



State of South Carolina Department of Social Services

Policies and Procedures: Child Welfare Services

Subject:	1642 Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM)
Authority:	S.C. Code Ann. Sections 63-7-10; 63-7-1640(A); 63-7-1650; 63-7-1660 and 63-7-1670
Standards:	Guiding Principles and Standards (GPS) Practice Model
Application:	All Child Welfare Services (CWS)
Purpose:	
To outline the process of Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) using an individualized, family-centered, and strengths-based approach and ensure all children, youth, families, and their support systems have a voice in the decision-making process throughout the life of their case. The CFTM provides a forum to create and sustain working teams with families, their support system, and professionals who share a common purpose, unity in an effort, and a demonstrated effectiveness in problem-solving towards safe case closure.	
Policy Statement:	
A Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM) is convened at certain critical junctures in the life of a case, as well as on an as-needed basis, to help the family and the department work together to achieve permanency for children as soon as possible. Child Welfare staff organize and conduct Child and Family Team Meetings to promote safety, well-being, and permanency. The Child and Family Team develops or update a Family Permanency Plan. Child and Family Team Meetings are the forum for the coordination of the activities of the family permanency planning team, assessment of strengths and needs of the child or youth and family, and collaboration with informal family supports and community services.	
Policy Administration:	
Child Welfare Services Family and Community Services Division is the owner of the policy and the Director, or the Director's designee, will review and update this policy at least annually from the date published in the Child Welfare Services Manual, or as needed due to changes in law or practice.	
Procedures:	
A. Engagement of the Child and Family Team	1. From the first contact a family or child has with the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS), the case manager engages the family with empathy, genuineness, and respect. Collaborative and open casework relationships foster an atmosphere of trust when DSS staff demonstrate competence and empathy and communicate a belief in family strengths and resilience. 2. As risk and safety are being assessed, staff shall make every effort to

	validate the child and family's feelings, elicit their understanding of their strengths, needs, and circumstances, and help them to identify other resources in their family, network, or community who could offer support. These individuals, along with DSS staff, other professionals from community providers, and foster parents form the foundation of an ongoing, functioning team that work with the family and DSS to: • Secure the child(ren)'s safety in the least restrictive, least intrusive placement that can meet their needs; • Minimize the trauma associated with separation from family and help the child to maintain meaningful connections with family members and others who are important to him or her; • Contribute to an ongoing assessment of the child and family's strengths and needs; • Develop and support the implementation of quality Family Permanency Plans; • Ensure plans are monitored for progress and participate in revising or updating plans as the family/child's circumstances change; • Support the stability of appropriate placements while in DSS custody; and, • Facilitate the timely achievement of permanency for children. 3. Members of the Child and Family Team are actively engaged throughout the department's work with the family. Their role and responsibility to help the family achieve their long-term goals, or, in the event the family is not a viable resource for the child, to work toward finding a permanent, nurturing home for each child in care.
B. CFTMs in Family Preservation Cases	The Family Preservation Services (FPS) case manager or team leader contacts the family to explain the CFTM Process and begins gathering the family's informal and formal supports to plan and prepare to hold the CFTM within 25 days of the FPS line opening.
25-Day	The FPS case manager or team leader holds a 25-Day CFTM within 25 calendar day of the FPS line opening to finalize the FPP.
90-Day Status	The FPS case manager or team leader holds a 90-Day Status CFTM within 90 calendar days of the Family Preservation Services line opening to review and update the FPP.
6-Month Permanency	The FPS case manager or team leader holds a Permanency CFTM within six months of the service line opening to assess progress on the Family Permanency Plan. Child and Family Team Meetings are required at least every six months.
Special Call	The FPS case manager or team leader holds a Special Call CFTM within seven calendar days following a request. This meeting is held when any member of the team requests a meeting to discuss a concern. Special Call CFTMs can be referred to a full-time CFTM facilitator when the meeting requires a neutral party.

