



TEXAS

Department of Family
and Protective Services

Alternative Response Expansion



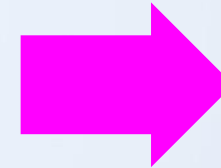


Alternative Response Background

In 2011, Congress amended the Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act (CAPTA) mandating all states receiving CAPTA funding to have some type of differential response process by September 1, 2011. Differential response was established to give caseworkers more tools and flexibility to respond differently to different types of cases.



The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) met the CAPTA requirements for differential response through its investigative screening process which was implemented in 2006. Although the screening process has undergone modifications over the years, it continues to qualify as differential response because it allows screeners to refer families in low-risk cases to community resources if available, and then close the intake without an investigation. Otherwise, the screener assigns the intake to Alternative Response or Traditional Investigations.

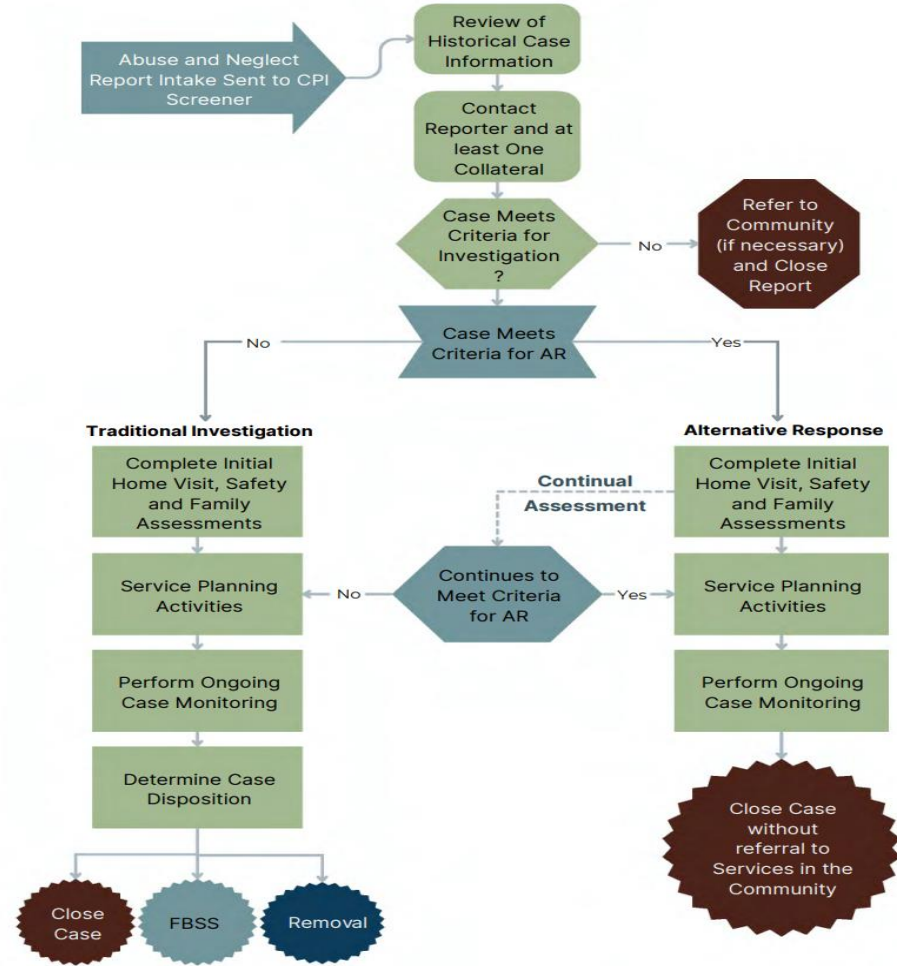


Despite technically meeting the differential response requirements, Texas began implementation of a new type of differential response under the name "Alternative Response" (AR) in 2014. CAPTA encouraged states to not only meet the mandate but to consider using the core elements that distinguish the differential response model from the traditional model, and DFPS implemented AR to align with these best practices.



