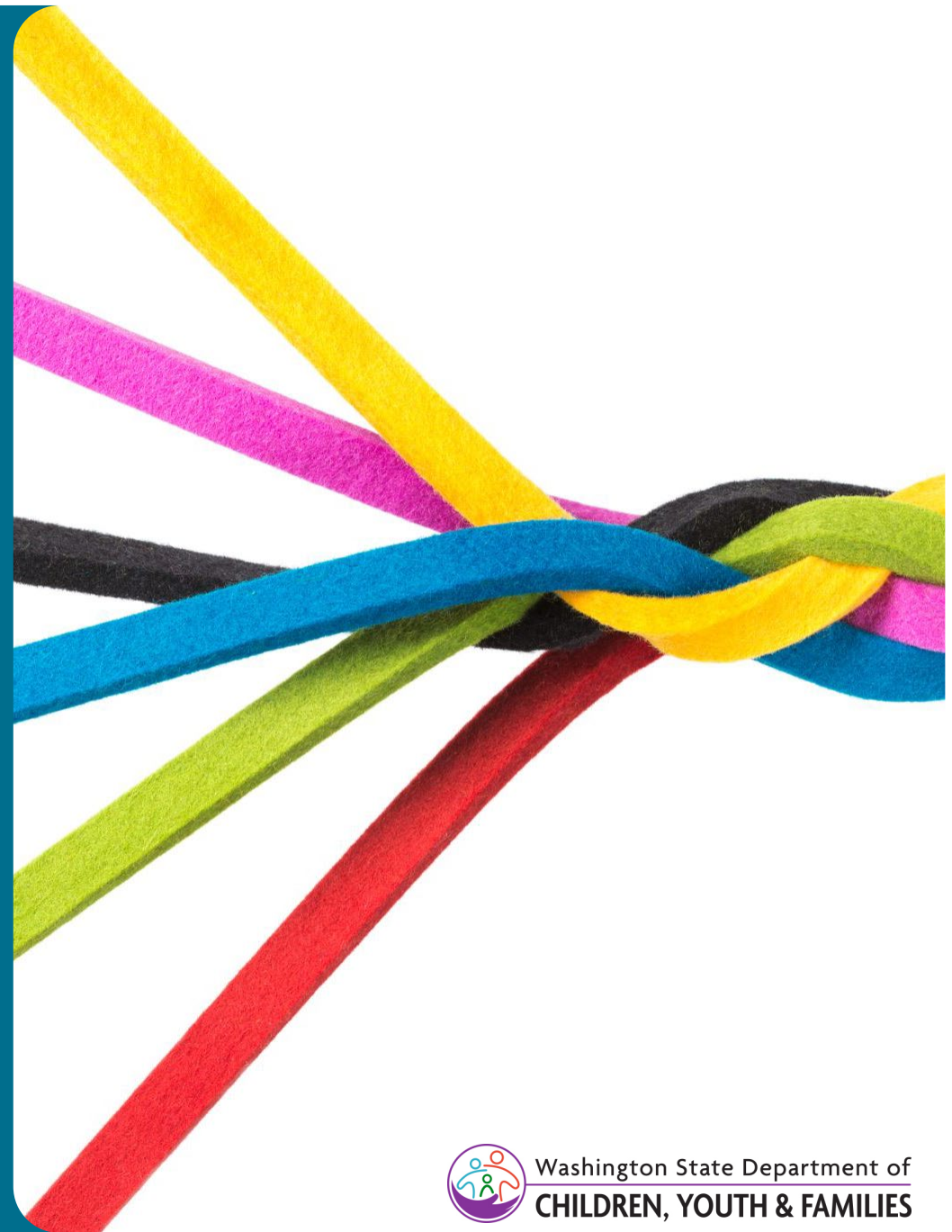


YOUTH AND FAMILY MEETINGS FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

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Child Welfare Division | Approved for distribution by Sarah McCamant, Meetings
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Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

CHANGING TO YOUTH AND FAMILY MEETINGS (YFM)

Washington's Youth and Family Meetings model is the result of multi-year system improvement grounded in lived experience, staff feedback, national expertise, and external review.

Rather than maintaining separate meeting types and facilitation models, one consistent, structured process will be used in all meetings across the life of a case. YFM is replacing all meetings under Shared Planning Meetings (SPM), including Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) meetings.

WHAT'S CHANGING?

