



Parental Child Safety Placement (PCSP) Resource Guide

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DEFINITION OF PCSP

A **Parental Child Safety Placement (PCSP)** is a temporary, short-term out-of-home placement a parent can make when DFPS staff determine that the child cannot safely stay with a parent. This may also include a placement necessary to protect a victim from a sibling perpetrator. DFPS staff may offer the parents the option of placing the child out of the home rather than DFPS petitioning for court-ordered removal of the child.

The most critical detail to remember about a PCSP is that it is meant to be **short term** and **temporary!** In most instances, it should not last more than 60 days.

Anytime the word "parent" is used when discussing PCSPs, "parent" refers to the person that is responsible for the child/ren. This could be the biological/adoptive parent or someone that has cared for the child for a substantial amount of time, such as a grandparent or aunt that has taken on the parenting role.

OVERALL GOALS OF A PCSP

Keep the Child Safe

The primary goal of every PCSP is to keep the child safe until the child can safely return to the parent.

Return the Child to the Parent

The goal for every child in a PCSP is to safely return to the parent that agreed to place their child out of the home.

Keep the PCSP Short

Another goal is to keep the PCSP as short term as possible. Having a child move out of their home is traumatic for the child. The relationship with their parent is the most important relationship in their life. Even if you see problems with the parent, the child still loves them and in most instances, wants to continue to live with them.

DETERMINING WHETHER TO USE A PCSP

There are times when you are at a home and realize that the children in the home are not safe. It may be the house is covered in animal feces, dirty diapers, and old food lying around. The child is one year old, crawling on the floor, and putting things in her mouth. Mom is a single mom. There is obviously a problem, but it doesn't rise to the level of a removal and it's something that the parent could most likely 'fix' in a day or two. A short-term PCSP with a relative or friend would be helpful, to give the mother time to make the home safe.

WHAT ISSUES POINT TO A PCSP?

Consider a PCSP when there are issues such as:

- The child is vulnerable to some threat or danger (the child may be the victim child or it may be a sibling of the victim child where the placement is needed to protect the children from each other);
- The parent is not able to protect the child at the time;
- The parent is willing to try to resolve the concerns;
- The parent is willing to do what the safety plan says to keep the child safe;
- The concerns can be corrected in a short period of time; and
- The parent has a relative or close friend that is willing to take care of the child for a limited amount of time and the caregiver already has a relationship established with the family.

CAN THE ISSUES BE RESOLVED IN LESS THAN 60 DAYS?

When considering a PCSP, think carefully about the situation and the issues that make you think this child may not be safe. Is it something that can be changed in 1-60 days? If not, consider an alternative method of protection, most likely assessing the situation for a possible removal.

But, if you think the situation can be remedied in 1-60 days, and the parent is willing, a PCSP is a way to keep the children safe in a least disruptive manner.

DECIDING WHETHER PCSP IS A REASONABLE OPTION

The issues we just mentioned can indicate that a PCSP may be a good option for the child and parents. However, there are other considerations and other options to look at. Let's talk about them now.

Is There a Danger Present in the Home?

To use a PCSP, there must be an identified danger indicator in the child's home. When you select "yes" to a Danger Indicator on the safety assessment, you have assessed that there is an immediate or imminent danger to the child that must be addressed prior to leaving the home. You will use a safety plan in most cases to address the danger to the child. If your assessment of the current safety of the home does not identify any dangers to the child, you will not need to develop a Safety Plan, consider a PCSP, or removal. However, even if dangers are not present, there may be other risk factors to address, and you should take the necessary actions to begin reducing those risks.

Are There Enough Protective Actions by Family Members to Keep the Child Safe in the Home?

If there is a danger indicator identified in the home, complete the Household Strengths and Protective Actions Section on the Safety Assessment, to determine if the non-offending parent or other family members can keep the child safe in their home.

It's your job to make sure the children are protected, but you always want to protect them in the least intrusive manner possible. If the Safety Assessment and your professional judgment indicate that the family can take protective actions to ensure the child's safety, a PCSP may not be necessary. Instead, a better option is a Safety Plan that uses another method of protecting the child. These are listed from least restrictive to more restrictive:

- Asking the alleged perpetrator to leave the home;
- Asking a close friend or relative to move into the home to monitor the family and provide safety measures;
- Asking the protective caregiver to move to a safe environment with the child.

However, if the family cannot take the necessary protective actions to ensure the child's safety, a Safety Plan most likely will not be effective. The following are examples of situations that might suggest a family will not be able to take protective actions needed to keep the child safe:

- Prior PCSP was made and the parent did not adhere to the agreement;
- The parent has limited ability to make changes, such as sociopathic, psychotic, or limited intellectual ability.

Under these circumstances, while less likely, a PCSP may still be an option; but before making that decision, you'll need to ask other questions.

Is There Immediate Danger to the Physical Health and/or Safety of the Child?

There are times, when you know from information you gathered, that the parent has little chance of making the necessary change in the 1-60 day time frame of a PCSP.

Example: Physical Abuse

You may be working a case where an infant has a skull fracture. You know the injury happened in the parents' home and no one else was there. The doctor is concerned and says this injury is not accidental. Both parents are denying that anything happened. You immediately know that this is a serious injury and you are not going to be comfortable returning this child home until you're able to get more details about what happened. You need to begin thinking about a removal and talking to your supervisor about it.

Other serious situations may include a child with multiple injuries or broken bones with no reasonable explanation.

Example: Sexual Abuse

There may be a sexual abuse case where mom doesn't believe the child and is not willing to make the perpetrator leave the home. The child obviously isn't safe, and you really can't assume mom will change her mind in 1-60 days. However, if mom doesn't believe the child immediately, **but** is willing to protect the child, you may not need a removal, but you may not need a PCSP either. In this case, work on getting the perpetrator out of the home so the child can stay in his or her own home. Keep working with the mom, get everyone in counseling and try to support the mother's eventual understanding of the dynamics of sexual abuse. After all, if someone told you your husband had sexually abused your child, wouldn't it take you some time to process? But wouldn't you be sure your child was safe while you processed the situation?

And what if you don't know who the perpetrator is? If you don't know, how can the child be safe? And how will this be resolved in 1-60 days? It probably will not be, so a removal may be a more appropriate choice.

The following are examples of other issues that would not be appropriate for a PCSP:

- Shaken baby;
- Multiple injuries;
- Numerous broken bones;
- Prior PCSP was made and the parent did not adhere to the agreement;
- Significant substance abuse that cannot be treated short-term;
- The parent has limited ability to make changes, such as sociopathic, psychotic, or limited intellectual ability;
- The parents are not engaged and cooperating with the caseworker to address the danger indicators;
- There is no identified caregiver that is willing to protect the child by limiting parent access.

If the family cannot take appropriate protective actions to ensure the child's safety, and there is an immediate danger of physical or sexual harm to the child, a PCSP is not the best approach. You need to remove the child from the immediate danger. Removals have the court behind them and protect the child for a longer period of time. Pursue emergency removal without prior approval and, depending on the situation, place the child in kinship placement or foster care.

Removal When Other PCSPs Exist

If a child in a home is removed and there are other children (of the same parent) in a PCSP, petition the court for the removal of *all* the children. You already made a determination that they are not safe with the parents, so be sure to present this information to the court.

Is There an Appropriate Caregiver Who Can Care for the Child and Keep the Child Safe?

If the child cannot stay in the home even with a Safety Plan, but there is no immediate danger to the child's physical health or safety, a PCSP looks more likely. You need to then determine if there is a suitable caregiver who can safely care for the child (see Creating a PCSP [Initial Assessment]).

If you assess potential caregivers, but do not find any that are suitable, you can't do a PCSP. Your option then is to seek one of the following:

- Emergency removal with prior court approval;
- Non-emergency removal; or
- Court ordered services.

RISKS OF A PCSP

Before deciding to use a PCSP, keep in mind that there are certain risks, also.

