

Family Assessment Response (FAR)



Differential response models never compromise child safety

In March 2012, Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6555 was signed into law. This law requires Children's Administration to implement a differential response system that provides an alternative pathway for families with accepted reports of child abuse and neglect, who have a low to moderate risk of future child maltreatment.

A Differential Response Model

Washington recognizes that not all families who come to the attention of Child Protective Services (CPS) need an investigative intervention. Differential response models provide an alternative response to CPS investigations. Caseworkers using a differential response model focus on child safety, assessing family strengths and needs, providing services and concrete supports. Differential response models have been successfully implemented in other states.

The Family Assessment Response (FAR) pathway is Washington state's differential response system. FAR engages families and addresses the basic needs of children to stabilize and strengthen the family unit, improve child and family well-being, and safely prevent out of home placements.

Family Assessment Response

FAR provides a comprehensive assessment of child safety, risk of subsequent child abuse or neglect, family strengths and needs. No subject is named and no findings are made. Serious physical abuse, sexual abuse and high risk neglect intakes will continue to be assigned to the investigative pathway.

The Family Assessment Response emphasizes engagement and collaboration to thoroughly assess and target service needs. Based on the assessment, the FAR worker, in partnership with the family, identifies and accesses concrete resources and services that make the most difference to increase parental capacity, reduce risk of child abuse and neglect, and keep children safely at home.

FAR connects families to services, concrete supports, and community resources. Families are better able to care for their children when their needs are met and when they have strong community connections.

The FAR pathway emphasizes the community's role in child welfare. A component of the assessment and service recommendation considers available resources that strengthen the family's community connection and engagement.

Family Assessment Response Guiding Principles

- Low to moderate risk neglect cases are best served through planning that includes parents as partners.
- Families want safety for their children.
- Families can meet their children's needs with supports and resources.
- Families are better able to care for their children when their needs are met and when they have strong community connections
- Communities want children to be safe and well cared for.
- Family Assessment Response supports and enhances the agency's vision of increased family engagement, enhances the practice of solution based casework, assessment of family's needs and strengths, delivery of concrete and supportive services and focuses on child safety.
- Family Assessment Response supports the Children's Administration's strength based practice model.
- Family Assessment Response is closely connected with the implementation of evidence-based practices to provide families and children with services that are supported by research.

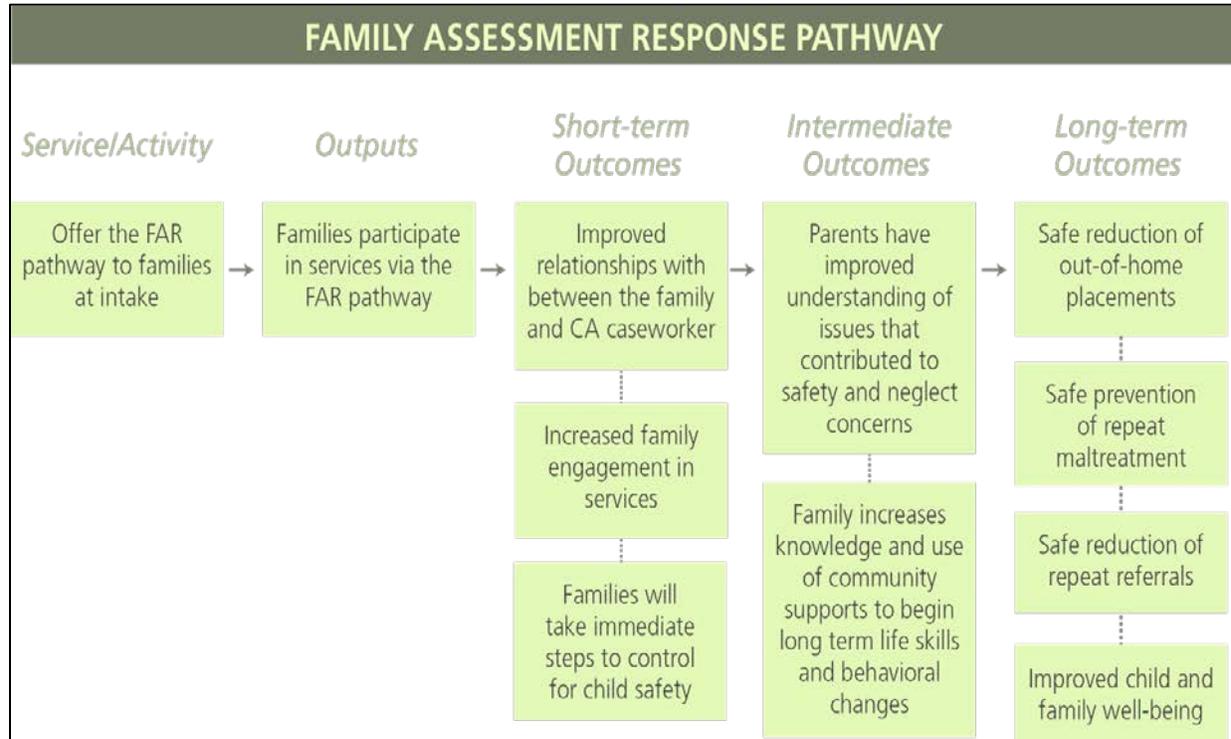
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Goals of Family Assessment Response

