



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES**

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**Manual Transmission Letter (MTL)**

**Family Programs Office: Statewide Child Welfare Policy Manual**

2009 – MTL #0503-091509

09/15/2009

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**TO:** Amber Howell, Deputy Administrator - Division of Child and Family Services – Central Office  
Tom Morton, Director - Clark County Department of Family Services  
Pat Hedgecoth, Social Services Manager V - DCFS – District Offices  
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**POLICY DISTRIBUTION:** Enclosed find the following policy for distribution to all applicable staff within your organization:

- 0503 Differential Response to Child Protective Services Reports of Child Abuse/Neglect(CA/N)

This policy is/was effective 05/15/2009 and replaces the following policy(s):

- 0503 Differential Response to Child Protective Services Reports of Child Abuse/Neglect(CA/N)
- Dated: 5/16/2008

Updates to the following areas have been made in this policy (policy page number/summary of change):

- Page 2 Item A 1 "Priority 3 reports"
- Typographical errors corrected
- Attachment FPO503A Informed Consent renamed to FPO503C Informed Consent
- This policy was updated to reflect deleted information.

**NOTE:**

- Please read the policy in its entirety and note any areas of Child Welfare Agency Action that are additionally required by your agency to be in compliance with the policy enclosed.
- This is an **All STAFF MEMO** and it is the responsibility of the Agency Director listed above to disseminate the policy enclosed to appropriate staff within his/her organization and to ensure compliance.

## 0503.0 Differential Response to Child Protective Services Reports of Child Abuse/Neglect (CA/N): Collaborative Pilot Between Public Child Welfare Agencies and Community Based Service Providers

### 0503.1 Policy Approval Clearance Record

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Policy	This policy supersedes:	Number of pages in Policy: 7
Date Effective: 12/19/2006	0503 Differential response... 05/15/2009	
	200 Differential response to Child Protective Services Reports of Child Abuse/Neglect(C/AN): Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS) Pilot Program	
DMG Approved Revisions	05/15/2009	Policy Lead: Debora Flowers
PART Review & Approval	04/01/2009	Policy Lead: Debora Flowers
DMG Approval	12/19/2006	Policy Lead: Nancy O'Neil, LSW
DMG Approved Revisions	03/13/2007	Policy Lead: Nancy O'Neill, LSW
Reformatted and Revised	12/06/2007	Policy Lead: Nancy O'Neill, LSW
DMG Approved Revisions	05/16/2008	Policy Lead: Betsey Crumrine
DCFS Administrator Approval:	05/16/2008	Signature: On File
Review by Representative from the Office of the Attorney General:	n/a	Signature: n/a

### 0503.2 Statement of Purpose

- 0503.2.1 Policy Statement :** This policy establishes standardized procedures for a pilot program to initiate the use of family assessment, through a state/county child welfare agency; Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Clark County Department of Family Services (CCDFS), Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS); partnership with Community Based Service Providers.
- 0503.2.2 Purpose:** Families referred under this policy are the subject of reports of child abuse and/or neglect which have been determined by the agency as likely to benefit from early intervention through assessment of their unique strengths, risks and individual needs, rather than the more intrusive approach of investigation.

### 0503.3 Authority

NRS 432B.180; 432B.190 (5); 432B.260 (6) (a) (b); 432B.393  
 NAC 432B.135; 432B.1352; 432B.1358; 432B.1362; 432B.1366

### 0503.4 Definitions

- 0503.4.1 Assessment Track:** When a report has been screened in for assignment and the child welfare agency has determined that the family is likely to benefit from early intervention through assessment and services, the report may be assigned to a Community Based Service Provider for response, including all actions necessary for a complete assessment as described in policy and procedure.

- 0503.4.2 Differential Response:** Upon receipt of a report, when a public child welfare agency determines that an investigation is not warranted; the child welfare agency may assign a report in Unified Nevada Information Technology for Youth (UNITY), on a particular child and family, to a Community Based Service Provider that has entered into a written agreement with the agency for the purpose of conducting assessments and providing appropriate services that will support, preserve and improve the child's safety and family's well-being and functioning.
- 0503.4.3 Information Collection Standard:** The required information necessary to identify family strengths, risk of maltreatment and to conduct a safety assessment. Information gathering in the Intake Protocol is structured by the use of six critical questions. The content of the six questions that are used for assessing and analyzing family strengths, risk of maltreatment and child safety, include: the extent of maltreatment; surrounding circumstances accompanying the maltreatment; child functioning on a daily basis; the disciplinary approaches used by the parent; and the overall, typical, pervasive parenting practices; and adult functioning with respect to daily life management and general adaptation (including mental health functioning and substance usage).
- 0503.4.4 Intake worker:** The state/county child welfare agency worker who takes the report. This does not refer to a dispatch or an Emergency Response Team worker.
- 0503.4.5 Investigative Track:** When a report has been screened in for assignment to a child welfare agency Child Protective Services (CPS) investigative worker, including all actions necessary to complete a full investigation as described in policy and procedures.
- 0503.4.6 Referral:** The collection and documentation of information received from a reporting party alleging child maltreatment and/or requesting services.
- 0503.4.7 Report:** A referral becomes a report upon submission to a supervisor for review and a response decision.

