

Child and Family Team Meetings

A simple guide for parents, youth, and caregivers

THE MAIN IDEA

A CFTM is your team's time to talk, plan, and make sure everyone knows what the child and family need.

Your Questions, Answered

What is a CFTM?

CFTM means Child and Family Team Meeting. It brings the family and team together to make plans for the child's safety, needs, and future.

When should meetings happen?

Meetings should happen when the family can take part. The worker should think about work hours, rides, interpreters, and other barriers.

- 14 days after protective custody
- 40 days after protective custody
- Every 90 days while the case is open
- 30 days before a child returns home or the case closes
- Any other time the team needs to meet

Where will we meet?

The parent's home is the first choice when possible. If the meeting must be somewhere else, ask the worker why.

Who may be on my team?

The team may include parents, the child, the worker and supervisor, caregivers, the GAL or CASA, family advocates, service providers, and supportive people chosen by the family.

Can my child choose support people?

Starting at age 12, a youth may choose up to two team members to support or speak for them at case reviews and court hearings. Safety concerns may affect who can attend.

What will we talk about?

The team may review the service plan, visits, safety, the child's needs, family strengths, progress, barriers, court dates, and what each person can do next.

Can I join by phone or video?

Yes. Technology may be used when it helps a person take part who could not otherwise attend.

Is private information protected?

A current release of information is needed before private information is shared. People may join only part of the meeting to protect private details.

Can parents keep attending if the goal changes?

A parent may still take part when the goal is no longer return home, as long as parental rights have not been ended.

How can parents prepare?

Parents should bring their questions, service plan, and calendar. It's recommended to bring a notebook with your progress, questions, and concerns. Write down the decisions that were made during the meeting. Before the meeting ends, make sure you know who will do each task and when it is due.

How can caregivers prepare?

Caregivers will share updates on the child's health, behavior, medical appointments, and school during the meeting. Your information helps the team identify needs, solve problems, and assess progress. Due to confidentiality, caregivers will be asked to exit the CFTM after the child's portion of the case is discussed. The caregiver can remain for the parent's portion only if the parent has given written consent.

Words You May Hear

CFTM: Child and Family Team Meeting.

Service plan: The written plan for family needs, goals, services, and action steps.

Permanency: A safe, lasting family and sense of belonging.

ACR: Administrative Case Review. A formal review of the case and service plan.

Where can I learn more?

More details are in Illinois DCFS Procedure 315.105 and Procedures 315.110-315.125.

This guide gives general information. It is not legal advice. Rules and case details can change what happens. Ask your worker, supervisor, advocate, or lawyer about your own case.