

Protective Authority Continuum

Protective Authority is the application of helping and/or coercive strategies that result in family accepting child welfare intervention. Effective family engagement leading to the assurance of child safety, reduction of risk of maltreatment, promotion of well-being and timely permanence.

Protective Authority can be viewed on a continuum that includes the least intrusive, most helpful strategies at the low end and the most intrusive strategies at the high end including police intervention, court ordered removal of a child and court termination of parental rights. The keys to effective use of protective authority are balance and flexibility. Balance involves using the least intrusive form of protective authority necessary to achieve client acceptance of intervention and effective engagement. Flexibility is the ability and commitment of the worker to adjust the level of protective authority higher or lower based on case requirements and client response.

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