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.
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**


  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/](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
  Engaging Children, Youth and Families
  http://www.childwelfaregroup.org/documents/Vol1_Issue2.pdf

- Children’s Bureau Family Engagement
For Additional Information

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