

Due to the large number of reports alleging abuse or neglect of children in South Carolina, in January 2012 SCDSS added two additional methods for processing Child Protective Services reports, resulting in a four-tiered plan: (1) if the report alleges that the safety of the child is at risk, DSS conducts an investigation (DSS investigations); (2) if the report does not meet the criteria for investigation, it is not accepted (Screened out/ Not investigated); (3) NEW - if the report sounds like the family needs support but the allegations are not serious, the report is sent to a Family Strengthening Services (FSS) contractor for follow-up (previously, most of these reports would have been screened out); and (4) NEW – if the report sounds like the family definitely needs assistance but the SAFETY of the child(ren) is NOT compromised, the report is referred to a Voluntary Case Management (VCM) contractor. DSS intake staff use the structured Appropriate Response Tool to assess of safety and risk for all the children to guide them in determining which of the 4 options above is the best route for ensuring the safety and well-being of the children in the reported family.