PCSPs are usually an emergency placement where decisions need to be made quickly with limited information. A PCSP placement may occur under stressful conditions, such as in the middle of the night. It may not be possible to get thorough background checks done immediately or get all the information you'd like to have to be absolutely certain about the placement. To reduce this risk, more tasks are required than you usually need to do - for example, thoroughly complete the Assessment and Agreement tool, get supervisor and program director approval, and make a mandatory face-to-face contact with the child and caregiver within 10 days of the placement. These tasks provide multiple points at which you can assess the placement and reasonably determine whether it is appropriate.

A PCSP is not a permanent placement, and the parent can legally come and get the child at any time. The parent can retrieve the child whenever he or she wants to, and the caregiver has nothing to say in the matter. On the other hand, the parent could leave the child with the caregiver longer than 60 days, causing stress for the caretaker, who was expecting a short-term arrangement and wasn't really prepared to care for the child long-term. In both situations, the child's safety may be at risk.

To reduce this risk, there are also more tasks we require of you:

- Make contact with the parent every 10 days, to make sure the parent stays engaged, is making progress in services and you remain aware of what's happening with his or her situation;
- Pursue legal intervention upfront if you believe the dangers aren't likely to be resolved in 60 days, in order to ensure that not only are you addressing the immediate issues, but also ensuring the child's long-term permanency and safety;
- Close a case with the child still in a PCSP, and no legal custody, **ONLY** as a last resort and only after a thorough review, to ensure the child's long-term safety.

WHEN MAY IT FEEL LIKE A PCSP BUT IT REALLY ISN'T?

Child Placed Out of State Before DFPS Involvement

There are times when a child may have been placed out of state before DFPS became involved. If that happens, it is not considered a PCSP. However, as a part of our process, we still need to be sure the child is safe. So we would want to ask the other state to do a courtesy visit and to check on the child for us.

Child Living with Relative Being Investigated

There are also times when a child is already living with a relative and we are investigating that person. If the child remains in that home, that is not considered a PCSP. We have not changed that child's living arrangement – they are still in what they consider their home. However, if the parent places another child into the same home due to DFPS involvement, this child would be considered in a PCSP.

Exception: Child Placed to Avoid an Investigation

An exception occurs if the child was placed with another person in an attempt to keep CPI from investigating. If the child has not lived with the other person a significant amount of time, it is considered a PCSP and needs to be treated as such.

For more specific information on situations that may or may not be considered a PCSP see [Appendix 2 What Constitutes a PCSP?](#)

CREATING A PCSP (INITIAL ASSESSMENT)

Remember to be culturally responsive when assessing the need for a PCSP. Being culturally responsive means you assess the family as a whole, considering their culture and beliefs in areas such as, sexuality, religion, race and much more.

You want to ensure the child will be safe but allow flexibility in how families make sure that happens. If there is more than one child, you need to **try to keep the children together and safe** if possible.

You always get approval from your supervisor and Program Director before placing the child in the PCSP. The Program Director is required to document his or her decision to approve or deny the PCSP. (See DFPS Handbook [3213 Program Director Documentation in Approving PCSPs.](#))

Once you've determined that a PCSP is an appropriate option and the parents have agreed and given you the name of a relative, what are your next steps?

You'll need to:

- evaluate the potential caregiver and household to determine whether the child will be safe in the PCSP;
- obtain approval from a supervisor and program director;
- complete the PCSP Assessment and Agreement Tool and provide the parent and caregiver a paper or electronic version of the completed and signed Tool;
- document essential information in the Safety Plan, such as:
 - details about the conditions under which a parent can have access to the child;
 - respective duties of the caregiver, parent, and department to safely meet the child's needs; and
 - the PCSP estimated end date (this should be no more than 60 days)

[see 3216](#) - Extending a PCSP past 60 days.

See [3211.1 Assessing and Documenting Placement in a PCSP.](#)

EVALUATING THE CAREGIVER AND HOUSEHOLD

You need to make sure you thoroughly assess the PCSP caregiver and household and that there is a detailed plan to safely meet the child's needs.

Evaluate the Physical Home Environment

- **Visit the home** - do a thorough assessment. You need to do this *before* you leave the child in the home. Are there working utilities? Does the family keep guns and if so, do they keep them locked up? Is there any nearby body of water such as a swimming pool, lake, creek, and so on? If so, what is being put into place to ensure the safety of the child? Is the child going into the home an infant? If so, where will this child sleep? Be sure to have a conversation about safe sleep practices.
- Make sure there are no threats to the child's safety.
- Do there appear to be other people living in the home that you weren't told about? Don't be afraid to ask questions about this. See what the sleeping arrangements are.

Evaluate Whether the Caregiver(s) Can Meet the Child's Needs

- Ensure the potential caregiver understands and supports the goal of safely returning the child home.

- Find out if the caregivers work. Ask who will take care of the child when or if they need help or day care.
- If the caregivers don't work, there will still be times they need someone to watch the child. Find out who that would be and run criminal and DFPS checks on them. Make sure the caregivers understand that no one can take care of the child unless we have run these checks! This does not apply to adults involved in "normal" out-of-home activities, such as after-school activities, birthday parties, and similar activities. Make sure the prospective caregiver understands the issues and why the child is coming to stay with them. That's the only way they will really understand the need to keep the child safe.
- Make sure the prospective caregiver knows or can help them find out the things that will make the transition easier for the child. What does the child like to eat? Does the child take a nap? Do they have a favorite toy or blanket? Is there an acceptable form of discipline the child is used to? Think about this as if you were placing your child or niece or nephew with this person. What would you want them to know about your loved one? Talk about the type of visitation the parent will have and make sure everyone has the same understanding. If you are asking the PCSP caregiver to monitor the parent visits, explain what that means. Does that mean the caregiver can be in the next room? Does it mean the caregiver needs to be in the same room? Can they be cooking supper in an adjoining room? What if they need to step away momentarily? Explain your expectations in detail, and document them in the safety assessment. If you don't, it's not fair to hold the caregiver or the parent accountable for things they weren't told about.
- Does the caregiver have the appropriate car seat for the child's height and weight if one is needed?

Evaluate Whether Individuals in the Home are Appropriate

Evaluate all household members, including all persons who have significant in-home contact with the child(ren), even if they do not live full-time in the residence. For example, a household could include a parent's paramour or other family member who visits the child(ren) or home routinely.

Check with collaterals

- It's important to know what others know about this family. You are asking a parent to place their child there. You need to do everything you can to be sure that child is safe. Make these calls before you allow the placement or as quickly as possible after the placement is made. (See DFPS Handbook [3211 Evaluating the Child's Safety Before Placement](#)).
- The most effective collateral is someone who is both familiar with the PCSP family and has information relevant to any potential safety concerns and the family's ability to safely meet the child's needs. Contacting the right person and asking the right questions is especially important when an individual in the home has some type of abuse, neglect or criminal history that is not an absolute bar to placement but requires an evaluation. It is important to contact collaterals who are able to provide information about whether the past history represents a current danger to the child.
- If the prospective PCSP caregiver is already a kinship caregiver, you need to contact the Program Director over the CVS case for approval before placement.
- If the prospective PCSP caregiver is a foster home, you need to contact the licensing agency for the foster home for approval before placement.
- If there is an open conservatorship (CVS) case and investigations or FBSS is asking the parents to place a child that is still with the parents, or a newborn, contact the CVS Program Director over the case for approval before placement.

See [3211.4 Collateral Contacts](#).

You also need to run checks on household members for:

- Criminal history
- Abuse and neglect history

Criminal History

DFPS Criminal History

Run a DPS Criminal History check on every adult or minor, age 14 and older, who is a member of the PCSP household.

You have to obtain a driver's license number for each adult for whom you are running a criminal history check. If the person does not have a driver's license, you can use a state or federal identification card from either the United States or another country, as long as it includes the person's photograph and enough information to obtain a criminal history. If a person does not have an acceptable form of identification, you cannot make the placement.

