

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 5: General Case Management	Effective Date: August 1, 2010
	Section 7: Child and Family Team Meetings	Version: 3

POLICY

[REVISED] The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will facilitate the Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting process with every family at critical junctures throughout the life of the case beginning during the assessment phase and continuing through case closure. DCS will utilize CFT Meetings to create plans for assessment, safety, service delivery, and permanency. A CFT Meeting may fulfill the requirement to hold a Case Plan Conference if all required parties are present. If a family chooses not to participate in the CFT Meeting process, a Case Plan Conference must be held to develop the [Case Plan \(SF 2956/DCS 0046\)](#). If the membership of the CFT does not include the resource parent or the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/Guardian ad Litem (GAL), who are mandatory parties to the development of the [Case Plan \(SF 2956/DCS 0046\)](#), a Case Plan Conference must be held in addition to the CFT Meeting. See separate policy, [5.8 Developing the Case Plan](#).

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will engage members of the CFT regarding the need for a CFT Meeting when critical junctures occur in the life of the case, including but not limited to:

1. **[NEW]** Assessing the need for and/or preventing removals;
2. Case transition or transfer (a CFT Meeting may suffice for the transition meeting). See separate policies, [5.1 Transitioning from Assessment](#) and [5.13 Transferring a Case](#);
3. Development of the Case Plan;
4. Prior to court or permanency hearings;
5. Determining or revising permanency goals;
6. **[NEW]** Safety and service planning;
7. **[NEW]** Identifying absent parents;
8. **[NEW]** Exploring placement options;
9. Change of placement;
10. At the request of any team member;
11. Case closure; and
12. **[NEW]** Any other time when convening a meeting would benefit child safety.

[NEW] DCS will convene a CFT Meeting for all youth in care at age 15 ½ to develop the [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#). See separate policy, [11.6 Independent Living/Transition Plan](#).

[NEW] Family Case Managers (FCMs) will utilize the GenoPro software in the development of a Family Network Diagram (Genogram and Ecomap) after gathering information about family and community connections during each CFT Meeting. See separate Tool Family Network Diagram Guide.

DCS will assess for the presence or concern of domestic violence prior to each CFT Meeting. If domestic violence is identified, DCS will take necessary actions to assure the safety of all members of the CFT. See [Tool 5.A: Domestic Violence and CFT Meeting Considerations](#).

Code References

1. [IC 31-34-15-5: Cooperation in Development of Case Plan](#)
2. [45 CFR 1356.21\(g\) Case plan requirements](#)

PROCEDURE

For cases where domestic violence has been identified, the FCM will:

1. Assess whether holding a CFT meeting with both parents present can be accomplished safely. See Practice Guidance;
2. Seek Supervisory input when determining how to involve the alleged domestic violence offender in the teaming process;
3. If there are safety concerns about having both parents present during the meeting, consider other options for having the alleged domestic violence offender involved in the meeting without being physically present; and
4. Include a domestic violence advocate or another domestic violence service provider(s) in meetings whenever possible.

Note: If a CFT Meeting is held with both the non-offending parent and the alleged domestic violence offender present, create a plan that addresses safety before, during, and after the meeting. This may include, but is not limited to: having the non-offending parent and alleged domestic violence offender arrive and leave the meeting at different times; having scheduled breaks throughout the meeting to evaluate the safety of all team members; etc. See [Tool 5.A: Domestic Violence and CFT Meeting Considerations](#).

The FCM will:

1. Utilize peer coaching to become qualified as a facilitator to lead a CFT Meeting. See [Engagement and Facilitating the Child and Family Team Meeting Participants Workbook](#);
2. **[NEW]** Explain the CFT process to the parent(s), guardian, or custodian(s). Document that this information has been provided to families;
3. **[NEW]** Utilize the [Authorization to Contact Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM\) Members \(CFTM110801ATC\)](#) form to determine the list of members to include in the CFT;

Note: The family may select all CFT members, except for DCS staff.

