



# ***2017 State Roundtable Report Permanency Practice Initiative***

Dear Members of the Pennsylvania State Roundtable:

At the 2016 State Roundtable, the Permanency Practice Initiative Workgroup was tasked with examining a family meeting process that “provides for family engagement within the time constraints of emergency or crisis situations”. This task could only be described as daunting. However, the Workgroup immediately dove in by surveying counties in Pennsylvania and subsequently interviewing numerous county administrators and providers. We were pleased to discover several counties had already developed and were utilizing Rapid/Crisis Response Family Meetings. Our report will detail our recommendations to refine/encourage use of these meetings -- a practice that at times will eliminate the need for placement, or will reduce trauma for children and families by ensuring that necessary placements are with kin.

We also spent considerable time focusing on best practices for Family Finding (FF). In order to better support FF, we authored “Keys to Successful Family Finding”. It is our hope this document will lead to better FF efforts across the state. To be successful, FF is not a once and done event. Rather it is an ongoing process. Therefore, we are also including sample templates for agency reports to the court that are updated prior to every hearing. We are confident these resources will aid the agency in providing the necessary information for courts to make the required findings at each hearing. It is our strong belief that enhanced FF efforts will positively impact safety, permanency and well-being for all of our families.

In 2006, the State Roundtable voted to support court and agency practices that gave voice to children and families. Those practices included use of CPCMS, Family Finding, FGDM, 3 month court reviews, a local Children’s Roundtable co-convened by the lead dependency judge and agency administrator, a model to train staff, providers and the community in strength-based practice and philosophy, and grief and loss training (added later). These collective practices formed the Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI). Since 2006 and the inception of the PPI, significant changes have occurred in the Child Dependency System across the state of Pennsylvania as a result of these practices.

The Workgroup suggests celebrating the success of the PPI and building on that success with a new initiative that would take practice to a new level. Our report outlines in detail our suggestions for the introduction of the Family Engagement Initiative.

Finally, we wish to thank each Workgroup member for their time, expertise and commitment to the improvement of the Permanency Practice Initiative. We would like to thank the Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC) for giving us the opportunity to be involved with the Roundtable’s efforts and ultimately help improve permanency outcomes for dependent children in Pennsylvania.

Honorable Eleanor L. Bush  
Court of Common Pleas Allegheny County

Rick Saylor  
Director of Children’s Services  
Lycoming County (retired)

# Permanency Practice Initiative Workgroup

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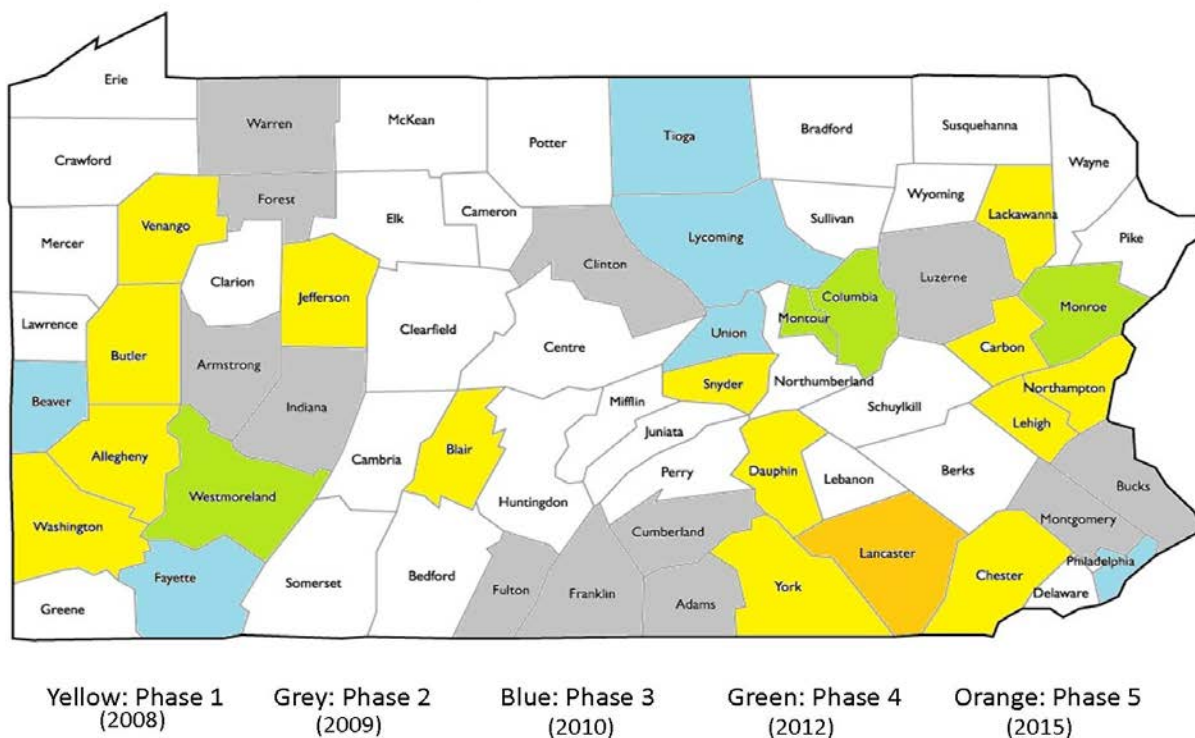
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## Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI)

