

How PA’s Approach Compares to Core Components of Differential Response (DR):^{i ii}

According to the American Humane Association (AHA), the National Quality Improvement Center on DR in Child Protective Services there are eight core components of DR:

Core Components	Pennsylvania’s Approach
<p>The use of two or more discrete responses of intervention.</p>	<p>Child Protective Service (CPS) and General Protective Service (GPS) responses involve different timeframes and methods of investigation.</p> <p>CPS investigations are similar in how law enforcement approaches investigations. They involve more urgent timeframes for response than GPS reports, are focused on determining if incidents of abuse have occurred, may result in perpetrators being identified and registered in the state’s ChildLine central registry, require specific notifications regarding the investigation and right to counsel, and may involve joint investigations with law enforcement and medical professionals.</p> <p>GPS assessments are conducted with the primary goal of identifying the needs of families that may be impacting child safety and well-being and providing services to meet those needs. Social work strategies are employed to engage families in determining their strengths and needs. There is no formal determination of whether certain incidents of child maltreatment occurred or the identification of perpetrators.</p>
<p>The creation of multiple responses for reports of maltreatment that are <i>screened-in and accepted for</i> response.</p>	<p>Cases are screened-in and accepted for response under CPS and GPS, and can be accepted for services through either response.</p>
<p>The pathway or response assignment depends on an array of factors, such as the presence of imminent danger, level of risk, number of previous reports, source of the report, and/or presenting case characteristics, such as the type of alleged maltreatment and the age of the alleged victims.</p>	<p>CPS assignment is made for alleged incidents that fall within PA’s definition of child abuse and typically require a more heightened response. GPS assignment is made for situations that pose harm to children but do not fall under PA’s definition of child abuse. Timeframes for the speed of initial response are also determined by factoring imminent danger (present danger) and level of risk for both CPS and GPS.</p>

Core Components

Pennsylvania's Approach

The capacity to re-assign families to a different pathway in response to findings from initial investigation or assessment (e.g., a family receiving an assessment could be re-assigned to an investigation if the level of risk of the child is found to be higher than originally thought).

The assignment of CPS or GPS is done immediately upon the alleged incident(s) being communicated by the reporter to either ChildLine or the county intake worker. Counties may opt to gain further information before assigning the appropriate response. Reassignment of GPS to CPS occurs when information is obtained or a report is made that meets the legal definition of child abuse. CPS investigations are not reassigned to GPS assessment at a later date. If the alleged incident(s) of child abuse fail to meet PA's definition of child abuse following a CPS investigation, the report is classified as unfounded. However, families with an unfounded CPS report can still be accepted for services.

The establishment of multiple responses is codified in statute, policy, and/or protocols.

CPS and GPS are grounded in state statute, regulation and policy bulletin. Some counties have also established local protocols for conducting CPS and GPS.

CPS policy includes more specific response timeframes and requires the investigation be completed within 30 days, or 60 days if an extension is needed to coordinate with law enforcement. CPS policy includes more specificity on interviewing, involvement of medical professionals, and collaboration with law enforcement in making a formal determination of whether abuse has occurred.

GPS policy requires that the county agency see the child immediately if emergency protective custody (foster care placement) has been taken, is needed, or if it cannot be determined from the report whether or not emergency protective custody is needed. Otherwise, the county agency is required to prioritize the response time for the GPS assessment to assure that children who are most at risk receive an assessment first. The entire GPS assessment must be completed within 60 days. OCYF issued a policy bulletin last week that clarifies how counties should establish the initial timeframe for responding to a GPS report.

Families in the assessment pathway may refuse services without consequence as long as child safety is not compromised.

Services under GPS are voluntary. However, GPS can be ordered by the court if a family refuses services and child safety is a concern.

Core Components

Pennsylvania's Approach

No formal determination of maltreatment is made as part of an assessment, and services are offered to such families without any such determination.

No status determination (indicated or unfounded) is made under GPS. Only CPS investigations result in a formal status determination of whether abuse has occurred.

No perpetrator is identified and listed in the state's central registry at the conclusion of an assessment.

No perpetrator is named or listed in the ChildLine central registry under GPS. Only CPS investigations that result in a finding of indicated or founded child abuse name a perpetrator in ChildLine, and only if the perpetrator is known.

ⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Quality Improvement Center on Differential Response in Child Protective Services. Differential Response in Child Protective Services: A Literature Review (Version 2) (2011). http://www.differentialresponseqic.org/resources/qic-dr_lit_review-version-2.pdf

ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Quality Improvement Center on Differential Response in Child Protective Services. Differential Response in Child Protective Services: An Analysis of State Legislative Provisions. Report prepared by National Council of State Legislators (2011). <http://www.differentialresponseqic.org/assets/docs/differential-response.pdf>



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