## 0503.5 Procedures

Differential Response procedures are used when reports alleging child abuse or neglect are reviewed and a determination has been made by the child welfare agency that the family is likely to benefit from early intervention through an assessment of the family for appropriate services that considers their unique strengths, risks and individual needs, rather than the more intrusive traditional investigative approach. Such family assessments are completed by the Community Based Service Provider with which the agency has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

### A. Reports of Abuse or Neglect

- 1. Evaluations:** All reports of abuse or neglect must be evaluated by the child welfare agency for appropriateness of assignment to either the "Investigative Track," or the "Assessment Track." Upon completion of the CPS intake screening process by the child welfare agency (using the Information Collection Standard), when a report has been "screened in" as meeting the statutory definition of child abuse/neglect, a decision will be made by the child welfare agency CPS supervisor(s), or other assigned supervisor, to assign as a child welfare agency investigation, or a differential response, in the form of an agency assessment, or forwarding to a Community Based Service Provider for assessment and service provision.

- Reports assigned to a Community Based Service Provider will be limited to Priority 3 reports

## **B. Referral to Community Based Service Providers under a Memorandum of Understanding**

Each State/County Child Welfare Agency (CCDFS, DCFS and WCDSS) and the participating Community Based Service Providers will enter into a specific MOU that outlines the duties and responsibilities of each entity including, but not limited to, the following:

1. The report, which includes a summary of any available history on the child and family, will be transferred in UNITY to the appropriate Community Based Service Provider prior to the close of the next working day after receipt of the referral. An email will be sent to the Community Based Service Provider to alert them as to the assignment of a report.
2. Upon reviewing the report in UNITY, the Community Based Service Provider supervisor will determine acceptance based upon workload capacity. (Each Community Based Service Provider Differential Response worker will be limited to 15 open cases at any time.)
3. If unable to accept a report, the Community Based Service Provider will communicate this to the state/county child welfare agency within the same working day.
4. Upon accepting a report from the state/county child welfare agency, each Community Based Service Provider will do the following:
  - Acknowledge acceptance of the report to the child welfare agency by e-mail within the same working day.
  - Attempt to contact each family and schedule an appointment to meet with the referred family within three (3) working days of receipt of the referral.
  - Obtain the parent's signature on the Informed Consent for Services prior to contacting the school or any other agencies regarding the child and/or family.
  - If unable to make phone or in-person contact within three (3) working days of receipt of a report, the Community Based Service Provider will send a letter to the family, requesting they contact the Community Based Service Provider.
  - If unable to make contact with the family within ten (10) working days of receipt of the report, the Community Based Service Provider will communicate this to the state/county child welfare agency, with contact attempts noted in UNITY.
  - If a family refuses to allow the Community Based Service Provider to make contact, or conduct an assessment, the Community Based Service Provider will note this in UNITY and communicate this to the state/county child welfare agency within the next working day following the refusal.
  - Upon contact with the family, the Community Based Service Provider Differential Response caseworker will complete the designated safety assessment, in addition to the approved standardized family assessment.
  - If, upon completion of the safety assessment, any child in the home is determined to be "unsafe," the Community Based Service Provider will immediately report this to the referring child welfare agency.
  - The Community Based Service Provider Differential Response caseworker will meet with the Community Based Service Provider supervisor upon completion of assessment(s) to discuss assessment results and recommended services.

