



### How is a response chosen?

When a report of child abuse or neglect is received and accepted for evaluation, either an Alternative Response or a Traditional Response is required. A pathway decision is based on state guidelines, past reports, and family cooperation.

### How can we work together to ensure children’s safety and families well-being through Alternative Response?

When CPS workers hear concerns about child safety, they meet with families to assess their needs and strengths.

Rather than focusing on the details of a specific incident in order to prove or disprove that abuse or neglect occurred, workers and families focus on the safety of children and the family’s resources to address concerns. Family needs are also identified and county workers are able to organize community resources and informal supports to address these needs.

At the end of your participation in Alternative Response, families will receive a family portrait and a frame from Olan Mills Studio as a thank you from our agency.

**Children’s Division**  
**Ross County Job and Family Services**  
150 E. Second Street  
Chillicothe, OH 45601



## ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE

Receiving a call or visit from Child Protective Services can be frightening, especially if families are already struggling with stressful family issues. They may feel shame or anger at being reported, and threatened by the possibility of government involvement in their lives.

It is important to quickly assist families who need help to keep children safe. Alternative Response offers this opportunity.

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Your Worker

740-702-4453 ext: \_\_\_\_\_

As part of Alternative Response programming, your family may also receive a satisfaction survey by mail or phone. This is your opportunity to provide feedback about your experience with CPS. Participants will be compensated for survey completion.

## Why use Alternative Response?

Alternative Response is based on the belief that parents love their children and want them to be safe. Sometimes parents need help to make that happen. Alternative Response can provide that help.

Some parents, however, are not able to keep from endangering their children. This is when Child Protective Services (CPS) must step in with a Traditional Investigation to keep children safe. When there is a serious and immediate risk of harm to children, CPS must conduct a thorough (traditional) investigation.

Ross County Children's Division has the flexibility to apply the response that best matches a family's needs.



## What is Alternative Response Versus Traditional Response?

Alternative response, like Traditional Response, is an approach that responds to concerns about child abuse and neglect.

*Both Responses:*

- Ensure children are safe
- Work in partnership with parents
- Identify families' needs
- Provide services and resources matched to families' needs
- Build on parent and community strengths and resources

*Traditional Response:*

- Labels child victims and alleged perpetrators
- Must make a finding based on the facts of the case
- May involve Juvenile Court, Law Enforcement, and/or removal of a child

*Alternative Response*

- One Worker - One Family
- Allows the family to be a decision-making part of the "Investigative Process"
- Has more resources and broader time lines to help identify and meet family needs
- Avoids negative labels for parents
- Sets aside blame

