



FAR by the Numbers

Children's Administration began implementing Family Assessment Response (FAR) in January 2014 in three offices. So far, the results are encouraging – between January 1 and April 30, 2014, FAR social workers have responded to 520 intakes.

- 60 percent to 65 percent of CPS intakes have been assigned to FAR social workers in Aberdeen, Lynnwood, and Spokane (Zip Codes 99201 and 99207). This is exactly what we predicted before implementation.
- The families served by FAR have been wonderfully diverse. We have served families from 21 American Indian Tribes and 2 Canadian Bands. We have translated the FAR documents into 21 languages. FAR has served families whose first languages include Somalian, Marshallese, Korean, Bosnian, Spanish, Amharic, Romanian, Swahili, Samoan, Punjabi, Hmong, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Nepali.
- FAR workers filed dependencies in 1 percent of cases due to child safety threats in the home. These cases did not transfer to investigations because the FAR worker gathered enough information to file the dependency to keep the children safe without adding to the number of social workers involved.
- Six percent of FAR intakes were reassigned to investigations because of safety concerns, or because the family chose an investigation instead of FAR.

Here are a few emerging themes about why families choose not to participate in FAR:

- Some families engaged in child custody issues believe that an investigation with an unfounded outcome (assuming that the finding would be unfounded) will help their custody dispute.
- The law that allowed Children's Administration to implement FAR requires parents to sign an agreement to participate in the program. Some families have consulted with an attorney, who encourages them not to sign any Children's Administration documents. We are reaching out to local attorneys to increase their understanding of FAR.

Although it is too early to assess trends in FAR offices, early data shows a clear increase in the number of families voluntarily participating in services during a FAR intervention. FAR is working well in the offices where it is available. Our contractor, TriWest, will be tracking data on repeat referrals, disproportionality, and other outcomes for families engaged in the FAR pathway. Watch for more data in future FAR newsletters.



Schedule of Coming Events

June 23 - 26, 2014

- Phase II FAR Curriculum Training - Tacoma

June 27, 2014

- FAR CANS Training Certification - Tacoma

July 8 - 9, 2014

- Supervisor/Coaching Training - West Seattle

July 10 - 11, 2014

- Supervisor/Coaching Training - West Seattle

July 14, 2014

- Phase II - FAR "Go Live"
 - Spokane (Zip codes 99205, 99217 and Lincoln County), Ellensburg
 - Mount Vernon, MLK, Pierce East, Stevenson

July 25, 2014

- External Implementation Consultation – West Seattle



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FAR FAQs

How do I refer a family for Family Assessment Response (FAR)?

ANSWER: You cannot refer a family specifically for Family Assessment Response.

If you believe a parent or caregiver has abused or neglected a child, call your local intake number or 1-866-END-Harm (1-866-363-4276). The intake worker who takes your call will see if FAR is available where the family lives and use a screening tool to determine:

1. If the allegations meet the legal definition of abuse and neglect or there is risk of imminent harm to a child.
2. If allegations of abuse and neglect meet the criteria for a CPS investigation response or a FAR response.

Both CPS investigation workers and CPS FAR staff work with families to keep children safe at home whenever possible. Children's Administration only places 12 percent of children referred for concerns about abuse and neglect in out-of-home care. In most cases, CPS is able to work with families to keep their children safe at home with community support.

For more information about reporting child abuse and neglect and signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect, go to the DSHS website: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/safety/abuseWhat.asp?2>

What is the difference between an Investigative Response and FAR?

ANSWER: An investigation is required when the allegations of child abuse or neglect are severe physical abuse, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. The investigative worker will respond to the allegations within 24 or 72 hours of the intake, depending on the severity and risk to the child. The investigative worker makes an initial face-to-face contact with the child, usually prior to talking with the parent(s). The investigative worker will make a safety assessment and develop a safety plan if needed, and will determine a finding of whether abuse or neglect occurred. The family may be referred for further services and follow-up through the Family Voluntary Services program or court involved Child and Family Welfare Services.

Children's Administration may initiate FAR when the allegations of child abuse or neglect are low to moderate. The FAR worker will make contact with the family within 72 hours of the intake. The FAR worker will engage the family before making initial contact with the child. The FAR worker will work with the family to identify services and concrete needs that will help address issues that affect child safety in the home. FAR workers do not make any findings about whether abuse or neglect occurred. They do complete safety assessments and safety plans when safety threats are identified. The family may receive FAR services for up to 90 days.

Can I request that a family receive FAR services?

