the parents to come up with a plan to meet these needs.

Will the caseworker visit my home?

Yes. From time to time, the CPI or CPS caseworker will make home visits to check on the child's safety and health. These visits may be announced or unannounced. Home visits also give you a chance to get answers to your questions. This is what you may expect during the visits:

- The worker will look at the conditions in your home.
- The worker will ask to see where the child sleeps.
- The worker may talk to the child alone, depending on the child's age.

- If CPS remains involved after the investigation, a FBSS caseworker will see the child once a month or more depending on what is happening with the family.
- The caseworker may need to visually examine the child.

When does the child visit his or her parents?

CPI and CPS usually encourages parents and children to continue to see each other when they are not living together. Depending on the case, you may be asked to sit in on these visits in your home. These visits may upset the child, but this is normal, and it is important to keep the child and parent in contact. In some cases, the caseworker may sit in on the visits or arrange for visits outside of your home.

Supervised visits include watching how the parent interacts with the child during a visit. You may be asked to watch for the things listed below:

- How the parent handles the child's behavior.
- The parent-child relationship, including attachment and communication skills.
- How the parent cares for the child.
- How the child reacts to the parent.

You are expected to share what you see with the caseworker. You may do this in writing or by talking to the caseworker.

Can I discipline the child?

CPI and CPS discourages physical discipline. The child must be able to learn from discipline and it must be helpful, fair, and consistent. It must make sense and be due to a specific action. You are expected to talk to the child in a way that the child understands. Below are some ways to do this:

- Tell the child what he or she did wrong.
- Tell the child why you are disciplining him or her.
- Make sure the child knows how long the discipline will last.
- If the child can do something to end the discipline period, make sure the child knows about it.
- Discuss what you think is good behavior.

Before you decide how to discipline the child, make sure you consider the child's actions, age, earlier experiences, and reaction to discipline. The time-out method should be supervised by an adult and last only one minute for every year of the child's age. For example, if the child is 3 years old, the time-out should last only 3 minutes. If you have questions about discipline, talk with your caseworker.

Allowable Forms or Discipline

Discipline must suit the child's age, circumstances, and developmental needs. No discipline should cause any kind of bruising or injuries. It is important to:

- Set routines for the child.
- Set reasonable limits that the child understands.
- Act the way you want the child to act.
- Offer choices to the child.
- Explain the discipline to the child.
- Repeat instructions to the child.
- Use time outs.
- Make sure the consequences make sense or are natural to the child.
- Reinforce the behavior you want from the child.

How will I know when the PCPS ends?

How You'll Know

The DFPS caseworker will contact you and the parent to let you know the placement is ending.

You will receive verbal notice from the caseworker when the placement is ending and/or the case is closing.

If the child remains in your care after closure, the caseworker will provide written confirmation and a summary of what happens next — including any next steps for the family and resources for you as the caregiver. All of this will be documented on a PCSP Closure Form.

If the Child Is Returning Home to the parent

The caseworker will schedule a final Family Meeting or conversation with you and the parent to discuss how the transition home will occur.

You'll have the opportunity to share updates about how the child has been doing, school information, and anything that might help the parent as the child returns home.

If the Child Will Stay with You Without DFPS Involvement

The caseworker will explain that you may continue the arrangement privately without DFPS oversight.

If you and the parent want to formalize the arrangement, you can use:

- Authorization Agreement for Nonparent Caregiver (Form 2638), and
- the PCSP Case Closure Form that both you and the parent sign.

After case closure, DFPS no longer monitors the placement or provides case management services.

The PCSP Case Closure Form documents the agreed-upon plan for the child after DFPS involvement ends. The form summarizes whether the child will return home or remain with the caregiver, outlines the responsibilities of the parent and caregiver, and provides information about available resources and supports. The parent and caregiver will review and sign the form together before the case closes.

What Happens Next

You can continue to reach out to community supports such as schools, local family resource centers, or kinship support programs for guidance and connection.

If new safety concerns arise after the case closes, anyone can make a new report to DFPS.

What kind of help is available?

