

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

STANDARDS FOR OUT-OF-HOME CARE SERVICES

6.10 FAMILY TEAM MEETING

Council on Accreditation Standard

The Council on Accreditation Standard S21.7 (Services to the Child's Biological Parents) links to and supports Standard 6.10 *Family Team Meeting*.

Administrative Code

There are no Ohio Administrative Code Rules that directly address Standard 6.10 *Family Team Meeting*.

I. Philosophy

The purpose of the Family Team Meeting (FTM) is to create a continuation of care that reduces trauma to the child as a result of removal from the home and out-of-home placement, by establishing a healthy working relationship between the key adults in the child's life. When a child feels secure in knowing both sets of parents are working together, instead of in opposition to one another, trauma is reduced and, as a result, the child's transition into the temporary home is easier for the child, the birth family and the caregiver. Studies report that, as a result of this reduced trauma, the child has less need to act out, reducing the rate of placement disruptions.

The Family Team Meeting initiates the formal relationship between the birth parent, foster parent (or relative caregiver) and the social worker. As a result of this relationship the child will feel the support and concern of both families working together while the child is in placement, during reunification and after s/he returns home.

II. Outcome

Children maintain placement in the foster home.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- number of family team meetings agency holds per child per year;
- number of foster families that attend family team meetings per year;
- number of birth families that attend family team meetings per year;
- number of family team meetings occurring within 3-7 days of placement;
- number of children reunified;
- the median length of stay for children prior to returning home, emancipation or prior to adoption finalization;
- number of placement disruptions;
- number of placement disruptions for children whose families attended a family team meeting versus the number of placement disruptions for children whose families did not attend a family team meeting;
- average number of moves;
- number of children with adoption finalizations.

IV. Standards for Implementation

- 1) This meeting should be scheduled and held within the first three to five days of placement, but no later than seven days.
- 2) The agency should provide advance notice to the meeting members and assist in arranging for transportation and childcare.
- 3) This meeting should be held in a neutral and natural location.
- 4) The social worker or supervisor facilitates these meetings.
- 5) Participants include the:
 - a. child's parent(s);
 - b. foster parent(s);
 - c. social worker (and also family foster care worker, if different from the child's social worker);
 - d. child (when possible);
 - e. Foster Care Network social worker (if applicable); and
 - f. parent's support person.
- 6) The Family Team Meeting can last from 30 minutes to one hour, depending on the needs of the members.
- 7) The social worker should start out by explaining the purpose and intent of the Family Team Meeting, and what the FTM is not, such as:
 - a. case planning/staffing;
 - b. discussing reason(s) for placement;
 - c. blaming, attacking, arguing with one another;
 - d. foster parents to give out personal information (address, phone number, etc.) unless foster parents decide to; and
 - e. a time to challenge the other parent on who knows the child best and what is best for the child.
- 8) The social worker begins the meeting by asking everyone to introduce themselves and reviewing the agenda.
- 9) The social worker should review the general types of things everyone can expect when a child is placed in foster care (visitation, parental rights, foster care activities, etc.).
- 10) The birth parent should be placed in the role of expert and consultant and asked to talk about their child's:
 - a. favorite food,
 - b. snack,
 - c. color,
 - d. toy, book, story,
 - e. nap time,
 - f. cartoon,
 - g. favorite subject in school (when school age),
 - h. favorite activity,
 - i. medicines; etc.

- 11) The foster parents are encouraged to ask questions and enter into an informal dialogue with the birth parents as the birth parents are sharing information about the child.
- 12) The foster parents are asked to give an update on the child's first days in their home.
- 13) It is recommended that the agency have a Polaroid camera available at each FTM. The social worker may take pictures of the foster mom and birth parents and child and the child with his/her birth parents.
- 14) The social worker reviews with the birth and foster parents upcoming meetings and appointments, including court hearings. Questions regarding these meetings are surfaced and discussed, including who is responsible for taking the child, and if birth and foster parents will attend.
- 15) The Family Team Meeting is concluded by the social worker asking if there are any additional questions, concerns or thoughts that need to be shared and discussed.
- 16) Agreed upon activities and responsibilities should be documented and signed off by those present. Copies should be shared at the conclusion of the meeting.
- 17) The first scheduled visit between the birth parents and the child often follows at the conclusion of the meeting. If this does not occur, the social worker should reaffirm the first visit per the agreement made earlier.
- 18) The social worker should set the next FTM and reaffirm that any of them can call a FTM when they feel one is needed.

V. Financial Implications

Costs associated with Standard 6.10, *Family Team Meeting* would include preparation, family contact, documentation, and travel for a total of:

8 hours x \$89.25/hour = \$714 per Family Team Meeting

Additional costs may be included for possible clerical support, office supplies and room charge for meeting (if held in the community).