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Case Closure	The FPS case manager or team leader holds a Closure CFTM at least five days before case closure to reinforce safety network protocol and gather supports for ongoing safety, permanency, and well-being after DSS involvement ends.
Pre-Removal	1. Before seeking an Ex-Parte Order of Custody, the case manager consults with the CFTM Facilitator or CFTM Supervisor to determine whether a Pre-Removal CFTM can be safely held before the filing of the action. 2. The FPS case manager completes a referral for a Pre-Removal CFTM in the CFTM tab in CAPSS. 3. In FPS cases, where DSS staff are planning to file a petition for a Non-Emergency Removal or a Motion for Temporary relief, a CFTM is held before removal to gather the Family Team in an effort to prevent Foster Care entry. 4. The FPS case manager supports the CFTM Facilitator in organizing and holding a Pre-Removal CFTM before the hearing. This meeting is held to gather support and identify placement options to prevent the removal of the child or youth. 5. Within two calendar days, after a legal consultation confirms a child or youth cannot safely remain in the home and a Non-Emergency Removal Petition or a Motion for Temporary Relief will be filed, the Family Preservation Case Manager requests a facilitator led CFTM using the CFTM Referral tab in CAPSS.
C. CFTMs in Foster Care Cases	Before the Initial Child and Family Team Meeting: 1. The Investigations case manager notifies the family that they will have a Child and Family Team meeting and immediately completes the following: • Schedules the CFTM with the family; • Informs the family to expect a call from a CFTM Facilitator; and • Completes the referral in CAPSS unless a qualifying Pre- Removal has been held. 2. Within 24 hours of a child or youth entering foster care, the Investigations case manager requests a Facilitator-led CFTM utilizing the CFTM Referral in the CFTM tab in CAPSS. Once the referral is marked "COMPLETE" the CAPSS system automatically sends the completed referral appropriate CFTM e-mail inbox. 3. Before the CFTM, the case manager meets with the CFTM Facilitator to prepare for the CFTM and share information. 4. If a child enters foster care within 30 days of a completed Pre-Removal CFTM, the case manager notifies the CFTM Facilitator and CFTM team leader. The Pre-Removal CFTM meets the requirement for the Initial CFTM if the child enters foster care: a. Within 7 days of the Pre-Removal CFTM; and b. Due to same maltreatment addressed in the Pre-Removal CFTM.
Initial	The Investigations case manager will support the CFTM Facilitator in

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	organizing and holding the Initial CFTM within one business day of entry into Foster Care.
7-Day	The Foster Care case manager or team leader may hold a 7-Day CFTM within seven business days of Foster Care entry to assist the family or caregiver with urgent psychiatric, behavioral, medical, educational, or legal issues post entry into care if they were not addressed at the initial meeting.
25-Day	The Foster Care case manager and team leader supports the CFTM Facilitator in organizing and holding a 25-Day CFTM within 25 calendar days of Foster Care entry to develop the FPP with the Child and Family Team.
90-Day Status	The Foster Care case manager or team leader holds a 90-Day Status CFTM within 90 calendar days of the Foster Care service line opening. This meeting is held to review progress towards goals and ensure the plan remains viable and meets the child or youth and family's needs.
6-Month Permanency	The Foster Care case manager or team leader holds a Permanency CFTM within six months of the service line opening to assess progress on the Family Permanency Plan. Child and Family Team Meetings are required at least every six months.
Transitional	The Foster Care case manager or team leader holds a Transitional CFTM before transitions including but not limited to planning for transition-age youth, TPR, placement disruption, and reunification.
Special Call	The Foster Care case manager or team leader holds a Special Call CFTM within seven calendar days following a request. This meeting is held when any member of the team requests a meeting to discuss a concern.
Placement	The Foster Care case manager, team leader or Regional Performance Coach holds a placement CFTM when a child or youth is experiencing placement instability or disruption. The Placement CFTM is focused on finding solutions for a child/youth's placement with a team of individuals that can best support the identification of strengths, resources, barriers, and solutions.

Forms:	CANS Policy FAST Policy Family Permanency Plan Policy CFTM Foster Care and Family Preservation Timelines
Related Management Reports:	N/A

Glossary:

Child and Family Team (CFT): A group of family members, fictive kin, friends, professionals, and other invested stakeholders who join to strengthen a family and provide protection and a Family Permanency Plan for the child or youth to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being. The family chooses the members of the team. The team also includes the child or youth when developmentally appropriate.

Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM): Child and Family Team Meetings are family-centered, culturally responsive, goal-orientated, and problem-solving processes that bring together the Child and Family Team to make decisions about the safety, permanency, and well-being of their children or youth through the development of an individualized Family Permanency Plan. CFTMs are planned in advance so that meaningful participation by all members is possible. Interpreter services are scheduled as needed.

Family Permanency Plan: The sole collaborative plan that describes the reasons for agency involvement, the actions and services required to change behaviors, and the strategies to reduce safety concerns and risks that promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child or youth and family.

CFTM Facilitator: A DSS employee who is trained, skilled, and certified in coordinating meetings among the family, Case Manager, and other stakeholders.

Family Engagement Services Administrative Assistant: A DSS employee that supports the Child and Family Team process.

Types of CFTMs for Family Preservation: 25 Day, 90-Day (Status), 6 month (Permanency), Pre-Removal, Special Call, and Closure.

Types of CFTMs for Foster Care: Initial (one business day), 7-Day (as needed), 25- Day, 90-Day (Status), 6 Month (Permanency), Transitional, Special Call and Placement.