

RISK ASSESSMENT QUALITIES

RISK ASSESSMENT:

- Is an attempt to translate knowledge of likelihood of abuse/neglect into a hypothesis of maltreatment that may occur in the future.
- Is an attempt to improve objectivity through the use of standard tools (*i.e.*, matrices, checklists, etc.)
- Is a means to provide structure for information gathering.
- Provides a standardized pool of data.
- Is a way in which to make distinctions among types of, degrees of, and potential for future child maltreatment.
- Provides a informed basis for the allocation of limited resources.
- Provides a philosophical framework for children and youth services.
- Is prediction-oriented; and, is therefore prevention-focused.
- Directs worker attention to factors that place children at risk of future maltreatment when performing a comprehensive assessment.
- Identifies cases, in situations when risk of serious harm does not exist, where the family might be better-served by other community agencies.
- Serves as a training guide for new staff and other community professionals involved in case assessment.
- Provides a standardized method of recording the outcome of an investigation.
- Provides an objective basis for case planning, case closing, and/or other decisions.
- Beyond (or absent) safety plans, establishes the degree of intervention necessary as well as the services that would best suit the needs of the family and the level of intervention needed (*i.e.*, most-intrusive response used in the high-risk cases).
- Provides a comparative means to reassess risk throughout the life of the case.

RISK ASSESSMENT CANNOT:

- Address present or impending danger.
- Substitute for professional decision-making.
- Provide a complete standardized pool of information on which to assess all families.
- Be confused with treatment of child abuse and neglect.
- Be used as a means to exclude appropriate requests for agency service.
- Substitute for training/knowledge and skill deficiencies.