

**Diagram key**

- Hearing
- DSS Meeting
- Safe Babies Action
- Decision
- Conference
- Safe Babies Enhancement

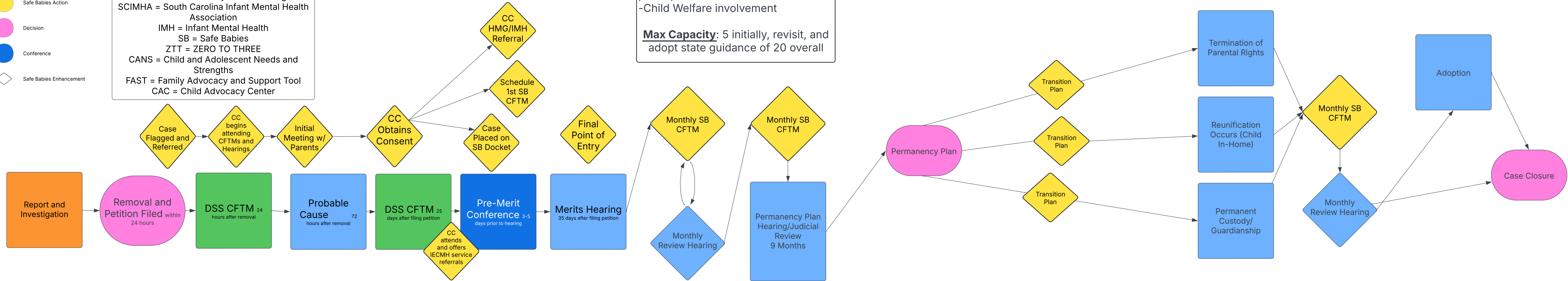
**ACRONYMS**

DSS = Department of Social Services  
 GALP = Guardian ad Litem Program  
 CC = Community Coordinator  
 CFTM = Child Family Team Meeting  
 SCIMHA = South Carolina Infant Mental Health Association  
 IMH = Infant Mental Health  
 SB = Safe Babies  
 ZTT = ZERO TO THREE  
 CANS = Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths  
 FAST = Family Advocacy and Support Tool  
 CAC = Child Advocacy Center

**Eligibility Criteria:**

- At least one child, between the ages 0-3 (siblings over 3 allowed)
- Parent voluntarily consents to participate in Safe Babies
- Child Welfare involvement

**Max Capacity:** 5 initially, revisit, and adopt state guidance of 20 overall



**Identification & Referral Process:**

- Potential families will be identified starting with new foster care cases coming in to DSS.
- Safe Babies could be a DSS pre-Probable Cause conversation with the families.
- CFTM Facilitator will flag cases with eligible children and invite CC to initial CFTM.
- When CFTM Facilitator calls to schedule the initial DSS CFTM with the family, the Facilitator will include language in their initial phone call providing information to family about SBC, alerting family to their eligibility, and offering CC's attendance at initial CFTM.
- CC will use the SCHIMA brochure until the Dorchester specific brochure is developed.
- DSS will keep CC up to date on incoming eligible families via email.
- Referral form (including parent name, phone number, caseworker info, next hearing, allegations, child and placement information) will be filled out by the DSS Investigator and sent to CC via email.

**Safe Babies Introduction to Parents:**

- CC will attend the Probable Cause hearing to meet the parents and schedule an additional face-to-face meeting to discuss Safe Babies; if the CC does not attend the Probable Cause hearing, the CC will reach out to the parent to gauge interest and schedule a meeting.
- CC will meet with the parent(s) to provide additional program information and provide the consent forms to participate. The CC will use the CAC consent form for program participation and the ZTT database consent form.

**Consent and Enrollment:**

- DSS attorney will give the parent information about obtaining a 608 attorney in the initial pleadings and will ask the court to appoint an attorney if there is interest.
- Parent will sign consent form with CC in person.
- CC will notify DSS attorney, assigned case worker, DSS Supervisor, GALP and CFTM Facilitator of signed informed consent via email.

**Screenings/Assessments/Referrals:**

- **IMH:** CC will complete referral and submit.
- **Baby Net:** DSS will complete referral and submit. DSS will refer to HelpMeGrow (HMG) if not eligible for Baby Net.
- **Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ):** CC will encourage parents to complete the ASQ questionnaire and bring to the CFTM.
- **DSS Initial Screenings:** Comprehensive medical, CANS/FAST, trauma screening are completed and will be shared with CC once the consents are signed.
  - CC will ensure proper releases of information are in place so these screenings can be shared.

**Safe Babies Docket:**

- After the parent consents, the case will be moved to the Safe Babies docket.
- Docket will occur Thursday afternoons, rotating on when Safe Babies Judge is in Dorchester.

**Family Time:**

- 2x/month - minimum of an hour; case by case basis; family member can hopefully supervise;
  - Revert to standard practice at Probable Cause; Family Time can be revisited at Merits Hearing.
- Opportunities for shared parenting with the parent/caregiver will be explored at every Safe Babies CFTM. This may include inviting parents to additional parenting opportunities like doctor's appointments and other routine engagements.
- Family Time will be monitored at each hearing and CFTM with the goal to aim for least restrictive visits as quickly as possible.

**Case Planning:**

- Case Plan will be formalized by 30 days.
- Parent(s) will be engaged in the development of the Case Plan.
- DSS will collaborate with the CC to participate in the development of the case plan to include a focus on Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) when discussing assessments and services.