ANSWER: No, you cannot refer a family specifically for FAR. When you call 1-866-END-HARM, the intake worker will use a structured decision-making tool to determine whether a family will receive an investigative or FAR response. The intake worker will consider:

- The type of allegations (physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect or abandonment).
- The severity of the allegation.
- Family history.
- If FAR is available in the area in which the family lives.

What information should I be prepared to share when I call 1-866-END-HARM?

ANSWER: To make a good decision and to prepare the CPS worker in both FAR and investigations, it is helpful to have as much information about the family as possible. If you have access to this information, be prepared to tell the intake worker:

1. Who did what to whom?
2. The names and ages of children who live in the home.
3. The name and address of the child's parent, guardian or other person who has custody of the child.
4. Contact information for the family (home, cell, and work phone numbers).
5. Emergency contact information the family may have given you.
6. If the family primarily speaks a language other than English.
7. The family's ethnic identity.
8. Any information you might have about the family's Native American heritage.
9. Information about any previous concerns.
10. Positive information about the family. Having positive information about the family helps the CPS worker build on existing protective factors to keep the child safe.

You do not need to have all of the above information when you make a report, but the more accurate the information you can provide, the better we are able to respond to a family's needs.

FAR FAQs

Building community resources

A major guiding principle and goal of FAR is to build partnerships in communities. Here's some examples of how that works:

- For many years, only one gas station in the Spokane area would accept vouchers from the Spokane Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) office. The FAR Office Lead there worked with the corporate office of an oil company to create 18 new contracts with gas stations to accept the vouchers.
- Offices in the Skagit and Island counties are fortunate to have access to resources from the Kids Closet*, which accepts donations from community sources and volunteers. These contributions include:
 1. Local faith communities hold monthly drives to collect diapers, hygiene supplies, pillows, shoes, toys, and make tote bags.
 2. Sleep Country collects and donates coats, pajamas, and toys.
 3. Toys for Tots donates leftover toys.
 4. Knitting, quilting and sewing groups make items for kids.
 5. DCFS Social Workers and individuals donate pajamas purchased on sale, gently used kids' clothing and cosmetic bags for teens.



* Here are some examples of families and children who benefit from Kids Closet items:

- A 10-year-old girl had been living in a van for a month. When she was placed in foster care, she had no clothes or toys. She received two Barbies, clothes and art supplies.
- A 10-year-old boy going into foster care was excited to shop for new clothes.
- A single father was reluctant to work with Child Protective Services (CPS). The CPS worker brought some shampoo, soap, hair ties, and toothbrushes for his little girls at the initial home visit. The father was thankful and invited the CPS worker in to complete the investigation.
- An 18-year-old mom received clothes and diapers for her six-month-old.
- A father had no money to purchase a toy for his daughter's birthday. A CPS worker brought a toy computer for the father to give to her.
- A CHET screener found an educational toy phone at Kids Closet to help a young child with development and speech therapy needs.

FAR Success Stories*

- Concerns about neglect were reported about a grandmother raising her grandchildren. The family home had become dilapidated and it needed repairs. The family also needed help accessing medical care for the children. The caseworker was able to get the grandmother and the biological father to agree to FAR. This allowed the caseworker to collaborate with the family's Tribe to help with home improvements and medical care.
- A mom who grew up in foster care was very fearful of CPS involvement. After meeting with the FAR worker, the mother was able to put her fears aside and engage in the assessment. She is working with the FAR worker to find local supports for herself and her child.
- A mom told us she appreciated the FAR worker contacting her prior to coming

to the home. This was a comfort to her because she had been worried about the CPS worker interrupting her child at school. Her child was new to the school and struggles with disruption and change.

- A single mother who recently had moved to Washington was homeless and needed in-patient treatment. The FAR worker did a voluntary placement of the children for four weeks while the mother engaged in treatment and found housing. The FAR worker helped the mother enroll the youngest child in Headstart, find child care for all of the children and access medical support for the children through a community health worker.
- A single father moved to Washington to get away from gang life. Responding to a report of neglect, the FAR worker asked the parent what he needed. He said that he was having difficulty finding a job and

staying away from gangs because he had gang-related tattoos. The FAR worker called the FAR office lead to see what could be done to help. The FAR office lead found a local law enforcement officer who works with a tattoo shop to remove gang tattoos for a nominal fee. The father was able to focus more on the needs of his children after he addressed his concerns about the tattoos.



*Some information about these families has been changed to protect their confidentiality