

Child Welfare Screening

In Oregon, there are 15 child abuse screening lines for 16 Child Welfare districts. This means reports involving abuse and neglect of children receive a regional response depending on their geography. In 2014, a total of 67,863 reports of abuse/neglect were received. The regional office determines disposition of the report including closed at the screening level, assessment or the decision for family support. There are advantages and disadvantages to having a semi-local number to report abuse and neglect. It is beneficial for Oregon to investigate the pros and cons of moving to a centralized screening system.

The benefits of centralized screening include;

- One point of entry for all reports of suspected abuse and neglect for children
- Ensures consistency in receipt and documentation of reports for Child Protective Services (CPS)
- Provides consistency in evaluation and decision making related to assignment
- Training and Quality Assurance is built into the unit and provides ongoing support and the potential for continuous program improvement
- Promotes collaboration among staff and community partners

One of the biggest barriers to overcome when developing a centralized screening system is creating trusting and open relationships among staff and community partners.

A recommendation from a prior Critical Incident Team report was to look into the possibility of centralized screening. Due to a number of factors, at the time, it was not possible to move forward with the creation of a centralized screening system. With the implementation of Differential Response, it is again clear to the department that some method is needed to insure fidelity to the DR model, especially now that there is a category of families that would have interaction with the department, but would not have a dispositional finding at the end of the assessment. Insuring the right families are put into the right track is critical to the success of the model and that decision is made at the screening level.

In the Governor's 2015-17 requested budget resources were included to conduct a feasibility study for centralized screening. These resources were not approved, however the department has committed other resources to do the feasibility study with the goal of making a recommendation to the Governor for 2017 session

