

SAFETY DEFINITIONS IN WISCONSIN

Safety refers to the absence of present or impending danger to a child or routinely demonstrated parent or caregiver protective capacities to assure that a child is protected from danger.

Unsafe refers to the presence of present or impending danger to a child and insufficient parent or caregiver protective capacities to assure that a child is protected.

Impending Danger is a foreseeable state of danger in which family behaviors, attitudes, motives, emotions and/or situations pose a threat which may not be currently active, but can be anticipated to have severe effects on a child at any time in the near future and requires safety intervention. The danger may not be obvious at the onset of CPS intervention or occurring in a present context, but can be identified and understood upon more fully evaluating individual and family conditions and functioning.

Present Danger Threats refer to immediate, significant and clearly observable family condition that is actively occurring or “in process” of occurring at the point of contact with a family and will likely result in severe harm to a child.

Parent or Caregiver Protective Capacities refers to personal and parenting behavioral, cognitive, and emotional characteristics that can specifically and directly be associated with a person being protective of his or her child. A protective capacity is a specific quality that can be observed, understood and demonstrated as a part of the way a parent thinks, feels, and acts that makes her or him protective.

Threat to Child Safety refers to specific conditions, behavior, emotion, perceptions, attitudes, intent, actions or situations within a family that represent the potential for severe harm to a child. A threat to child safety may be classified as present danger threats or impending danger threats.

Vulnerable child refers to a child who is dependent on others for protection and is exposed to circumstances that she or he is powerless to manage, and susceptible, accessible, and available to a threatening person and/or persons in authority over them.

From: *Child Protective Services Safety Intervention Standards, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, July 2015.*