

Tips for Workers for Effective TDM Meetings

1. Be on time. Assist parent(s) with transportation if needed. If you are going to be delayed for any reason, let the facilitator know so attendees can be informed.
2. Invite the right people. Give as much notice as possible. Don't "forget" to invite someone because they may be difficult, or you don't want to hear what they have to say.
3. Be sure to invite older children, according to your agency's policy, and if they are unable to attend, utilize strategies to bring their voices in to the room.
4. Explain the purpose of the meeting in advance to non-agency attendees.
5. Be sensitive and respectful of the serious nature of the meeting. Parents and others are watching, not just during the TDM but also before the meeting begins and after it ends.
6. Schedule adequate time for yourself. While it is important to adhere to timeframes for the meeting, remember we are dealing with critical and emotional decisions in the lives of families and whatever time is needed to make a quality decision should be expended. Turn off your cell phone to avoid interruptions and give this situation your full attention.
7. Be clear on the goal of developing a clear recommendation, with the assistance of the child's family and others, that keeps the child safe in the least restrictive placement/least intrusive manner.
8. Come organized to present a summary of the situation and prepared with ideas and a recommendation while receptive to the opinions and ideas of other participants.
9. Be honest, direct, and fair in what you say. Discussion should be strength-based and straightforward.
10. Assist in keeping the group focused and productive. Invite others to share their perspective, information and opinion.
11. If consensus among the participating agency staff is not reached during the meeting, you will be asked to consider all the information and ideas shared during the staffing and make the final decision/recommendation. However, if an agency participant feels that the decision will put the child at risk or violates a law or policy, it is their responsibility to request a review of the decision. This is about making decisions that protect the child, not winning or losing.

Source: (Evident Change, 2021)