- If the Community Based Service Provider supervisor determines that Differential Response is not sufficient to meet the family's needs, the supervisor will document this in UNITY and communicate the decision to the state/county child welfare agency within the same working day as the decision is made.
  - If appropriate, the Community Based Service Provider Differential Response caseworker develops a service plan (as designed by the Community Based Service Provider in partnership with the state/county child welfare agency and other community partners) in collaboration with the family.
  - The agreed upon service plan and all contacts with the family will be documented in UNITY case notes by the Community Based Service Provider Differential Response caseworker within five working days of contact.
  - The Community Based Service Provider will provide direct services, and/or assist the family in accessing services from other agencies, to address the needs and services noted in the service plan.
  - The Community Based Service Provider will immediately report any suspected child maltreatment issues not identified in the original referral, or any additional issues Community Based Service Provider identifies that may place the child(ren) at risk of injury or harm to the state/county child welfare agency, by telephone. The child welfare agency intake screener/supervisor will determine if this constitutes a "new report."
5. The Community Based Service Provider supervisor will meet at least twice per month (or as established in the MOU) with the designated child welfare agency contact, to review general status of caseload and overall progress. The Community Based Service Provider Differential Response caseworker will request case closure in UNITY, to be approved by the Community Based Service Provider supervisor. (Case closure criteria and approval process is to be outlined in the MOU.)
  6. Differential Response Steering Committee will meet no less than four (4) times a year to review overall process; including number of cases opened/closed, types of referrals and any concerns about procedures that may require changes in protocol.

## 0503.2 Timelines

**Table 0503A: Timelines for family assessment activities:**

Requirement	Timeline	Starting Date	Responsible Party	Actions to be taken
1. Acknowledge acceptance of the report from state/county child welfare agency	Same working day	Day that the report is received by Community Based Service Provider	Community Based Service Provider Differential Response caseworker	E-mail acknowledgement of acceptance of the report back to the state/county child welfare agency within the same day the report was referred to the Community Based Service Provider
2. Contact with family	Within 3 working days of receipt of the report	Day that the report is received by Community Based Service Provider	Community Based Service Provider Differential Response caseworker	Document attempts to contact the family in UNITY
3. Unable to contact the family by phone or in-person within 3 working days	Within 3 working days of receipt of the report	Day that the report is received by Community Based Service Provider	Community Based Service Provider Differential Response caseworker	Document attempts to contact the family in UNITY and if no contact is made, send a letter to the family
4. Letter sent to the family	At or near the end of the 3rd working day from the receipt of the report	Day that the report is received by Community Based Service Provider	Community Based Service Provider Differential Response caseworker	A letter is mailed to the family requesting their contact with the Community Based Service Provider
5. Unable to make contact with the family within 10 working days	At or near the end of the 10 <sup>th</sup> working day from the receipt of the report	Day that the report is received by Community Based Service Provider	Community Based Service Provider Differential Response caseworker	Document attempts to contact in UNITY and communicate inability to contact the family to the state/county child welfare agency
6. Family Refuses Assessment Services	Within 3 working days of receipt of the report	Day that the report is received by Community Based Service Provider	Community Based Service Provider Differential Response caseworker	Community Based Service Provider will note refusal in UNITY and communicate this to the state/county child welfare agency

### 0503.3 Forms:

- A. North Carolina Family Assessment Scale-General (NCFAS-G)
- B. NCFAS-G Initial Plan
- C. Informed Consent for Services

## 0503.6 Child Welfare Agency Action

- 0503.6.1 Development of Internal Policies:** Specific procedures to implement Differential Response Pilot in adherence to State collaborative policy
- 0503.6.2 Timelines:** Adhere to timelines in policy
- 0503.6.3 Tools & Forms:** North Carolina Family Assessment Scale-General (NCFAS-G)

**0503.6.4 Documentation:**

**A. Case File Documentation (paper):**

File Location	Data Required
Case record	Service referral(s)

**B. UNITY Documentation (electronic):**

Applicable UNITY screen	Data Required
Case notes	Information regarding all contacts with family; including attempts to contact, assessments conducted, service referrals and acceptance, or non-acceptance of services
Safety Assessment	Safety determination

**0503.6.5 Supervisory Responsibility:** Supervisors are expected to review all referrals and make a determination whether to assign a report for a family assessment and to meet at least twice monthly with the Community Based Service Provider to review status of cases assigned for differential response. The supervisor(s) may participate on the Differential response Steering Committee.

**0503.7 State Responsibilities**

**0503.7.1 Participants in Policy Development:** Differential Response Steering Committee

**0503.7.2 Technical Assistance:** National Resource Center for Child Protective Services (Action for Child Protection)

**0503.7.3 Clearance Process:** N/A

**0503.7.4 State Oversight:** The State has the responsibility to conduct quality improvement/assurance activities that measure compliance with policy on appropriateness, and response to, referrals.

**0503.8 Policy Cross Reference**

**0503.8.1** 0506 Intake

**0503.8.2** 0510 Safety Assessment

**0503.9 Attachments:**

**0503.9.1** FPO 0503A North Carolina Family Assessment Scale-General (NCFAS-G)

**0503.9.2** FPO 0503B NCFAS-G Initial Plan

**0503.9.3** FPO 0503C Informed Consent for Services Form