**Child Family Team Meetings:**

- Safe Babies CFTMs will take place monthly in a virtual setting and will be scheduled for 60 minutes.
- CC will send invitation for SB CFTM via email and invite:
  - Parents and their attorneys
  - DSS attorneys
  - DSS worker and supervisor
  - GAL and GAL supervisor
  - Caregiver
  - Service providers
- Prior to the meeting, the CC will send out an email to ask the team if there's anything they want to add to the agenda
  - CC will call the parents prior to the meeting (and if able will meet in person) to review agenda and prep them for the meeting.
  - Service providers will email the CC and DSS their updates for discussion in the SB CFTM prior to the SB CFTM
- The CC will facilitate this meeting and will provide a trauma responsive environment by preparing the family for the meeting, encouraging attendees to have cameras on, reminding participants to be in a private space and not allow recording.
- The CC will use the ZERO TO THREE Agenda and Notes Template.
- If the parent doesn't show up for the SB CFTM, the team will attempt to call the parent and engage them. The meeting will be rescheduled if the parent cannot attend.
- CC will attend the DSS CFTMs, which will be facilitated by a DSS representative.

**Communication Loop with Court**

- Documentation of the CFTM will be completed by the CC using the ZTT notes template and will be shared via email to all parties.
- The Judge, attorneys, and the CC will have a conference prior to each individual hearing to update the Court about the FTM.
  - If a parent is pro se, they will attend the conference.

**Safe Babies Review Hearings:**

- SB hearings will take place Thursday afternoon based on Judge's schedule
- Specific report time will be provided to all attendees
- Attendance expectations include
  - Parents and parents' attorney
  - CC
  - DSS worker
  - DSS attorney
- The hearing duration will vary depending on the case.
- Hearings will take place in a Trauma Responsive Environment including consideration of what the parents and family are experiencing, making sure parents are heard, asking parents if they need something that hasn't been provided to them (coloring books, therapy dogs, toys, etc.)
- Hearings will ensure the child and family are centered as they will consider family strengths and resources.

**Concurrent (Alternative) Planning:**

- Discussed during initial CFTM and at every SB FTM; Family finding happens throughout the life of the case. Parents are engaged with what could be the back-up plan including what other supports could be explored.
- Reunification is emphasized at the Merits Hearing. A concurrent goal is assessed at the PPH (typically at 6 months).

**Permanency Plan definition:**

- This is when the plan has been identified as TPR, Reunification or Permanency Custody/Guardianship. During this time the case remains open with DSS and SBC. This plan is submitted in court order and agreed amongst team or ordered by the court. Then transition plan begins below until finalization of plan and closure.

**Transitions:**

- **Reunification (In-Home):**
  - The team works with family on transition planning before the child returns home and continues to support the family until case closure.
  - A proposed plan will be created in the SB CFTM and provided to the court.
  - Every child who is placed out of home will have a transition plan.

• **Adoption/TPR:**

- When a plan is changed or recommended to change to TPR a Permanency Specialist will be assigned to a child and the Regional Office of Permanency will then identify an adoptive resource for the child.
  - Family Specialist is assigned for a prospective adoptive placements.
- The team will be notified of the Permanency Specialist assignment at monthly CFTMs. The Permanency Specialist can attend CFTMs.
- DSS will notify CC if a new worker is assigned to ensure communication is maintained with all parties (current foster care provider; adoptive resource) or in the event of a change in placement.

• **Permanent Custody/Guardianship:**

- KinGAP is offered to licensed kinship caregiver. These cases remain with foster care, unless the child has already gone through TPR.
- Licensing and adoption can take up to 6 months or this can be an immediate closure of custody to kinship caregiver.

**Planning for Case Closure:**

- The team will communicate with the family about an expected closure timeline and continue to support the family, utilizing monthly hearings and CFTMs until case closure.

• **Reunification:**

- Cases are usually open 30-60 days after children are returned home.
- CFTMs and hearings will continue monthly
- Hearings will continue monthly
- Reunification celebration at the final hearing and the case will close!

• **TPR/Adoption:**

- Case may transfer to another judge if adoption is filed in another county.
- CFTMs and Review Hearings will take place monthly.
  - Adoption and Family Specialists will attend CFTMs until the adoption is finalized.

• **Perm. Custody/Guardianship:**

- Parents retain their parental rights but are required to hire an attorney to file petition to change custody. Parents must also prove they are capable of caring for their children, and they completed their original treatment plan.
- CFTMs and hearings will continue monthly.
- Two types of guardianship include:
  - (see next box)

• **Two types of Guardianship:**

- **Subsidized/KinGAP:** The child must be in the legal custody of DSS, have a strong bond/attachment with the perspective guardian and vice versa, the prospective guardian must hold a Standard Foster Home License and the child must have resided in that Standard Foster Home for six months or longer (if it is kinship foster home, the time the license was provisional does not count in the six month time frame); a Successor Guardian must be named; a DSS CFTM must be held (CC will be invited); and DSS must enter into a signed Subsidized Legal Guardianship Assistance Agreement prior to finalizing this plan in court. With this plan, the family will continue to receive financial assistance from DSS until the child turns 18 or until the child turns 21 if extension criteria is met and they still are the legal guardians of the child.
- **Unsubsidized:** There is no financial assistance provided to the family and the above requirements for subsidized guardianship are not required. Cases will be monitored 60 days once permanent guardianship is granted.

**Data and Continous Quality Improvement (CQI):**

- Data from cases is documented in the ZERO TO THREE Database for CQI purposes.
  - SCIMHA tracks case information
  - CAC will also be collecting data
- Site Leadership team will review family level data annually.
- Referral Information shared by CC
- Other data shared by partners
- The Case map will be reviewed annually.

**Active Community Team:**

- Status/Frequency/Data review
- Not yet launched
  - Building connections to Early Childhood and Parent Support programs, community events
  - Will be a joint ACT with Berkeley - also considering a tri-county effort with Charleston

**Site Leadership Team:**

- Will take place virtually every other month (even) - first Tuesday of the month at 4pm.