

FAMILY INTERACTION PLAN, FORM 470-5148
GENERAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES INSTRUCTIONS

The Family Interaction Plan and General Roles and Responsibilities, form 470-5148, is the official family interaction plan developed for children placed out of the home. All children who are placed out of the home need to have a family interaction plan in place to ensure interactions occur in safe and healthy ways. The family interaction plan should be tailored to meet the safety needs of the family.

The most effective way of developing or reassessing a family interaction plan is during a Family Team Decision-Making (FTDM) Meeting. The written family interaction plan may be incorporated as part of the FTDM Meeting notes or identified separately on the family interaction plan form. However, not all children placed out of the home will have a FTDM Meeting but family interaction planning and development of a family interaction plan should still occur.

Carefully planned family interaction is a powerful family reunification intervention tool. Family interaction can help implement many essential family reunification goals, including:

- Maintaining the parent, child, and sibling relationships, and other relationships.
- Learning, practicing, and demonstrating new behaviors, parenting skills, and patterns of interactions.
- Enhancing well-being.
- Helping family members work through issues and connect to resources, and
- Documenting progress toward reunification goals.

The first page of this document outlines the role of the DHS Worker, the parent, the caregiver, and the provider. The second page includes the Family Interaction Plan.

Background Information. All fields in this section of the Family Interaction Plan must be completed, including:

- **Children's names**
 - If multiple children have different needs or safety concerns, the family's team may want to consider a separate plan for each child.
- **Date of initial plan**
 - This is the date the first Family Interaction Plan was developed.
- **Placed with**
 - Document where the child is placed and with whom. If multiple children are in different places, indicate the type of placement (i.e., resource family, relative, residential placement, etc.).
- **Placement date for children.** This is the date the child was removed from their home and placed out of the home.
- **Permanency Goal.** Document the identified permanency goal.

Safety Concerns/Required level of supervision. Enter the safety concerns and the identified level of supervision specific to family interactions. The elements to explore when assessing safety include the three basic safety constructs: threats of maltreatment, child vulnerability, and caretaker's protective capacities.

- **Threats of maltreatment.** The aggravating factors that combine to produce a potentially dangerous situation.

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- Situation (unsafe home, criminal activity)
- Behavior (impulsive actions, assaults)
- Emotion (immobilizing depression)
- Motive (intention to hurt the child)
- Perception (viewing child as a devil)
- Capacity (physical disability)
- **Child vulnerability.** The degree that a child cannot on the child's own avoid, negate or minimize the impact of present or impending danger.
 - **Present danger** means immediate, significant, and clearly observed maltreatment which is occurring to a child in the present or there is an immediate threat of maltreatment requiring immediate action to protect the child.
 - **Impending danger** means a foreseeable state of danger in which family behaviors, attitudes, motives, emotions, or the child's physical environment poses a threat of maltreatment.
- **Protective Capacities.** The family strengths or resources that reduce, control, or prevent threats of maltreatment.

Family Interaction Plan. The family interaction plan needs to consider the developmental needs of the children and safety concerns. Frequent and developmentally appropriate family interaction benefits the child emotionally and is the strongest indicator of family reunification and achievement of permanency. Involving the family in interaction planning ensures the family's culture and rituals are respected. The family's cultural dynamics will be taken into consideration during family interaction planning.

Family interaction should begin as soon as possible after removal from parental custody. At a minimum, interactions should occur within 24 hours of placement, be regular, and of increasing frequency and duration.

- **Types of interaction.** Document the type of interaction. Creativity in defining interactions should be supported. Every opportunity needs to be considered such as doctor appointments, school activities, meetings, and other functions in which the family would have participated if the children were in the home. Interactions should be built around meaningful activities including:
 - Mealtimes
 - Bathing
 - Grooming
 - Naptimes
 - Homework time
 - Grocery shopping
 - Doctor's appointments

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- School activities (i.e. conferences, plays, band/choir concerts, family nights, carnivals, graduation, etc. and
- Sports activities

Family interactions should be geared towards the child's developmental abilities. Creative planning should not only support face-to-face time but also other methods, such as calls, letters, texting, emails, and other electronic methods of communication. Families should be encouraged to explore other ways to connect and interact with one another.