FBI Exigent and Fingerprint Checks

You will have to request an FBI exigent check for any adult or minor, age 14 and older, who is a member of the PCSP household **only when**:

- the household member currently lives outside Texas; or
- the household member lived out of state within the last five years; or
- you learn that the household member may have a criminal history in another state.

Within seven days of the exigent check, the person will also have to submit to an FBI fingerprint check as soon as possible. You need to tell the parent and proposed PCSP caretaker that DFPS cannot allow the placement to be made if the person is not willing or able to provide fingerprints in Texas. If the household member has not been fingerprinted or made arrangements to be fingerprinted within seven

days of the date the PCSP is made, you need to staff with the program director, to determine if the child needs to be removed from the PCSP.

If the household member lives outside of Texas, you cannot allow the person to leave Texas with the child until you get the results of the FBI fingerprint check and determine that there is no bar to placement.

You request FBI Exigent and Fingerprint Checks through the Centralized Background Check Unit. For information on CBCU requirements and procedures for requesting background checks, see [Appendix 3](#) FBI Exigent Records Checks.

Do not place the child in a PCSP if any individual has any of the following criminal history:

- A criminal conviction or deferred adjudication that has been identified as an absolute bar. An absolute bar to placement is any of the following:
 - a conviction or deferred adjudication for any felony listed in [Appendix 4525: Offenses From the Texas Penal Code](#), in the Word document Assessing Criminal History Offenses and Convictions for PCSPs; or
 - a conviction or deferred adjudication for any felony not listed in Appendix 4525, but which has occurred in the last five years.

You are required to evaluate, on a case-by-case basis, any criminal history that is not an absolute bar to placement and decide whether the history would pose a current danger to the child being placed. Arrests without convictions are not an absolute bar, but have to be evaluated. If you cannot obtain the information needed to make this determination before placing the child, do not place the child in the PCSP.

Abuse and Neglect History DFPS History Check

Before placement, the caseworker must conduct a DFPS History Check on all residents in the PCSP. ([See policy 3211.3](#))

Out-of-State Abuse and Neglect History Check

If any household members age 14 and older lived out of state within the last 5 years, you need to conduct an Out-of-State Abuse and Neglect History Check with those states to determine if the person had CPI, CPS, APS, or CCL involvement in the other state. If there is history for any person, be sure to assess it and bring your supervisor in on the discussion. ([policy 3211.3](#))

We generally do not leave a child in a PCSP if a PCSP household member has any of these allegation dispositions in a CPI, RCCL or CCL case:

- Reason to Believe (RTB);
- Unable to Determine (UTD);
- Unable to Complete (UTC).

If you believe there are extenuating circumstances and the household would be safe, you are required to evaluate, on a case-by-case basis, APS (including Adult Foster Care – AFC) and other CPI, CPS, RCCL and CCL dispositions, and decide whether the history would pose a current danger to the child being placed. An evaluation can include the use of drug testing, examination of police reports, interviews with individuals who may have information about the circumstances of the prior history and contacts with collaterals outside of the household to verify current behavior.

If you cannot obtain the information needed to complete an evaluation **before** placing the child, do not place the child in the PCSP.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR APPROVAL AND DOCUMENTATION

24-Hour and 5-Day Approval Decisions

Both the supervisor and the program director should review all information the caseworker has gathered about the caregiver, not just the information on the Assessment and Agreement Form.

24-Hour Review

Any PCSP placement has to be approved by a Program Director (PD). The PD makes the final decision to approve or deny the placement. The PD making the initial decision has to document his or her rationale for approving or denying the PCSP within 24 hours of making the decision.

5-Day Review

Within five days of the placement, the PD for the caseworker who has ongoing responsibility for the case is required to review the case history and all documentation or information relating to the PCSP, and determine whether:

- the child is safe;
- all PCSP policies were followed; and
- all necessary documentation was entered.

The PD documents the basis for his or her decision to uphold or reverse the placement decision. This is required even if the PD making the 5-day review was the PD who made the initial decision. After five days, new information may be available that could affect the initial decision. ([See policy 3213](#))

During the five day review, the PD also has to consider whether there appear to be grounds for legal intervention. If so, the PD should staff with legal to determine what type of legal intervention may be pursued.

The PD also has to:

- complete the 5-Day PCSP Assessment Tool;
- submit the Tool to the Program Administrator (PA) within 2 working days of completing it;
- place a copy of the completed Tool in the case file; and
- document that the tool has been completed and a copy placed in the case file.

If the PD who made the initial PCSP decision was not the ongoing caseworker's PD, both PD's should discuss the case.

Documentation Related to Criminal or Abuse or Neglect History

When any member of the PCSP household has criminal or abuse or neglect history that requires evaluation, the PD's documentation should include:

- The nature of abuse or neglect or criminal history;
- The PD's decision to approve or deny the PCSP, including
 - Specific sources of information used to make the determination that the problem that led to the criminal offense is no longer a problem;
 - How circumstances have or have not changed since the last incident, or an explanation about how the abuse, neglect or criminal history is or is not related to current child safety.; and

- The reasons for the decision.

Documentation should include specific sources of information used to make the determination that the problem that led to the criminal offense is no longer a problem--for example, the use of drug testing, contacting collaterals used outside of the household to verify current behavior, etc.

Documentation should also address how circumstances have or have not changed since the last incident, or an explanation about how the abuse, neglect or criminal history is or is not related to child safety, including:

- How long ago the incident occurred and the severity of harm;
- Actions the individual has taken to change behavior;
- When looking at all information about the individual and family, any patterns of:
 - Deceitful behavior;
 - Escalating severity;
 - Inability or unwillingness to understand the impact of behavior on others.

See [3213 Program Director Documentation in Approving PCSPs](#)

COMPLETING THE PCSP ASSESSMENT AND AGREEMENT

DFPS created the PCSP Assessment and Agreement to help you determine if a caregiver and household are appropriate for caring for the child. Staff must use the electronic version of the PCSP Assessment and Agreement form (located in IMPACT). ([See policy 3211.1](#))

The Learning Station contains a course on how to complete the Assessment and Agreement in IMPACT:

<http://learning.dfps.txnet.state.tx.us/lms21/course/view.php?id=686>

Exception: Using the Paper Version of the Assessment and Agreement

Paper versions of the Assessment and Agreement (in English and Spanish) will still be accessible through the PCSP Resource Guide for backup use. **Use these versions ONLY if connectivity issues make IMPACT inaccessible or you need a Spanish version of the tool for the parties to fully understand the terms of the PCSP.**

You can find English and Spanish versions of the paper document with the PCSP Resource Guide page in the DFPS Handbook:

<http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Menu/MenuCPSResource.asp>

When you need to use a paper version of the PCSP Assessment and Agreement (English or Spanish version), **you should then enter the information into IMPACT as soon as possible.** Otherwise, there will be no record of the PCSP Assessment and Agreement being completed.

Completing the Assessment and Agreement

The Assessment and Agreement contains a number of questions to determine whether:

- the individuals in the PCSP home are appropriate caregivers for the child(ren);
- the PCSP physical home environment is safe;
- the child(ren)'s needs can be met.

You are required to complete a PCSP Assessment and Agreement before leaving the child in a PCSP.

See [3211.1 Assessing and Documenting Placement in a PCSP](#).

Complete the PCSP Assessment and Agreement Once per PCSP

It's important to understand that you only need to complete one assessment, for the PCSP caregiver you place a child with. You do NOT need to complete an assessment for each caregiver you evaluate. Only complete the PCSP Assessment and Agreement for the caregiver you actually approve. You'll answer the questions in the Assessment section PCSP Assessment and Agreement for that caregiver.

For example, the parent gives you the names of three potential caregivers; Jane, Katherine and Lisa. You assess Jane and Katherine, but determine they are not appropriate caregivers. After assessing Lisa, you determine that she is an appropriate caregiver. Complete the PCSP Assessment and Agreement for Lisa's household. Use IMPACT to document (in a contact narrative) that you assessed the others, and document the reasons you did not find them appropriate caregivers. This helps staff understand why these households weren't chosen, if that becomes an issue in a future case.