- Youth and Family Meetings (replacing all Shared Planning Meetings including FTDM)
- Statewide referral, Meeting Program Consultant (MPC) will be inviting participants
- A safety check in for parent(s) and youth will occur before meetings
- All YFMs are facilitated by trained Meeting Consultants using the 6-stage process
- Transparency in documentation, MPC's will chart the discussion resulting in Action Plans youth, families and plan participants leave meetings with

D.S. SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Under the D.S. Settlement Agreement, DCYF is required to review and revise Shared Planning Meeting (SPM) and Family Team Decision Meeting (FTDM) policies and practices, establish a quality assurance processes, and ensure these practices are trauma-informed, culturally responsive, LGBTQIA+ affirming and fulfill the following five system improvement functions:

[D.S. Settlement Implementation Plan](#) (08/02/2023)

[D.S. Data Addendum](#) (02/02/2024)

MEETINGS SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

- Support and encourage active participation of children and youth, their immediate and extended family members, and other individuals who have trusting relationships with the child and family (collectively the “Family Team”) in the SPM/FTDM process, including offering meetings in times and places that are accessible for all members of the Family Team;
- Educate the Family Team about available services and placement options, including family reconciliation services, evidence-based practices, and System Improvements 4.6 Emerging Adult Housing Program, 4.7 Professional Therapeutic Foster Care and 4.8 Hub Homes;

MEETINGS SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

- Elicit and value the child or youth's preferences including, but not limited to, where to live, where to go to school, what treatment or services to receive, what supports are needed for safety, and who is involved in their lives;
- Empower and authorize Family Teams to make and revisit decisions about how and where to best support the child or youth's health, safety, stability, cultural socialization, and relationships with family;
- Provide necessary supports and resources, including those identified in the SPM/FTDMs policies and procedures

YOUTH AND FAMILY MEETINGS MODEL

Partnership

All families deserve to participate in agency decisions and be included in plans about their own lives.

Inclusivity & Transparency

Acknowledging individual differences helps participants attend to power imbalances. *Early inclusion sets the stage for ongoing engagement.*

Engagement

Meetings tap into the group's energy and creativity, embody team collaboration, and involve proactive planning for next steps with youth, families, kin, and caregivers.

Equity & Fairness

The same process is offered to everyone. MPCs manage the process, modeling respect and interpersonal skills. Community partners share the responsibility of supporting the best decisions with the family and agency.

Adapted from © 2023 Evident Change Implementation Guide

Washington's Youth and Family Meetings model is adapted from Evident Change's Team Decision Making (TDM) model using six-stages to guide teams through collaborative decision making and planning.



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YOUTH AND FAMILY MEETING PROCESS

- The same six stages are used for all meetings.
 - The purpose of the meeting determines how stages are facilitated.
- Decision-making meetings require a formal consensus-based process for recommendations for safety and placement.
- When not making placement decisions, collaborative discussions are driven by the purpose of the meeting.

All meetings will include discussions on cultural, relative, and kin connections for engagement and relational permanency.

STAGES OF THE YFM MEETING

BEFORE

DURING

AFTER



BEFORE THE MEETING

- Caseworker will collaborate with children, youth and families before the meeting, and encourage them to:
 - Identify family, kin, and other supports to include for invites to the meeting.
 - Discuss the preferred date, time, and location for meeting to be held (in-person or remote).
 - Discuss needs for language access, translation services and ADA accommodations.

WHO PARTICIPATES IN MEETINGS?

- Children based on age and appropriateness
- Youth age 12+ and 2 supports of their choice
- Parents
- Placement caregivers
- Family members and kin
- Facilitator, caseworker, supervisor, other DCYF staff
- Tribal representatives
- Community partners
- GAL and CASA
- Court Partners (Attorneys and OPD social workers)

IN PERSON VS. REMOTE PARTICIPATION

- In person meetings are encouraged whenever possible, because they support strong connection, trust-building, and shared understanding among all members of the youth and family team.
- Meetings will be offered in person unless a family or youth requests a virtual meeting due to accessibility, safety, or logistical needs.
- The preference of the youth and family is central to this decision.

PARENT SAFETY CHECK-IN

- In child welfare, DV is a common factor; therefore, safety is critical for parents and the children
- The following are general questions to ask both parents.
 - » Are you concerned about your safety or the safety of anyone else in the room today?
 - » Are any court orders in place that prohibit contact between any participants?
 - » Is there anything else that you feel you need to have a safe meeting?
- Safety check-ins are meant to be **BRIEF**

CHILD OR YOUTH SAFETY CHECK-IN


- A safety check-in is required for any child or youth attending a meeting.
 - To ask about their physical and emotional safety and answer any questions about what to expect in a meeting.
 - To provide alternate options for them to communicate during the meeting (e.g., texting, notepad, nonverbal signal).
 - To discuss the child or youth's preferred names and their pronouns.



INVITATIONS

Meetings Program Consultants (MPCs) will ensure participants identified by the case worker on the referral are invited, including professionals working with the family.

