

# Division of Children & Family Services



# Differential Response

*A Non-adversarial Approach*



# Differential Response

A method that allows child welfare systems to respond to reports of specific allegations of child maltreatment through a family assessment. This focuses on the safety and well-being of the child and promotes permanency.

# Differential Response

## Federal Mandate and State Law

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act  
Reauthorization Act of 2010 Public Law 111-320  
issuance date 2-15-2011

Including differential response in triage procedures  
for the appropriate referral of a child not at risk of  
imminent harm to a community organization or  
voluntary preventive service (section 106(b)(2)(B))

# Investigations vs. Differential Response

- Investigations require gathering of forensic evidence and formal determinations as to whether the abuse/neglect occurred.
- Family assessments are non-adversarial and non-accusatory responses and there is no formal finding of substantiated or unsubstantiated. The family is treated as a whole and does not identify a perpetrator or victim.
- The health and safety checklist is completed. Safety of the children is paramount.
- DR is family driven

# Investigations and Differential Response

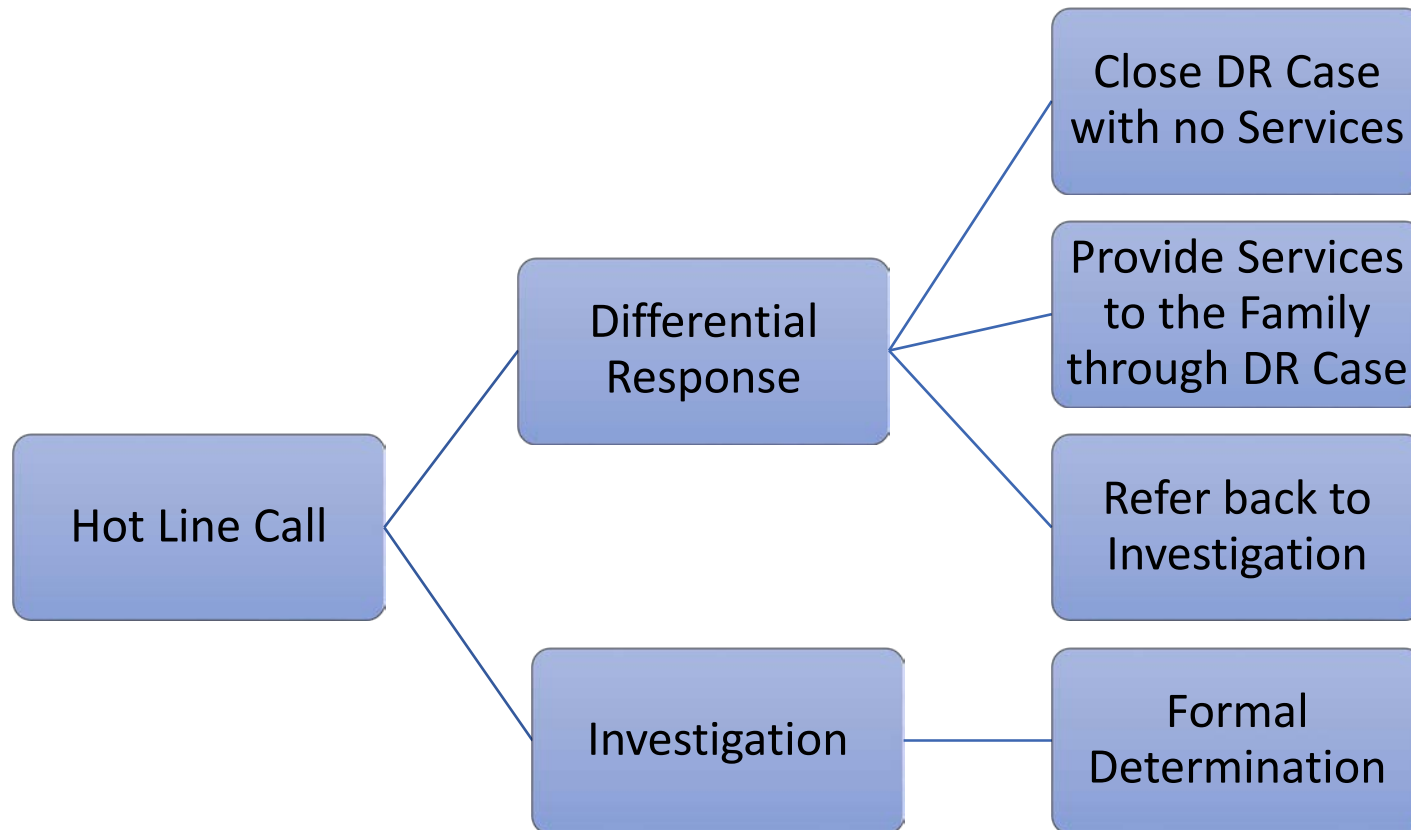
A differential response track will still share many underlying principles with the traditional child protection approach. They will:

- Focus on the [safety](#) and [well-being](#) of the child
- Promote [permanency](#) within the family whenever possible
- Recognize the authority of CPS agencies to make decisions about whether [removal from the home](#) and out-of-home placement is necessary, and when to involve the courts

# Values of Differential Response

- Family engagement
- Strengths based perspective
- Thinking outside of the box to involve family input
- Allow the family to lead with things they think they need to work on
- Ask the family to identify sources of support for them

# Process of Differential Response





# Maltreatment Types accepted for D.R.

- Inadequate Supervision-excludes reports involving a child or children under the age of 5, or a child older than 5 years of age with a physical or mental disability which limits his or her skills in the areas of communication, self-care, and self-direction.
- Educational Neglect-excludes reports involving a child that was never enrolled in an educational program
- Environmental Neglect-exclusions involve children under the age of 3

# Maltreatment Types accepted for D.R.

- Lock Out-excluding any child under the age of 10
- Medical Neglect-excluding any child under the age of 13 or a child with a severe medical condition that could become serious enough to cause long-term harm to the child if untreated
- Inadequate Food
- Inadequate Clothing
- Inadequate Shelter

# Maltreatment Types accepted for D.R.

- Human Bites
- Sprains/dislocations
- Striking a child age seven or older on the face
- Striking a child with a closed fist
- Throwing a child
  - Excludes events that happened less than one year ago; and or
  - The caller to the hotline can verify injury (physical signs, medical, date photograph)

# Strengths Based Approach

## Collateral: Family Strengths Based Questions

- What are the parent's strengths that may help the family?
- How has the family used those strengths in the past?
- What would you say is good about the mother's/father's/caregiver's parenting?
- Are there positive aspects to the parent-child relationship?
- If this situation happened before, how has the family tried to deal with it?
- Are there times when the parents provide good care to the child? Can you tell me about those times?
- Knowing the strengths and issues of this family, what do you think the family needs?
- Are there people who can support the parents?

# Partnering with families

## Family Strengths and Needs Assessment

- Engage the parents
- Comprehensive and collaborative
- Gather other relevant, corresponding information
- FSNA will explore the five protective factors

# Partnering with families

DR Family Plan

After Care Plan

- Family Plan will take information from the FSNA and help you identify goals
- Allow the clients to identify their family plan goals
- Due to short status of the DR Case worker might refer to services but might not see service through to the end
- Aftercare Plan: What Steps will you take when faced with future challenges?

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We Care. We Act. We Change  
Lives.

