

## What Is The Multiple Response System?

North Carolina law requires that local county departments of social services ensure children's safety in their homes. When a Child Protective Services (CPS) report meets the legal definition of neglect, the Department of Social Services (DSS) will decide whether to conduct a Traditional Investigation response or whether a Family Assessment response may be more appropriate. Since there may be more than one option for response from DSS, this process is called the Multiple Response System.

## What Is The Family Assessment Response?

An Investigative response determines whether abuse or neglect has occurred, the Family Assessment response determines whether a family is in need of supportive services to ensure child safety. Your family may be eligible for the Family Assessment response. It involves working together to ensure that your child is safe. The decision as to which response is mandated is made at intake.

## What Can My Family Expect During The Family Assessment Process?

- During the first visit, the social worker will complete a Safety Assessment. If DSS decides that the child is not safe, you and the social worker complete a Safety Response to ensure your child's safety.
- Together, you and the social worker will gather information from many people. This process is expected to be completed within 30 days.
- From this information, DSS will make a Case Decision. The Case Decision will be one of the following:

**"In need of services"**(this means that services are mandatory.) If your family is found to be "in need of services", an In-Home social worker will be matched with your family to begin supportive services.

**"Services recommended"** (this means that services are not mandatory.)

**"Services not recommended"** (this means that the case is closed.) This social worker will meet with your family within 7 days of the case decision to discuss a child and family services agreement.

## Client's Rights And Responsibilities

As a Client:

- Your family has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- You have a right to know DSS 's expectations of your family and what you can expect from DSS.
- You have a responsibility to know DSS' s legal authority and right to intervene.
- Your phone calls should be returned within one working day ( If the social worker is not available, you should call the social worker ' s supervisor. )

## The Family Assessment Process Is Family-Centered

- Safety of the child is top priority.
- Children have the right to be with their family.
- The family is the most important resource for nurturing their children.
- Families are respected for their individuality. Children can flourish in different types of families.
- Family members are experts on their family.
- A crisis is an opportunity for change.

**For Further Information On Services Call  
(828) 250-5500**

## DSS Mission

To partner with individuals, families, and communities to strengthen their efforts toward Independence, Permanence, and Safety.

## Children Services Mission

To protect and provide permanence to children by preserving and strengthening families through family centered, child-focused, community based services.

Visit our website at:  
[www.buncombecounty.org/governing/depts/dss/children](http://www.buncombecounty.org/governing/depts/dss/children)

## Safety Is Priority

If at any time it is determined that your child's safety cannot be ensured in your home, or if your family chooses not to participate in the family assessment process, or if new allegations of abuse, neglect or dependency arise during the process, DSS has the legal obligation to take one or more of the following actions:

- A Traditional Investigative response.
- The court may become involved with your family.
- You may be asked to choose a safe place for your child, other than your home.

***Our work is guided by professional ethics and values that are designed to safeguard your privacy and confidentiality. If you have any concerns about how you have been treated, contact your worker's supervisor. If you are unsure who to contact, please call the Director's office at (828) 250-5587.***

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## Children Services Division

### Child Protective Services

### Multiple Response System: The Family Assessment Response



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Hours of Operation  
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