

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>	
	<b>Chapter 5:</b> General Case Management	<b>Effective Date:</b> May 1, 2009
	<b>Section 7:</b> Child and Family Team Meetings	<b>Version:</b> 2

**POLICY**

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 transition or transfer (a CFT Meeting may suffice for the transition meeting). See separate policies, [5.1 Transitioning from Assessment](#) and [5.13 Transferring a Case](#);
3. Development of the Case Plan;
4. Prior to court or 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.

**[NEW]** DCS will assess for the presence or concern of domestic violence prior to each CFT Meeting. If domestic violence is identified, DCS will take necessary actions to assure the safety of all members of the CFT. See [Tool 5.A: Domestic Violence and CFT Meeting Considerations](#).

Code References

N/A

**PROCEDURE**

**[NEW]** For cases where domestic violence has been identified, the FCM will:

1. Assess whether holding a CFT meeting with both parents present can be accomplished safely. See Practice Guidance;
2. Seek Supervisory input when determining how to involve the alleged domestic violence offender in the teaming process;

3. If there are safety concerns about having both parents present during the meeting, consider other options for having the alleged domestic violence offender involved in the meeting without being physically present; and
4. Include a domestic violence advocate or another domestic violence service provider(s) in meetings whenever possible.

**[NEW] Note:** If a CFT Meeting is held with both the non-offending parent and the alleged domestic violence offender present, create a plan that addresses safety before, during, and after the meeting. This may include, but is not limited to: having the non-offending parent and alleged domestic violence offender arrive and leave the meeting at different times; having scheduled breaks throughout the meeting to evaluate the safety of all team members; etc. See [Tool 5.A: Domestic Violence and CFT Meeting Considerations](#).

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, or 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.

6. **[NEW]** Contact the non-offending parent within 24 hours after the CFT Meeting, if domestic violence has been identified as a risk factor for the family and both parents were present at the CFT Meeting.

**[NEW] Note:** This contact will allow the FCM to assess any impact the CFT Meeting may have had on the non-offending parent and child(ren)'s safety. See [Tool 5.A: Child and Family Team Meeting Considerations](#) for more information.

7. **[NEW]** Complete a home visit within three (3) calendar days of the CFT Meeting with the non-offending parent if domestic violence has been identified as a risk factor.

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. **[NEW]** If CFT Meeting is held with both the non-offending parent and alleged domestic violence offender present, assist the FCM in creating a plan that addresses safety before, during, and after the CFT Meeting;
7. **[NEW]** Attend all CFT Meetings where domestic violence has been identified as a risk factor;

**Note:** The assigned Supervisor may request that another Supervisor or management level employee attend the meeting.

8. Utilize data to improve practice; and
9. Utilize the Quality Service Review (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/dcs/icwis/CasePracticeReform/Resources%20for%20Supervisors/Forms/AllItems.aspx) at the Indiana Practice Model SharePoint: <https://myshare.in.gov/dcs/icwis/CasePracticeReform/Resources%20for%20Supervisors/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

## PRACTICE GUIDANCE

### **[NEW]** Domestic Violence and CFT Meetings

Due to the extreme power and control that one partner typically exhibits in a relationship where domestic violence is present, it may be unsafe and/or unproductive to have both the non-offending parent and alleged domestic violence offender present at the same CFT Meeting.

Reasons why holding a joint meeting would **not** be appropriate include, but are not limited to:

1. The non-offending parent does not want a meeting because he or she feels that they or the child(ren) would be in danger;
2. The non-offending parent does not want a meeting because he or she feels intimidated and therefore unable to represent what they feel is in the child(ren)'s best interest;
3. The non-offending parent has secured a "no contact order" and the CFT Meeting would be a violation of the order;

**Note:** DCS may request that the court lift the "no contact order" for the time of the meeting, if holding a joint CFT Meeting is in the best interest of the family.

4. The FCM believes the non-offending parent or the child(ren) could be placed in danger if the meeting took place; or
5. The family of the non-offending parent or the alleged domestic violence offender either denies or enables the abuse.

**Note:** Although it may initially be inappropriate to have the non-offending parent and alleged domestic violence offender attend the same CFT Meeting; the possibility of having the non-offending parent and alleged domestic violence offender attend the same CFT Meeting should be reevaluated prior to each meeting throughout the life of the case. See [Tool 5.A: Domestic Violence and CFT Meeting Considerations](#) for more information.

## FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Confirmation Notice of a Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM 110801NOC\)](#)
2. [Family Team Meeting Preparation/Completion Checklist](#) – Available on Indiana Practice Model SharePoint
3. [Authorization to Contact Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM\) Members \(CFTM110801ATC\)](#)
4. [Child and Family Team Meeting \(CFTM\) Attendance and Confidentiality for Limited Use of Agreement for Access to Confidential Department of Child Services Client/Case Information \(CFTM110801\)](#)
5. [Family Team Meeting Agenda](#)
6. [CFT meeting Debrief Forms](#) – Available on Indiana Practice Model SharePoint
7. [Suggested Outline for CFT Meeting Notes](#) – Available on Indiana Practice Model SharePoint
8. [Tool 5.A: Domestic Violence and CFT Meeting Considerations](#)
9. [Case Plan \(SF 2956/DCS 0046\)](#) – Available in ICWIS

## 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, or 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 \(SF 2956/DCS 0046\)](#) development. The resource caregiver and CASA would need to be involved in all CFT Meetings when the [Case Plan \(SF 2956/DCS 0046\)](#) is being discussed. The FCM should use engaging and reasoning skills to impress upon the parent, guardian, or 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?

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

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; and
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; and
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.