

Family Partnership Meetings

Insuring safety and quality decision making
through collaboration



Why Family Partnership Meetings?

- Child and Family Services Review
- Practice deficiency in the area of Family Engagement
- Review of research and successes in other states
- Recommendations from CORE



Family Engagement

A structured and deliberate approach to partnering with families. Family engagement recognizes that:

- ❑ All families have strengths;
- ❑ Families are the experts on themselves;
- ❑ Families deserve to be treated with dignity and respect;
- ❑ Families can make well-informed decisions about keeping their children safe when supported;
- ❑ Outcomes improve when families are involved in decision-making; and
- ❑ A team is often more capable of creative and high-quality decision-making than an individual.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS



A deliberate and structured approach to involving youth and families in decision-making through a facilitated meeting of family, their identified supports, and professionals working with the family.



Family Partnership Meetings

- Purpose -A team collaboratively develops ideas and establishes a decision for the child or family throughout the family's involvement with the agency
- Structure- A meeting facilitated by a trained individual that is not the social worker for the child or family



Critical Decision Points: When Should Family Partnership Meetings Occur?

- ❑ High or Very High Risk Assessment
- ❑ Emergency or Considered Removal
- ❑ Prior to Change of Placement
- ❑ Prior to Change of Goal
- ❑ At the request of the parent, foster parent, or social worker, if connected to one of the other decision points



What is the role of the facilitator?

- Focus the group on an identified task
- Move the group through the problem solving decision-making process
- Strive to develop a consensus with all participants, but always consistent with agency policy



Who attends the meeting?

- ❑ Parents
- ❑ Child, if age appropriate
- ❑ Relatives
- ❑ Friends or relevant supports identified by the family
- ❑ Caregivers for the child
- ❑ Professionals involved with the family
- ❑ Relevant community partners



Family engagement requires...

- A shift in the belief that agencies alone know what is best for children and families
- Allowing the family to fully participate in decision-making
- Using straight talk to communicate with others
- Diligent Search



Family engagement is not...

- ❑ A service/treatment planning meeting where services have been pre-determined
- ❑ A forum for pretrial discovery
- ❑ Minimizing valid concerns for safety
- ❑ An additional CPS investigation or foster care hearing



Benefits of Family Engagement

- ❑ Shared decision-making
- ❑ Family more likely to comply with a plan they helped to develop
- ❑ Prevent kids from coming into foster care
- ❑ More relative and community placements



How do we improve?

As an agency, ask yourself the hard questions...

How are families involved in case planning?

Are we involving all families?

Are we doing the best we can for children and families?

How are we communicating with our community partners?



How do we improve?

It is vital that fathers and paternal relatives are invited to FPMs

❑ Fathers and paternal relatives can provide additional information

❑ Fathers and paternal relatives may also be an additional resource for support or placement



How do we improve?

Track and Monitor Data

- ❑ Monitor the number of FPMs occurring
- ❑ Track the decision points used for FPMs
- ❑ Track who is attending i.e. mothers, maternal relatives, fathers, paternal relatives and/or agency and community partners
- ❑ Track the outcomes of the FPMs i.e. if the child was placed and/or what services were provided



How do we improve?

Track Satisfaction with:

- Community Partners
- Other professional staff like GALs
- Child Welfare Workers
- Family Members

Quotes on process...

- GAL: I felt this was different as a GAL as it was more comprehensive and goal directed. Important for everyone to be apart of the decision making.
- Child: This is better than other places. Nothing to change. I think it was performed at a high level of productivity.
- Mother: It helps give understanding, answers to questions, nonjudgmental and very fair. I think this is very productive the environment is very safe comfortable and equally fair.
- Uncle (maternal): Better food and beverage. I prefer root beer and pizza.
- Grandmother. We are all in agreement for the best plan for the child.
- Father: The process was explained by the CPS worker. Everyone expressed concerns. The goal was made very clear, I hope child listened. Everyone spoke it was great to hear thoughts. Everyone has an objective and plan to carry out with concerns of child, grandchild, and parent. We made a good choice.
- Mother: Questions were answered. It is a relief to understand.



Resources

- **VDSS Web Page- Family Engagement Tool Kit**
<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/fe.cgi>

- **Promising Practices in Family Engagement (2006-2011)**
http://www.nrcpfc.org/webcasts/archives/21/Meaningful_Family_Engagement%20Bibliography.pdf

Includes titles such as:

- Engaging Parents as Partners
- Engaging Fathers in Child and Family Services
- Engaging Parents: Innovative Approaches in Child Welfare

Resources~ *continued*

□ **The Child Welfare Information Gateway**

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/famcentered/caseworkpractice/>

Includes topics such as:

- Family Engagement A Web-Based Practice Tool Kit
- Engaging Clients from a Strengths-Based Solution Focused Perspective
- Engaging Families
- Growing and Sustaining Parent Engagement
- The Importance of Family Engagement in CWS
- Working with Families Right From the Start
- Expanding the Family Circle

Resources~ *continued*

- **CWPPG Newsletter**

 - Family Team Conferencing**

 - http://www.childwelfaregroup.org/documents/Vol2_Issue1.pdf

 - Engaging Children, Youth and Families**

 - http://www.childwelfaregroup.org/documents/Vol1_Issue2.pdf

- **Children's Bureau Family Engagement**

 - https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/f_fam_engagement/f_fam_engagement.pdf



For Additional Information

Visit <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/fe.cgi>
or contact

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