If you end up not approving any of the proposed caregivers, you still need to complete a PCSP Assessment and Agreement. In this case, complete the PCSP Assessment and Agreement only for the last caregiver you assessed. Use the PCSP Assessment and Agreement to document the reason(s) you did not find this last caregiver appropriate.

In the above example, if you end up not approving any of the caregivers, and evaluated Lisa last, complete the Assessment and Agreement for Lisa's household. Use the PCSP Assessment and Agreement to indicate the reasons the placement would not be appropriate. Use a contact narrative in IMPACT to document your assessment of the other potential caregivers.

Either way, you only complete the PCSP Assessment and Agreement once for the last potential PCSP caregiver you evaluated or placed a child with.

Use Your Judgment in Addition to the Agreement and Assessment Tool

Determining whether the PCSP caregiver and household are appropriate involves more than just completing the Assessment and Agreement Tool. The PCSP Assessment and Agreement Tool will help you evaluate a potential PCSP household and backup caregiver. It will help you know if a person meets the **minimum** requirements to be a PCSP caregiver.

*However, the Tool is not a substitute for your critical judgment and assessment of the **appropriateness** of the caregiver.* Even if the caregiver "looks good on paper", you still need to consider the totality of the circumstances and all the information you have available. Your judgment is more critical than the tool, and if it tells you the child may not be safe, don't place the child with the caregiver. Remember, the child's safety is the most important consideration.

Use the Assessment and Agreement as the PCSP Agreement

You no longer have to complete the PCSP Agreement Form 2298. In addition to documenting the assessment of the PCSP, the PCSP Assessment and Agreement documents that the parents and caregivers understand and agree to certain requirements. Review the caregiver agreement portion with the following people and make sure each person understands the responsibilities, conditions and limitations that are part of the agreement, each of the following has to sign the caregiver agreement:

- the parent(s);
- the primary caregiver (this is the person who provides at least 51% of the child's care);
- the secondary caregiver (if available); and
- the caseworker.

Once everyone has signed the agreement, you have to give a copy of the PCSP Agreement (paper or electronic) to everyone who signed it, before you place the child in the home.

DO NOT give the client or caregiver the Assessment and Agreement-**Sensitive** version. This form contains confidential information.

Refer to the PCSP IMPACT Training, Module 3: Print the Assessment, and the associated Job Aid.

<http://learning.dfps.txnet.state.tx.us/lms21/course/view.php?id=686>

Voluntary Caregiver Manual

Always remember to give the PCSP caregiver a copy of the *Voluntary Caregiver Manual* before leaving the child in the home.

Discussing the Authorization Agreement for Voluntary Adult Caregiver

Also, you have to discuss with the parent and PCSP caregiver the option to enter into an Authorization Agreement for Voluntary Adult Caregiver. This agreement is a legal document that allows the PCSP caregiver to make medical, educational and other important decisions on the child's behalf. You need to help the parent and caregiver understand the purpose of this document and how it can be helpful to the family. As an agency, DFPS does not and should not coerce the family to sign this document. See [Form 2638](#) Authorization Agreement for Voluntary Adult Caregiver.

PROVIDING SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

While it is required that you complete the Assessment and Agreement Tool, it can be very helpful for you to document in a narrative the details of how you completed the Tool. For example, if you say that a weapon is in the home, you can use the narrative to provide more information, such as where it is located and how the caregiver specifically intends to store it away from the child, or whether you verified yourself that it is stored properly. Another example is sleeping arrangements. You can note on the tool that the caregiver has appropriate sleeping arrangements, but you can use the documentation to provide the details of those arrangements.

The Assessment and Agreement Tool allows you to identify that the caregiver and household meet the requirements for a PCSP, but remember that the more detailed your documentation, the more information your supervisor and program director have so that they can review and make an effective decision. Also, this detail helps you later when you are re-evaluating the PCSP, and helps other staff who may need to evaluate the PCSP (for example, an FBSS worker if the case is being staged from Investigation to FBSS).

COMPLETING A SAFETY PLAN

You should have a safety plan detailing what the family needs to do to alleviate the issues placing the child in danger. The safety plan requires the following details:

- the conditions under which a parent(s) can have access to the child;
- the respective duties of the parent(s), PCSP caregiver and DFPS related to child safety; and
- the planned PCSP end date.

During the PCSP, if any changes occur related to child safety, the parent(s) access to the child, or the planned PCSP end date, document these changes in a revised safety plan.

For more information on safety plans and visitation see [CPS Handbook 3200 CPS Actions When Danger to a Child is Present](#).

PLACING A CHILD INTO AN EXISTING PCSP

If you are placing a child into an existing PCSP, containing children from the **same** case as the child already in the PCSP, you do not need to complete a new PCSP Assessment and Agreement. You will complete an Addendum in IMPACT. However, before adding the new child to the PCSP household, you will have to evaluate whether:

- the child will be safe with the residents of the home;
- the child will be safe in the physical home environment; and
- the PCSP caregiver can keep the child safe.

You are required to document the results of these evaluations in the PCSP Agreement and Assessment Addendum, and provide the parent and caregiver with a paper or electronic version of the completed and signed Addendum. Update the Safety Plan for the child, if applicable.

The Learning Station contains a course on how to complete the Addendum in IMPACT:

<http://learning.dfps.txnet.state.tx.us/lms21/course/view.php?id=686>

Refer to Module 4: The Addendum.

If you are placing a child into an existing PCSP, containing children from a **different** case from that of the child already in the PCSP, you have to contact the supervisor on the other case and obtain any relevant information regarding the PCSP. Then follow the steps in 3213 Documenting a PCSP Placement.

WHAT IF THE PARENTS WANT TO PLACE THE CHILD OUT OF STATE?

Remember that the child's safety is the most important thing. There will be times we cannot agree to an out-of-state placement because we can't be sure the child would be safe. In order for a child to be in a PCSP out of state:

- We would still need to see the caregiver's home. That means we would need permission from the receiving state to go into their state and make the assessment or they would have to agree to do this for us. This is NOT an ICPC issue, since we do not have custody. Many states will not agree to do this;
- We would need to run the background checks on each person, which means we would still need to see a driver's license or state or federal document with a picture. The receiving state could agree to send this to us via fax. The background checks should be done prior to the child leaving Texas;
- Once the child is placed, the caregiver and the child have to be seen monthly, either by the Texas caseworker or the receiving state's social service agency;
- The receiving state has to agree that it is OK for this child to come into their state under these circumstances; and
- If you are able to get sufficient information to evaluate the individuals in the out-of-state PCSP household, the physical home environment and develop a plan for the child's needs to be met, caseworkers need to complete the PCSP Agreement and Assessment Tool and document the creation of the PCSP in IMPACT. [See policy 3211.1](#)

Out of state placements are rare due to the difficulty of meeting all of these requirements.

AFTER THE PCSP IS MADE

Critical Time

The period right after the PCSP is made is a critical time for the family. The parents are experiencing the feelings of not having their child living with them. The child is probably confused and doesn't understand why he or she can't go home. This is your opportunity to help make change happen! This means you may need to spend a bit more time with this family instead of moving on. Even if your caseload is calling, a little more time at this point can make a difference as to how quickly this child can return home and how long the agency needs to keep the case open.

Check In Right Away

If at all possible, check in with the child's family the next day, but no later than the 10th day.. See how they are doing. Are they starting to work on the issues that led you to ask them to make the PCSP? Ask what you can do to help them take those next steps. Offer suggestions. For example, if an unclean home led to the PCSP, perhaps you can provide garbage bags and cleaning supplies. Be specific in what they need to do, and make this the minimum they need to do *for the child to come home*, rather than to make the entire family situation 'better'. In many situations, the longer term issues that don't place the child in immediate danger can be worked on when the child is back in the home. If these conversations aren't held soon after the PCSP is made, you lose the moment when the parent is most open to change.