### Overview:

The Pennsylvania Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI) was commissioned by the State Roundtable in June 2007. The PPI forms the practice change foundation for Pennsylvania's Dependency System. Currently, thirty-seven (37) counties are participating in the PPI. These counties represent 79% of all children in Pennsylvania's out-of-home care system.

### Permanency Practice Initiative Counties



The underlying premise of the PPI is that enhanced judicial oversight combined with strength-based, family-led social work practice will ultimately increase the number of children safely maintained in their own homes and support expedited permanency either through safe reunification or the finalization of another permanent plan.

Counties entered the PPI in five phases. Counties wanting to participate submitted a letter of intent signed by the lead Dependency Judge, Child Welfare Administrator, Human Service Director and County Commissioner. They further agreed to implement the PPI required elements within 6 months of acceptance and selected a target population of dependency cases upon which to apply these practices. Data reports to measure the progress of the PPI elements would be submitted quarterly by the counties.

The PPI practice combination includes:

- Local Children’s Roundtable (CRT) – Convened by the lead Dependency Judge and co-facilitated with the Child Welfare Agency Administrator
- Common Pleas Case Management System (CPCMS) - Dependency Module
- 3 Month Judicial Reviews
- Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)
- Family Finding (FF)
- A plan for training providers and the community in strength-based practice/philosophy
- Grief & Loss Education

**Approved 2016 State Roundtable (SRT) recommendations:**

1. FGDM remains the family meeting model for PPI counties and cannot be replaced by any other family engagement model.
2. The Workgroup support the examination of an emergency/rapid response process that provides for family engagement within the time constraints of emergency or crisis situations through selected volunteer PPI counties, with results presented to the 2017 SRT.
3. All PPI counties must have identified a model/practice and implementation plan for training staff, providers and the community in strength-based practice and philosophy by October 1, 2016.
4. During 2016-17, the Workgroup will focus on improving FGDM/Family Finding implementation and best practice.
5. Accept the “10 Keys for a Successful Local Children’s Roundtable” for use with all counties in PA with the goal of strengthening local CRTs through self-assessment and continuous quality improvement.

## **Strength-based Practice Model**

Prior to the 2016 SRT, all PPI Counties were required to utilize Family Development Credentialing/Strength-based Worker Credential as the model for training staff, providers and the community in strength-based practice and philosophy. At the 2016 SRT, it was determined that although PPI counties were still required to train in strength-based practice the training model/practice used would be at the discretion of the county.