4. **[NEW]** Encourage the parent, guardian, or custodian to include the noncustodial parent, resource parent, and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) or Guardian ad Litem (GAL) as members of the CFT by explaining the benefits to case planning;
5. **[NEW]** Prepare the parent, guardian, or custodian, child (when appropriate), and other team members for the meeting;
6. **[NEW]** Send a [Confirmation Notice of a Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM 110801NOC\)](#) to all team members to notify them of an upcoming meeting;

7. **[NEW]** Coordinate and implement the CFT Meetings following the [Family Team Meeting Agenda](#);
8. **[NEW]** Ensure that all CFT members sign a [Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM\) Attendance and Confidentiality for Limited Use of Agreement for Access to Confidential Department of Child Services Client/Case Information \(CFTM110801\)](#) and the family understands the limits of the confidentiality of team members;

Note: Individuals who have not signed the form may not participate in a CFT Meeting or receive a copy of the CFT Meeting notes. Individuals are only required to sign this form one time.

9. **[NEW]** Gather essential family and community connections to reflect in the GenoPro software;
10. **[REVISED]** Ensure that individualized plans based on the family's personal goals are developed during the CFT Meeting to connect the family with the appropriate services and resources;
11. **[NEW]** Complete CFT Meeting notes. The Family Story is not included in the notes. If a safety concern is raised during the Family Story, a 'Contact' titled, "family story" must be entered in ICWIS and the information about the safety concern must be entered;

Note: All CFT Meeting notes must address current safety provisions

12. **[REVISED]** Ensure the CFT Meeting notes are distributed to all appropriate parties and entered in ICWIS within seven (7) calendar days of the CFT Meeting;

Note: Distribute CFT Meeting notes to the resource parent and CASA/GAL if they were not included as part of the CFT. **[NEW]** They do not need to request the notes, they must be sent automatically.

13. **[NEW]** Submit all CFT Meeting notes with each [Progress Report \(PermRptR1070108\)](#) to the court;
14. Contact the non-offending parent within 24 hours after the CFT Meeting, if domestic violence has been identified as a risk factor for the family and both parents were present at the CFT Meeting; and

Note: This contact will allow the FCM to assess any impact the CFT Meeting may have had on the non-offending parent and child(ren)'s safety. See [Tool 5.A: Child and Family Team Meeting Considerations](#) for more information.

15. Complete a home visit within three (3) calendar days of the CFT Meeting with the non-offending parent if domestic violence has been identified as a risk factor.

The Supervisor will:

1. Communicate appropriate expectations to the FCM;
2. Ensure FCM expectations are implemented;
3. Assess performance and provide feedback to the FCM;
4. Coach and provide ongoing support to the FCM;
5. Facilitate or co-facilitate CFT meetings as needed;

6. If CFT Meeting is held with both the non-offending parent and alleged domestic violence offender present, assist the FCM in creating a plan that addresses safety before, during, and after the CFT Meeting;
7. Attend all CFT Meetings where domestic violence has been identified as a risk factor;

Note: The assigned Supervisor may request that another Supervisor or management level employee attend the meeting.

8. Utilize data to improve practice; and
9. Utilize the Quality Service Review (QSR) to improve practice.

Note: For additional information regarding the role of the Supervisor, see [Case Practice Reform Goals and Expectations for Supervisors](https://myshare.in.gov/dcs/icwis/CasePracticeReform/Resources%20for%20Supervisors/Forms/AllItems.aspx) at the Indiana Practice Model SharePoint: <https://myshare.in.gov/dcs/icwis/CasePracticeReform/Resources%20for%20Supervisors/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Domestic Violence and CFT Meetings

Due to the extreme power and control that one partner typically exhibits in a relationship where domestic violence is present, it may be unsafe and/or unproductive to have both the non-offending parent and alleged domestic violence offender present at the same CFT Meeting.

Reasons why holding a joint meeting would **not** be appropriate include, but are not limited to:

1. The non-offending parent does not want a meeting because he or she feels that they or the child(ren) would be in danger;
2. The non-offending parent does not want a meeting because he or she feels intimidated and therefore unable to represent what they feel is in the child(ren)'s best interest;
3. The non-offending parent has secured a "no contact order" and the CFT Meeting would be a violation of the order;

Note: DCS may request that the court lift the "no contact order" for the time of the meeting, if holding a joint CFT Meeting is in the best interest of the family.

4. The FCM believes the non-offending parent or the child(ren) could be placed in danger if the meeting took place; or
5. The family of the non-offending parent or the alleged domestic violence offender either denies or enables the abuse.

