

Environmental Awareness

When working with DCS families as a home based service provider, it is essential to be aware of your surroundings. This not only helps to keep you safe, but is essential to keeping the children we serve safe. As a home based service provider you spend a significant amount of time in the home and with the family. This affords you the opportunity to observe the environment at various times and in various situations at a higher frequency than the FCM other formal supports involved in the case.

When in the home you are focused on specific goals. However, observing your surroundings should also be occurring constantly. When you observe ANYTHING that is a concern, you should ALWAYS inform the FCM. The following is a list of specific items that you may observe. This list is not all inclusive, and you should always err on the side of caution and keep the FCM informed.

- Is the interior and exterior of home clean and free from dangerous or hazardous conditions?
- Does the home have functioning utilities?
- If you observe the family transporting a child, are they using proper car seats? Do the car seats appear to be used correctly?
- Who is in the home when you are present? Who else visits or has access to the home?
- Are there animals in the home? Do you observe any safety concerns surrounding the presence of the animals?
- Is the sleeping environment of the children safe?
- Are household cleaners, poisons, and medications accessible to the children?
- Are firearms, ammunition, and/or weapons present in the home? Are they accessible to the children?

When ANY issue or potential issue is observed, you should make a plan to report the circumstance to the FCM and your supervisor as soon as possible. In cases impacting the immediate safety of the child(ren), you should make a decision to do one or more of the following, in addition to notifying the FCM and your supervisor:

- Contact law enforcement
- Make a report to the Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-800-5556
- Address the issue with the family

Your agency's policy should provide additional guidance on situations to watch for and addressing observed issues. Please discuss the related policies and procedures with your supervisor.

Employee Signature

Date

Supervisor Signature

Date