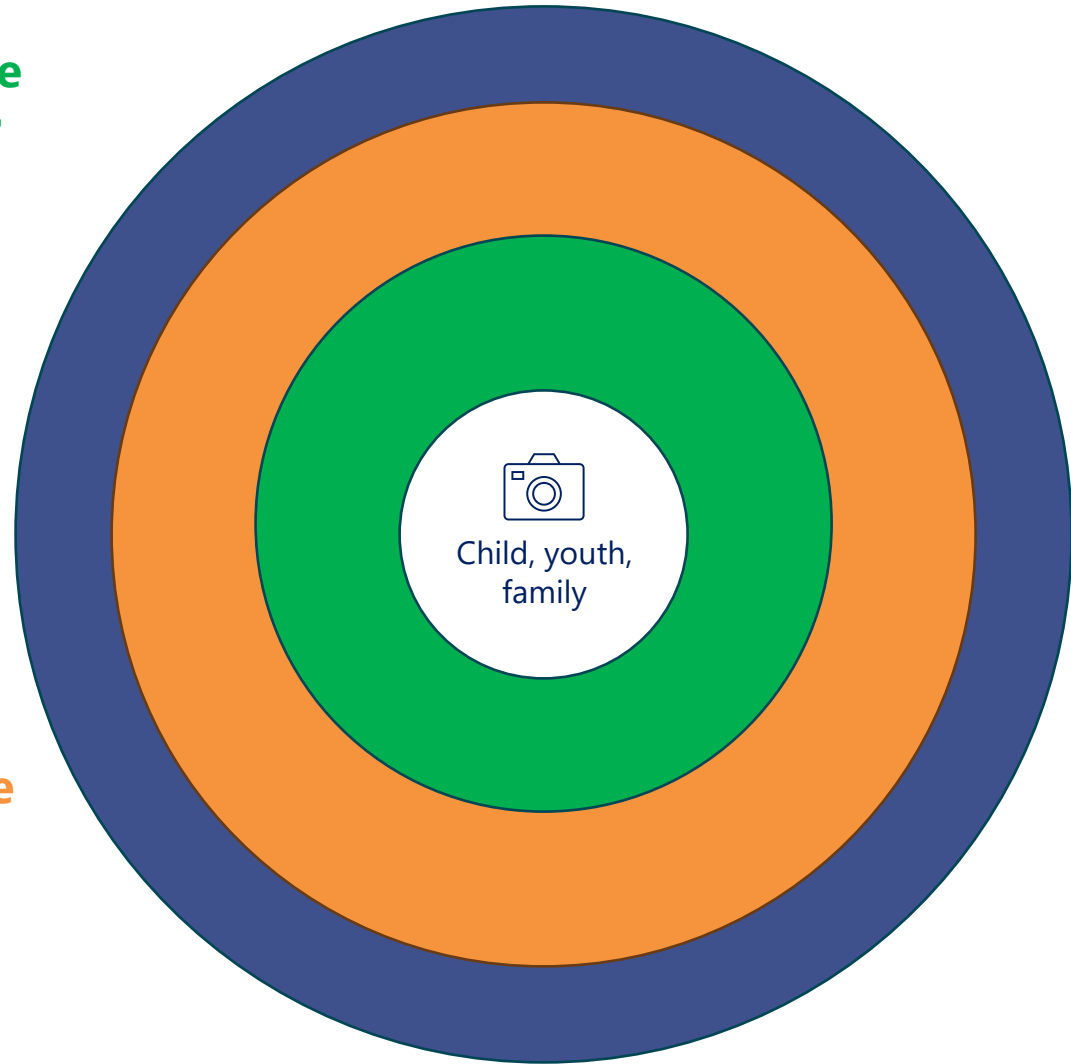
CHARTING WHITEBOARD EXAMPLE

<p><u>CHILD/YOUTH INFORMATION</u> Names: Ages: Where and with whom they live:</p>	<p>WHAT'S WORKING WELL/STRENGTHS?</p>	<p>WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT?</p>
<p>WHAT ARE WE WORRIED ABOUT/NEEDS?</p>		<p><u>BRAINSTORM/IDEAS</u></p>
<p><u>SAFETY CONCERNS, BARRIERS, NEEDS</u></p>		<p><u>PLACEMENT DECISION</u></p>
	<p><u>CONNECTIONS/RESOURCES</u></p> 	<p><u>ACTION PLAN</u></p>

CIRCLES OF SUPPORT- INFORMAL FAMILY MAPPING

Who do the children or youth and family feel most connected with?

Who do the children or youth and family feel some connection with?



Who are the people that don't support the family now but maybe could in the future?

