



What is a Plan of Safe Care?

You and your worker will create a Plan of Safe Care for both you and your newborn. The plan must include services that address health and substance use treatment needs.

A newborn's plan may include:

- Infant development services
- Parenting education information
- Home visiting

A parent's plan may include:

- Help finding safe housing
- Social, recovery and parenting supports
- Help managing stress and building coping skills
- Referral to financial assistance programs

For more information about North Dakota's Alternative Response Assessment process, contact your Human Service Zones office.

Contact information is online at:
www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv/



SAFE CHILDREN – **STRONG, SUPPORTED FAMILIES**

A Guide to Child Protection Services' Alternative Response Assessment

Partnering with families to safely care for substance exposed newborns in their own homes and communities





What is an Alternative Response Assessment?

Alternative response assessment is a second option for responding to reports of substance exposed newborns.

An alternative response assessment wraps supports and services around substance exposed newborns and parents if the parents want to work towards recovery from substance use while keeping their newborn safe at home.

When Human Service Zones receive a report that a newborn has been affected by drug use (legal or illegal), has symptoms of withdrawal from a substance (legal or illegal), or has a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, human services is required by law to complete an assessment.

Parents who qualify can choose either an alternative response assessment or a standard child protection services assessment.



How can an Alternative Response Assessment help my family?

- Identifies the family's strengths and needs
- Addresses health and substance use treatment needs
- Helps connect families to services and supports
- Enhances parenting skills through education and training
- Ensures the newborn's safety and well-being in the home



How does it work?

A child protection worker will meet with you to assess your health and substance use treatment needs. You and your worker will discuss and plan for your newborn's safety. You will invite people who do not abuse substances to be a part of your plan as safety supports. Your worker will help you find services that meet your family's needs as you work toward recovery.

Together, you and your worker will create a Plan of Safe Care to ensure the safety and well-being of your newborn.



What are my choices?

- While Human Service Zones are required by law to assess reports concerning substance (drugs or alcohol) exposed newborns, you can choose to participate in an alternative response assessment or a standard child protection services assessment.
- In an alternative response assessment, you select service providers and engage family, friends, and community members as resources to help meet your family's needs.

If you choose an alternative response assessment, your newborn remains at home as long as he or she is kept safely away from the use of drugs or alcohol, and you are participating in recovery services.

In either type of assessment, if a newborn is unsafe due to drug use, lack of supervision, abuse or neglect, etc., Human Service Zones must respond to assure the safety of the newborn, including removing the newborn from the home if necessary.

