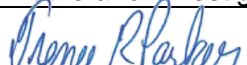


Effective Date: 2/17/2016, Revision: 02/20/2025	Responsible Administrator: Sarah Azevedo, Intake and Investigation Program Manager
Authorized Signature: Trenee Parker, DFS Director 	

POLICY 301 – FAMILY ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION RESPONSE (FAIR)

A. POLICY

The response to reports made to the Division of Family Services (DFS) Child Abuse Report Line must be flexible and proportional to the alleged maltreatment. While some families require an investigative, multidisciplinary response, evidence-based research indicates that many families benefit more from an approach focused on family engagement and collaboration.

Family Assessment and Intervention Response (FAIR) is an alternative to the traditional investigation response when a report of child abuse/neglect is screened in but does not require a multidisciplinary response. The goal of FAIR services is to increase child safety, decrease subsequent reports to the DFS Child Abuse Report Line and future involvement with DFS, and prevent child removal into foster care. This type of differential response is authorized by Delaware statute [\(16 Del. C. §906 \(e\)\(2\)\)](#).

§ 906. State response to reports of abuse or neglect.

(e) In implementing the Department's role in the child protection system, the Department shall do all of the following:

(2) Forward reports to the appropriate Department staff, who shall determine, through the use of protocols developed by the Department, whether an investigation or the family assessment and services approach should be used to respond to the allegation. The protocols for making this determination shall be developed by the Department and shall give priority to ensuring the well-being and safety of the child.

B. PROCEDURES

1. Upon screening in a report at the DFS Child Abuse Report Line, the intake worker will determine if a multidisciplinary (MDT) response is required due to the seriousness of the allegations (e.g., serious child injury, substance exposure, hospitalization due to abuse or neglect, etc.). If an MDT response is required, the report will be assigned to a DFS investigation caseworker for an investigative response.
2. If an MDT response is not required, then the report is eligible to be assigned as a FAIR case, and the intake worker will assign the report according to the DFS rotation. The FAIR worker will make an initial response within the Structured Decision Making (SDM®) Priority Response time.
3. Reports received about families who are active in a DFS investigation or treatment case are not eligible for FAIR and will be assigned either as a new investigation or a treatment response.

4. If new allegations are received at the DFS Child Abuse Report Line while a family is active with FAIR, and the new allegations require an MDT response, a new investigation will be opened in FOCUS, and the FAIR case will be abridged or closed.
5. If child safety cannot be ensured, absent DFS custody and removal of the child(ren) from the home, as determined by the SDM® Safety Assessment, or if the FAIR worker cannot gain access to the children to assess safety, the Intake and Investigation Program Manager or their designee will be consulted. If the Program Manager authorizes, the FAIR case will be changed to an investigation and will be transferred to an investigation worker.
6. Priority will be given to engaging with families in the home, utilizing the Family Team Meeting model. However, FAIR cases must follow the same timeliness and contact requirements as an investigation to establish child safety, as detailed in Policy 302: Standard Investigation, so FAIR caseworkers may meet with children and caregivers at other locations if necessary.
7. All components and requirements of an investigation must also be present in a FAIR case, in compliance with Policy 302, including:
 - a. Initial interview with identified victim children and a caregiver, as well as interviews/observation of all household members
 - b. SDM® Safety Assessment and Child Safety Agreement, if appropriate
 - c. Criminal history review on all household members aged 13 and older
 - d. FOCUS history review
 - e. Collateral information
 - f. Biological parent information for all household children
 - g. Physical health, mental health, and educational information about each child in the household
 - h. Referrals to substance abuse providers, domestic violence services, and Birth to Three, as required by DFS policy
 - i. SDM® Risk Assessment
8. FAIR cases may be open for up to 120 days. For those cases held open for longer than 60 days, the following elements must be present and documented in FOCUS:
 - a. SDM® Family Strengths and Needs Guide (FSNG) and SDM® Child Strengths and Needs Guide (CSNG)
 - b. Family Service Plan (FSP)
 - c. Monthly Framework documenting the need for ongoing case management and plans for closure
 - d. SDM® Risk Reassessment
 - e. Protective Factors Survey
9. FAIR cases will be closed when:
 - a. Risk is low/moderate or has been sufficiently reduced, as evidenced by the SDM® Risk Assessment and/or SDM® Risk Reassessment
 - b. There are no current safety threats
 - c. Emergency needs have been addressed
 - d. Family has been connected to needed community resources
 - e. Family has enhanced its Protective Factors

10. If the FAIR provider believes that a family would benefit from ongoing case management that extend beyond the scope of FAIR, a consultation will be held with the Intake and Investigation Program Manager or designee to determine if the family can be transitioned to a DFS Treatment caseworker or can be stepped down to DSCYF's Intensive Family Consultation services (IFC).
11. FAIR cases open for housing services and SRAP vouchers must remain open with a case management service and should be considered for transfer to a treatment case manager.
12. FAIR cases will not result in substantiation or Child Protection Registry placement, unless the FAIR case has been converted to an investigation, as described in earlier paragraphs of this policy.

C. FOCUS

[FOCUS User Manual: Family Intake](#)

[FOCUS User Manual: Family Investigation \(FAIR\)](#)

D. FORMS NONE