Beginning in August, the Workgroup, with the assistance of the Office of Children and Families in the Courts (OCFC) Judicial Analysts, initiated follow-up with PPI counties to assure that they had identified a model and developed an implementation plan for strength-based training. The Workgroup is pleased that as of the deadline date, October 1, 2016; all PPI counties had completed this task. While many counties continued to utilize Family Development Credentialing/Strength-based Worker Credential, other replacement models included:

- Motivational Interviewing,
- Provider meetings/training hosted by the agency,
- Quality Assurance meetings hosted by the agency, and
- Alternative curriculums such as Strengthening Families.

## **“10 Keys to a Successful Children’s Roundtable”**

During 2016, the Workgroup developed a tool to strengthen local CRTs across Pennsylvania. At the 2016 SRT, the document, “10 Keys for a Successful Local Children’s Roundtable” was accepted for implementation. Following the SRT, each county received a copy. It was the hope of the Workgroup that counties would use the tool as a self-assessment instrument to help strengthen their local CRT.

During the 2016 fall LRTs, the Workgroup surveyed all of the counties in attendance regarding their use of the tool. Each county in attendance reported they had already used the tool or had plans to do so. Counties using the tool acknowledged it had been valuable in enhancing their CRT.

Additionally, with minor adjustments, the tool was also used to assess the strengths and opportunities for both the 2016 Fall LRTs and the SRT.

## **Crisis and Rapid Response Family Meetings**

At the 2014 SRT, the PPI Workgroup was tasked with exploring a tiered approach to family meetings. Over the 2014-2015 period, the Workgroup collected information regarding various family engagement models being utilized across Pennsylvania, as well as other states, and provided that information to the 2015 State Roundtable. Throughout 2015-2016, the Workgroup met with representatives from numerous agencies and counties across Pennsylvania to discuss the variety of family engagement practices being utilized. The practices discussed included Family Group Decision Making, Team Decision Making and Family Team Conferencing.

At the 2016 State Roundtable, the Workgroup was tasked with providing to the 2017 State Roundtable a summary with recommendations “regarding crisis/rapid response models currently in use across the state and identifying best practices.”

Throughout the 2016-2017 year, the Workgroup conducted conference calls, distributed and reviewed surveys, interviewed direct service providers and discussed various models of crisis/rapid response practices being utilized across Pennsylvania by private agencies (under contract with county agencies) and county agencies. The following counties and providers participated in our discussions: Blair, Clinton, Cumberland, Dauphin, Indiana, It Takes a Village (serving Bradford and Philadelphia), Justice Works Youth Care (serving Lehigh, Blair and Susquehanna), Montgomery and Pike.

Discussions with providers suggested that early family engagement conferences have in some cases eliminated the need for placement of children in foster care and in some other cases have eliminated the need for continued Agency involvement. However, early family engagement conferences were not routinely offered in any of the counties participating in our discussions. Reasons cited included lack of referral by the caseworker responsible for the case, concerns regarding safety issues for the parties involved and lack of availability of parents due to abandonment, incarceration or even death (most recently due to drug overdose).

In the Workgroup’s review of crisis response (immediate to 24 hours) and rapid response (within 72 hours) family engagement meetings, the Workgroup found there was no significant difference in practice based upon time frames. The Workgroup found that timing of the meetings varied from occurring simultaneously with the crisis event to up to five (5) days from the initial contact of the presenting issue(s). Discussions with agency staff and providers revealed no consistent fidelity to any established model of family engagement. This appears in part due to the short period of time from the initial contact to the actual meeting, the need to customize the meeting to meet the individual needs of each family and the fact that the meeting is only dealing with the immediate presenting issues not all case issues. We learned

that some counties in Pennsylvania have staff available around the clock to respond to crisis situations while others have staff on-call; therefore, limiting the ability to provide an immediate response. Also, the crisis/rapid response meetings in some counties are convened by private providers and therefore may need administrative approval in some cases.

Despite the time and effort given to this task, the Workgroup is not in a position to recommend a specific model for these emergency family meetings. However, after extensive discussions with providers and county agency staff conducting or involved in such meetings, the Workgroup recommends the following practice elements for successful “crisis/rapid response family meetings”.

