



# UTAH

PRACTICE ELEVATED

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2012 Court Improvement Summit

## Structured Decision Making

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## **Children's Research Center**

A nonprofit social research organization and division of  
the National Council on Crime and Delinquency  
[www.nccd-crc.org](http://www.nccd-crc.org)

# What Is SDM?

The SDM system:

A set of research- and evidence-based tools for each important decision in the life of a child welfare case.



# Goals of SDM

1. Reduce subsequent harm to children.
2. Expedite permanency.



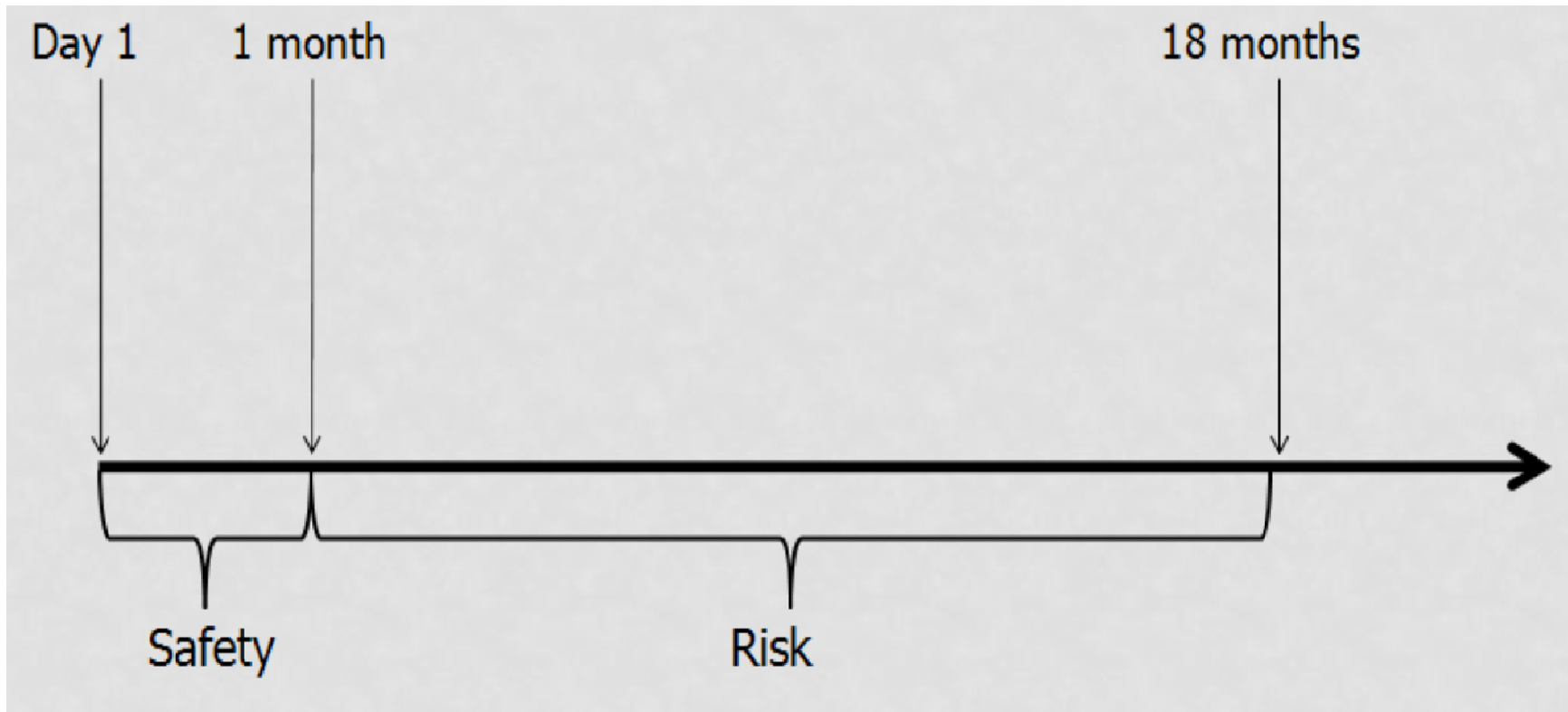
## Benefits Include:

- Common language.
- Information gathering.
- Ensure key elements are considered.
- Greater transparency in decision-making.
- Improves decision-making.
- Provides equity.