You may be able to get financial assistance and other help to care for the child. See the "Federal Government Assistance" and "Finding Help in Texas" section at the end of this booklet. For most government aid, you will need:

- A Texas driver's license or other picture ID.
- A Social Security number for each adult and child (or proof that you have applied for a number).
- A document that provides proof of your relationship to the child.
- Proof of income.
- Proof of assets.
- Proof of rent and utilities costs.

if you are related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption, you may receive a "child-only" grant and Medicaid through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) manages this program. If you qualify and are a grandparent, great-grandparent, or great-great grandparent, you may be able to get an additional onetime payment of $1,000. HHSC has a handout about the benefits for grandparents raising their grandchildren. The handout is available at HHSC offices across the state. Call 211 to find the TANF office nearest you or you can download it at https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/help-raising-children-related-to-you.pdf.

Here are a few organizations that provide information to grandparents who are raising their grandchildren:

- AARP (1-800-424-3410 or www.aarp.org/grandparents).
- Generations United (www.gu.org).

- Grandfamilies.org (https://www.grandfamilies.org/About-Us).

Will CPS/CPI pay for childcare?

CPI or CPS may be able to help pay for childcare, so talk to your caseworker. Remember that CPI or CPS cannot pay for any childcare that happens before CPI or CPS approves those services. CPI or CPS will give you the exact date for when childcare services that it will pay for may begin.

Federal Government Assistance

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

TANF provides monthly financial aid to families who qualify. This program also helps children who have not had parental support or care. Children who are eligible for TANF are also eligible for Medicaid. More information is available at http://www.tanf.us/texas.html.

Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC)

WIC can help grandparents and other relatives buy healthy food for the children in their care. WIC also offers nutritional screening for low-income pregnant women, women with babies 11 months or younger, and children younger than age 5. This program is managed by the Texas Department of State Health Services. For information on how to apply for WIC call 1-800-942-3678 or visit your local WIC office. Office locations and more information about this program can be found at texaswic.org.

Finding Help in Texas

Texas 2-1-1

Calling 211 is a free, easy way to get information about services in your area. Dialing 211 will not work if you are calling from outside Texas. You must dial the service provider directly in that case. You can also search the 211 Texas Database online at www.211texas.org.

Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a program where members share their experiences, strengths, and hopes to help other defeat and recover from alcoholism. You only have to want to stop drinking to join AA. Members go by their first names and confidentiality is highly guarded. There are no dues or fees for membership. The main goal is to stay sober and help other alcoholics get sober. Find more information online at www.aa.org.

Al-Anon and Alateen

These are support groups for people who have been affected by someone else's drinking. They may be parents, children, spouses, partners, brothers, sisters, other family members, friends, employers, employees, or coworkers of alcoholics. For meeting information you can call 1-888-4AL-ANON (1-888-425-2666) or search online at https://al-anon.org/.

Finding Help in Texas

Case Information or Complaints

You can contact the DFPS Office of Consumer Affairs if you have a complaint about how your CPS case is handled. It is a neutral office that will take an unbiased look into your case to make sure DFPS policy and procedure were followed and make recommendations. You can reach them by calling 1-800-720-7777, by e-mail (oca@dfps.state.tx.us) or on the web at https://www.dfps.texas.gov/Contact_Us/QuestionsandComplaints/OCA.asp.

You can call the Health and Human Services (HHSC) Ombudsman office at

877-787-8999 if you have problems or complaints about a state agency health

and human service or program.

Child Abuse or Neglect Reporting

The public can report abuse or neglect by calling the Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or online at www.txabusehotline.org. Always call 911 in an emergency. An emergency is a situation where a child seems to be unsafe or in danger of abuse or neglect that could cause death or serious harm.

Child Care

Find childcare in your area by visiting www.TxChildCareSearch.org. Learn more about the choosing quality child care and factors to consider at https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/safety/child-care/exploring-day-care

Child Care Assistance

The Child Care Assistance program of the Texas Workforce Commission helps eligible parents pay for childcare. The requirements for this aid vary in different regions of the state. More information about the program can be found at https://www.twc.texas.gov/programs/child-care. To find out if you can get subsidized childcare, contact your Workforce Solutions office. This number can be found by calling 211 or at https://www.twc.texas.gov/contact-us.

Child Support Payments

Even though you may be caring for a child in your home, the parents may be financially responsible. The Texas Office of Attorney General enforces child support orders in Texas. For non-custodial parent information, review the frequently asked questions at https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/child-support/forms/cs-faq%20correct.pdf.

Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECI)

ECI services are for families with children up to three years of age who are delayed in their development. These delays may affect a child's ability to walk, talk, crawl, understand, see, or hear. For more information or to refer a child, call 1-877-787-8999 or visit https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/early-childhood-intervention-services. CPS may automatically refer the children to ECI if needed.

Head Start Program

Head Start is a child development program for children from low-income families. Children ages three to five years can attend. Early Head Start provides learning and development services for families with children younger than age three. Call toll-free 1-866-763-6481 or see www.txhsa.org.

Legal Services

A court may get involved if the child's parents do not follow their Family Service Plan or new safety issues come to light. The court may give CPS or someone else legal custody. If at any time you want to ask the court for custody of a child, you have the right to talk to your own lawyer. DFPS cannot offer private legal advice, and this manual does not do that. You must get an attorney of your own to get legal advice about seeking legal rights to or legal custody of a child. If you cannot afford a private attorney, there are resources and legal aid organizations that you can contact. You can call the State Bar of Texas Legal Referral line at 1-800-252-9690 or see www.texasbar.com/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Can_t_Afford_an_Attorney.

The State Bar does not provide legal aid or promise that it will be available to you. If you are 60 years or older or a Medicare recipient, you may qualify for free advice from the Texas Legal Services Center at 1-800-622-2520 or see http://www.tlsc.org.

Local Mental Health Authority (MHMR)

The Texas Department of State Health Services provides community mental health services for adults and children. You can find services in your area by calling the number for your local mental health authority. You can get this number by calling 211, or at https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use.

Texas Education Agency (TEA)

TEA oversees Texas public school districts. They also provide information about special education and other federal programs to help students with special needs. Learn more information at https://tea.texas.gov/.

Your Texas Benefits

our Texas Benefits lets you see if you are eligible for programs provided by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and other state agencies. Learn about various programs at www.yourtexasbenefits.com.

Important Terms

Child Protective Investigations (CPI)

The list below shows some of the things that CPI does.

- Investigates reports of abuse and neglect of children through a traditional investigation or alternative response approach.
- Refers families to community resources or CPS programs to reduce high risk of future abuse or neglect.
- Places children in foster care when necessary to keep the child safe.

Child Protective Services (CPS)

The list below shows some of the things that CPS does.

- Provides services to children and families in their own homes.
- Places children in foster care when necessary to keep the child safe.
- Places children in adoptive homes when a court takes away the rights of the parents.
- Provides services to help foster kids when they become adults.

Court-Ordered Participation

- A court can order a parent or parents to participate in services if they appear unwilling to cooperate with the services CPS is recommending. This is done so children can remain safe in their own homes or with voluntary caregivers.

Department of Family and Protective Services (Department or DFPS)

This is the parent agency of CPI and CPS. The list below shows some of the things the Department does.

- Protects children and the elderly.
- Protects adults with disabilities who live at home.
- Protects adults with disabilities who are in state care.
- License group day-care homes, day- care centers, and registered family homes.

Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)

- CPS services that help families strengthen their ability to protect the children and reduce threats to the child safety. FBSS works with families who maintain their legal rights over their children to reduce the high risk of future abuse or neglect.

Family Group Conference (FGC)

- A meeting that CPS, the child's family, the child, extended family, and close friends attend. This meeting may happen during an FBSS case. Participants make a plan for the safety and well-being of the child. The meeting includes private "family time" and coming up with tasks to support the family and keep the child safe. Family Team Meetings are one type of Family Group Conference.

Family Service Plan

- A written agreement between CPS and parents to address safety concerns for the child. The goal is to keep the child safe and, if possible, safely return the child home. The plan also includes the services CPS will provide and tasks for the family to complete.

Family Team Meeting (FTM)

- This is a meeting of CPI or CPS, family, relatives, friends and other professional during a case. Participants make a plan to keep the children safe and well cared for. These meetings help the family quickly organize and respond to concerns about a child's safety.

FBSS Caseworker

- The CPS caseworker who helps the parents, child, and caregivers meet the goals in the Family Service Plan.

Home Assessment

- This is a report on the safety and condition of the home of any person being asked to care for a child in a CPI or CPS case.

Home Visit

- From time to time, a CPI or CPS worker will visit the home where the child is living. These visits are to check on how the child and family are doing with the tasks given to them. The caseworker also may check the home for safety hazards. These visits may be announced or unannounced.

