

## Overview of Family-Focused Meetings (FFMs)

Family Focused Meetings (FFMs)	
<b>Foundation</b>	<p>FFMs are a formal family engagement strategy to work toward solutions. Families are best served when they are actively engaged and their voices are heard, valued, and considered with regard to decision.</p> <p>A Family Focused Meeting (FFM) is a way for the family to work together with DHS to make plans and decisions about how to help the family. It draws upon a family’s strengths, experiences, knowledge, and resources that provides for the safety and well-being of children in the family.</p> <p>Family Focused Meetings support families through change in several ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying parents’ readiness to change;</li> <li>2. Developing plans that support parents through each stage of the change process;</li> <li>3. Ensuring family voice is a primary driver of change; and</li> <li>4. The primary safety concerns remain forefront of discussions so that families know what needs to be accomplished.</li> </ol>
<b>Definition</b>	<p>“Family Focused Meeting” or “FFM” means a gathering of family members, friends, formal and informal supports, with the assistance of the meeting facilitator, to draw on past successes of the family in problem solving and work in partnership with the family to enhance the safety of children. Motivational Interviewing, family engagement and relapse prevention strategies will be utilized in the facilitation of the meeting.</p>
<b>Purpose/Goal Outcome</b>	<p>Family Focused Meetings bring the family together with their formal and informal supports to address safety, permanency, and well-being for the children.</p> <p>During the initial Family Focused Meeting, HHS and FCS meet with the family to address immediate needs and begin talking with the family about goals for the case. The goal of this meeting is to support the family in identifying initial steps to begin stabilizing the family and working toward case plan goals.</p> <p>During the comprehensive Family Focused Meeting, the family and their supports gather with HHS and FCS to celebrate the family’s early successes, identify additional strengths upon which to build, and continue to discuss next steps. The family’s goals are formalized into a plan that sets out objectives and activities the family and their supports will complete collaboratively to achieve positive outcomes.</p>

<p><b>Preparation</b></p>	<p>The initial FFM is to support the development of a positive, trusting working relationship with the family. Preparation for the comprehensive FFM begins at the initial meeting and continues until the comprehensive meeting is held. The facilitator learns more about the family and their strengths through preparation. The purposes of the comprehensive meeting will be identified during the preparation process.</p>
<p><b>Confidentiality/ Privacy</b></p>	<p>Creating a safe environment in which personal information may be shared without fear of re-dissemination is a critical element in building trust and openness. The facilitator discusses privacy and confidentiality with the family and all participants during the preparatory phase and at the meetings. All team members must sign a confidentiality agreement before participating in the comprehensive meeting. The facilitator explains the importance of privacy and confidentiality at the start of the meeting and again at conclusion.</p>

<p><b>Meeting Outline</b></p>	<p>Facilitators adhere to a meeting outline. However, there is flexibility based on the identified goal of the meeting.</p> <p>Warm Handoff/Initial Family Focused Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introductions</li> <li>▪ Level Setting/Ground Rules</li> <li>▪ Meeting Purpose</li> <li>▪ Safety Concerns</li> <li>▪ Strengths, Opportunities, Successes, Immediate Needs, and Barriers</li> <li>▪ Child Specific Needs</li> <li>▪ Family Interaction Plan discussion (if applicable)</li> <li>▪ Concurrent Planning</li> <li>▪ Planning for Comprehensive FFM</li> <li>▪ Safe Case Closure Overview</li> </ul> <p>Comprehensive Family Focused Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Welcome and introductions</li> <li>▪ Meeting purpose</li> <li>▪ Initial reason for involvement and how safety was assured</li> <li>▪ Family voice (safety concerns from family’s perspective)</li> <li>▪ Family Interaction planning discussion (if applicable)</li> <li>▪ Family Strengths, Services, and Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Current Plan</li> <li>• Next Steps</li> <li>• Genogram review (with consent of the family)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Child Well-Being</li> <li>▪ Family Input on how to address risks and safety concerns</li> <li>▪ Goals and Action Steps (Who does What by When)</li> <li>▪ Crisis Plan</li> <li>▪ Concurrent Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of relatives/fictive kin options if children are not in kin/fictive kin care</li> <li>• Inquire about ICWA/gather information if possible tribal association has been identified</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<p><b>Life of Case Junctures</b></p>	<p>FFMs are facilitated at the following junctures during the life of the Case on open Agency Child Welfare Service Cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Warm handoff- no facilitator attends</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive FFM (within 45-60 calendar days from the date of referral).</li> <li>▪ Upon Family request</li> <li>▪ Six months from the date of referral to services</li> <li>▪ 12 months from the date of referral to services and every six months the case remains open</li> <li>▪ Prior to case closure</li> </ul> <p>In addition, FFMs may be facilitated when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ when HHS determines that an FFM is needed to address child safety;</li> <li>▪ when the family needs the assistance of others to achieve next steps with their Case Plan;</li> <li>▪ the opportunities arise to recognize and celebrate change and identify what is left to accomplish.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Length of Meeting</b></p>	<p>The length of the meeting depends on the goal of the meeting. Typically, warm handoff meetings will be around 30-45 minutes in length and comprehensive FFMs will be 60-90 minutes in length.</p>
<p><b>Documentation</b></p>	<p>The Family Support Specialist completes the Initial FFM Notes and provides to their agency's FFM meeting facilitator. The facilitator then uses those notes to complete prep work for the comprehensive FFM.</p> <p>The FFM facilitator completes the Comprehensive FFM Notes and provides to the HHS worker and all team members within five business days from the date of the meeting.</p>