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# DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE RESOURCE DOCUMENT

## FOR OCWTP TRAINERS AND COACHES

### WHAT IS DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE?

Differential Response (DR) is a child welfare practice that allows for more than one method of initial response to accepted reports of child abuse and neglect. It reserves use of formal investigation methods (in Ohio, this is called Traditional Response) for situations where alleged maltreatment is very serious, or referral information suggests children may be at high risk. In many situations, particularly when children are not at high risk of serious harm and the involvement of the legal and court systems is not warranted, a less intrusive approach is preferable. Alternative Response is another child protection response option that is typically used when evidence suggests a family can be engaged in successfully protecting their children in their own homes.

Ohio's Differential Response System separates accepted reports of child maltreatment into the Traditional Response and Alternative Response pathways and creates different processes for handling them. Screened in referrals are assigned to a pathway at the completion of the screening process, based on the seriousness of the allegation and the supporting data gathered at the time of screening.

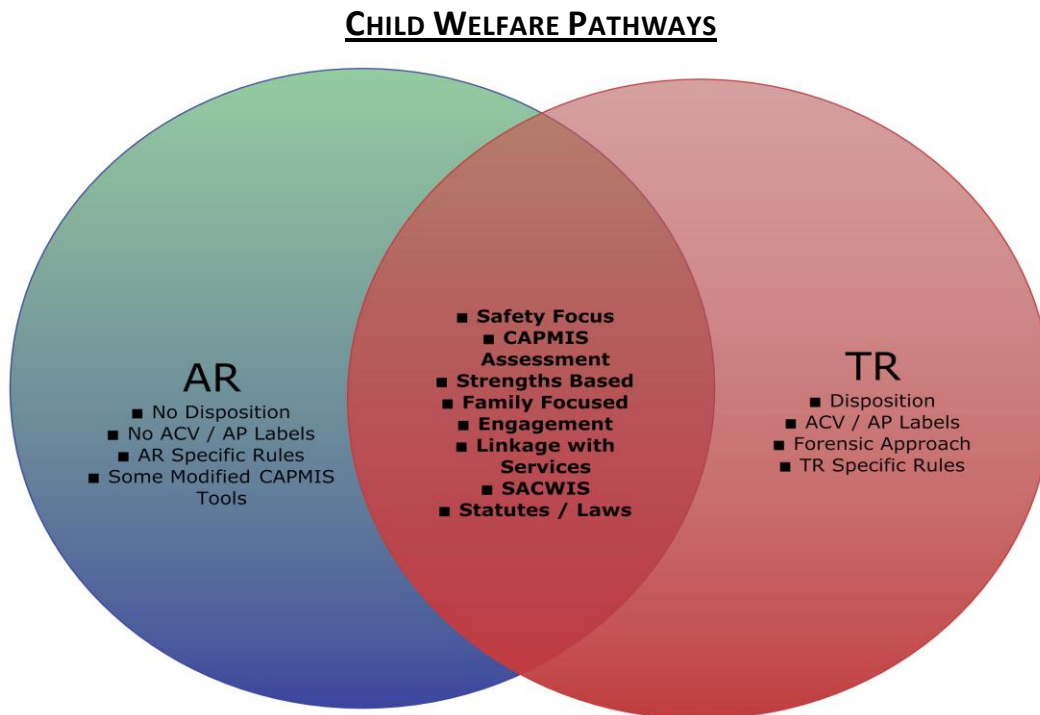
### ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE & TRADITIONAL RESPONSE: TWO PATHWAYS TO CHILD SAFETY

While agencies (PCSAs) have some discretion in determining a pathway, the following types of accepted reports must use the traditional response pathway by law (ORC Section 2151.429):

1. Physical abuse resulting in serious injury or that creates a serious and immediate risk to a child's health and safety
2. Sexual abuse
3. Child fatality
4. Reports requiring a specialized assessment as identified by rule adopted by ODJFS
5. Reports requiring a third party investigative procedure as identified by rule adopted by ODJFS

An Alternative Response is the preferred response for all other accepted child abuse and neglect reports, whenever appropriate and in accordance with rules adopted by ODJFS.

There are numerous commonalities between the Alternative Response and Traditional Response pathways as indicated in the diagram below.



**PERTINENT ELEMENTS TO REMEMBER INCLUDE:**

- Safety, Risk and Comprehensive Family Assessments are completed on all cases, whether they are assigned to the Traditional Response or Alternative Response pathway.
- Pathway assignment may change from Alternative Response to Traditional Response based on new information or an increase in risk level.
- There is no formal determination of maltreatment for cases served in the Alternative Response pathway.
- No identified perpetrator and victim are entered into the state central registry for families assigned to the Alternative Response pathway.
- Families eligible for the Alternative Response pathway are given the choice to participate in the Traditional or Alternative Response pathway.
- Some modifications are made to SACWIS screens, rules, and CAPMIS tools to accommodate the Alternative Response and Traditional Response pathways.

Click on the following links for more information related to the fundamentals and pathway changes of Ohio's Differential Response System.

