Receiving a call or visit from social 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. While it is recognized that most parents want to keep their children safe, sometimes circumstances or conditions interfere with their ability to do so.

What is Family Assessment response?
Family Assessment responds to concerns about child maltreatment by:
- Ensuring children are safe
- Avoiding negative labels for parents
- Setting aside the issue of fault
- Working in partnership with parents
- Identifying families’ needs
- Providing services and resources matched to families’ needs
- Building on parents’ and communities’ strengths and resources.

Family Assessment response provides social services the flexibility to best meet families’ needs.

Why use Family Assessment response?
The focus of Family Assessment is to engage families’ protective capacities and offer services that address immediate and ongoing safety concerns of a child.

Family Assessment uses strength-based interventions and involves families in planning for and selecting services.

How is a response chosen, and what are the possible outcomes?
Reports not involving substantial child endangerment, sexual abuse or situations of serious danger may be assigned for a Family Assessment response rather than a Family Investigation.

No determinations of maltreatment are made in Family Assessment response. At the end of an assessment, it will be decided if:
- Child protective services are needed, or
- Family support services are jointly agreed upon by the agency and parents.

How can everyone work together to ensure children’s safety and families’ well-being through Family Assessment response?
When social services staff responds to concerns raised about children’s safety, they meet with families to assess their needs and strengths.

Social services staff and families focus on the safety of children and families’ strengths to address concerns.

They also discuss families’ needs. Social services staff offers to help families meet their needs. They connect families with resources in their communities or through their informal support systems.
Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, ask your worker or call the number below for your language.

For accessible formats of this information or assistance with additional equal access to human services, write to DHS.info@state.mn.us, call 651-431-4670, or use your preferred relay service. ADA1 (2-18)