



A community based **Family Team Meeting (FTM)** is a professionally facilitated meeting that brings together individuals who can **assist vulnerable families in getting back on track** and **preventing any crisis warranting Department of Human Services (DHS) involvement** from occurring.

This approach **draws upon a family's strengths**, experiences, knowledge, and resources to **create a plan that provides for the safety and well-being of children** in the family. The family is assisted in developing natural supports that will enhance the family's capacity and build a circle of support that will see the family through difficult times.

FTMs are based on these values: **everyone has strengths, people can change, and people deserve support.**

The family selects who to invite to their FTM with guidance from a certified facilitator. Typical team members include family members, informal supports (*such as friends, neighbors or other community members*), community support (*such as pastors, teachers, support group members, counselors or other advocates*) and formal resources (*such as attorneys, child welfare, mental health, domestic violence, education or other agencies*). All team members will sign a confidentiality agreement prior to the FTM. **The family will also select when and where to have their**

FTM. Typical locations include their home, church, or a community building.

Children are usually invited to FTMs because **they care about their family's wellbeing and have important things to say about what they would like to see happen.** Sometimes children do not attend or come for only part of the meeting, especially if they are young.



The family's facilitator will contact them prior to the FTM to describe what the meeting will be like and to identify the issues that need to be discussed. **The facilitator will ask the family what they would like to see happen as a result of the meeting.** The role of the facilitator is to make sure that everyone's voice is heard during the meeting and that everything runs smoothly. **All FTM facilitators are thoroughly trained and certified.**

During the FTM, the team:

- ❖ *Is welcomed and introduces themselves*
- ❖ *Learns what the family hopes to accomplish and defines the purpose of the meeting*
- ❖ *Sets reasonable and meaningful goals*
- ❖ *Recognizes and affirms the family's strengths*
- ❖ *Assesses the family's needs*
- ❖ *Designs an individualized course of action that includes supports and services matching the family's needs and building on their strengths*
- ❖ *Agrees on next steps and sets up supports*

The services and supports identified can **help the family deal with future challenges without the need for DHS intervention**. If the services or supports are ever found to be unsuccessful or unresponsive, the family team will have an opportunity to modify the plan to meet the family's changing needs.



By having all of the family's services and supports present at the FTM, **all contributors will be aware of and in agreement with the individualized course of action that is developed**. All team members will understand their role and how it relates to the other team members and will know what the others expect of them.

Do you know a family that could benefit from a non-DHS, community based family team meeting?

Any child protection concerns need to be reported to DHS; **if a child abuse concern exists and you have not reported it yet, do this now by calling 1-800-362-2178**.

You must **obtain the family's informed consent before submitting a FTM referral** on their behalf. Prior to filling out the referral form, tell the family about what a FTM is and how it could help them. CPPC can provide you with a brochure outlining information pertinent to families as well as the referral form. Self-referrals from families are also accepted.

To make a referral, contact Polk County's Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC) Coordinator, Tommy Ross, at 515-725-2780 or via email at tross@dhs.state.ia.us

Once you have made the referral, information will be collected from you that will help determine if the family is a good candidate for a FTM. CPPC works in partnership with DHS to ensure that **any families in need receive appropriate services and supports**. Be advised that due to confidentiality restrictions, we cannot notify you whether or not a family will be participating in a FTM or if they are receiving any other services or supports.

If you would like to learn more about non-DHS supports for vulnerable families, you are encouraged to **attend Polk County CPPC's bi-monthly meetings**. Thank you for your efforts to protect children!

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