Check in with the PCSP caregiver, too. Ask how things are going, how the child slept, how the child is eating, whether the child has had any behavioral problems. The caregiver needs to know that someone cares about how they are doing. They have changed their life temporarily to take in this child. Change is hard and they are trying to help the family and our agency.

PCSP Outside the Unit Catchment Area

If a child is placed in a PCSP outside the unit catchment area, be sure to request courtesy supervision for that PCSP. It is still critical that the caregiver home be assessed on an ongoing basis and the children be visited and assessed.

Make the FBSS Referral If Necessary

Remember we said the PCSP was short term. You need to make the referral to FBSS (if the case is not already an FBSS case) if you think this PCSP will last more than a few days. Make the referral quickly so the process can get started. You will need to update the PCSP in IMPACT at stage progression and verify the child is still in the placement. The sooner you start, the greater this family's chances for long-term success.

Establish the PCSP 60-Day Goal

If a child is still in a Parental Child Safety Placement (PCSP) 60 days after the first placement in a PCSP, you have to determine and document appropriate next steps. The PCSP Goal in IMPACT may change within the life of the case. You are required to update the PCSP Goal in IMPACT any time the goal changes.

ONGOING ASSESSMENT

If you are responsible for the case, regardless of your stage of service, it is critical to keep in contact with the child and caregiver and also with the parents. While the child is in the PCSP, you are required to:

- make face-to-face contact with the child and caregiver:
 - within the first 10 calendar days of placing the child in the PCSP, at the PCSP residence, and
 - at least one face-to-face visit with the PCSP caregiver each month thereafter; and
- contact all parents who agreed to the PCSP every 10 calendar days.

(See DFPS Handbook [3214 Required Contacts](#))

The 10-day contact with the child and caregiver allows you to reassess if the PCSP and caregiver are still appropriate for the child, now that you all are away from the immediacy of the situation that led to the placement, and after the child and home have had reasonable time to adjust to each other.

After this initial visit, contact the child and caregiver *at least* once a month thereafter and continue to assess whether the caregiver is:

- following the safety plan; and
- still willing and able to ensure the child's safety.

Assess Child Safety

At each contact, it's important that you ASSESS SAFETY and any other concerns you have as the caseworker. If the PCSP caregiver is uncooperative (for example, doesn't allow you into the home or certain rooms) and you cannot adequately evaluate whether the child is safe, you should staff immediately with your supervisor. The child should not remain in the PCSP household if the PCSP caregiver is no longer willing or able to safely care for the child.

Assess the Needs of PCSP Caregiver and Child

At each contact, it is also important to ask about the needs of the PCSP caregiver and child and how things are working. This is your opportunity to make this placement work for everyone, so the child doesn't have to change placements.

During these contacts, you are assessing whether:

- the placement should continue;
- the caregiver or child need any resources to keep the placement stable;
- the child can now safely return to a parent (and if so, they should do so and the PCSP should end); or
- you need to pursue legal action if the child is not going to be able to safely return to a parent within 60 days.

There are many other things important to child safety that you should check on with the PCSP caregiver at each visit.

At each contact, you are required to assess whether the child can safely return to the physical custody of a parent. You want to return the child home as soon as it is safe to do so.

Assess Changes to the Household

- Are there any new household members or frequent visitors? If so, add them to the person list and run criminal and DFPS background checks on them. Be sure to discuss sleeping arrangements for the new people in the home and whether they have any responsibility for caring for the child.
- Has anyone moved out of the home since the placement? If so, does this add any stressors to the caregiver? Was the person that moved a backup caregiver? If so, what is the new plan? Is there anyone else you need to run background checks on?
- Remind the family that if there are changes like this, they should be calling you within 24 hours. If they do call, make sure you respond quickly.

Assess Lifestyle Changes

- Have there been any changes to their job situation? This could cause issues with their financial ability to continue to keep the children. If there have been changes, find out how this impacts the family.

Assess the Home

- Walk through the home. **Always ask permission** – it is their home. Make them feel comfortable about allowing this. If it's routine, the caregiver will understand the need, and if you did this before placement, that should have established the routine.
- As you walk through, notice if there is anything that would cause you concern about the child's safety. For example, a small child with cleaning materials in reach, or a full mop bucket a toddler could fall in. You need to support the caregiver in making sure the situation is corrected before you leave the home.
- As you walk through, watch for signs of someone living in the home that you may not be aware of so you can ask about them. Always be aware that sometimes caregivers forget to tell us when someone moves into the home.

Assess the Child's Condition and Needs

- Have a conversation about the child and what is going on.
- What does the caregiver see as the child's needs?
- Does the child need daycare? If so, make sure and talk to your supervisor and set it up as quickly as possible.
- Do we need to provide the caregivers with information about toilet training?
- If the child is a baby is he or she up all night crying?
- Do the caregivers understand basic child development – or can we help them with some understanding?
- What kind of discipline are they using? What are they disciplining the child for doing?
- What is the child's routine?
- Where is the child sleeping? How are they sleeping? Are there any sleep-related issues?
- Ask about any unusual bruising you notice, for example, child has a black eye. Don't make assumptions about the child obtaining the bruise while playing.
- If needed, is there a car seat that is appropriate for the child's height and weight?

Assess the Parent's Progress

When assessing the parent, make sure to see what they have been working on.

- Do they remain engaged in the process?
- Are they participating in services?
- Are they complying with DFPS requests?

- Are they following the Safety Plan?
- Are they waiting on you to do something?
- Is there something you can do to help them?
- Have you made any referrals you need to make?

Praise the family for work they do. We all need a pat on the back and most parents need to hear something good about this time!

RE-EVALUATING THE PCSP

Evaluating the PCSP means talking to your supervisor and the parents to determine whether or not the PCSP needs to continue. Each time a supervisor or program director reviews or staffs a case with a child in a PCSP, they must determine whether the child can safely return to a parent and whether the PCSP is still appropriate. They must also consider any other safety actions that are appropriate. ([See policy 3215](#))

Typically, you should have reviewed the case before the 60th day from the date of the PCSP placement, but if you haven't, it is mandatory that you re-evaluate the PCSP no later than the 60th day.

Remember that a subsequent placement in another PCSP does not restart the 60-day clock.

If it appears the PCSP should continue, you should also consult the caregiver to be sure he or she is willing to continue as the caregiver. If there are any changes, you may need to update the Safety Plan and document the changes in IMPACT. Also remember to update the PCSP goal if necessary.

When a supervisor or program director reviews or staffs a case with a child in a PCSP, the supervisor and program director will need to determine whether the child can safely return to a parent.

If the supervisor or PD determines the child cannot safely return to a parent, the supervisor or PD has to determine whether:

- conditions have changed in the PCSP home, and if so, what steps are being taken to ensure child safety;
- the caregiver is seeking or is willing to seek legal custody; and
- the caseworker has sought legal intervention (and the current status of that request), or if legal intervention wasn't sought, that the dangers leading to the PCSP are likely to be resolved within 60 days of the child's initial placement in a PCSP

If a caregiver is willing to seek legal custody, you should provide information and direct them to the appropriate resources.

You should review the case and staff with the attorney representing DFPS on whether to seek legal intervention no later than 60 days after the child's initial placement in a PCSP. You need to document the results of the review and the staffing.

(See DFPS Handbook [3215 Re-evaluating the PCSP](#))

Add an Addendum

Add an Addendum to the PCSP Assessment and Agreement in IMPACT any time there is an active PCSP and a new child from the same case needs to be added to the placement.

Refer to the PCSP IMPACT Training, Module 4: The Addendum, and the associated Job Aid.

