

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 on the following actions:

- Use a traditional investigation 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 from them.
- Families have the right to be heard and to be involved in planning for their children.

Underlying beliefs of the NC Multiple Response System:

- 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.

Durham County "Multiple Response System" Brochure
Last updated: March 2011

Child Protective Services

The Multiple Response Approach to Child Maltreatment Concerns



Durham County Department of Social Services

Partnering with Families and the Community to achieve Prosperity, Permanence, Safety and Wellbeing

(919) 560-8424

220 E. Main St.

Horario: 8:15 am – 5:30 pm

www.durhamcountync.gov/departments/dssv/



What is the Multiple Response System?

The Multiple Response System (MRS) is a different way of responding to concerns of some types of neglect or dependency by:

- Ensuring that children are safe in their homes;
- Seeking family strengths as a basis for growth;
- Setting aside the issue of fault in favor of solutions;
- Working in partnership with parents to identify family needs;
- Working with the community to support families.

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. It is expected the process will be completed in 30 days.

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.

The decision

After gathering information and completing the assessment, a team of social workers will determine:

1. If the family “is in need of services”;
2. If “services are recommended” for the family or
3. If “services are not recommended” for the family.

If services are not recommended, the case is closed.

If the family is found in need of services a social worker will develop a service plan with the family to secure services needed to remove the CPS concerns and maintain the children in their home.

