

## Our goal is to work with you by:

### ▶ *Engaging*

Establishing common goals to ensure your child's or children's safety, well-being and permanency.

### ▶ *Assessing*

Gathering information about your family's strengths and needs.

### ▶ *Partnering*

Developing respectful and meaningful connections with your family to achieve shared goals.

### ▶ *Planning*

Developing strategies, outlining tasks and setting goals with you.

### ▶ *Implementing*

Identifying and applying the most effective services and resources for your family.

### ▶ *Evaluating*

Monitoring outcomes of service plans and programs to see if they meet the desired goals for your family.

### ▶ *Advocating*

Providing intervention for your family to get needed resources from other groups or organizations.

### ▶ *Demonstrating Cultural & Diversity Competence*

Learning and honoring your family's diversity within and across cultures.

### ▶ *Communicating*

Effectively sending and receiving information through various methods.

### ▶ *Collaborating*

Maintaining mutually beneficial and well-defined relationships.

John R. Kasich, Governor  
State of Ohio

Cynthia C. Dungey, Director  
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

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Ohio | Department of  
Job and Family Services

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Ohio  
Differential  
Response

## Ohio's Differential Response Child Protection System

Ohio has a Differential Response child protection system. This means children services agencies have two options for responding to accepted reports of child abuse and neglect: a Traditional Response pathway and an Alternative Response pathway.

Both pathways allow children services staff to address the unique safety concerns, risks and situations of each family, in a way that is collaborative and respectful. In both cases, the primary goal is child safety.

### Two Pathways to Help Ensure Child Safety

#### Traditional Response

- ▶ Always required for reports of sexual abuse, abuse resulting in serious injury, and whenever children are determined to be in serious and immediate risk of harm
- ▶ May involve court intervention
- ▶ Will result in a determination/finding about the allegation

#### Alternative Response

- ▶ Used when reports of abuse or neglect do not allege serious or imminent harm
- ▶ Involves safety-focused partnerships with families
- ▶ Does not result in a determination/finding about the allegation

Both pathways require caseworkers to complete Safety, Risk and Comprehensive Family Assessments, to gather information about the family's strengths and needs.

A case may be assigned to an Alternative Response pathway but later changed to a Traditional Response pathway if needed to ensure child safety.

## Keeping Children Safe

**Our primary job is to partner with you and 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, friends and other families across Ohio. One size does not fit all when it comes to keeping children safe. We are committed to working with you to understand your unique circumstances.

*Many times, the best way to help you and your children is to listen to you, discuss your family's situation, partner with you to identify solutions, and connect your family to resources to meet your needs.*

## How Can We Help Strengthen Your Family?

- ▶ Getting involved with a children services agency can be intimidating and confusing for families. You have become involved with your local agency because somebody made a report of concern about your child or children. The agency will assign a caseworker to meet with you.

You and your caseworker will discuss the situation, as well as the events and actions that may have caused this situation. Your caseworker will ask you about your family's strengths and concerns, and ask how you can work together to address those concerns.

Together, you and your caseworker will create a plan with child-centered, family-focused, strength-based solutions to keep your children safe. If an assessment indicates that your child may be in serious and immediate risk of harm, he or she may need to formally investigate the matter and/or seek court intervention to ensure your child's safety. If no safety concerns are identified, you can accept or refuse the services offered.