<http://learning.dfps.txnet.state.tx.us/lms21/course/view.php?id=686>

PARENTS CHANGING A PCSP

Keep in mind that a PCSP may change because the parent decides he or she no longer wants the child to stay with the caregiver that was originally selected. The parent has the right to make that decision. If he or she wants to make this change, start the process by having the parent determine where he or she would like to see the child reside, and then begin the process of assessing the potential caregiver and creating a new Assessment and Agreement in IMPACT.

The Learning Station contains a course on how to complete the Assessment and Agreement in IMPACT:

<http://learning.dfps.txnet.state.tx.us/lms21/course/view.php?id=686>

When the Parent Continually Wants to Move the Child

You should be concerned when a parent gets upset at the caregivers and continually wants the child moved. Continuous movement of the child becomes detrimental to the child and can result in additional trauma. The child never gets to really settle in before moving again. Make sure and staff this case with your supervisor. If the parents ask for the child to be moved more than twice, it may be time to staff the case with your supervisor and legal to see if there is enough information to remove the child.

Update Changes in IMPACT

Update the PCSP information in IMPACT if you make a change.

IF YOU CANNOT RETURN THE CHILD TO THE PARENTS

In almost all cases you should be able to return the children to a parent, preferably the parent they were living with before the PCSP. However, there are some instances where it won't happen. The parent may be incarcerated, they may decide not to make the necessary changes for the child to return, or you may not be able to find the parent.

In these instances, it is important to:

- **Make sure you have talked to your chain of command.**
- **Consult with the agency attorney or the attorney that represents your office in court.** It is best to write up an actual affidavit presenting all of the facts of the case to see if there is enough information to take the case to court. It may seem like a waste of your time to do this. It's not. That affidavit will stay in the case file, providing all of the details for why the children were in the PCSP to begin with and why they are not being returned to the parent. It's a pretty serious issue when children are not returned and it is worth our time, as agency employees, to write this out in detail.
- If the family is "missing", **make sure you have followed all protocols to locate the family and worked with a Special Investigator to try to find the family.**
- **Check with the caregiver to see if they are willing to continue caring for the child in the future.** If they are, complete the Voluntary Caregiver Case Closure Agreement, see [Appendix 1](#). Also, see sections *Extending a PCSP* and *Closing a Case with the Child Still in the PCSP*.

EXTENDING A PCSP

Ideally, a PCSP should not last more than 60 days. By the 60th day (and most likely sooner), you should be evaluating the PCSP to determine whether conditions have changed enough that the child can return to the parent's home.

The 60-day time frame starts from the date the child is **first** placed into a PCSP. If the child gets moved to another PCSP after that, it doesn't reset the clock.

You may need to extend the PCSP past 60 days. Continue the PCSP if:

- a parent(s) is cooperating with DFPS, continuing to work services and complying with the Family Plan and/or Safety Plan; or
- the current PCSP caregiver is seeking legal custody.

Continue the PCSP until the child can safely return to the physical custody of the parent(s) or the PCSP caregiver gets an initial order for legal custody. The PCSP does not have to remain in place until the case is closed.

Do not extend the PCSP if the parent(s) are not cooperating with DFPS *and* the caregiver is not seeking legal custody. In this instance, staff with your supervisor, program director, and legal to determine if legal intervention is possible. If DFPS can't legally intervene, or the court denies legal intervention, you can then close the case with the child in the PCSP. See section *Closing a Case or Stage with the Child Still in the PCSP*.

You are required to get approval from your PD to continue the placement, and the PD will have to document the approval and approval reason in IMPACT. The PD will also document what the plan is going forward.

See DFPS Handbook [3216](#) 60-Day Extension.

CLOSING A CASE OR STAGE WITH THE CHILD STILL IN THE PCSP

In certain situations, you can close a case with the child remaining in the PCSP.

One such situation is when the child can safely live with a parent but the parent chooses to have the child live with the caregiver. Another situation is when the caregiver gets an order for legal custody of the child and it appears the child will be safe without DFPS continuing to be involved.

You may also close a case with the child remaining in the PCSP when the child cannot safely return to a parent and all of the following apply:

- the parent(s) are not cooperating with DFPS (including not continuing to work services or not complying with the Family Plan or Safety Plan); and
- the caregiver is not able or willing to seek legal custody of the child; and
- a DFPS attorney determines that no legal intervention is available or sought legal intervention that was denied.

If you have not already had a staffing with Legal at this point, you should hold one with an attorney representing DFPS to determine if legal intervention is possible. If the attorney for DFPS is external, and legal intervention was denied, you should also staff with a DFPS regional attorney, before closure, to ensure no further action or information is required.

When you staff the case with an external or internal attorney, be prepared to discuss:

- why the PCSP was necessary;
- any DFPS or criminal history for the caregivers or household members;
- whether the parents agree with the placement;
- why the child can't return home;
- why the placement is safe and appropriate;
- if the placement is in the best interest of the child;
- if the caregiver is willing to assume legal custody;
- whether the case was staffed for FBSS and the outcome;
- what services have been offered to the parents;
- the dates of last contact with the parents and child; and
- whether the case was staffed with Legal representation previously and what the outcome was.

Before closing a stage or case with a child still in a PCSP, you will need to get approval from your supervisor and PD.

The supervisor reviews the PCSP-related actions in the case to ensure they are thoroughly documented, policy has been followed and documentation adequately reflects child safety. Documentation includes: ([see policy 3218](#))

- Supervisor's and program director's approval;
- Details of any legal staffing with the DFPS regional attorney – what was staffed and the legal staffing outcome;
- Voluntary Caregiver's Case Closure Agreement, is completed following the prompts, signed, and uploaded into IMPACT by all stages of service.

After reviewing the case, the program director documents in IMPACT his or her decision to approve the case for closure with the child remaining in the PCSP.

Remember that best practice is to return the children prior to closing the case. Children left in a PCSP at case closure should be a very rare circumstance.

Follow Up

A State Office PCSP Quality Assurance Team conducts follow-up on all cases closed with a child still in the PCSP. Please ensure that all phone numbers and address are updated in IMPACT prior to closure.

When the QA Team cannot locate a caregiver after 30 days, the Team may contact regional staff and request that a caseworker attempt to locate the caregiver. The caseworker documents his or her contacts or attempted contacts in a closed stage addendum in the stage of service that the PCSP was in at case closure.

ENDING A PCSP

You end a PCSP when the child:

- safely returns to a parent;
- moves to another PCSP household; or
- cannot safely return home but the caseworker determines that either:
 - the child can safely reside with another person who is legally entitled to possession; or
 - it is necessary to remove the child and seek legal custody to ensure the child's safety.

When you and your supervisor feel the child can safely live with a parent, it's time to end the PCSP. That doesn't mean the case has to immediately close. In fact, in an FBSS case, you should keep the case open long enough to be sure everyone has adjusted as a family and that none of the old issues are coming up – remember the reason you asked the family to make the PCSP. Be sure the family can sustain their protective actions. (See DFPS Handbook [3217 Ending a PCSP](#))

- The first thing you need to do is to **make a plan for how to return the child or children**. If there is one child, it may be fairly easy. But if there are 6 children, it would be overwhelming for anyone to bring 6 children back into the home at one time and sustain the changes they had made. They may revert back to how they were parenting before the children left. So make a plan with the family as to what works best in their case. Does the baby go home first? Or do the two older children? There is no standard answer. You have to look at the needs of each specific case. The same thing goes with how long a child is in the home before the others go home. You need to be talking to the parents and making sure the plan works for the family. Your goal is not to overwhelm them. We want them to 'make it' as a whole family. Together.
- **Talk to the caregiver**. They have changed their life to take this child into their home. Although they cannot stop the child from going home, their feelings should be taken into consideration. You want them to support the parents and be there for the parents and the children if the family needs their help in the future.
- Once the children go home, **MONITOR**. It is always best practice for you or another person to visit in the home the day following the return. This is one of the most critical times for the family. Your visits can provide the encouragement they need to maintain those protective actions that they worked so hard on. It will be tempting to revert back to what they have practiced through the years. So try to see them the next day and as often as you can for the first few weeks.
- When the child is returned to his or her own home, remember to **end the PCSP in IMPACT**.