Family-Initiated Parental Child Safety Placement (PCSP)

- This is when a parent picks another home for the child to live in when CPI or CPS finds safety issues in an investigation or FBSS case. The child may stay in this other home while the parents get services and deal with issues that put the child at risk. This type of placement helps avoid legally removing children from their parents, reduce disruption for the family, and ensure the safety of the child.

Safety Plan

- A Safety Plan is a written agreement between CPI or CPS and the family. The plan spells out what needs to be done to make sure the child is safe right away. The caseworker can change the active safety plan, if needed.

Voluntary Caregiver

- A person who agrees to take care of a child whose parents are involved in a CPI investigation or CPS FBSS case.

Safe Sleep

A-Sleep ALONE

B-On their BACK, with no blankets or bedding

C-In a CRIB and COOL

S-In a SMOKE FREE room

Do-
Do put babies to sleep alone on their backs in a crib or on another firm surface with a tight-fitting bottom sheet. If the baby leaves a dent in the bed, it's too soft.

Do keep babies away from second hand smoke.
Dress the baby lightly and control the room temperature.

Do breast feed and use pacifiers. Both may lower risk of
sudden death.

DON'T

Don't put a baby to sleep with blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, or bumper pads.

Don't cover a baby's face or let a baby cover its face with anything.

Don't let a baby sleep with older kids.
Don't sleep with a baby, especially if you have been using alcohol, drugs, or medicines that make you sleepy. Don't sleep with a baby when you are very tired.

Don't put a baby to sleep on chairs, sofas, futons, beanbags, or cushions.

Don't put babies to sleep on soft beds such as pillow-tops, waterbeds, or memory foam. If the baby leaves a dent in the bed, it's too soft.
Don't expose babies to smoke.

Poison Prevention:

- Keep all medicine out of the reach and sight of children. Use the dosing device that comes with the medicine. The right dose is important, especially for young children.

- Teaspoons or tablespoons used for cooking do not measure the same amount as the dosing device.
- Store household products, cleaners, and chemicals out sight and reach of children. Don't store them under the kitchen sink and in the bathroom. Remember that kids may get into other places like a purse or side table.
- Keep cleaning products in their original containers. Don't put a product that may be poison in something other than its original container.

TV & Furniture Tip Overs

- Secure TVs and furniture so they can't tip over. Mount flat TVs to the wall so they can't be pulled down.
- Follow the maker's instructions to make sure you have a secure fit. If you have an old box TV, put it on furniture that is low, stable, and designed for the size and weight of the TV.
- Use brackets, braces, or wall straps to secure furniture to wall.

Car Safety

- Always use car and booster seats. The law says you must put kids, under the age of two, in a car seat that faces backward and is installed in the back seat of the car. Older kids must be in booster seats or car seats until they are 8 years old or reach 4-foot, 9-inches tall.
- Talk to your kids about the dangers of playing around
- cars and watch them closely when they're around cars.
- Check to make sure that there are no children nearby
- before you get into a car to drive.
- Never leave a child alone in a car, no matter how short
- the stop or the weather, even if the windows are cracked.
- Use reminders that your child is in the back seat. Leave
- something you need in the backseat like your purse or
- phone or leave a stuffed animal or toy in the front seat.

Water Safety

Watch kids around water at all times.

- Don't read or talk on the phone or anything that takes your attention off the child.
- Make sure you know who is supposed to watch the child around water.
- **Never leave a baby alone in a bath for any reason.** Get what you need before you start. Take the baby with you if you leave.
- Never leave small children alone near water. This includes pools, lakes, bathtubs, or even toilets.
- Make sure toddlers can't get out of the house and get into pools, hot tubs, or any body of water.

Gun Safety

There are ways to keep a child from getting a loaded gun:

- Keep your gun unloaded when you are not using it. Don't store bullets and guns in the same place. Use cable locks or trigger locks. Use locks with no keys – like combination, magnetic, or
- electronic locks.
- Store guns in a lock box, vault, or safe.

Teach your child what to do if he or she sees a gun:

1. Stop & don't touch
2. Leave the area
3. Tell an adult

Websites and resources

For additional tips, resources, and support:

HHS Family Support Services webpage.

Texas Abuse Hotline

1-800-252-5400 or

TxAbuseHotline.org

Closing

If there were more content in this report, the page numbers would continue to automatically appear at the bottom of each page.