# SAFETY VS. RISK



# Safety vs. Risk





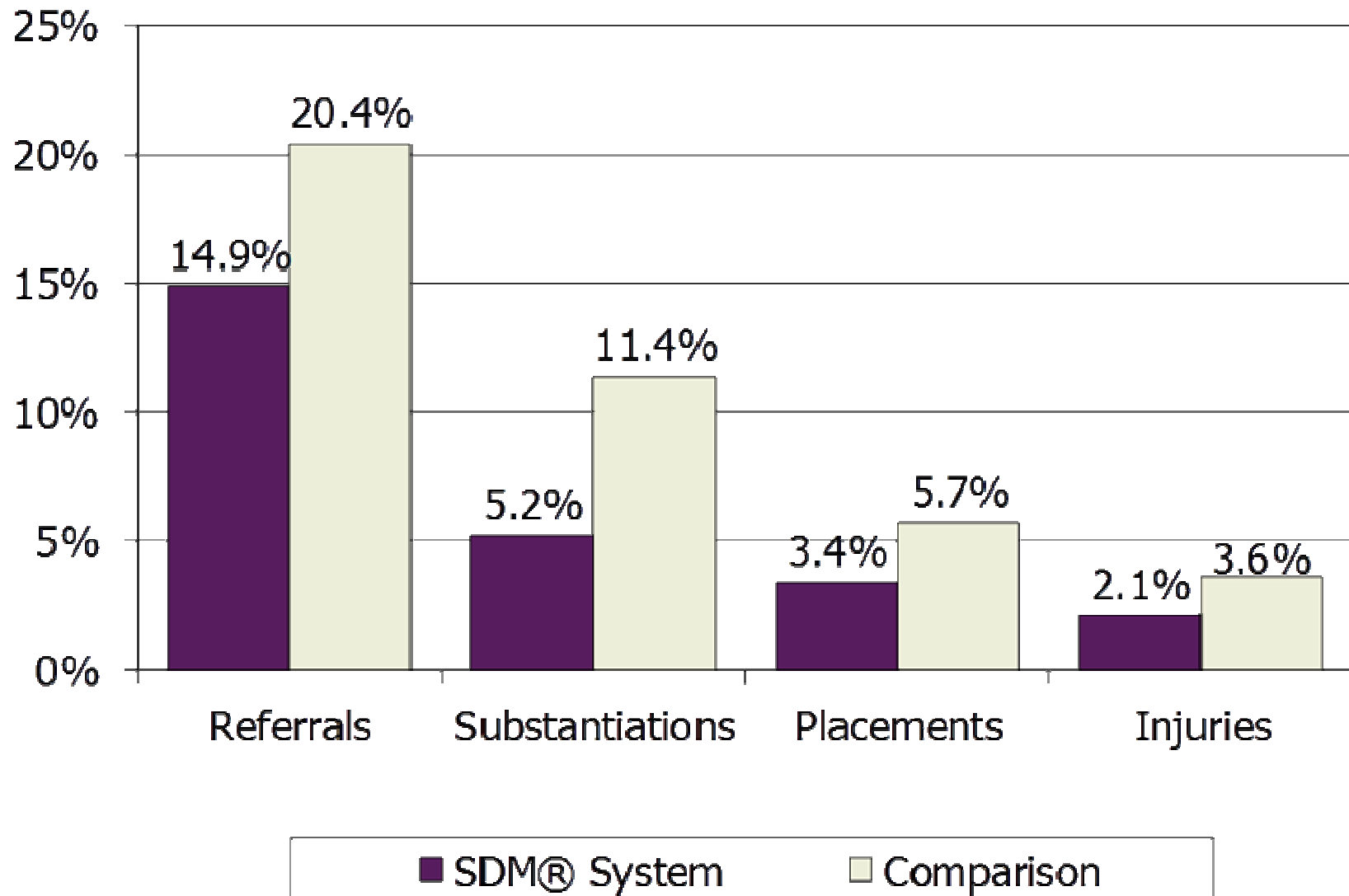
- Removal?
- Reunification?
- Close case?



