What is Differential Response?

- Focuses less on investigative fact finding and more on assessing and ensuring child safety
- Seeks safety through family engagement and collaborative partnerships
- Allows and encourages agencies to provide services without formal determination of abuse or neglect

States with Differential Response

Two Pathway Systems

Purpose of QIC-DR Project

- Improve child welfare outcomes by implementing DR, and build cutting edge, innovative, and replicable knowledge about DR
- Enhance capacity at local level to improve outcomes for children and families identified for suspected abuse or neglect
- Provide guidance on best practices in differential response
QIC-DR Highlights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase I</th>
<th>Phase II</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Developed</td>
<td>3-5 R &amp; D projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>QIC Products Created</td>
<td>Up to 4 Dissertations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation Awards</td>
<td>Process, Outcome, and Impact Evaluation of R &amp; D sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>Announced</td>
<td>Cross-site Evaluation</td>
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- QIC operation throughout both phases
- Knowledge gained during both phases contributes to the achievement of QIC purpose

Highlights of Phase I Activities

- Literature Review
- Interviews and Focus Groups
- Information Summits
- Listening Sessions
- Online State Survey and Report
- CFSR/PIP Analysis
- Legal Issue Brief
- Legislative Analysis
- National Advisory Committee Meetings

Phase I Research: Legal

- Legal Literature Review
- Legal and Judicial Focus Groups
- Legal Issue Brief

Focus Group Themes

- Lack of understanding of what DR is
- Limited collaboration with legal community
- Lack of oversight and transparency
- Concerns over Due Process violations
  - Coercion and temporary removals
  - Inability to challenge agency decisions
  - Lack of informed consent
- Exposed need for community buy-in and education for judges and attorneys on DR approach

Legal Issue Brief

- Areas of focus:
  - substantive and procedural due process
  - equal protection
  - 4th Amendment
  - federal statutory based rights of parents and children
  - state-based negligence and other claims by parents and children
Legal Issue Brief: Findings & Implications for DR

There are a handful of cases that provide some legal guidance when implementing DR:

These cases hold that ‘voluntary’ safety plans do not violate parent’s due process rights. These plans were:
- Implemented during investigation (not DR, but relevant)
- Often included temporary removal of the child
- Safety plan forms noted possibility of change in agency direction
- In some instances, caseworkers threatened or coerced families into submission


Legal Issue Brief: Findings & Implications for DR

State negligence cases challenging agencies’ failure to investigate also show that many cases turn on whether state statute creates a duty of care to investigate instead of DR:

- Is DR in statute or policy?
- If in statute, is the practice mandatory? Optional?
- How prescriptive is the statute in outlining particular outcomes?


Research Foci

What are the key questions?

Research Question #1

**Child Welfare Outcomes – Safety**

Are children whose families participate in the non-investigation pathway as safe as or safer than children whose families participate in the investigation pathway?

Research Question #2

**Cost**

What are the cost and funding implications to the child protection agency of the implementation and maintenance of a Differential Response approach?
Research Question #3

**DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE APPROACH**

*How is the non-investigation pathway different from the investigation pathway in terms of family engagement, caseworker practice and services provided?*

**Plans for Doctoral Dissertations**

**Dissertation Research on Differential Response**

- Three to four dissertation projects
  - Competitive RFA to be announced by October 2009
  - Two-year grants at $25,000 per year
  - Applications reviewed and recommendations from the Academic Scholars Panel (ASP)
- Support
  - Technical assistance for applicants provided by QIC-DR team and ASP
  - ASP will advise students and their dissertation committee members
- Focus on cutting edge research issues related to Differential Response
- Use of QIC-collected site data desirable but not mandatory
- Funding support provided directly to recipient

**Some Possible Research Areas**

- Analysis of DR law and policy across states
- Secondary analysis of administrative data regarding DR at national or state levels
- Evaluation of DR implementation in connection with DR initiatives funded by the QIC-DR
- Research regarding fundamental infrastructure associated with DR implementation
  - Assessment protocols,
  - Worker and supervisory decision making,
  - Information technology,
  - Studies addressing services
- Outcome-based cost-effectiveness evaluation of DR
- Analysis of the connections between DR and child welfare disparities
- Fidelity scale construction
- Other research consistent with the research objectives of the QIC-DR

**Eligibility**

- Doctoral-level graduate students enrolled in accredited institutions of higher education
- Demonstrated academic excellence
- Enrolled in a doctoral program in social work, psychology, sociology, or other related programs
- Currently hold a master’s degree
- Have an approved dissertation proposal

**Timelines for Submission**

- FFY 2010 applications submitted before:
  - January 15, 2010
  - July 1, 2010
- FFY 2010 applications submitted before:
  - January 15, 2011
  - July 1, 2011
Plans for Research and Demonstration Sites and Cross-Site Evaluation

Purpose of the Evaluation
- Strengthen the Knowledge Base to Guide the Future Development of DR

Research and Demonstration Sites
- Three to five sites
- Competitive RFA to be released in August 2009
- 42 month projects (starting January 2010)
- Average Award per site:
  - Years 1 & 4: $290,625
  - Years 2 & 3: $387,500
- Applications externally reviewed and selected with NAC input
- Support from QIC-DR project staff including technical assistance, readiness trainings, site meetings and local evaluator training

Eligibility
- State, region, county, or tribe with authority to respond to reported cases of child abuse and neglect in their jurisdictions
- Consortiums of small to mid-size counties welcome
- Will accept applications with ability to conduct valid and reliable evaluation

Closing