MEETING TYPES CROSSWALK

SHARED PLANNING MEETINGS	YOUTH & FAMILY MEETING
FTDM-Imminent risk of placement & Emergency Placement or VPA	Initial
FTDM-Change of Placement	Placement Stability
Behavior Rehabilitative Services (BRS) Staffing	Placement Stability
Multiple Placement Staffing/DS Meetings	Placement Stability
Shelter Care Case Conference	Permanency
CHET	Permanency
Permanency Planning Staffing	Permanency
FTDM-Exit from Placement	Permanency
Foster Care Assessment Program (FCAP)	Permanency
Developmental Disability Community Service (formally DDA) Staffing's	Permanency
Multi-Disciplinary Staffing (17.5 & 20.5)	Permanency
Adoption Planning Review	Permanency



WHAT IS AN INITIAL MEETING?



- A meeting to determine if removal can be prevented through engagement in prevention services.
- The meeting seeks to make a live decision and is intended to occur:
 - Prior to recommending removal, including VPAs.
 - Before the initial Shelter Care hearing.
 - As soon as possible following a Protective Custody.

WHAT IS A PLACEMENT STABILITY MEETING?

- A meeting to ensure safety and stability for children and youth in out of home care
- Intended to occur at the first sign of placement instability
- Used to develop specific, individualized, and appropriate responses to:
 - Stabilize placements
 - Develop a transition plan when a move is deemed necessary, for example a move to kin, or a more culturally supporting and affirming placement

WHAT IS A PERMANENCY MEETING?

- A meeting to discuss safe, stable, and timely permanency.
- An opportunity to build and maintain children and youth's cultural and community connections to include relatives, kin, Tribes, and others important to the family.
- Meeting to discuss permanent plans and any recommendations to make changes to the permanent plan.

ACTION PLANS

- All meeting discussions will result in an Action Plan
 - » Youth, parents, legal parties, and Action Plan participants will receive the plan at the end of the meeting in written or electronic format.

MEETING OUTCOME:		PLACEMENT RECOMMENDATION:	
ACTION PLAN			
GOAL / OBJECTIVE	TASKS	BY WHOM	TARGET DATE

MEETING SUMMARY

CASE NAME		CHILDREN DISCUSSED	
CASE WORKER NAME	TELEPHONE NUMBER	SUPERVISOR NAME	TELEPHONE NUMBER
<p>STRENGTHS / RESOURCES</p> <p>Summarize:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths • Protective capacities • Child/youth well-being • Connections and resources • Placement and service information provided as relevant to meeting purpose <p>SAFETY CONCERNS</p> <p>Summarize the safety threats, or concerns related to child/youth well-being and/or permanency (safety threats and concerns that correlate with action plan tasks).</p> <p>PLACEMENT DECISIONS</p> <p>Indicate the placement decision if that is the purpose of the meeting, and summarize how the team got to that decision to include child, youth, family, and kin voice.</p>			

RESOURCES

[D.S. Lawsuit and Settlement Agreement | Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families](#)

[Youth and Family Meetings | Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families](#)

[Youth Guide for Decision Making and Transition Planning Meetings](#)

Youth Guide for Decision-Making and Transition Planning Meetings

This is **your** time to be heard. DCYF staff want to make sure **you** feel supported and have a voice in decisions being made about **your** future.

All parts of you are respected, including culture, gender identity, pronouns, and anything you are comfortable sharing.



Types of Meetings

1. Family Team Decision-Making Meetings:

- **When?** For a change in **your** living situation, like moving to a new home, staying somewhere temporarily, or plans for returning to live with your family.
- **Why?** To talk about what's going well, things that may not be working, and ideas from you and the team to develop a plan together with **your** input.

2. Permanency and Transition Planning Meetings:

- **When?** To discuss **your** needs to make sure your permanent plan is working for **you**.
- **Why?** For support in planning for **your** current safety, well-being, and future.

This meeting is all about you, you choose how involved you want to be

- Want to speak up? Go for it!
- Feeling shy? That's okay too.
- Sharing things can be difficult, **you can talk with a trusted person ahead of time and have them share for you during the meeting.**
- Got questions or ideas? Bring them, we're here to listen!

Help us understand what really matters to you:

- **School:** What's working? What's not? How can we help?
- **Employment:** What are your passions?
- **Where You Live:** What makes a place feel like "home"?
- **People Who Matter:** Let's talk about the relationships that are important to you and make you feel supported.
- **Your Well-Being:** How are you? Is there anything on your mind—health, mental health, or just your everyday needs. What makes you happy? What are your interests? Hobbies? Sports?

Who is invited to meetings?

You: Youth (12 and older) and **your** choice of two people who are supportive of **you**. Other people that you may see at meetings include:

- Parents/Legal Guardians
- Caregivers
- Tribal Representatives
- Attorneys
- Guardian Ad Litem, Court Appointed Special Advocates
- Service Providers

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THANK YOU