



Handout 5.1: UNDERLYING BELIEFS GUIDING FAMILY MEETINGS

- Respect for the integrity of the family unit and extended family
- Respect for diverse cultures and the ability to maximize cultural competence
- Children need continuity in their family relationships for their healthy growth and development
- Best outcomes for children come from the sharing of power between the state and family
- Opportunities for parents to feel responsible for their children and themselves
- Crisis as Opportunity and Motivator for Change
- Families have strengths that can be tapped to make positive changes
- People can change with the right education and support



Handout 5.2: PHASES OF FAMILY MEETINGS

- PRE-PLANNING ACTIVITIES
- BEGINNINGS
- MIDDLES
- ENDINGS
- POST-MEETING *events and follow-through*



Handout 5.3: FAMILY MEETINGS: EMERGING CONSIDERATIONS

- How is a ‘family meeting’ defined?
- What are the varying purposes of family meetings?
- When in the life of the case should family meetings be held?
- Who will facilitate the family meetings?
- Who should attend?
- Where should family meetings be held?
- How will confidentiality be protected?
- How will self-determination be promoted?



Handout 5.4: FAMILY MEETING: PRE-PLANNING

- Concern about immediate safety of the child
- Obtaining consent for the meeting from birth parents
- Defining the family
- Explaining the purpose and the process
- Inviting family members and service providers
- Involving offenders and children (preparing statements in advance)
- Soliciting the views of those not attending
- Defining and clarifying participants’ roles
- Coordinating the logistics (date, time, space, transportation, food, supervision of children, etc.)



Handout 5.5: FAMILY MEETING: STAGES

Beginnings- Introduction

- Culturally relevant welcome (prayer, song, poem, silence)
- Reiteration of purpose and process
- Introduction of participants and their relationship to child
- Ground rules
- Agreement on the goal of conference
- Review of participants’ role

Middles - Information Sharing and Conflict Management

- Case social worker reviews/presents facts of the case – others share related information
- Focus on: Where are we? How did we get here? What are the strengths? What are the barriers to safety, permanency and well-being? What will happen next? When?
- Family members react and ask questions on what has been presented
- Family may meet alone to develop plan that protects/safeguards child, addresses placement/permanency options or options are reviewed together

Endings - Reaching a Decision

- Options and plans are outlined with family, agency and service providers’ reactions and input
- Details get specified: tasks/activities, timeframes and consequences
- Resources are planned and supported
- Follow-up activities are agreed to



Handout 5.6: CHECKLIST FOR FAMILY MEETINGS

(Adapted from materials developed by Dee Unterbach for NRCFCPP)

<p style="text-align: center;">Need for Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review Case History <input type="checkbox"/> Review Reason for Referral/Cause for Allegations <input type="checkbox"/> Determine Purpose or Goals for Holding Family Meeting 	<p style="text-align: center;">Purpose (Goals)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review goals with family <input type="checkbox"/> Allow for reactions or expression of feeling <input type="checkbox"/> Elicit family input to plan of action 	<p style="text-align: center;">Composition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Who should be involved? <input type="checkbox"/> How is “family” defined? <input type="checkbox"/> Which other family formal and informal supports should be there?
<p style="text-align: center;">Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Where will meeting be held? <input type="checkbox"/> When and how often in the life of the case will the meeting be held? <input type="checkbox"/> What time of day? <input type="checkbox"/> How much time will be needed? <input type="checkbox"/> What are the transportation needs? <input type="checkbox"/> What other logistics should be considered: i.e. food, cultural traditions? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What should content of agenda be? <input type="checkbox"/> Who will facilitate? <input type="checkbox"/> How should meeting be introduced? <input type="checkbox"/> What are the key issues that need to be addressed? <input type="checkbox"/> What are plans for when conflict arises, for case planning and for permanency options? 	<p style="text-align: center;">Pre-Meeting Contacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have all facts been compiled? <input type="checkbox"/> Have all relevant participants been contacted and prepared for what to expect? <input type="checkbox"/> Child, if age appropriate? <input type="checkbox"/> Parents? <input type="checkbox"/> Foster parents or other caregivers? <input type="checkbox"/> Other family members? <input type="checkbox"/> Other collateral parties?