



**NYC** | **CARES**  
Children Collaborative Assessment,  
Response, Engagement & Support

150 William Street New York, NY 10038

### Contact numbers

**CARES CPS Name:**

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Contact Information\Mobile

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Email

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Office Address:

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**CARES CPS Supervisors Name:**

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Contact Information\Mobile

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Email

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**CARES CPS Managers Name:**

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Contact Information\Mobile

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Email

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**We Can Help  
Your Family**

**ACS's Family Assessment  
Response program**

# How Can We Help Your Family?

Getting involved with NYC's Administration for Children's Services (ACS) can be intimidating and confusing for families. While there are many ways to access ACS services, you have become involved because somebody made a report to the state regarding a safety concern about your child or children. In response to the concern, ACS will assign a Collaborative Assessment, Response, Engagement & Support Child Protective Specialist (CPS) to meet with you if you are interested.

You and your CARES CPS will discuss the situation, as well as the events and actions that may have caused this situation, to determine the best ways to protect the safety of you and your child. Your CARES CPS will ask you about your family's strengths and challenges and how you can work together to address any needs or safety concerns. Together you will create a plan with child-centered, family-focused, and strength-based solutions to keep your child or children safe. If there are no serious or immediate risks of harm to your child or children, you can choose to accept or refuse the services offered. In CARES, ACS's Family Assessment Response program, no determination is made about the report of concern so there is no indication or unfounded report on your record.

## OUR GOAL IS TO WORK WITH YOU BY:

### Engaging

Establishing common goals to assess and promote your child's or children's safety, well-being and permanency.

### Partnering

Developing respectful and meaningful connections with your family to achieve shared goals.

### Assessing

Gathering information about your family's strengths and needs.

### Planning

Developing strategies, outlining tasks and setting goals with you.

### Implementing

Identifying and applying the most effective services and resources for your family.

### Evaluating

Monitoring outcomes of service plans and programs to see if they meet the desired goals for your family.

### Advocating

Providing intervention for your family to get needed resources from other groups or organizations.

### Demonstrating Cultural & Diversity Competence

Learning and honoring your family's diversity within and across cultures.

### Communicating

Effectively sending and receiving information through various methods.

### Collaborating

Maintaining mutually beneficial and well-defined relationships.

## CARES - Collaborative Assessment, Response, Engagement & Support

NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) has two options for responding when the State accepts reports of child abuse and neglect: a Traditional Response pathway and a Collaborative Assessment, Response, Engagement & Support (CARES) pathway. Both pathways allow ACS CARES CPS staff to address

the unique safety concerns, risks and strengths of each family, in a way that is collaborative and respectful. In both cases, the primary goal is child safety.

No formal determination/finding about the report is made for CARES cases.

## CARES Response to Child Safety Concerns

Receiving a phone call or visit from Children's Services can be frightening to families, especially when families are already struggling with stressful issues and challenges.

We understand that families may feel shame, fear or anger at being reported. We also understand that

families may feel threatened by the possibility of government intervention in their lives.

It is important for ACS to quickly assist families to help to keep children safe and families supported. Collaborative Assessment, Response, Engagement & Support (CARES) offers this possibility.

## Why use CARES?

CARES is based on the belief that parents love their children, want them to be safe, and want to grow together as a family. Sometimes parents may need help to make that happen. CARES can provide that help. Some parents struggle with keeping their children safe.

When this happens, Children's Services must respond by conducting a thorough assessment and investigation to assess and promote child safety. CARES is an alternative response open to all but the most serious reports of child abuse and neglect.

## Two Pathways to Help Ensure Child Safety

### Traditional Response

- ➔ Always required for reports of sexual abuse, abuse resulting in serious injury, and whenever children are determined to be in serious and immediate risk of harm
- ➔ May involve court intervention
- ➔ Will result in a determination/finding about the allegation

### CARES

- ➔ Used when reports of abuse or neglect do not allege serious or imminent harm
- ➔ Involves safety-focused partnerships with families
- ➔ Does not result in a determination/finding about the allegation