

Family Assessment Response to Child Safety Concerns

Receiving a call or visit from child protection services can be frightening, especially if families are already struggling with stressful family issues. They may feel shame or anger at being reported, and threatened by the possibility of government involvement in their lives.

It is important to quickly assist families who need help to keep children safe. Family Assessment Response offers this opportunity.

What is Family Assessment Response?

Family Assessment Response is a program that responds to concerns about child abuse and neglect by:

- Ensuring children are safe
- Avoiding negative labels for parents
- Setting aside the issue of fault
- Working in partnership with parents
- Identifying families' needs
- Providing services and resources matched to families' needs
- Building on parents' and communities' strengths and resources.

Family Assessment Response provides counties the flexibility to best meet families' needs.

Why use Family Assessment Response?

Family Assessment Response is based on the belief that parents love their children and want them to be safe. Sometimes parents need help to make that happen. Family Assessment Response can provide that help.

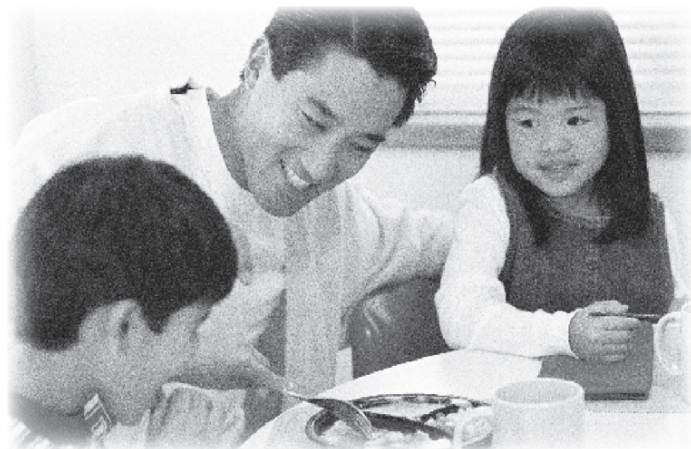
Some parents, however, are not able to keep from endangering their children. This is when child protection services must step in with an investigative response to keep children safe. When there is a serious and immediate risk of harm to children, child protection services must conduct a thorough investigation.

County child protection agencies have the flexibility to apply the response that best matches families' needs.



How is a response chosen?

When counties receive reports of child safety concerns, they must conduct either a family assessment or an investigation. They make this decision based on state law that encourages the use of family assessments for all but the most serious reports of child abuse and neglect. They also consider a history of past reports and level of cooperation from families.



How can we work together to ensure children's safety and families' well-being through Family Assessment Response?

When county child protection workers hear concerns raised about children's safety, they meet with families to assess families' needs and strengths.

Rather than focusing on the details of a specific incident to prove or disprove that abuse or neglect occurred, county workers and families focus on the safety of children and families' strengths to address concerns.

They also discuss families' needs. County workers then offer to help families meet their needs. They connect families with resources in their communities or through their informal support systems.



agency

Carlton County Public Health & Human Services
1215 Avenue C
Cloquet, MN 55720
218-879-4583
1-800-642-9082

This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by contacting us at (651) 431-4671 (voice). TTY/TDD users can call the Minnesota Relay at 711 or (800) 627-3529. For the Speech-to-Speech Relay, call (877) 627-3848.



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**
Child Safety and Permanency Division
PO Box 64943, St. Paul, MN 55164-0943

www.dhs.state.mn.us