

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>	
	<b>Chapter 5:</b> General Case Management	<b>Effective Date:</b> May 1, 2008
	<b>Section 7:</b> Child and Family Team Meetings	<b>Version:</b> 1

<b>POLICY</b>	<b>OLD POLICY: 307.21</b>
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The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will facilitate the Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting process with every family served as an effective practice approach of case planning and service delivery. If a CFT meeting is not completed, a case conference will be facilitated with appropriate parties.

DCS will utilize CFT Meetings to develop a plan for assessment and delivering ongoing services to families and children under the care and supervision of DCS.

The DCS 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. Within 30 days of case creation, when possible;
2. Case transfer (a CFT meeting may suffice for the transition meeting);
3. Development of the case plan;
4. Prior to court/permanency hearings;
5. Determining or revising permanency goals;
6. Removals;
7. Change of placement;
8. At the request of any team member; and
9. Case closure.

Code References

1. N/A

<b>PROCEDURE</b>
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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. Coordinate and implement the CFT meeting as outlined in the [Family Team Meeting Preparation/Completion Checklist](#);
3. Encourage the parent/guardian/custodian to include the noncustodial parent, resource parent and court appointed special advocate (CASA) and/or Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) as members of the CFT;
4. Ensure that individualized plans are developed in the course of the CFT meeting to connect the family with the appropriate services and resources; and

5. Ensure the CFT meeting notes are distributed to all appropriate parties within a week of the CFT meeting.

**Note:** Distribute CFT meeting notes to the resource caregiver and CASA if they were not included as part of the CFT.

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. Utilize data to improve practice; and
7. Utilize 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/fssa/icwis/CasePracticeReform/Resources%20for%20Supervisors/Fo rms/AllItems.aspx) at the Practice Reform Sharepoint: <https://myshare.in.gov/fssa/icwis/CasePracticeReform/Resources%20for%20Supervisors/Fo rms/AllItems.aspx>.

#### PRACTICE GUIDANCE

1. N/A

#### FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [CFT Meeting Confirmation Letter](#)
2. [Family Team Meeting Preparation/Completion Checklist](#)
3. [CFT Meeting Parent Release of Information and Authorization](#)
4. [CFT Meeting Confidentiality/Limited Use Agreement for Access to Confidential DCS Client/Case Information](#)
5. [CFT meeting Debrief Forms](#)
6. [Suggested Outline for CFT Meeting Notes](#)

#### RELATED INFORMATION

##### **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 child and the family's identified strengths play an essential role in determining what interventions might be most successful.

### **Including the Resource Caregiver and CASA in CFT Meetings**

Indiana statute requires the resource caregiver and CASA be included in the case planning development process. If the parent/guardian/custodian is inclined not to include the resource caregiver and CASA as a part of the CFT, the FCM should engage the family about the practicality of such a decision. Based on Indiana law, which requires inclusion of the resource caregiver and CASA, DCS policy is to utilize the CFT for case plan development. The resource caregiver and CASA would need to be involved in all CFT meetings when the case plan is being discussed. The FCM should use engaging and reasoning skills to impress upon the parent/guardian/custodian the importance of including the resource caregiver and CASA in all aspects of the CFT process.

### **Resolving Potential Differences (Addressing Potential Conflicts)**<sup>1</sup>

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
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
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 the differences be effectively communicated to the Judge for consideration.

DCS may have to take a more directive role if during the course of a CFT meeting, safety concerns arise or due to the responsibility placed upon DCS by State laws and the court.

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