

Family Team Meeting Information for Service Providers and Participants

A Family Team Meeting (FTM) is a gathering of family members, friends, community resource representatives, and other interested people who join together to strengthen a family, brainstorm ideas to assist the family in reaching goals, and develop a protection and care plan for the children. Family Team Meetings evolve from the way that families form a natural helping system to meet needs and solve problems. The Family Team Meeting is often the forum in which the child and family team comes together to help the family craft, implement, or change the Individualized Course of Action (ICA).

The Family Team- Families need help in times of crisis and stress, so they draw together people whom they trust and who can help in responding to the issues they face. Almost everyone can identify a time when they formed a team, sometimes involving professional helpers, to meet a specific need. Likewise, most people who have drawn a team around them are willing to become contributors to such a team or circle of friends.

A Facilitator/ Coordinator will set up the Family Team Meeting by having met with the family, speaking with invited participants and service providers. Arranging for a meeting place, inviting the participants, and sharing information with the participants as to the focus of the FTM. The facilitator/ coordinator will also provide participants with Consent for Information Exchange signed by the family if necessary. It is also the facilitator's job to facilitate/ coordinate the actual FTM.

The Family Team Meeting will be held at a safe and neutral location. The average length of the FTM is approximately 2 hours. During the meeting the family will indicate the goal (s) that will be worked on and have a chance to tell their 'story'. Then the group will brainstorm family strengths, *needs and concerns*, and resources that may help meet the goals. (It is important that the participants be open and honest with information relevant to the families situation and identify their concerns and needs at the meeting during the time in which needs and concerns are discussed). A strategic plan that everyone agrees to will be devised from the information gathered and each participant will receive a copy of the plan. Within 30 to 60 Days a Follow-up FTM should be held to review progress and additional goals and needs. Any team member can contact the Facilitator/Coordinator to begin the follow up process.

To be prepared for the FTM each participant should come prepared to share family strengths, needs and concerns that they have noted, and ideas on resources to meet the needs and goals for the family. *It is imperative that while we remain strength based, we also agree to be honest and open during the Family Team Meeting.

If you have questions, the best person to contact is the facilitator/coordinator of the Family Team Meeting.