FAMILY PARTNERSHIP MEETING IMPLEMENTATION: SOME ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN PLANNING

- **ASSESS EXISTING PROCESSES**: Review all current ‘family team’ or other collaborative processes, assess for potential redundancy, blend where possible, delete, if appropriate – streamline! Create a continuum that makes sense to families and is efficient for staff and others.

- **DECIDE ON SEQUENCING OF IMPLEMENTATION**: If unable to implement for all types of placement-related decision making, prioritize: perhaps implement in one geographical area at a time, or implement everywhere but with phased-in meeting types (i.e., first all removal meetings, then all change of placements, then reunifications, etc.)

- **GATHER DATA**: To determine how many facilitators needed, how many meetings, etc.: Must know how many removals per month (plus how many near-removals which could be prevented by a team meeting); also how many changes of placement; how many reunifications; how many other permanency decisions (i.e. TPR, guardianship, etc.)

- **LOGISTICS**: Rooms for meetings, child care, security, communication of available meeting slots to after hours staff, invitations to family members at point of emergency removal, etc.

- **SUPPORT NEEDS**: Telephone scheduler, automated scheduling system, inviter of community representatives, etc.

- **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**: Who might attend on behalf of family’s home neighborhood? How to invite them?

- **POLICY CHANGES**: How to ensure no child is removed (or moved, or reunified, etc.) without a family partnership meeting? Accountability mechanisms, mandatory attendees, checks & balances, clarity re: who has authority to make decisions on behalf of agency, review of a decision process, etc. Also may necessitate changes in contracts with private foster care providers.

- **AGENCY CULTURE CHANGE**: Need a plan for staff to learn more about FEM, its underlying values, connection to CORE outcomes, etc. Allow staff to participate in planning.
• **COURT ORIENTATION**: Be sure to share plans with Court, reassure them of how FEM will complement the work of the Court, etc.

• **TRAINING PLANS**: Not only for facilitators. All staff and external participants need readiness training/orientation to understand process and their role in it. (Don’t forget private foster care providers, other public and private agencies with whom agency partners, et al.)

• **DECISIONS ON ATTORNEY PARTICIPATION**: Consider pros/cons.

Adapted from Annie E. Casey Foundation
Family to Family Initiative