

Family Team Decision Meetings

In an effort to work with families more effectively, DCFS has developed a new process to involve families in the planning for their children's safety and well being.

The purpose of holding a **Family Team Decision Making Meeting (FTDM)** is to encourage families to assist in placement decisions that affect their children and to involve a broad representation of individuals to share in the decision making process. The goal is to develop a plan that will provide the safest and most appropriate placement for children while preventing unnecessary moves and encouraging continued family involvement.

Increasing parents' involvement in decisions regarding their children is the primary purpose of a Family Team Decision Making Meeting. A FTDM Meeting includes birth parents and youth (when appropriate), and is held for ALL decisions in the following circumstances:

Initial placement: When a child is assessed at high risk for abuse/neglect or within 24-72 hours of an emergency placement/removal. The purpose of the FTDM Meeting in this situation is to decide if:

- The agency must file for dependency and facilitate placement
- The child can remain in their home with a safety/service plan in place
- The child should be voluntarily placed by parent(s) with a safety/service plan in place

Change of placement: Prior to child being moved from one placement to another to decide if:

- The child can remain in the current placement, possibly with additional supports and/or services
- The child must move to another placement, then: why, where, when and with what services

Reunification/other permanency plan: A FTDM Meeting is held prior to reunification/transfer of legal custody to decide if:

- ◆ The child can safely return to family home
- To develop an alternative permanent plan if child cannot return to family home

Who should attend?

In addition to the assigned social worker and their supervisor, the following persons should be invited to attend when appropriate:

Parents, child (12 and over), Relatives/Supports, Current Caregivers (i.e. Foster Parents), Community Partners, Service Providers, and GAL.