



## What's the Difference in Differential Response?

### Traditional Pathway: **Investigation**



#### CFSA CPS Investigative Social Worker

CFSA must see and interview the alleged victim and core contacts. The family must cooperate with the investigation and must accept services when a child is removed.

- Assess level of safety and risk to determine whether children can remain at home or must be removed
- Determine whether child abuse or neglect occurred and issue an investigative finding—substantiated, inconclusive, or unfounded
- Identify the maltreater
- Involve the court whenever a child is removed
- In each instance of child removal, get a Family Team Meeting convened to mobilize extended family involvement and support
- When appropriate, involve police to investigate for criminal behavior and to charge a maltreater, if necessary
- Initiate services the family needs immediately to improve safety and well being
- Decide whether to open a child welfare case
- Enter name of the maltreater in the Child Protection Registry

**Families with serious difficulties that pose a high risk must accept this intensive approach.**

### Partnering Together

### Alternative Pathway: **Family Assessment**



#### CFSA CPS Family Assessment Social Worker

CFSA must have an initial interaction with the family to ensure the children are safe. If children are safe, the family can choose to participate in helping services.

- Assess for safety to ensure children are not in serious or immediate danger
- Gain family's voluntary cooperation in continuing the assessment to identify strengths, issues, and needs
- Convene a Partnering Conference (PT) so family can consider and choose services and confirm which provider will take the lead in working with them: CFSA, DC Department of Human Services (DHS), or Healthy Families/Thriving Communities (HF/TC) Collaboratives
- Takes the lead in managing family's use of helping services—or offers support as DHS or HF/TC Collaboratives take the lead with the family
- If a child's safety becomes compromised at time during involvement with the family, switch family to traditional investigation
- Usually does not involve opening a child welfare case
- No investigative finding, no entry of names in the Child Protection Registry

**After an initial safety assessment that raises no concerns about child safety, families can choose to continue with this supportive response.**