- **The referral process must be streamlined as to not be a hindrance to agency staff making the referral.** *This was more prevalent in situations where private providers were utilized. Additionally, an automatic referral process would allow all families the opportunity to create an emergency plan and reduce trauma.*
- **Facilitator/Coordinator of the emergency family meeting should attempt to get as many persons as possible to be involved in the meeting unless safety concerns are present.** *Conference calling, FaceTime, Zoom and Skype are examples of some technology utilized to maximize participation.*
- **Facilitator/Coordinator of the emergency family meeting must be neutral.** *The use of a neutral facilitator allows ample time to organize the meeting, prepare participants and allow the investigation to proceed independently from the meeting. This is especially important given the different albeit complementary goals of each activity.*
- **The Emergency Family Meeting must be employed at the earliest possible time to safely prevent placement, prevent agency continued involvement or, if placement is unavoidable, establish kinship connections and placement resources so as to reduce trauma.** *As stated this practice has in some cases eliminated the need for placement and eliminated the need for continued agency involvement. In those instances, where placement is needed, the practice can identify safe kinship placements, connections and adults who may assist in the provision/access of services (i.e. visitation or transportation).*
- **Agency administration and the courts must fully support the process and set an expectation for genuine, ongoing family engagement as “routine practice” for all dependency professionals.**



- **Plans developed by families and approved by the Agency must be provided to the Court, when there is court involvement.** *Providing the family plan to the court may demonstrate reasonable efforts and compliance with Act 55. These plans can also assist the court in understanding the extended family and friends' capacity to help.*
- **Agency staff must be trained on the benefits of the practice and must be provided with regularly scheduled training updates.** *Sustainability is essential. It should never be assumed that staff knows either the practice or the benefits of the practice.*
- **Follow-up family meetings, if needed, must occur within thirty (30) days to deal with all relevant issues with all family members and/or invitees in attendance. Further follow-up family meetings should be scheduled as needed.** *As stated by all providers, the crisis/rapid response meetings deal only with the immediate presenting safety issues and stabilization. They were not comprehensive in dealing with other issues.*
- **Private family time must be offered so that the plan being developed will have family support and a higher degree of success.** *Most of the providers did not automatically offer private family time but stated that if the family requested private time it would be provided. Research has demonstrated a significant difference in the creativity of plans developed in private and the ownership of those plans.*

In order to further support best practices in family meetings, the Workgroup authored a brochure, "Crisis and Rapid Response Family Meetings". The Workgroup requests the State Roundtable accept the brochure for dissemination to all counties. (Attachment A)

### **"Keys to Successful Family Finding"**

In 2007 the State Roundtable adopted Kevin Campbell's model of "Family Finding" as one of the core best practices to be included in the Permanency Practice Initiative. The Family Finding practice model includes specific steps to be followed with the overall goal of providing each child involved in the child welfare system with the lifelong connections that only kin can offer.

Family finding is now required by law. Effective in 2013, Pennsylvania statutes require that family finding be conducted beginning when a child is accepted for service by the county CYS agency and at least annually thereafter. 62 P.S. § 1302.1. The law defines "family finding" as "ongoing diligent efforts" to (1) search for, identify, and engage adult relatives and kin in children and youth "social service planning and delivery" and (2) gain commitment from those relatives and kin to support a child or parent who is receiving services. 62 P.S. §1302.

The Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure were amended in 2015 to ensure that dependency courts address family finding, thus adding further reinforcement and accountability for

compliance with the law. Rule 1149 requires the court to inquire into the county agency's family finding efforts and to determine whether the agency "has reasonably engaged in family finding." Additionally, courts are required to inquire and make findings regarding family finding at every stage of dependency proceedings.

The PPI Workgroup's charge from the State Roundtable for 2016-17 included a focus on improving Family Finding implementation and best practice. Having carefully reviewed and discussed the results of the fall Leadership Roundtables' discussions, as well as county-level practices in PPI counties whose data reports reflect particularly good Family Finding statistics, common features of good practice stood out.