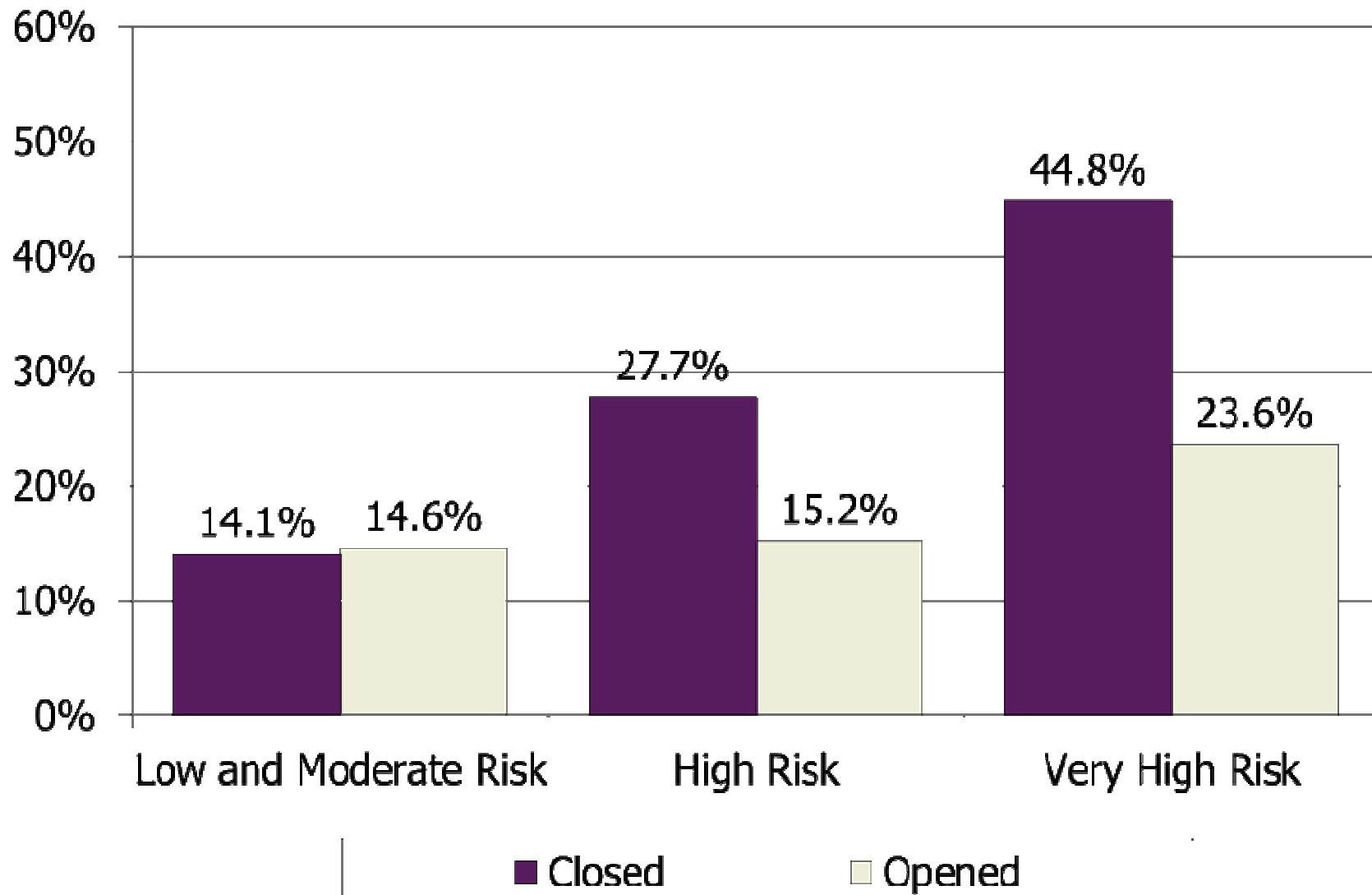
SDM

Research

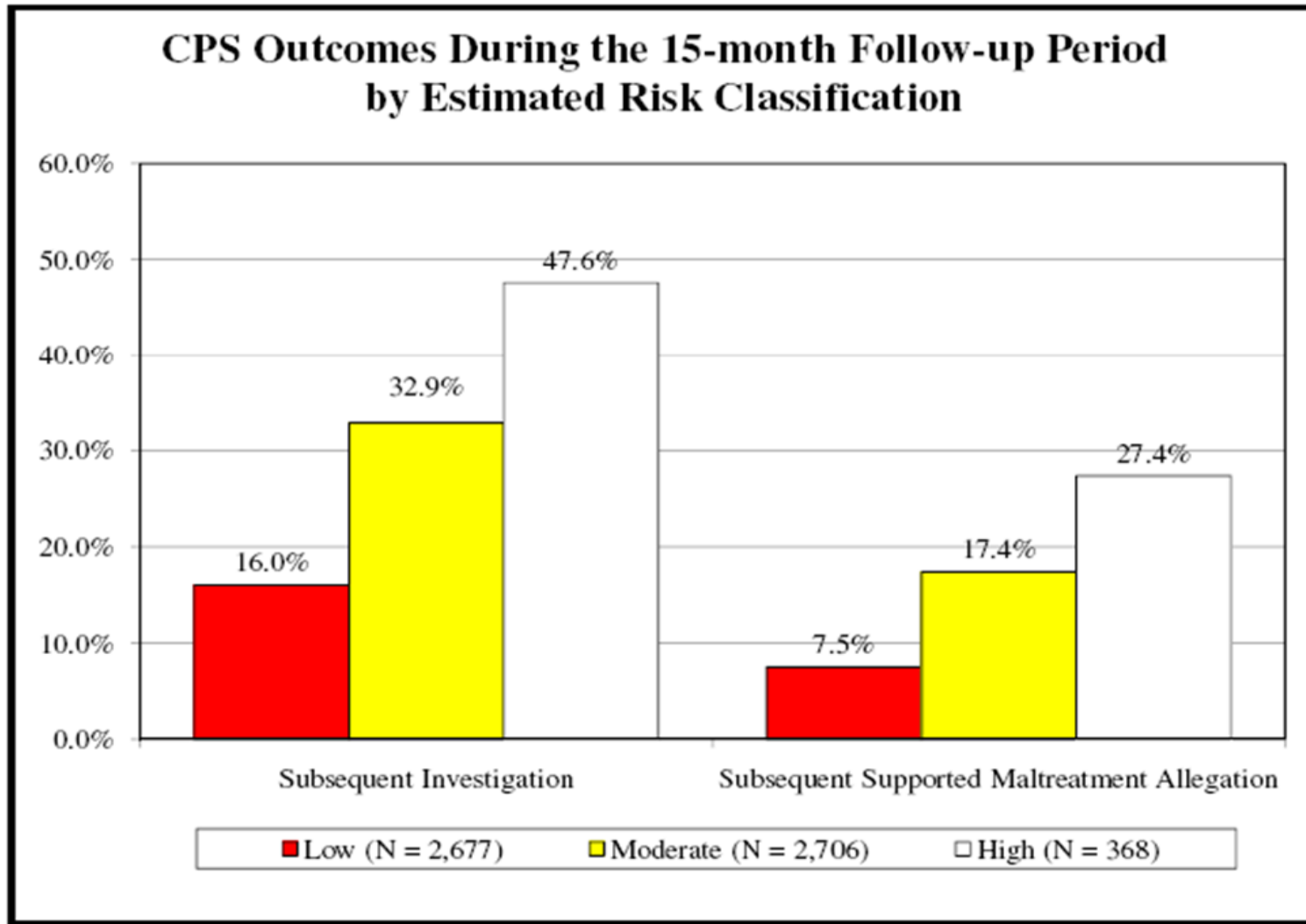
## Outcomes After 12 Months



## Cases With a New Referral in the Next Two Years

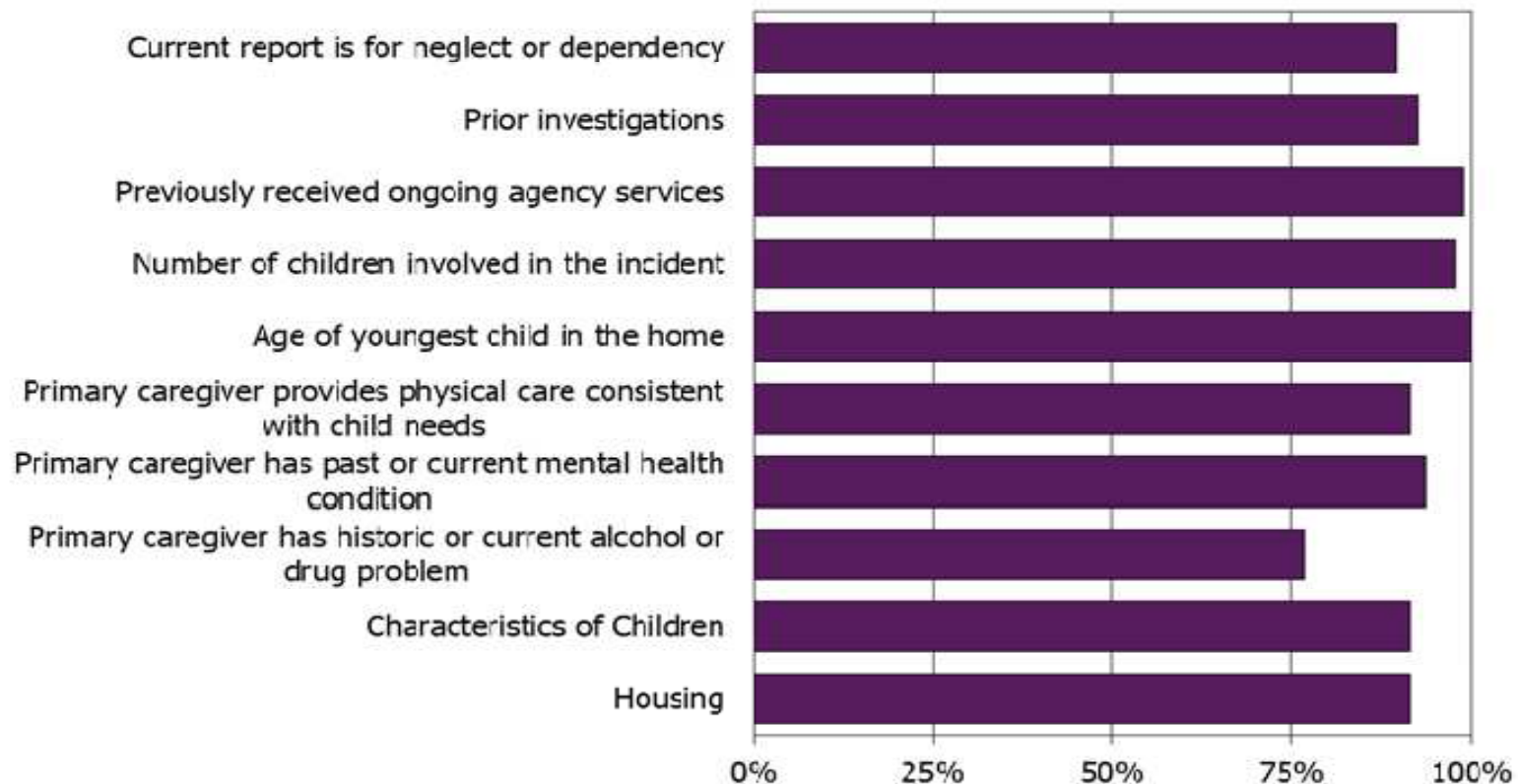


# Utah Data Analysis



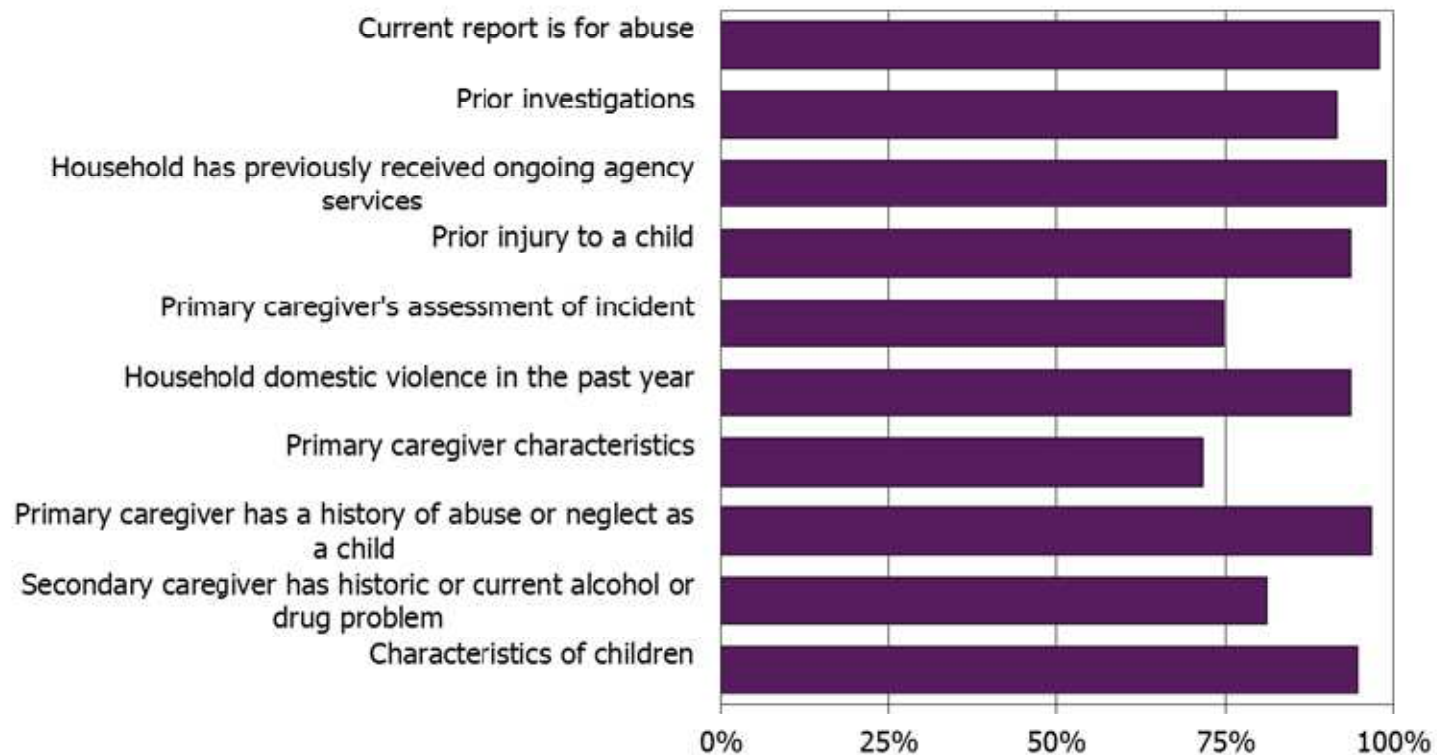
# Inter-rater Reliability

## Agreement on Neglect Items



# Inter-rater Reliability

## Agreement on Abuse Items





## SDM Assessments

- Safety Assessment
- Risk Assessment
- Risk ReAssessment

UTAH DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES  
SDM\* SAFETY ASSESSMENT

4-0711

Primary Caregiver Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Case #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Referral Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Office: \_\_\_\_\_  
Worker Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Worker ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Assessment Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
 Initial  Review  Closing

Names of Children Assessed:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

(If more than six children are assessed, add additional names and numbers on reverse side.)

**SECTION 1: CHILD VULNERABILITIES:** The vulnerability of each child is considered throughout the assessment. Young children cannot protect themselves. For older children, inability to protect themselves could result from diminished mental or physical capacity or repeated victimization. The following conditions may result in child's inability to protect self; mark all that apply to any child.

