

DRAFT

**CALIFORNIA
SDM® FAMILY RISK ASSESSMENT**

Referral Name: _____ Referral #: _____ - _____ - _____ Date: ____/____/____

County Name: _____ Worker Name: _____ Worker ID#: _____

PRIOR INVESTIGATIONS	Neglect	Abuse
1. Prior neglect investigations		
<input type="radio"/> a. No prior neglect investigations	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. One prior neglect investigation	0	1
<input type="radio"/> c. Two prior neglect investigations	1	1
<input type="radio"/> d. Three or more prior neglect investigations	2	1
2. Prior abuse investigations		
<input type="radio"/> a. No prior abuse investigations	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. One prior abuse investigation	1	0
<input type="radio"/> c. Two prior abuse investigations	1	1
<input type="radio"/> d. Three or more prior abuse investigations	1	2
3. Household has previous or current open ongoing CPS case (voluntary/court ordered)		
<input type="radio"/> a. No	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. Yes, but not open at the time of this referral	1	1
<input type="radio"/> c. Yes, household has open CPS case at the time of this referral	2	2
4. Prior physical injury to a child resulting from child abuse/neglect or prior substantiated physical abuse of a child		
<input type="radio"/> a. None/not applicable	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. One or more apply (<i>select all applicable</i>)	0	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Prior physical injury to a child resulting from child abuse/neglect		
<input type="checkbox"/> Prior substantiated physical abuse of a child		

CURRENT INVESTIGATION	Neglect	Abuse
5. Current report maltreatment type (<i>select all applicable</i>)		
<input type="checkbox"/> a. Neglect	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> b. Physical and/or emotional abuse	0	1
<input type="checkbox"/> c. None of the above	0	0
6. Number of children involved in the child abuse/neglect incident		
<input type="radio"/> a. One, two, or three	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. Four or more	1	1
7. Primary caregiver assessment of the incident		
<input type="radio"/> a. Caregiver does not blame the child	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. Caregiver blames the child	0	1

FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS	Neglect	Abuse
8. Age of youngest child in the home		
<input type="radio"/> a. 2 years or older	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. Under 2	1	0
9. Characteristics of children in the household		
<input type="radio"/> a. Not applicable	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. One or more present (<i>select all applicable</i>)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental health or behavioral problems	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Developmental disability		
<input type="checkbox"/> Learning disability		
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical disability		0
<input type="checkbox"/> Medically fragile or failure to thrive		
10. Housing		
<input type="radio"/> a. Household has physically safe housing	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. One or more apply (<i>select all applicable</i>)	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Physically unsafe; AND/OR <input type="checkbox"/> Family homeless		
11. Incidents of domestic violence in the household in the past year		
<input type="radio"/> a. None or one incident of domestic violence	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. Two or more incidents of domestic violence	0	1
12. Primary caregiver disciplinary practices		
<input type="radio"/> a. Employs appropriate discipline	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. Employs excessive/inappropriate discipline	0	1
13. Primary or secondary caregiver history of abuse or neglect as a child		
<input type="radio"/> a. No history of abuse or neglect for either caregiver	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. One or both caregivers have a history of abuse or neglect as a child	1	1
14. Primary or secondary caregiver mental health		
<input type="radio"/> a. No past or current mental health problem	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. Past or current mental health problem (<i>select all applicable</i>)	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> During the past 12 months		
<input type="checkbox"/> Prior to the last 12 months		
15. Primary or secondary caregiver alcohol and/or drug use		
<input type="radio"/> a. No past or current alcohol/drug use that interferes with family functioning	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. Past or current alcohol/drug use that interferes with family functioning (<i>select all applicable</i>)	1	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol (<input type="checkbox"/> Last 12 months and/or <input type="checkbox"/> Prior to the last 12 months)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Drugs (<input type="checkbox"/> Last 12 months and/or <input type="checkbox"/> Prior to the last 12 months)		
16. Primary or secondary caregiver criminal arrest history		
<input type="radio"/> a. No caregiver has prior criminal arrests	0	0
<input type="radio"/> b. Either caregiver has one or more criminal arrests	1	0
	Neglect	Abuse
TOTAL SCORE		

SCORED RISK LEVEL. Assign the family's scored risk level based on the highest score on either the neglect or abuse indices, using the following chart.