Remember that best practice is to return the children prior to closing the case. Children left in a PCSP at case closure should be a very rare circumstance. After case closure PCSP Specialists do reviews on cases that have been closed with a PCSP intact in order to ensure appropriate plans are in place. PCSP Specialists conduct follow up phone calls with caregivers at 6 and 12 months to make sure services are in place and to assist caregivers with overcoming barriers to successful placement.

ENDING A PCSP IN IMPACT

Closing a PCSP in IMPACT is an important part of case documentation. If the PCSP is not closed in IMPACT, the case will perpetually show as an "open" PCSP. We need to be able to state where the child is at the end of the PCSP, even if it means the child is still in the PCSP at case closure (which is always the least preferred option).

Choosing the right End Reason in IMPACT is not necessarily intuitive. Case situations vary widely and not every situation 'neatly' falls into one of these categories. The table below lists the various End Reasons and the situations when you should use them.

End Reason	Use This Reason...
Child returned to parent by DFPS or Court	Any time a child is returned to the parent's home and is allowed to stay there by the Courts or DFPS.
Child Moved to Another PCSP	When a child is in a PCSP and immediately moves to a different PCSP.
TMC - PCSP Caregiver is placement	When the Department is granted TMC, but the child remains placed in the home that had been the PCSP.
TMC - PCSP Caregiver is not placement	When the Department is granted TMC of the child and the child is being placed anywhere other than the PCSP that they were previously at.
Child remains with PCSP Caregiver at Case Closure - No Legal Custody	When the case is closed and the child remains in the PCSP and is not returned home, but the PCSP caregiver does not have legal custody of the child.
PCSP Caregiver obtained legal Custody	When a PCSP caregiver gains legal custody of the child. (In this instance, it is no longer a PCSP.)
Other	When none of the above circumstances apply. Your documentation will include details about the PCSP ending as well as where the child next resided.

The Learning Station contains a course on how to end the Assessment and Agreement in IMPACT:

<http://learning.dfps.txnet.state.tx.us/lms21/course/view.php?id=686>

See Module 5: Update the PCSP, in the section "End a PCSP". The course also contains a related Job Aid, "End the PCSP".

FINAL REMARKS

You can see that there is a lot of work involved when you make a PCSP. There is a reason for that! It's because a PCSP is one step away from a removal. We are asking a parent to allow their child to live with someone else. That's a major, life changing request. A PCSP interrupts the parent/child relationship. When you ask a parent to make a PCSP, it's a very serious decision that should be carefully reviewed to see if there is a least restrictive option that would still protect the child. Whatever choice you make, ALWAYS keep the child's safety primary in your decision making process. And remember, keeping the child safe extends into making sure the child is safe in the PCSP. Reunify at the earliest possible time and begin the reunification planning (how to make it happen) the moment that child goes into the PCSP. The less time a child spends in a PCSP, the better, as long as they are safe.

APPENDIX 1: VOLUNTARY CAREGIVER'S CASE CLOSURE PLAN

Parents' Names _____
 Voluntary Caregiver(s) Name(s) _____
 Date _____

Child(ren):

Name	Age	Current Address

Detailed explanation for why case will be closed with the above named child(ren) in Parental Child Safety Placement (PCSP) - *either why the parent wants the child to remain in the PCSP even though it would be safe for the child to return or list the specific reasons why it is not safe for the child to live with the parents/mother/father:*

Plan for meeting children's future needs:

- Who is responsible for educational needs and school related issues and how will this be accomplished:

- List any other specific needs of the children and provide a description of how those needs will be met, including contact with parent(s):

STATEMENTS OF CAREGIVER UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENT INITIALS

I understand that I am responsible for meeting all the needs of the children and am willing to raise the children to adulthood, if needed.	
The Authorization Agreement for Voluntary Adult Caregiver has been explained to me and I was given the opportunity to accept or decline. Check here if the Authorization Agreement for Voluntary Adult Caregiver has been executed. _____	
I understand that a caseworker will periodically contact me to discuss whether circumstances have changed and to assist with any needed services or changes in circumstance. This may include visits to my home.	
I understand that if I am unable to carry out this plan successfully, or if the children in my care are considered to be in an unsafe situation, the children will be moved to a different placement and further DFPS involvement may be necessary, including legal intervention.	
I understand that if DFPS ever seeks legal custody of the children, as the caregiver, if I have a certain type of criminal or child abuse/neglect history, I may not be eligible to foster or adopt and may not be eligible for any financial assistance through those programs, the kinship program, or the permanency care assistance program.	

SIGNATURES

By signing this form, the parents and the voluntary caregiver are agreeing that the children can continue living in this placement after DFPS is no longer involved with the child or family.

Child's Parent or Legal Guardian X	Date Signed:	Child's Parent or Legal Guardian: X	Date Signed
Voluntary Caregiver: X	Date Signed:	Voluntary Caregiver X	Date Signed
Other Party: X	Date Signed:	DFPS Caseworker X	Date Signed:
DFPS Supervisor: X	Date Signed	DFPS Program Director: X	Date Signed:

NOTICE to Voluntary Caregiver:

DFPS has approved this agreement. If there are any concerns, problems, questions about this agreement, please contact the PCSP mailbox:

DFPSPCSP@dfps.state.tx.us

If you, as the caregiver, have a concern regarding the safety of the child(ren) in your care due to the parent(s) contact with the child or any other reason, contact the Child Abuse hotline number at (800) 252-5400 or www.txabusehotline.org to report your concerns.

A copy of this completed Voluntary Caregiver Case Closure Plan was given to the voluntary caregiver(s) on
(date): _____; OR

Reason parents did not receive a copy of the Voluntary Caregiver Case Closure Plan:

APPENDIX 2: WHAT CONSTITUTES A PCSP?

Scenario: When a child is already living out of a parent's care when DFPS gets involved and our safety assessment indicates the child could not safely return home - is it a PCSP?

Answer: In most instances, this would not be considered a PCSP if the child has been living out of the home for a sufficient amount of time before DFPS got involved, the child was not placed out of the home in an attempt to circumvent our involvement, and the child appears to be there long term.

These situations will require caseworkers to use professional judgment. Caseworkers must still make sure the child is safe in the home by verifying that the child is actually living with the caregiver and it is an appropriate placement. Caseworkers should still make a home visit, run criminal checks, and make sure the caregiver understands the worries/danger to the child.

The exception to actually seeing the child in the placement would be to verify that the caregiver has legal custody of the child and that there are no allegations against the caregiver.

Scenario: When a child is living at home and our safety assessment indicates the child cannot safely live with the parent and the parent chooses to place the child at a facility or someplace other than an individual (e.g. sleep away camp) - is it a PCSP?

Answer: This is not a PCSP. In most instances the facility would be licensed. Facilities have their own regulatory standards that are very comprehensive. Facilities are also mandated reporters, and staff has continued contact with parents in most cases. If the child is being returned to the parent, facilities generally have a follow up program and, as mandated reporters, they should call in a report if they have any concerns.

Parents should be provided names of facilities as an option and a resource. **Caseworkers should never tell a parent they 'must' place the child in a facility just as they should never 'make' a parent do a PCSP.**

Scenario: When a placement outside the home is supposed to be no longer than 1-2 nights, is it a PCSP? Some caseworkers are terming this respite care.

Answer: This **is** a PCSP. If DFPS is asking a parent to place a child outside the home in order to keep the child safe, even if it is only one night, it is a PCSP. The agency does not recognize 'respite' care in investigations.

Scenario: Using the scenario immediately above, if the child is in a PCSP and wants to spend the night with a friend or relative - is this considered a PCSP placement?

Answer: An occasional overnight stay with a friend or relative would not be considered a PCSP. The PCSP caregiver has agreed to keep the child safe. The parent believes this is possible and the agency has approved the placement. PCSP caregivers should be able to make some decisions regarding the child they are caring for and children should be allowed to spend the night at a relative or friend's house if the parent and the PCSP caregiver are in agreement. This falls in the normal realm for any child and DFPS will not be responsible for doing background checks for occasional sleepovers with friends or relatives.

