

## SAFETY COMES FIRST

If at any time it is determined that the child's safety cannot be maintained in the home, or if the family chooses not to participate in the Family Assessment process, or if new allegations of abuse, neglect, or dependency arise during the family assessment process, our child protective services agency has the legal obligation to take one of the following actions:

- Use a traditional investigative approach.
- Ask the family to choose a safe place for their child other than their own home.
- Take custody of the child if necessary to assure safety for the child.

## RIGHTS OF THE FAMILY

An important part of working in partnership with families is acknowledging their rights.



- Families have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Families have the right to know DSS's legal authority and right to intervene.
- Families have the right to know what they can expect from us and what we expect of them.
- Families have the right to have their phone call returned within one working day.
- Families have the right to be heard and to be involved in planning for their children.

Phone: 252-257-5000 or 252-257-5002  
Fax: 252-257-5610

# Multiple Response Approach to Child Maltreatment



Warren County Department  
of  
Social Services

# Multiple Response

Receiving a call or a visit from child protective 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. Multiple Response offer this opportunity.

## What is Multiple Response?

Multiple Response is a program that responds to concerns about child 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

A core value of the Multiple Response System is that parents love their children and want

them to be safe. At times, parents need help to make that happen. A Multiple Response System can provide that help. "One size does not fit all" when working with families who have different needs. The Multiple Response System will work to tailor the services to the needs of the individual family in his own community.

## The Traditional Approach

Some parents are not able to keep their children safe. For all reports of abuse and dependency, a traditional investigation will still take place. Law enforcement will continue to be asked to assist in cases where abuse has been reported. Reports to the District Attorney will continue to be made in these cases.

## The Family Assessment Approach

When the Agency receives a call with concerns relating to child neglect or dependency, the choice may be made to approach the family in order to complete a *family assessment*. The goal is that CPS and the family will work to develop a true partnership to ensure the safety of the child. They use a holistic approach—looking at all the needs of the family.

A safety assessment is conducted as is a strengths and needs assessment. The family and the social worker gather information together from several sources. It is expected the process will be completed in 45 days or less.

## The Decision

After gathering information and completing the assessments, a team of social workers will determine if the family "is in need of services" or is eligible for optional services". The team may also conclude that "services are not recommended". If services are not recommended, the case is closed. If the family is found in need of services or requests services available in the community, supportive services will be provided to the family in the home.

## Underlying Beliefs of NC MRS

- Safety of the child is the first concern.
- Children have a right to their family.
- The family is the fundamental resource for the nurturing of children.
- Parents should be supported in their efforts to care for their children.
- Families are diverse and have the right to be respected for their special cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious traditions; children can flourish in different types of families.
- A crisis is an opportunity for change.
- Inappropriate intervention can do harm.
- Families who seem hopeless can grow and change.
- Family members are our colleagues.
- It is our job to instill hope.