

Quick Guide to Planning an Family Team Meeting

PREPARATION STEPS

- 1. Review files & discuss case w/ DHS Social Worker or other Lead Worker:** touch on key elements such as: family sets goals, but review w/ SW their ideas on which goals the family may be likely to identify for the meeting; family decides who is invited (except DHS & corrections are necessary parties); identification of service providers and informal supports; meeting is family focused & strength based; meeting is way to mobilize family's resources, help them get "organized", focus on a do-able number of goals; a written strategic plan (action steps, time frames, who's responsible, etc.) is produced.
- 2. Meet with the "Key Adult"** (the person who would be calling the meeting – usually one or both parents; perhaps a relative custodian) to offer the option of having a Family Team Meeting (this type of meeting can not be convened by DHS or others, only by the family). Explain Family Team Conferencing and assist key adult in identifying how they might use a Family Team Meeting. Key adult will identify goal(s) of the Family Team Meeting (1 - 2 usually work best). Key adult will develop the invitation list w/ your counsel (especially encourage them to invite informal support persons – relatives, friends, church, etc. – and people who have knowledge of their situation or who play a key role (even if they may not be on best terms at this time). Discuss how key adult can prepare for and participate in the Family Team Meeting.
- 3. Schedule a date and** time for the Family Team Meeting, with the convenience of the family and invitees being the priority.
- 4. Contact the people on the invitation list** (key adult may contact invitees in addition to your more formal invitation). This contact is not only to invite them to the Family Team Meeting but also to help them prepare to participate in the meeting by thinking about: the family's strengths; what the family needs to achieve its goals; concerns; what role they may be able to take in assisting the family in meeting its goals. Contact w/ individual invitees may be by phone, letter, face-face meeting or any combination of those methods. Some invitees have participated in Family Team Meetings before and need less preparation. Other invitees, especially informal support persons, are best prepared for participation via face-face discussion.
- 5. Reserve a room** for the Family Team Meeting. Try to hold the meeting in a location that will be comfortable for the family and is reasonably convenient to travel to. The DHS building is usually not used for Family Team Meetings.
- 6. Transportation/Child Care.** Determine if family members will need help in getting to the Family Team Meeting or child care. Offer to help them make reliable transportation plans or arrange for appropriate child care.

7. Refreshments. Some form of food and beverage should be provided. If the meeting is at or near a mealtime, arrange for more substantial fare. If not at a mealtime, arrange for snacks such as fruits, pretzels, etc. Bottled water, soda and fruit juices have been popular beverages. Remember napkins or paper towels, paper plates, etc. Possible sources for food/refreshments include local businesses that would like to donate; church groups; community volunteers.

8. Arrange for a co-facilitator. Also bring an easel w/ poster size pad, markers, sign-in sheet (which includes confidentiality statement) and a basic agenda form. Arrive at the meeting location early enough to prepare the room.

9. Facilitate the Family Team Meeting. *Leave the room in good condition when the meeting is over!*

10. Write up the Plan from the meeting immediately afterwards and distribute copies to all persons in attendance.

11. Complete the “tracking form” if your location is collecting data.

[Revised for generic use on 06/20/2002]