Neglect Score	Abuse Score	Scored Risk Level
<input type="radio"/> 0–2	<input type="radio"/> 0–1	<input type="radio"/> Low
<input type="radio"/> 3–5	<input type="radio"/> 2–4	<input type="radio"/> Moderate
<input type="radio"/> 6–8	<input type="radio"/> 5–7	<input type="radio"/> High
<input type="radio"/> 9 +	<input type="radio"/> 8 +	<input type="radio"/> Very high

OVERRIDES

Policy Overrides. Select yes if a condition shown below is applicable in this case. If any condition is applicable, override the final risk level to very high.

- Yes No 1. Sexual abuse case AND the perpetrator is likely to have access to the child.
- Yes No 2. Non-accidental injury to a child under age 2.
- Yes No 3. Severe non-accidental injury.
- Yes No 4. Caregiver action or inaction resulted in the death of a child due to abuse or neglect (previous or current).

Discretionary Override. If a discretionary override is made, select yes, increase risk by one level, and indicate reason.

- Yes No 5. If yes, override risk level (select one): Moderate High Very High
- Discretionary override reason: _____

Supervisor's Review/Approval of Discretionary Override: _____ Date: _____

FINAL RISK LEVEL (select final level assigned): Low Moderate High Very high

RECOMMENDED DECISION

Final Risk Level	Safety Decision		
	Safe	Safe with Plan	Unsafe
Low/Moderate	Close	Open	Open
High/Very High	Refer to services or open	Open	Open

PLANNED ACTION

- Close without any intervention
- Refer to Services as primary intervention
 - Universal prevention services_
 - Specialist prevention services or community agency: _____
 - Substance Use
 - In-Home Parenting
 - Mental Health
 - Domestic Violence
 - Other: _____
 - Differential Response Program
- Open for Child Welfare Services Case
 - Family Maintenance (voluntary in-home)
 - Family Maintenance (court ordered in-home)
 - Out of home NOTE: select only for households with unmitigated safety threats
 - Other: _____

If recommended decision and planned action do not match, explain why:

SUPPLEMENTAL RISK ITEMS

Note: These items should be recorded but are not scored.

1. Either caregiver demonstrates difficulty accepting one or more children's gender identity or sexual orientation.
 a. No
 b. Yes
2. Alleged perpetrator is an unmarried partner of the primary caregiver.
 a. No
 b. Yes
3. Another non-related adult in the household provides unsupervised child care to a child under the age of 3.
 a. No
 b. Yes
 c. N/A
 - 3a. Is the other non-related adult in the household employed?
 a. No
 b. Yes
 c. N/A
4. Either caregiver is isolated in the community.
 a. No
 b. Yes
5. Caregiver has provided safe and stable housing for at least the past 12 months.
 a. No
 b. Yes

DRAFT

CALIFORNIA
SDM® FAMILY RISK ASSESSMENT
POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The SDM family risk assessment classifies families into low-, moderate-, high-, or very high-risk categories according to the likelihood of future child protective services involvement for alleged child abuse or neglect. By completing the risk assessment, the worker obtains an objective appraisal of the likelihood that a family will come to the attention of child protection for allegations of maltreatment to a child in the next 12 to 24 months. The difference between risk levels is substantial. Families classified as high risk have significantly higher rates of subsequent referral and substantiation than families classified as low risk, and they are more often involved in abuse or in neglect incidents that require more intensive agency involvement (e.g., child removal)

When risk is clearly defined and objectively quantified, the choice between serving one family or another is simplified: agency resources may be targeted to families at higher risk families because of the greater potential to reduce subsequent CPS involvement and, ideally, maltreatment.

The current risk assessment is based on research on investigations with substantiated or inconclusive allegations of abuse or neglect, which examined the relationships between family characteristics and the outcomes of subsequent child protective services referrals, investigations, substantiations, and placements. The tool does not predict recurrence but simply assesses whether a family shares characteristics with other families who are more or less likely to have subsequent child protective services involvement.

Which Cases

Required for all substantiated and inconclusive referrals; also recommended to be completed on unfounded referrals.

No SDM risk assessment should be completed for the following in-person responses:

- An incident involving *only* a third-party perpetrator of sexual exploitation with no allegations regarding the caregiver;
- An investigation of child fatality suspected to be a result of abuse or neglect AND there are no remaining minor children in the household; or
- A referral regarding allegations in an out-of-home care setting.
- New assigned referrals on open cases. Instead, complete relevant risk reassessment.

Who

The social worker who is responding to the referral.