Alternative Response Flowchart

GENERAL OVERVIEW ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE (AR) MODEL





Intakes Formally Screened

Year	Total P2 Intakes	P2 Investigations	P2 Intakes Sent AR	Screened Out P2 Intakes
	Source: Data Book Intakes P2s and PNs	Source: Data Book Intakes P2s	Source: Data Book Intakes AR & P2s	Source: Data Warehouse Int_08-flawed data
2021	231,349	115,840	41,544	19,564
2022	256,103	124,527	48,008	29,719
2023	263,581	169,707	47,756	36,137



Title 40, Title 19, Chapter 707:

- (a) (1) Alternative Response case is the case is assigned a priority other than 1.
- (a) (2) The case does not involve a child victim under the age of six.
 - Requesting to amend this rule to state if a P1 is downgraded to a P2, it can be screened for Alternative Response.
 - Requesting to remove the age restriction. Cases with victim of physical abuse under the age of six are excluded from this change.
 - This will allow more cases assigned to the Alternative Response pathway.

Changes to the Texas Administrative Code



Intakes Ineligible for AR:

- A current household member is a designated or sustained perpetrator of a child fatality due to physical abuse.
- Alleged perpetrator is a school employee, DFPS employee, foster parent.
- An allegation of sexual abuse, forced marriage, sex or labor trafficking.
- Household member is a convicted sex offender.
- Physical abuse allegations that indicate serious physical injury.
- Family has an open investigation, FBSS or CVS case.
- Current intake involves a child fatality alleged to be a result of abuse or neglect.
- Child removal is imminent
- Allegations of manufacturing of illegal substances or that involve an active drug raid.

**Intakes which
will continue to
go to
Investigations**



Proposed Changes to Alternative Response Criteria

	Current	Proposed
Age	Cannot go AR if victim is under 6	Any age of victim, except physical abuse
Physical Abuse	Cannot go AR if any child in the home is under 6	AR if the victim is over 6
Medical Neglect	Cannot go AR if condition could cause substantial harm	Cannot go AR if condition could cause immediate harm
Weapon Use	Any prior use of a weapon except self-harm	Prior use of a weapon and indication of ongoing threat
History	Cannot go if DFPS has had custody in last 2 years Cannot go if family have previously refused services and there is indication family will not cooperate again	History is reviewed and considered but is not an absolute bar



Region 10 Expansion Pilot

The region 10 (El Paso) Alternative Response Pilot is DFPS's opportunity to implement new policies, procedures and processes on a smaller scale in-order to identify possible barriers, get input from staff and make needed adjustments before large-scale implementation.





Goals of Pilot

Increase

Number of cases eligible for Alternative Response

Decrease

The number of removals by removing the age restriction for Alternative Response

Identify

Barriers and solutions regarding the statewide expansion of Alternative Response.

Quality

Develop new techniques and approaches to ensure fidelity of Alternative Response

Increase

Community and worker satisfaction with the agency.



Cross Training of Staff

Complete
Prerequisite
Trainings



Designated Staff
will attend AR
Cross-Training



Technical Support
provided to
Regions



Regional Staff will
conduct additional
support



Monthly Technical
Support for 12
Months

Data for the AR Pilot





Pilot Measures (1 of 2)

Metric	Statewide – FY 2023	Pre-pilot Region 10 (Aug 23-Jan 24)	Pilot Region 10 (Feb 24 – Aug 24)	Goals
Increase number of P2 cases eligible for AR pathway	20%	20%	49%	Increase
Child Safety – CSS Return Rate	***	20%	No data yet	Decrease
Child Safety – Case Reads	None identified from sample	Data not available limited by this time period	No data yet	No child safety issues identified
Child Safety – Stage Progression	10.8%	13.7%	No data yet	Remain steady
Children Removed	9,965 children	83 children	No data yet	Decrease
AR cases closed with Services Completed	7,201 cases	208 cases	No data yet	Increase



Pilot Measures (2 of 2)

Recidivism

- After August 2025, review the recidivism in cases from the pilot and compare to statewide data we have requested
- Exploring options to measure re-referral rates as part of recidivism

Reduce Disproportionality in AR Assignment

- Assess whether there are disparities in assignment to Investigations and alternative response in the pilot

Increase Family Engagement

- Measured through surveys of families who participated in both investigations and alternative response cases during the pilot

Increase Worker Retention

- Caseworker and supervisor surveys will assess their satisfaction with the pilot



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For additional information or questions please contact:

Jerome Green Jr.

**Director of Policy and Practice for
Investigations and Alternative
Response**

Nicole Williams

**Division Administrator for
Investigations and Alternative
Response**

dfpscpipolicypractice@dfps.texas.gov