- Under 5 years  Diminished developmental/cognitive capacity  
 Significant diagnosed medical or mental disorder  Diminished physical capacity  
 Isolated or less visible in the community

**SECTION 2: THREATS TO SAFETY:** The following items are behaviors or conditions that may place a child at risk of serious harm. Identify the presence of each threat to safety by checking the item. Note: The vulnerability of each child is considered throughout the assessment. Answer each item as it applies to the most vulnerable child.

- | Yes                      | No                       |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Caregiver caused serious physical harm to the child or made a plausible threat to cause current investigation, as indicated by any of the following:<br><input type="checkbox"/> Serious injury or abuse to the child other than accidental<br><input type="checkbox"/> Caregiver fears he/she will maltreat the child<br><input type="checkbox"/> Threat to cause harm or retaliate against the child<br><input type="checkbox"/> Excessive discipline or physical force<br><input type="checkbox"/> Drug-exposed infant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Child sexual abuse is suspected and circumstances suggest that the child's safety may be at risk.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Caregiver does not meet the child's immediate needs for supervision, food, clothing, or care, resulting in danger to the child's health and/or safety.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. The physical living conditions are hazardous and immediately threatening to the health and safety of the child.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Caregiver describes the child in predominantly negative terms or acts toward the child in negative ways, including the child being a danger to self or others, acting out aggressively, or being severely withdrawn and/or suicidal.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Caregiver does not or is unable to protect the child from serious harm or threatened harm by others. This may include physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Domestic violence exists in the home and poses an imminent danger of serious physical and/or emotional harm to the child.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Caregiver's current substance abuse, emotional stability, developmental status, or cognitive deficiency seriously impairs his/her current ability to supervise, protect, or care for the child.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Caregiver's explanation for the injury to the child is questionable or inconsistent with type of injury, and the nature of the injury suggests that the child's safety may be of immediate concern.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. The family restricts access to the child, or there is reason to believe that the family is about to flee.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. There is a concerning pattern of prior investigations or inappropriate behavior that has not been resolved AND new concerns have been identified.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. Other (specify): _____   |

IF NO THREATS TO SAFETY ARE PRESENT, PROCEED TO SECTION 4.

