

Introduction and Parents' Guide to Child in Custody Case Planning Conferences

Note: Parents should also refer to the Family Handbook PPS 5137. The DCF Policy Manual is on the web at: <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Pages/PPSpolicies.aspx>. Information about case planning is in Section 3000.

What is a Case Planning Conference?

The Case Planning Conference is a meeting of a group of people who are involved in the life of a child. They provide information and ideas about how to best achieve stability for the family, permanency for the child, and develop steps to reach those goals. The purpose of the meeting is to develop a plan of action that will serve the needs of the family, build on their strengths, and insure the safety of the child. Case Planning Conferences are held within 20 days of the child being placed in the custody of the Secretary and at least every 170 days thereafter. Permanency goals can be maintaining children in their own home, reintegrating children back home, adoption, permanent custodianship or another planned permanent living arrangement.

Who is on the Case Planning Team?

The Case Planning Team includes the Parents, Child, and DCF CPS Specialist or Child Welfare Case Management Provider Case Manager, at a minimum. Other participants that will be invited if the child is in the custody of the Secretary include:

Guardian Ad Litem

Court Appointed Special Advocate

Resource Parent

A third party who is not responsible for managing the case
Others who may be involved would be those that the family would like to participate for support, such as relatives, kin, teachers, therapists, or educational advocates.

What are the benefits of a Team meeting?

When a number of people come together to share information and discuss ideas in an open, honest, way, ideas are generated and the chances of a successful completion of the case plan tasks increase. Information about community resources, possible services that would be helpful, and exploration of informal supports can all be outcomes of the process. Differing viewpoints are valuable for creating a number of different options.

What will be created/produced?

A form will be filled out that will include the strengths and needs of the family and the goals, objectives and tasks outlined by the Team. Services that address the needs of the child and interaction/visit plans are included. Participants will sign the form to indicate that they had an opportunity to participate. A copy of the form will be given to parents (perhaps by mail once it has been typed) so that they have written information about the decisions made at the Case Planning Conference.

What information will be shared with whom?

Open discussion is encouraged by all Team members. The information shared during the meeting is confidential in nature and will only be shared with others who need to know. For example, the Judge needs to have information about what occurred at the case planning conference in order to make decisions on the case. Participants are not to share information with others if there is not a need for them to know the information.

What else do I need to know?

A “**family meeting**” (also known as Family Group Conferencing) is a unique process that involves a shift from a decision making process that is "expert driven" to one that is "family driven". It is a special gathering of parents, children, extended family, and those whom the family has identified as their support system (kin). The meeting takes into consideration the child and family's physical, emotional, mental, cultural and spiritual needs. Sometimes family meetings are used to do case planning. The case manager assigned to the case can share information about the model they use.