



<b><u>SAFETY ASSESSMENT (Not used for Child Care, Group Care or Institutional investigations)</u></b>		
Safety Outcome (Current Safety Assessment Must Be Attached)		
Safe: _____ Conditionally Safe: _____ Unsafe: _____		
<b><u>RISK ASSESSMENT (Not used for Child Care, Group Care or Institutional investigations)</u></b>		
Risk Assessment Outcome (Current Risk Assessment Must Be Attached)		
Neglect Score	Abuse Score	Risk Level
Override _____yes _____no If yes, see Risk Assessment		

**FAMILY STRENGTHS and NEEDS ASSESSMENT**  
(Not used for Child Care, Group Care or Institutional investigations)

**SUMMARY:**

The Family Strengths and Needs Assessment Summary serves as the guide for the development of the Initial Case Plan and should detail the needs and the activities intended to prevent foster care placement of child for whom, absent effective preventive services, the plan would be removal from the home. This plan is in effect no longer than 30 days while the In-Home Family Services Agreement is being developed with the family. This plan shall also be used when the child is placed outside the home prior to the case decision.

**(Current Family Strengths and Needs Assessment Must Be Attached.)**

Identify the Family Strengths:

<b>INITIAL CASE PLAN</b> (Not used for Child Care, Group Care or Institutional investigations)
Identify the behavioral needs and activities to be addressed through CPS Case Planning and Case Management or Child Placement services until the In-Home or Out-of-Home Family Services Agreement is developed.
Identify behaviors that need to change:

Identify activities that will begin to address behaviors:

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHILD CARE, GROUP CARE, OR INSTITUTIONS</b>
Identify the recommendations for licensing issues to the Division of Child Development or to the appropriate licensing agency in the case of group homes and institutions as a result of an Investigative Assessment.





**North Carolina  
Case Decision Summary/Initial Case Plan  
Structured CPS Assessment Case Decision Process  
Policy and Procedures**

Determining whether a child is abused, neglected, or dependent requires careful assessment of all the information obtained during the CPS Assessment process. In making a case decision it is important to assess not only that maltreatment has occurred, but what are the current safety issues, and is there future risk of harm and the need for protection. The following questions should provide the structure for making a case decision:

1. Has the maltreatment occurred with frequency and/or is the maltreatment severe?  
*This question applies to the history of the family. Any and all child maltreatment within the family that was revealed through the CPS Assessment should be considered when answering this question.*
2. Are there current safety issues? Would the child be unsafe in the home where the abuse, neglect or dependency occurred?  
*This question applies to the situation at the time of the case decision.*
3. Is the child at risk of future harm?
4. Is the child in need of protection?  
*This question applies to the situation at the time of the case decision as to whether ongoing CPS in-home services or placement out of the home are needed to protect the child.*

To make a case decision to substantiate or find “services needed,” the answer to one or more of the above questions must be yes, and there must be documentation to support the answers included on the case decision tool. Only in unusual circumstances should a supervisor and staffing team change the indicated structured case decision. In those cases, the supervisor should complete the “Rationale for Case Decision/Disposition” to justify the change.

**Note:** In determining severity of maltreatment, consideration should be given to the degree of harm, level of severity, extent of injury, egregiousness, gravity and the seriousness of maltreatment.

In determining current safety, consider safety issues that exist at the time of making the case decision.

If the decision of the Safety Assessment is Safe, and the findings of the Risk Assessment and the Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs are both Low, then the case would not be substantiated or found “services needed,” unless there are unusual circumstances.

**Note:** In cases where poverty is the sole factor of the maltreatment and services were offered and accepted by the parent/caretaker, the case decision should be: unsubstantiated, “services recommended” or “services not recommended,” unless there are unusual circumstances. In cases when poverty is the sole factor of the maltreatment, and there is an ongoing history/pattern of services being offered and declined and the pattern of maltreatment continues, it would be appropriate to substantiate or find “services needed” if the answers to the above four questions are “yes,” unless there are unusual circumstances.

**Note:** When the finding is “services needed,” there is no perpetrator identified. Therefore, on Page 1 of the Structured Case Decision Tool, check “N/A” under “Perpetrator.” For each child, indicate in the “Children” section the individual case decision by circling the appropriate choice. Following is the Key for these choices: S (Substantiated), U (Unsubstantiated), SN (Services Needed), SR (Services Recommended), SNR (Services Not Recommended), SP (Services Provided, No Longer Needed).

**Note:** This form also serves as the Initial Case Plan, except for investigative assessments involving Child Care settings, Group Homes, or Institutions. In those types of investigative assessments, complete the section labeled “RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHILD CARE, GROUP CARE, OR INSTITUTIONS” and fax the entire form to the Division of Child Development or the appropriate licensing agency within seven (7) days.