[Ohio Practice Fundamentals Document](#)

[Pathway Switch QandA.pdf](#)

### OHIO'S IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

To ensure high-fidelity implementation among all counties, ODJFS is rolling out Differential Response in a phased implementation plan. As of January 2013, 59 counties have implemented Differential Response. A statewide implementation schedule will result in Differential Response being fully implemented in Ohio by June 2014. To aid counties in Differential Response implementation, ODJFS has developed the *Ohio Differential Response County Planning Guide* that contains implementation activities, timelines, and resources. The activities include county self-assessment, orientation, and readiness consultation, exploration with experienced Differential Response counties, training, and community partner outreach. Please refer to the following links for additional information on Ohio's Implementation Plan.

[D R Implementation\\_County\\_Planning Guide12.pdf](#)

[D R\\_ODJFS Statewide Implementation.pdf](#)

[D R Counties Map.pdf](#)

### OHIO LAWS & RULES GOVERNING DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE

Statutory authorization of Differential Response was provided in Amended Substitute House Bill 153. This also included authority for ODJFS to adopt rules and set forth procedures and criteria on traditional and alternative pathways. Below are links to the excerpted language regarding Differential Response in House Bill 153 and Ohio Administrative Code (rules) related to assessment requirements, intake/screening procedures, and requirements for ongoing services in Alternative Response cases.

[Provisions on Differential Response Excerpted from H.B. 153](#)

[5101:2-36-01 Intake and Screening Procedures](#)

[5101:2-36-20 AR Assessment Requirements](#)

[5101:2-38-20 Requirements for AR Ongoing Services](#)

### DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The Leadership Council provides advice to the Supreme Court of Ohio's Subcommittee on Responding to Child Abuse, Neglect and Dependency, the Ohio Supreme Court and ODJFS staff regarding statewide implementation of Differential Response. In addition, it is an ongoing leadership forum for guidance, support, monitoring, problem solving, and mentoring

for the Ohio Differential Response Project. The Leadership Council has provided guidance on changes to the Ohio Revised Code, the Ohio Administrative Code policies and procedures, and SACWIS screens to be consistent with Differential Response. Click on the link below for the Leadership Council Charter.

[Leadership Council Charter](#)

## PCSAS SUPPORT OF DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE

An array of practice elements are emerging in several Differential Response counties. Tools developed by DR counties that address field observation, clinical decision-making framework, case presentation reviews, supervisory worksheets and family letters and surveys are available. Many Differential Response counties are instituting group supervision for screening, pathway assignment and case consultation and using solution focused interview and engagement strategies. The Differential Response Leadership Council is in the process of finalizing practice profiles in ten practices areas. Many of these tools and materials can be accessed on the Ohio Differential Response Project website listed below.

Resources, Documents, and Opportunities to learn about DR:

- 1) Ohio's Alternative Response Pilot Chronicle - This report captures Ohio's implementation experience planning and piloting Differential Response. It includes information and "lessons learned" from both the counties and the state that were gathered through interviews and observation at regular intervals throughout the pilot process. The chronicle is available online at: [Ohio Alternative Response Pilot Chronicle](#)
- 2) Ohio Differential Response Project Website – This website was created as a resource for Ohio's Differential Response counties and others exploring Differential Response. A variety of documents and resources are posted to the website, including Differential Response Leadership Council meeting minutes, past editions of the *Ohio AR Quarterly* newsletter, tools and resources shared by counties, and SACWIS and policy information. Log onto the site at: [Ohio Differential Response Project Website](#)

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- 3) Ohio Alternative Response Pilot Reports – The Final Report from Ohio's Alternative Response Pilot and the full Pilot Evaluation Report are available online at: [Ohio Alternative Response Pilot Repots](#)
- 4) National Quality Improvement Center on Differential Response – this website contains a wealth of information and resources on Differential Response: [National Quality Impvment Center on Differential Response](#)
- 5) Differential Response Primer training is a two-day training offered to all DR counties designed to provide participants with a thorough overview of the philosophical and

practice frameworks of Differential Response. Trainers/coaches may attend this workshop and can register through E-Track.

- 6) Field Experience for Trainers/Coaches- To learn more about the Differential Response county operations, RTC staff can assist trainers/coaches in participating in a field experience in a county in their region. Please do not directly contact the agency but work through the RTC that serves a DR county.

For further information or questions about Differential Response, OCWTP trainers and coaches are welcome to contact Nan Beeler ([nbeeler@ihs-trainet.com](mailto:nbeeler@ihs-trainet.com)) or Mary Kay Hawkins ([mhawkins@ihs-trainet.com](mailto:mhawkins@ihs-trainet.com)). Many thanks to ODJFS staff, Carla Carpenter and Sonia Tillman, for providing numerous documents and information. Thanks go to Franklin County Children Services for the pathway diagram.

**Note:**

To open hyperlinks for resources, open this document at OCWTP.net, click on, "For Trainers" then "Trainer Resources" and scroll, down to "ODJFS Initiatives."