

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

FAMILY TEAM CONFERENCES

1. What is a Family Team Conference (FTC)?

This is a meeting to help you and your family plan for the future. It brings together you, your family and the people working with you and your family. Sometimes these meetings are also called Service Plan Reviews (SPRs).

2. Who can attend the FTC?

- *You (if you are 10 or older)*
- *Your lawyer or a social worker from your lawyer's office*
- *Your parents*
- *Your foster parents (if you are in a foster home)*
- *Foster care agency workers*
- *ACS workers*
- *Other people important to you or helping you and your family*

3. What will be discussed at the Family Team Conference?

At the meeting, information about you and your family will be shared, services

and plans will be discussed, and important decisions will be made. Your workers will discuss why you are in foster care and help you set goals to achieve while you are in care. They will help you figure out what services you might need and who can best assist you. They will also discuss your Permanency Planning Goal, what your parents will need to do to meet the goal, and how the agency will help them. If your goal is to live on your own after leaving foster care, they will discuss the services necessary for you to achieve that goal.

4. What is a Permanency Planning Goal (PPG)?

This is the plan for what happens when you leave foster care. When you first enter foster care, the plan is usually for you to return home to your family. If you are not able to return home to live with your family, the plan may be for you to live with a relative or friend, or to be adopted, or to live on your own or in an adult residence. Your PPG can change over time depending upon your parent's actions and circumstances. You have a right to know what your PPG is and to participate in setting it.

5. When do FTCs take place?

FTCs take place more often when you first enter foster care. A conference is held within the first month, then at three months, and then every six months after that. In addition, a conference will be scheduled if you have to move from one placement to another, if you are being discharged from foster care, or if your PPG is being changed.

6. Why should I attend my FTC?

This is an opportunity for you to gain first-hand information from the agency and to have direct input into plans that will affect your future. You can raise your concerns and tell your workers what you would like to have happen. You can ask for help with problems that you are encountering and ask questions about actions the agency has taken. You are the "expert" on your situation and this is an opportunity to demonstrate your listening and advocacy skills.

7. How do I plan for my FTC?

Tell your caseworker if you would like to invite anyone else to attend your conference. This can be a teacher, a counselor, a family member or anyone who you feel close to.

Think about what questions you have. For example, are there aspects of your plan that you don't understand? Are you unsure why you are asked to do certain things? Think about requests you would like to make. For example, would you like changes in your visits with your parents or siblings? Think about services or assistance that you need. For example, are you receiving help with any problems in your school work? Do you need help applying for housing benefits? Write everything down so that you don't forget important items when you go into the meeting. Call and talk with your lawyer before the meeting.

8. What should I do at the FTC?

- *Listen*
- *Ask questions*
- *Speak up*

- *Stay calm, don't argue*
- *If you don't understand, ask for an explanation*
- *If you don't agree or the information is wrong, say so*
- *Say what you think you need and what you would like your future to look like*
- *At any time, you can ask for a break or talk with your lawyer or social worker alone*
- *Ask for a copy of the written plan developed at the meeting*

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