

## Who we are

The Children and Family Services Division of the North Dakota Department of Human Services oversees the public child welfare system in the state and administers programs to ensure:

- 1) Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect.
- 2) Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- 3) Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs and children receive adequate services to meet their educational, physical and mental health needs.

# Safety Framework Practice Model



**Child safety** is the primary focus of the Safety Framework Practice Model (SFPM) and attention is provided to children who may be unsafe based on the presence of uncontrolled danger threats (Roe Lund, T., Renne, J. (2009). *Child Safety: A Guide for Judges and Attorneys*. ACTION for Child Protection, Inc.).



A **safe child** is one in which no threats of danger exist within the family, OR parents/caregivers possess sufficient protective capacity to manage any threats, OR the child is not vulnerable to the existing danger.

An **unsafe child** is one in which threats of danger exist in the family, AND the child is vulnerable to such threats, AND parents/caregivers have insufficient protective capacities to manage or control the threats.



Safety Framework Practice Model uses standardized tools and decision-making criteria to assess family behaviors, conditions, and circumstances, including individual child vulnerabilities and parent/caregiver protective capacities, to make **well-founded child safety decisions**. The practice model's approach to safety assessment and management recognizes that issues concerned with child safety change as the child welfare's intervention proceeds.



Safety Framework involves multiple assessments of child safety throughout the life of the child welfare case, moving seamlessly from intake into the child protective services (CPS) assessment, and then into case management (ongoing services). SFPM supports **change-focused** case planning, ongoing safety management, and timely reunification and/or case closure when children are in safe, permanent homes. As the child welfare intervention proceeds, SFPM's focus shifts to more fully support a reduction in safety threats and bolstering parent/caregiver protective capacities through intervention assessment and strategies.