If, however, overnights with family members exceed an occasional sleepover, then DFPS should do background checks on everyone in the home where the child will be staying (criminal history and DFPS history), and should visit the home. This actually becomes a part of the family's plan if the stay overs occur on a regular basis.

Scenario:

- 1) When the plan is to bring a safety monitor into the home, but subsequently the parent leaves or DFPS asks a parent to leave, or
- 2) When the plan is for the parent and child/ren to move in with a safety monitor but subsequently the parent leaves or DFPS asks a parent to leave, is it a PCSP?

Answer: If DFPS has asked a safety monitor to come into the home with the parent and the child, or asked the parent and the child to go to a safety monitor's home, this would not be a PCSP.

If DFPS then asks the parent to leave due to safety concerns, and the child remains with the safety monitor, this could become a PCSP if the parent agrees to this and the procedures are all followed to make this a PCSP. If the parent does not agree, we would need to ask the parent for an alternative PCSP arrangement, or consider the need for a removal of the child.

If the parent leaves the caregiver's home without giving DFPS an opportunity to do the PCSP paperwork but DFPS is able to find the parent in a reasonable amount of time, we could consider turning the caregiver into a PCSP if the parent is agreeable and willing to leave the child in the home.

If there is a concern that the parent will return for the child and this would cause the child to be unsafe, the appropriate action would be to ensure the child is in a PCSP or consider the need to file a legal action for removal.

If the parent 'disappears', we would be unable to do the PCSP paperwork so we would need to assess our ability to file for legal custody. Whether or not we are granted custody, we would need to further assess the ability of the safety monitor to care for this child while they continue living in the child's home without the parent. When the parent has 'disappeared' or is no longer an appropriate caregiver, we have to ensure the child will continue to be safe in the home with the safety monitor who has become the caregiver. If the situation is appropriate, and we cannot get custody, we close the case at that point. The child is where the parent placed him/her. We would ask the safety monitor/caregiver to contact us if the parent returns.

Example: We have a teen mother that lives with her parents. The parents are asked to do a PCSP for the teen mom. The teen mom goes to her Aunt's house with her baby. This baby is not considered to be in a PCSP - only the teen mother.

If the teen mother leaves the home without DFPS prior knowledge - i.e. 'disappears', and leaves the baby in the home with the aunt, it is not considered a PCSP and we would probably need to file for custody of the baby. If we can find the teen mom, we may turn this into a PCSP for the baby if the mother is in agreement.

If DFPS asks the teen mother to leave the home and the teen mother wants her baby to stay with the caregiver, the teen mother could complete the paperwork to make this a PCSP.

Caseworkers and Supervisors must use critical thinking and assessment skills when making these decisions.

Things to be considered: Is the caregiver established as an ongoing caretaker of the child where the child resides? What we are looking for is the caregiving relationship for a substantial amount of time. EX: a mother and child move in with grandmother but mother leaves within a few weeks of the move. The grandmother is not an established caregiver and this should be handled as a PCSP if we can locate the parent.

Scenario: The agency went to court to request removal a child but the judge refuses to sign the removal order and instead orders the child to be placed with a relative or friend. Similarly, the judge refuses to order the removal of the child and instead orders the child into a placement that we had not approved as a PCSP as the potential caregiver did not meet all of the requirements. Is this a PCSP?

Answer: These situations would be handled as a PCSP if the Judge has allowed us to continue working with the family. We should still complete the PCSP paperwork and check the box that indicates the placement was denied by DFPS but was court ordered. This helps document the reason why the Judge denied placement and allows us to do what we can to ensure continued safety of the child. Follow up and continued contact with the family needs to be maintained.

Scenario: If a placement is with a non-custodial parent, especially a parent who did not have extensive prior contact with the child, is it a PCSP?

Answer: This would not be a PCSP. A non-custodial parent is still a parent. We would assess the home and do background checks as if we are investigating a parent. We would make sure the home is safe and assess the need for services.

Scenario:

A mother and her children are living with the grandparents. DFPS becomes involved and determines that the mother and the children need to reside separately. Mother agrees to leave the home and allows the children to remain with the grandmother. Is this a PCSP?

Answer:

Yes. The mother was the primary caregiver (legally responsible) and DFPS has asked her to leave the home. The grandmother must be considered as a PCSP and the tool must be filled out so she understands her new responsibility to the children and what is expected of her in regards to interactions with the mother.

APPENDIX 3: FBI EXIGENT RECORDS CHECKS

FBI Exigent Records Check should **only** be used when the information is:

- for a Parental Child Safety Placement, and
- would prevent a removal, and
- a household member has lived outside of Texas within the last three years.

The Centralized Background Check Unit (CBCU) performs FBI exigent checks; the FINDRS Team does not conduct FBI exigent checks. Within 7 days of an FBI exigent records search, staff **MUST** follow up with an FBI fingerprint check of the person on whom the FBI exigent check was performed.

FBI EXIGENT RECORDS CHECK - IN-STATE RESIDENT

- To start a request for a FBI Exigent check, dial 1-800-252-3223 (the SWI employee line) and select Option 3. This will ring through to CBCU staff who will conduct the FBI exigent check.

CAUTION: DO NOT select the FBI Exigent Check box on the Records Check page in IMPACT - only CBCU staff is authorized to select "FBI Exigent Check." If you select this option in IMPACT, the request will have to be denied/cancelled, and CBCU will have to re-enter it.

- If your request is outside of Monday-Friday between the hours of 7a.m.-5p.m., leave a message and a CBCU staff will return your call the following morning.
- CBCU staff will discuss the following with the caseworker:
 - Obtain the name and contact information of the person needing the check, including their email address or phone number.
 - Ensure the caseworker has seen the person's required proof of identification.
- CBCU staff will call the person needing the check to assist him or her with registering and scheduling the appointment with the fingerprinting vendor.
- After the appointment is made, the person will go to the designated location to be fingerprinted. DFPS pays the \$40 fee. The person being fingerprinted will not be charged anything.
- The fingerprinting results are entered directly into IMPACT. CBCU staff notifies the caseworker that the results are complete and ready for viewing in IMPACT.

FBI EXIGENT RECORDS CHECK - OUT-OF-STATE RESIDENT

- To start a request for a FBI Exigent check, dial 1-800-252-3223 (the SWI employee line) and select Option 3. This will ring through to CBCU staff who will conduct the FBI exigent check.

CAUTION: DO NOT select the FBI Exigent Check box on the Records Check page in IMPACT - only CBCU staff is authorized to select "FBI Exigent Check." If you select this option in IMPACT, the request will have to be denied/cancelled, and CBCU will have to re-enter it.

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- CBCU staff will discuss the following with the caseworker:
 - Obtain the name and contact information of the person needing the check, including their email address or phone number.
 - Ensure the caseworker has seen the person's required proof of identification.
- CBCU staff will call the person needing the check to assist him or her with registering the fingerprint submission with the fingerprinting vendor and explain the process for having his or her fingerprints collected by a local law enforcement agency.
- After the appointment is made, the person will go to the designated location to be fingerprinted. DFPS pays the \$40 fee.
- The local law enforcement may charge an additional fee. The person needing the check will have to pay the fee and submit their receipt to the caseworker for reimbursement. The caseworker will send the following information via e-mail to Cynthia.bargsley@dfps.state.tx.us in State Office for processing:
 - Name and Mailing Address of the person requesting reimbursement
 - Copy of the receipt
 - Case ID#
- The fingerprinting results are entered directly into IMPACT. CBCU staff notifies the caseworker that the results are complete and ready for viewing in IMPACT.

See the following CBCU pages:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Background_Checks/default.asp

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Background_Checks/terminology.asp

<http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Handbooks/CBCU/default.asp>