When

After the safety assessment has been completed and the worker has reached a conclusion regarding the allegation AND prior to the decision to promote to a case or close without services. This is no later than 30 days from the first face-to-face contact.

For children in out-of-home care with a “return home” goal, if a second parent living in a separate household will receive child welfare services, complete a baseline risk assessment within 30 days of identifying that parent. (Note: This risk assessment is completed within a case in WebSDM.)

Decision

The SDM risk level identifies the likelihood of a household’s future child protective services involvement for alleged child abuse or neglect. When considered alongside the SDM Safety Assessment, it can guide the decision of which families may most benefit from post-investigation services. SDM policy also recommends minimum contact frequency standards for open cases based on risk (see Section VI of this manual).

RECOMMENDED DECISION

Final Risk Level	Safety Decision		
	Safe	Safe with Plan	Unsafe
Low/Moderate	Close	Open	Open
High/Very High	Refer to services or open	Open	Open

PLANNED ACTION**Close without intervention**

Safe families that have low or moderate risk levels should not be considered for formal Child Welfare intervention. Families in this group may benefit from increased connection to natural support networks and community prevention services (e.g., heat, food pantry, TANFF, SNAP).

Refer to services as primary intervention

Intervention for families in this group may include referral to any of the following:

- Universal prevention services
- Referral to a specialist agency or community agency as needed, based on specific family needs. Specialized services may include substance use services, in-home parenting supports, mental health supports, domestic violence services, or other targeted community-based services such as medical care or kinship navigation.
- Differential Response programs, such as path 2 services provided by community agencies working in partnership CWS to provide an alternative response.

Open for child welfare services case

Intervention for families in this group involves opening a child welfare services case, including:

- Family Maintenance services supporting in-home child welfare interventions including both voluntary and court ordered.
- Out of home intervention. NOTE: Select this intervention only for households with unmitigated safety threats.

Appropriate Completion

The risk assessment is completed based on conditions that exist at the time the incident is reported and investigated as well as the prior history of the family.

- Only one household can be assessed on each risk assessment form.
- Always assess the household in which the child abuse/neglect incident is alleged. If a child is a member of two households and there are allegations on both households, complete a risk assessment on both households.
- Complete a second risk assessment for non-custodial parents who will receive reunification services.

Scoring Individual Items

Workers should familiarize themselves with the items that are included on the risk assessment and the accompanying definitions for those items. A score for each assessment item is derived from the worker's observation of the characteristics the item describes during interviews with household members (child, caregivers, and others) and collaterals; worker observations; reports and case records; or other reliable sources. Some characteristics are objective (such as prior child abuse/neglect history or the age of the child). Others require the worker to use discretionary judgment based on his/her assessment of the family, through use of the definitions.

After all risk items are scored, the score is totaled and indicates the corresponding risk levels for both subsequent neglect and subsequent abuse. Next, the scored risk level is determined; it is the higher between the abuse and the neglect risk levels. Overrides

After completing the risk assessment, the worker considers whether reasons to override the scored risk level are present. There are two types of overrides.

Policy Overrides

Policy overrides reflect incident seriousness and/or child vulnerability concerns and have been determined by the agency to warrant a risk level designation of "very high," regardless of the risk level indicated by the assessment tool. Policy overrides require supervisory approval. Consider each of the four policy override reasons and select yes or no as appropriate for each policy override.

Discretionary Override

A discretionary override be used when the worker is aware of conditions affecting risk that are not captured within the items on the risk assessment. When used, a discretionary override increases the scored risk level by one level (e.g., from low to moderate OR moderate to high, but NOT from low to high). Discretionary overrides require a written description of the reasons to increase the risk level and supervisory approval.

After completing the override section, indicate the final risk level, which is the highest of the scored risk level, policy override risk level (which is always very high), and the discretionary risk level.

Disposition

WebSDM will display the recommended response based on **the scored risk level and the most recent safety decision on the allegation household**. Enter the actual case disposition (promoted to case or not promoted to case). If the recommended response differs from the actual disposition, provide an explanation and obtain supervisory approval.

Supplemental Risk Items

These are items that are answered for each investigation in which a risk assessment is completed. The purpose of the supplemental risk items is to gather information on in areas that are thought to have a relationship to subsequent harm. The supplemental risk items are used in validation of the risk assessment, which occurs every five to seven years. Use the definitions to answer the items and gather the information for the answers in the same way as the risk assessment items.

DRAFT