The Workgroup particularly highlights that to be most effective, family finding efforts need to become integrated into the entire child welfare system, across all stakeholders, including the county agency, private providers, the court, the attorneys, and the families themselves. All have a role to play in ensuring that children have the benefit of lifelong connections. The PPI Workgroup now offers the following as tools for local Children's Roundtables to continue to elevate practice:

Attachment B – Keys to Successful Family Finding Chart

Attachments C and D -- sample court report formats

### **Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI)**

As stated earlier, in 2006 the SRT voted to support court and agency practices that gave voice to children and families. Those practices included use of CPCMS, Family Finding, FGDM, 3-month court reviews, a local Children's Roundtable convened by the lead dependency judge and co-facilitated with the agency administrator, a model to train staff, providers and the community in strength-based practice and philosophy, and grief and loss training. During the past year, the Workgroup surveyed all Pennsylvania counties (PPI and Non-PPI) regarding their implementation of the PPI practices. The survey results are summarized below:

- CPCMS is the computerized system utilized to document judicial findings and orders in all child dependency matters.
- Family finding, now required by Pennsylvania statute and the Supreme Court's Juvenile Court Procedural Rules, is happening to varying degrees of success in all counties. Courts are required to make an inquiry and findings at every stage of dependency proceedings.

- Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) is offered in 64 counties (95% of all PA counties). In addition to FGDM, counties also utilize various family meetings models including Team Decision Making and Family Team Conferencing. While including families in the development of their family service plan (as required by Act 55) has become the rule rather than the exception, no county “requires” the practice for all families and no counties “require an automatic referral”.
- Local Children’s Roundtables occur in 50 counties (75% of all PA counties).
- Three-month court reviews occur in 57 counties (85% of all PA counties).
- As for both strength-based training and grief and loss training, all counties have been exposed to ongoing training through various events and resources including the Children’s Roundtable Summit, hearing officer and legal representative training, the Judicial Benchbook, SWAN/Child Preparation units of service, Workgroups and State Conference of Trial Court Judges’ Dependency sessions.

Given that the PPI elements have now been incorporated into practice throughout the state, as well as in the designated PPI counties, the Workgroup believes the SRT should consider the original work of the PPI complete. The Workgroup also believes that a new initiative could offer an opportunity for the SRT to support counties that desire to build on the foundation of the PPI to further improve practice.

### **Taking Court and Agency Practice to the Next Level: The Family Engagement Initiative (FEI)**

The new initiative being proposed by the Workgroup, much like the PPI, the FEI would be offered to all 67 PA counties. Counties would be asked to submit a simple letter of interest signed by the lead Dependency Judge, the President Judge (if different), the Child Welfare Administrator and the County Commissioner. Depending upon the level of interest and readiness, four to eight counties would be selected.

As many SRT members will recall, the PPI began with identification of practices that the SRT thought held promise for transforming the child dependency system. Those original practices focused on enhancing child and family voice into the dependency process. Building upon the success of the PPI and because this effort is a court-led one, the Workgroup believes the focus should shift to support practices that specifically enhance the courtroom experience as well as child/family outcomes. The Workgroup strongly believes the new practices should be research based and measurable. Finally, the Workgroup believes these new practices should build upon the PPI practices (meaning those practices are well established within county agency and court

practice). These practices were vetted through the 2017 Spring Leadership Roundtables with no objections raised. The suggested new practices include:

1. Family Finding – Although family finding is now law, additional work could deepen and strengthen the practice to truly create lifelong family connections. If Family Finding is selected as an element of FEI, it would be the updated model of Family Finding developed by Kevin Campbell. It would be applied to all families and begin at the time the case is accepted for service.
2. Legal Representation – The Workgroup strongly believes that good legal representation (Solicitors, Parent Attorneys and GALs) leads to better outcomes for children and families. In fact, there is substantial evidence to support that good legal representation contributes to or is associated with:
  - increases in party perceptions of fairness;
  - increases in party engagement in case planning, services and court hearings;
  - more personally tailored and specific case plans and services;
  - increases in visitation and parenting time;
  - expedited permanency; and
  - cost savings to state government due to reductions of time children and youth spend in care.