- **Frequency and length of interactions.** Document the frequency and length of interaction. In determining how often and how long interactions should be, consider the following:
 - The age of the children.
 - The severity and chronicity of the abuse.
 - The potential for abduction or continued abuse of the children.
 - The progress of the parent learning new skills or managing inappropriate behaviors, protective capacities displayed by the parent.
- **Locations of interaction.** Document the location where the interaction will occur. Family interaction should occur in the least restrictive, most homelike setting that allows for natural interaction and appropriate to meet the child's need for safety. Generally, the parental, relative, or resource family home will provide the best environment. When safety is an issue, a more secure setting should be chosen and a safety plan developed for the interactions to continue.

Consider the type of interaction as you document the location. For example, if an interaction is built around school activities, sports activities, or doctor's appointments, you would document the location of the event (i.e. school, gymnasium, ball field, doctor office, etc.).

- **Types of supervision.** Document the type of supervision for the identified interaction. Types of supervision include:
 - Fully supervised
 - Semi or partially supervised or
 - No supervision necessarySupervision can be provided by a professional or other person identified by the family's team.
- **Supervised by.** If supervision is required, document who is responsible to provide supervision during the interaction. This will be determined by the family's team. Consideration should be given based on the safety concerns and the developmental needs of the child.

Family interactions are most "natural" when interactions are supported by those with a relationship with the child, such as other family members versus professionals. Family

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supports can be relied on to assist with all aspects of services including attendance at meetings, role modeling, transportation, observing interactions, etc.

- **Date reviewed.** Document the date when the plan was reviewed with the family.

Goals. Document the goals to be accomplished during family interaction. Family interaction should focus on allowing the most natural parent-child interactions, such as:

- Cooking and eating a meal,
- Reading stories,
- Cleaning a room,
- Playing a game,
- Bath time,
- Naptime, or
- Bedtime routines.

The focus is on maintaining ties between the parent and child and assessing the parent's capacity to care for the child.

Goals are the desired behavioral changes to be accomplished during the family interaction. These behavioral changes are most likely related back to the safety concerns as identified by the family's team.

- **Desired behavioral changes.** Document the goals to be accomplished during family interaction.
- **Demonstrated by.** Document how the family and family's team will know if the goal is accomplished.
- **Date reviewed or revised.** Document the date when the goal was reviewed or revised. Family interaction needs to be reviewed during a family team decision-making meeting or by those the family's team identifies, at a minimum, when:
 - There are changes in behavioral patterns demonstrated by the parents or children.
 - Protective provisions that may be a safety concern change or arise.
 - There is a change in family supports.
 - There is a change in legal issues or court requirements (change in custody or guardianship) that may impact family interaction planning.
 - Agreed upon behavioral changes are accomplished or not.

Transportation. Describe how transportation will be provided once individuals who are available to assist in transportation are identified. Transportation is a key component for interactions to be successful.

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Resource family and other relative caregivers should be encouraged to transport children at least one way. Parents and extended family members should be expected to arrange their own transportation, though they may be given temporary support when necessary to ensure there is not a gap in family interaction; however, this will likely be accomplished by public transportation. Children in placement may have to be transported by a contractor, provider, or DHS staff, one or both ways to interactions.

Expectations. Expectations are the “nuts and bolts” of family interaction planning. Considerations when setting expectations could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Expectations of what parents should bring to the interaction.
- Activities that parents should plan or consider doing during the interaction.
- Behaviors that provide an unsafe situation may terminate the interaction. It is important that there is follow up with the parents in order to reduce the risk for another unsafe situation.
- The use of physical discipline or threats towards others.
- Negative comments about others, which includes the children, family members, DHS worker, contractor or provider staff, and other professionals part of the family’s team.
- Possession or bringing any drug paraphernalia, illicit substances, or alcohol to the interaction.
- All legal decisions or documents regarding contact, including No Contact Orders (NCOs), etc. will be abided by all parties.
- Obtain approval before bringing any additional individuals to family interactions. Approvals are determined by the DHS case manager or the family’s team.

Completion/Distribution Requirements

The Family Interaction Plan is completed and/or updated during a Family Team Decision-Making (FTDM) Meeting and provided to the parents and other identified team members.

Location of Forms

All Family Interaction forms and documents can be accessed at the following website:

<http://iatrainingsource.org/forms/>