# Safety Assessment



# Safety Assessment Structure

Child  
vulnerabilities



Threats to  
safety



Protective  
capacities



Safety  
interventions

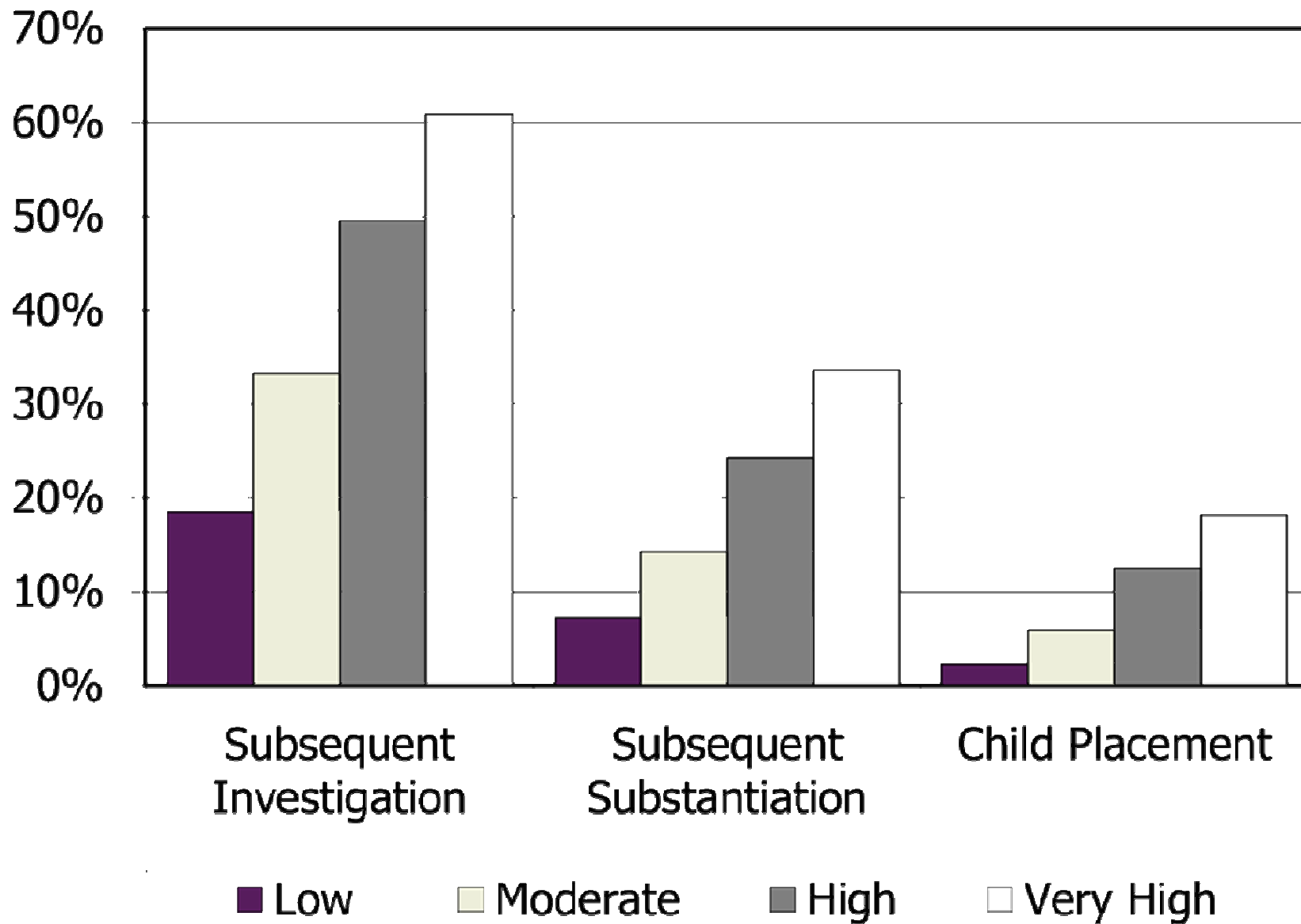
# Video Vignette

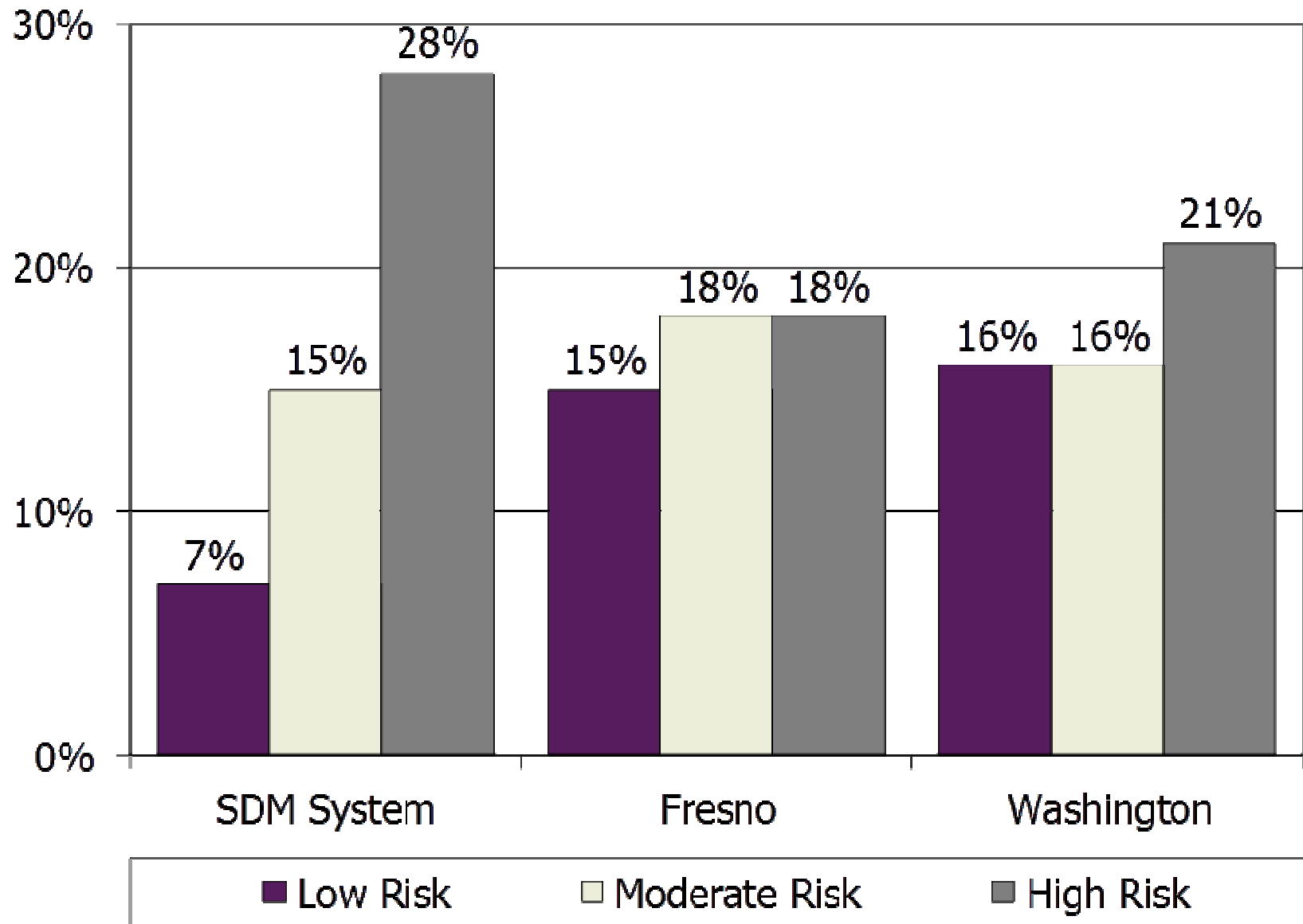
Safety Assessment

# Actuarial Assessment









# Risk Assessment Structure

Neglect index



Abuse index



Scored risk level



Overrides



Final risk level

# Case Contacts





# Contact Standards

<b>Ongoing Worker Minimum Contact Guidelines for In-Home Services</b>		
<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Caregiver and Child Contacts</b>	<b>Location</b>
Low	<b>One</b> face-to-face per month with caregiver and child	<b>Must</b> be in caregiver's residence
Moderate	<b>Two</b> face-to-face per month with caregiver and child	<b>One</b> must be in caregiver's residence
High	<b>Three</b> face-to-face per month with caregiver and child	<b>One</b> must be in caregiver's residence
Very High	<b>Four</b> face-to-face per month with caregiver and child	<b>Two</b> must be in caregiver's residence

# Video Vignette

Risk Assessment

UTAH DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES  
SDM® FAMILY RISK REASSESSMENT

4-0011

Primary Caregiver Name \_\_\_\_\_ Case #: \_\_\_\_\_ Referral Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Office \_\_\_\_\_ Worker Name \_\_\_\_\_ Worker ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Using the definitions, determine the appropriate response for each item and enter the corresponding score. After entering the score for each individual item, enter the total score and indicate the corresponding risk level.

- R1. Number of investigations prior to current involvement Score
- a. None \_\_\_\_\_ 0
  - b. One \_\_\_\_\_ 1
  - c. Two or more \_\_\_\_\_ 2

- R2. Household has previously received ongoing agency services
- a. No \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

- R3. Primary caregiver has a history of abuse or neglect as a child
- a. No \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

- R4. Child characteristics (mark applicable items and add for score)
- a.  None of the above
  - b.  Developmental, physical, or learning disability
  - c.  Medically fragile or failure to thrive

- The following items are scored based ONLY on observations since the most recent investigation.
- R5. New investigation of abuse, neglect, or dependency in the review period
- a. No \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