In 2014, the Legal Representation Workgroup finalized the Standards of Practice for Parent Attorneys, Guardians Ad Litem and Legal Counsel practicing in Pennsylvania’s Child Dependency System. This document includes tools that can assist counties in assessing areas of need and in implementing policies that would support attorney practice that meets the Standards. While the document doesn’t specifically address the role of Solicitor, the Workgroup believes this role should be included in the FEI. If legal representation is selected as a focus of the FEI, counties would be supported in making the Standards a reality.

3. Rapid/Crisis Response Family Meetings – As discussed above, the Workgroup feels confident (and research supports) that including family as early as possible significantly increases kinship placements, reduces trauma, and frequently reduces or eliminates agency involvement. If selected as a focus of FEI, counties would work to fully and systematically incorporate all of the meeting elements discussed above.
4. Motivational Interviewing (MI) – Motivational interviewing is a communication technique that harnesses a person’s intrinsic motivation to initiate and facilitate positive change. Over the past couple of years, the Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission and the

Office of Children and Families in the Courts have made it possible for judges and hearing officers to be introduced to the techniques. Some county child welfare agencies have introduced it to their staff and to service providers. The Workgroup believes that MI techniques, if used systemically by the many participants in the child dependency system, hold significant promise to improve outcomes. If selected as a focus of FEI, counties would work to train all court and child welfare system participants in MI and would work to incorporate the techniques across the system.

***The Workgroup requests the SRT accept the recommendation to create the FEI. The Workgroup further requests the SRT discuss the above practices/areas of focus and determine which practice(s) will be the foundation of the FEI.***

As with the PPI, participation in FEI would be voluntary. Applicants for the FEI would not be required to have been a PPI county. However, since this new initiative builds on the PPI successes, applicants would need to demonstrate current use of and a commitment to continued use of the PPI practices (FGDM, FF, CPCMS, CRTs, Strength-based training, Grief/loss training) in order to be considered.

Finally, one of the most important lessons learned from the PPI was in regard to the selection of target populations. Since counties applied the elements to vastly different populations, it was impossible to gather meaningful comparative outcome data. As a result, the Workgroup strongly recommends that the FEI not have target populations. Instead participating counties would be required to apply the practice elements to all families with larger counties doing this in planned stages.

In order to assess the success of this new initiative, the Workgroup plans to partner with the University of Pittsburgh/Child Welfare Resource Center to identify outcomes, collect data and measure outcomes.

***Proposed timeline for implementation of FEI:***

June 2017 – Establish new FEI Workgroup and finalize FEI application

July 2017 - Announce FEI to counties

August 2017 - Deadline for county applications

September 2017 - County visits and consideration of applications by OCFC and the Workgroup

October 2017 - Announce FEI counties

Nov – Dec 2017 - Prepare for implementation and arrange necessary training/support plan

January 1, 2018 - Full implementation and begin data collection

May 2018 - Initial report to SRT

## **Recommendations**

**The Pennsylvania State Roundtable's PPI Workgroup respectfully submits to the Pennsylvania State Roundtable the following recommendations:**

1. Disband the Permanency Practice Initiative Workgroup, acknowledging that its assigned tasks have been completed.
2. End the Permanency Practice Initiative, acknowledging that the original purpose of the PPI has been completed and celebrating the work of PPI counties.
3. Establish the Family Engagement Initiative Workgroup and task the workgroup with developing the Family Engagement Initiative for implementation in 2017-18.
4. Continue to encourage use of "the 10 Keys to a Successful Children's Roundtable" in order to strengthen local CRTs through self-assessment and continuous quality improvement.
5. Adopt for use the "Keys to Successful Family Finding" with the goal of strengthening FF practice and increasing lifelong connections for children and youth across Pennsylvania.
6. Adopt the best practice elements for crisis/rapid response family meetings.
7. Adopt the brochure "Crisis and Rapid Response Family Meetings" to be distributed to all counties and statewide partners promoting the use of crisis and rapid response family meetings.



