

PARENT GUIDE

ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE



Who is it for?

Getting involved with Child Protective Services (CPS) can be intimidating and confusing for families. You were referred to Alternative Response because CPS received a complaint alleging abuse or neglect of your child or children.

Under Alternative Response, your caseworker will not be conducting an investigation of the report made to CPS. Rather, you and your caseworker will discuss the current situation that you and your family are facing, the events and actions that may have caused this situation, and create a plan with solutions so that you can keep your children safe. If after the caseworker meets with you he or she discovers significant safety concerns, or if you refuse access to your children then CPS will formally investigate the child abuse and neglect report.

For many families, Alternative Response is a more appropriate approach than the traditional, investigative response. Alternative Response focuses on answering these questions: What caused this family to experience the issues it is experiencing? How can we work together to address this concern?

Alternative Response focuses on creating a working partnership among families and child welfare and community agencies. It focuses on identifying concerns and finding solutions, not on assigning blame, or finding fault. Alternative Response allows caseworkers to work with families to identify and use their strengths to solve their concerns and to make certain that they and their children are, and can remain, safe.

Keeping Children Safe

Our job is to help you keep your children safe and secure. We know that all families are not the same, and that the concerns you face are different from those of your neighbors, your friends and other families across Maryland.

Many times, the most appropriate way to begin to help you and your children is to listen to you, discuss your family's situation, find solutions, and access resources to meet your needs.

What is Alternative Response?

Alternative Response is a new approach for managing low risk reports of child neglect and abuse. Alternative Response allows local Departments of Social Services to help Maryland families access services, supports and other help that will resolve their concerns.

Alternative Response is designed to help Maryland's local Departments of Social Services meet the needs of children and families. It is based on the belief that families can stay together if they receive the assistance they need when concerns occur. Alternative Response creates a partnership between families and caseworkers and is designed to ensure child safety and well-being by addressing the family's issues as early as possible.

Keeping Families Strong

With Alternative Response, children are safer sooner and families are strengthened.

For more information
Contact your local Department of Social Services
Call 1-800-332-6347
or go to dhs.maryland.gov

State of Maryland
Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

Maryland Department of Human Services
Rafael López, Secretary