Note: Although it may initially be inappropriate to have the non-offending parent and alleged domestic violence offender attend the same CFT Meeting; the possibility of having the non-offending parent and alleged domestic violence offender attend the same CFT Meeting should be reevaluated prior to each meeting throughout the life of the case. See [Tool 5.A: Domestic Violence and CFT Meeting Considerations](#) for more information.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Confirmation Notice of a Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM 110801NOC\)](#) – Spanish Version Available in ICWIS
2. [Authorization to Contact Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM\) Members \(CFTM110801ATC\)](#) – Spanish Version Available in ICWIS
3. [Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM\) Attendance and Confidentiality for Limited Use of Agreement for Access to Confidential Department of Child Services Client/Case Information \(CFTM110801\)](#) – Spanish Version Available in ICWIS
4. [Family Team Meeting Agenda](#)
5. [CFT meeting Debrief Forms](#) – Available on Indiana Practice Model SharePoint
6. [Suggested Outline for CFT Meeting Notes](#) – Available on Indiana Practice Model SharePoint
7. [Tool 5.A: Domestic Violence and CFT Meeting Considerations](#)
8. [Case Plan \(SF 2956/DCS 0046\)](#) – Available in ICWIS
9. [GenoPro Software](#)
10. [Family Network Diagram Guide](#)
11. [Progress Report \(PermRptR1070108\)](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

[REVISED] The Purpose of Child and Family Team Meetings

The CFT Meeting model encourages a strengths-based approach to initial and ongoing assessments of children and their families. The CFT Meeting process focuses on the underlying needs of the family rather than behavioral symptoms. The CFT Meeting process will assist families with building a support system that will remain in place after the DCS case has closed. The child and the family's identified strengths play an essential role in determining what interventions might be most successful. The CFT process is voluntary for families. The FCM is required to work to engage the family in the CFT process throughout the life of the case. Families who are not initially willing to participate in the process, may decide to participate at a later date and should continually be offered the opportunity to have CFT Meetings.

[REVISED] Including the Resource Parent and CASA/GAL in CFT Meetings

If the parent, guardian, or custodian does not wish to include the resource parent and CASA/GAL as a part of the CFT, the FCM should engage the family about the practicality of such a decision. DCS policy requires the resource parent and CASA/GAL to be included in the development of the [Case Plan \(SF 2956/DCS 0046\)](#). DCS practice is to utilize the CFT for [Case Plan \(SF 2956/DCS 0046\)](#) development, so the resource parent and CASA/GAL would need to be involved in all CFT Meetings when the [Case Plan \(SF 2956/DCS 0046\)](#) is being discussed or a separate Case Plan Conference will need to be held. The FCM should use engaging and reasoning skills to impress upon the parent, guardian, or custodian the importance of including the resource parent and CASA/GAL in all aspects of the CFT process.

Resolving Potential Differences (Addressing Potential Conflicts)¹

¹ The Child Welfare Policy & Practice Group, *Engagement and Facilitating the Child and Family Team Meetings*

When potential differences arise while facilitating a CFT Meeting, the facilitator(s) should assess and decide if all family and team members should discuss the issue or differences. To make this decision some questions to consider are:

1. Does the issue or difference involve the whole team?
2. Does the issue or difference need the whole team to solve it?
3. How might this issue or difference influence the development and implementation of the family's plan?
4. Does this issue or difference impact the ability of the team or family to assure safety, well being and permanence for the child?
5. Do you need assistance or support from someone who is not a participant in this conference to resolve this issue or difference?

The facilitator(s) should utilize strategies to build consensus amongst the team members. Possible strategies include:

1. Clarifying the areas of agreement and disagreement;
2. Helping team members lay out options and then see their choices; and
3. Identifying higher principles members can agree on.

Use skills and techniques for conflict resolution such as:

1. Utilize engaging skills to clarify what the real disagreement is about;
2. Finding the common goal;
3. Generating as many alternatives as possible; and
4. Focusing on points of agreement.

Note: The CFT Meeting facilitator(s) will ensure that members of the team be reminded that any differences that cannot be resolved may need to be presented to a judge for a final decision. If this occurs, ensure that differences are effectively communicated to the judge for consideration.

[NEW] DCS may have to take a more directive role during a CFT Meeting if safety concerns arise, as ensuring the safety of the child(ren) is the primary responsibility of DCS. The goals and requests of the parent(s) must never come before ensuring the safety of the child(ren). It may be helpful to discuss this as a part of the "Non-Negotiables" agenda item. See [Family Team Meeting Agenda](#).