## Crisis and Rapid Response Family Meetings



*“Everybody has Somebody”*

## History

The 2016 State Roundtable (SRT) tasked the Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI) Workgroup with providing the 2017 State Roundtable with a summary with recommendations “regarding crisis/rapid response models currently in use across the state and identifying best practices.”

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*“We gathered quickly and our meeting helped us understand the seriousness of the situation. Now, we have our niece. She is safe, secure and with family.”*

▼

Throughout the year, the PPI Workgroup collected research on various family engagement practices utilized across the world, as well as, in Pennsylvania. The Workgroup also held conference calls, distributed and reviewed surveys, interviewed direct service providers and discussed specific models of crisis/rapid response family meetings being utilized across Pennsylvania by private agencies (under contract with county agencies) and county agencies.

The following counties and providers participated:

- Adams
- Blair
- Clinton
- Cumberland
- Dauphin
- Indiana
- Montgomery
- Pike
- It Takes a Village (serving Bradford and Philadelphia)
- Justice Works Youth Care (serving Lehigh)

▲

*“Family meetings should occur as soon as possible. In our experience, Crisis/Rapid Response Family Meetings at times eliminate the need for placement, or where placement is necessary, reduce trauma for families because placements are with kin”*

*Bradford County Caseworker*



It was clear in all Workgroup discussions that early family engagement conferences should be considered best practice. The use of Crisis/Rapid Response Family Meetings have in some cases eliminated the need for placement of children in foster care and sometimes eliminated the need for continued Agency involvement.

*"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". Front loading services provides great opportunity to assist a family in their capacity to avoid further system contact and gives hope to families and workers alike."*

*Honorable Jolene Grubb Kopriva  
Court of Common Pleas of Blair County*

Additionally, where placement is necessary the use of Crisis/Rapid Response Meetings very often results in kinship placements that reduce child and family trauma.

### **What is a Crisis and Rapid Response Family Meeting?**

Crisis Response Family Meetings occur simultaneously with the crisis event that brought the family to the attention of the agency.

Rapid Response Family Meetings occur within 24-72 hours after the crisis that brought the family to the attention of the agency.



While the Workgroup cannot recommend a specific model of Crisis or Rapid Response Family Meetings, it has identified the following best practice elements:

- **The referral process must be streamlined and automatic.** This would lessen any hindrance to agency staff making the referral and allow all families the opportunity to create an emergency plan and reduce trauma.
- **Facilitator/Coordinator of the meeting should attempt to get as many persons as possible to be involved in the meeting unless safety concerns are present.** Conference calling, FaceTime, Zoom and Skype are examples of some technology utilized to maximize participation.
- **Facilitator/Coordinator of the meeting must be neutral.** The use of a neutral facilitator allows ample time to organize the meeting, prepare participants and allow the investigation to proceed independently from the meeting. This is especially important given the different albeit complementary goals of each activity.
- **The meeting must be employed at the earliest possible time to safely prevent placement, prevent agency continued involvement or, if placement is unavoidable, establish kinship connections and placement resources so as to reduce trauma.** As stated this practice has in some cases eliminated the need for placement and eliminated the need for continued agency involvement. In those instances where placement is needed, the practice can identify safe kinship placements, connections and adults who may assist in the provision/access of services (i.e. visitation or transportation).

- **Agency administration and the courts must fully support the process and set an expectation for genuine, ongoing family engagement as “routine practice”.**
- **Plans developed by families and approved by the Agency must be provided to the Court, when there is court involvement.** Providing the family plan to the court may demonstrate reasonable efforts and compliance with Act 55. These plans can also assist the court in understanding the extended family and friends’ capacity to help.
- **Agency staff must be trained on the benefits of the practice and must be provided with regularly scheduled training updates.** Sustainability is essential. It should never be assumed that staff knows either the practice or the benefits of the practice.
- **Follow-up family meetings, if needed, must occur within thirty (30) days to deal with all relevant issues with all family members and/or invitees in attendance.** Further follow-up family meetings should be scheduled as needed to allow all family members/invitees to deal with other relevant issues. As stated by all providers, the crisis/rapid response meetings deal only with the immediate presenting safety issues and stabilization. They are not comprehensive in addressing other issues.
- **Private family time must be offered so that the plan that is being developed will have their support and a higher degree of success.** Most of the providers did not automatically offer private family time but stated that if the family requested private time it would be provided. Research has demonstrated a significant difference in the creativity of plans developed in private and the ownership of those plans.