- Provide early intervention to respond to low to moderate risk allegations with the possibility of preventing future high risk or unsafe situations.
- Increase scope of service delivery to provide services and resources for families at low to moderate risk for future maltreatment.
- Provide services based on families' needs to sustain and support their children safely at home.
- Improve family-centered practice by increasing the family's involvement in assessing and identifying their strengths and needs.
- Engage families in the development of their service plans to address issues relating to risk of abuse or neglect.
- Increase resource identification by reviewing service needs and resource availability for immediate and long-term supports for families.
- Improve engagement and assessment by moving away from incident-based assessments to a comprehensive assessment of the family dynamics, strengths, issues and needs.

Outcomes of Family Assessment Response

Parents served in the FAR pathway will improve their parenting skills and understand the issues that contributed to child safety and neglect concerns. Ultimately, this will safely prevent out-of-home placements, repeat maltreatment, reduce repeat referrals, and improve child and family well-being.



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FAR Requires an Initial Investment

Long term rewards and reinvestment require a short-term investment. Children's Administration has received a Title IV-E Waiver that allows us to reallocate federal funds to cover FAR expenditures as cost savings are realized. While the number of families served by the Department is not expected to increase, a diverse array of interventions and concrete supports will be available to families across administration programs. With the implementation of FAR, Children's Administration will need to hire additional FAR caseworkers increase funding for concrete goods, and expand services offered to families.

Due to the expected increase in the concrete supports, the projected cost per family will increase to \$588 for concrete goods. This represents a total increase in the average cost per family of \$269.

FAR Projected Expenditures per Family

<i>Concrete Goods Based on FY 2011 expenditures</i>	
Concrete Goods	Average Per Family Expenditure
Appliance/Furniture/Home Repair	\$198
Food/Clothing	\$199
Medical Dental	\$232
Utilities	\$304
Rent	\$488
Housing	\$416
Auto Repair/Transportation	\$90
Other Financial Support	\$98
Family Preservation Concrete Goods	\$231
Homebuilders Goods & Concrete services	\$234
Average Cost Per Family for Concrete Goods	\$319
*Based on the analysis of other states' implementations of differential response programs, CA expects an increase in concrete service cost per family of \$269 per year.	
Projected Concrete Goods per Family Expenditure under FAR is \$588	
Services	Average Cost Per Family Expenditure
Counseling - Child & Family	\$1,826
Parenting*	\$1,243
Child Care**	\$2,226
Average Cost Per Family for Services	\$2,016
*Assumes a 25 percent increase in EBPs provided.	
**Assumes 30 percent of child care will be provided through the investigative pathway.	
Projected Service Expenditure per Family under FAR is \$2,016	

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Implementation Timeline

Activity/Deliverable	Due Date
Submit Implementation Plan to legislature	December 31, 2012
FAR Kick-Off for implementation and office leads	January 2013
FAR training for Area Administrators Begin Office Readiness Assessment Begin FamLink Development Develop curriculum for FAR Academy training	February 2013
Begin FamLink User testing with field staff	May – July 2013
Begin FamLink and new intake policy training	July 2013
FamLink changes implemented	October 2013
FAR Training for Phase 1 Offices	October – November 2013
Implementation of Family Assessment Response – Phase 1	January 2, 2014