- R6. Caregiver alcohol or drug abuse problem in the review period (rate this based on the caregiver with the least demonstrated progress)
- No secondary caregiver
- Primary/Secondary
- a. No history of alcohol or drug abuse problem
  - b. No current alcohol or drug abuse problem, no intervention
  - c. Current alcohol or drug abuse problem, problem is being addressed
  - d. Current alcohol or drug abuse problem, problem is not being addressed

- R7. Adult relationships during this review period
- a. Neither b nor c \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Harmful/dangerous relationships with adults \_\_\_\_\_ 1
  - c. Domestic violence \_\_\_\_\_ 2

- R8. Primary caregiver physical care of child:
- a. Consistent with child needs \_\_\_\_\_ 0
  - b. Inconsistent with child needs \_\_\_\_\_ 1

- R9. Caregiver progress toward desired results on the child and family plan in current review period (rate this item for both caregivers, but enter one overall score based on the caregiver with the least demonstrated progress)
- No secondary caregiver
- Primary/Secondary
- a. Routinely pursuing desired results in the plan, frequently demonstrates desired behavior, actively participating in programs \_\_\_\_\_ 0
  - b. Occasionally demonstrates desired behavior, partial participation in pursuing desired results in the plan \_\_\_\_\_ 1
  - c. Rarely or never demonstrates desired behavior, refuses involvement in programs or has exhibited a minimal level of participation with plan \_\_\_\_\_ 2

TOTAL SCORE \_\_\_\_\_

SCORED RISK LEVEL. Assign the family's risk level based on the following chart:

Score	Risk Level
0-2	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
3-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate
6-8	<input type="checkbox"/> High
9-16	<input type="checkbox"/> Very High

# Risk ReAssessment

# Risk ReAssessment

Family characteristics  
+  
Progress in review period



Scored risk level



Overrides



Final risk level

# Demonstrating Change



# Video Vignette

Risk ReAssessment



# Panel

- Bob Smith- Assistant Attorney General
- Craig Bunnell- Guardian ad Litem
- Shannon Flasch- Associate Director- CRC
- Linda Wininger- SDM Project Lead Admin.
- Kevin Jackson- SDM Program Lead- In-Home

# When?

- When will I begin seeing and hearing SDM language from frontline caseworkers?







# Implementation Sites

- Northern: Ogden, Bountiful, & Logan.
- Salt Lake Valley: Metro & FIAT.
- Western: Spanish Fork.
- Eastern: Price, Castle Dale, & Vernal.
- Southwest: St. George.

# Timeframe

Statewide by the  
end of the  
calendar year.