<b>County</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Crisis/Rapid Response Model</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Adams	Contracted	Family Team Meeting	1-5 days
Blair	Contracted	FGDM	3-14 days
Bradford	Contracted	Family Group Conference	1-3 days
Clinton	County	FGDM/abbreviated	3-7 days
Cumberland	Both	FGD< & Family Teaming	3-7 days
Dauphin	County	FGDM/abbreviated	1-5 days
Lehigh	Contracted	FGDM	3-7 days
Montgomery	Contracted	*	Within 10 days
Philadelphia	Contracted	Family Group Conference	1-3 days
Susquehanna	Contracted	FGDM/abbreviated	3-7 days

\*Presently utilizing Team Decision Making but have RFP for Rapid Response FGDM model

	<b>Follow-up Family Meeting Available</b>	<b>Private Family Time</b>	<b>Automatic Referral</b>
	Yes	If requested	Yes
	Yes	Yes	No
	Yes	Yes	No
	Yes	If requested	Yes
	Yes	If requested	Yes
	Yes	If requested	Yes
	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Yes	If requested	Yes
	Yes	If requested	No
	Yes	If requested	No

**Office of Children & Families in the Courts  
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[www.ocfpcourts.us](http://www.ocfpcourts.us)**

**RESOURCES**

- Ensure that there are staff members with Family Finding activities as their primary responsibility. These may be agency or contracted providers.
- Ensure that resources necessary to support Family Finding are planned for and included in needs-based budgeting.

**TRAINING**

- Provide initial training and regularly offer updates for Family Finding staff and all staff within the child welfare agency.
- Provide training for all stakeholders – Judges, Hearing Officers, GALs, Parent Attorneys, Solicitors, CASA, Providers, and Foster Parents.

**TIMING**

- Ensure that Family Finding activities are initiated immediately upon acceptance for service.
- Ensure Family Finding activities are ongoing, not a one-time effort.

**ENGAGEMENT**

- Ensure that Family Finding efforts include engaging the child, family members and kin.
- Engagement goes beyond sending a letter, or making a phone call.
- Ensure that engagement genuinely includes family/kin in the case planning process and encompasses more options than a placement resource. Consider sending cards/letters, regular visitation or respite as options.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

- Agency leadership encourages/requires best practice.
- Prepare to provide Family Finding Information at every court hearing.
- Consider using a standardized form for the report, as aid to courtroom discussion, not as replacement for it.

**COURT INVOLVEMENT**

- Judicial officer leadership encourages/requires best practice
- Family Finding discussed in courtroom at every hearing.
- Court encourages/requires children, family members and attorneys to participate, ensuring that Family Finding is not solely an agency responsibility.

**TOOLS-EXAMPLES**

- Genograms, connectograms and calendars completed by skilled interviewers.
- Family interviews, including the child.
- OCFC Bench Card -- "Family Finding - Key Questions".
- Use of FGDM, rapid response/crisis response family meetings, facilitation and Family Team Meetings to include families in service planning
- Diligent Search -- includes Accurant and other search engines, social media.

**SUSTAINABILITY**

- Gather data and track outcomes.
- Periodically review data and outcomes with all system stakeholders.
- Family Finding is the Law

**ATTACHMENT C – Allegheny County**

IN RE:

DOCKET NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

KIDS CLIENT ID \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(DOB \_\_\_\_\_)

**FAMILY FINDING REPORT**

Date of Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_

Judge/Hearing Officer \_\_\_\_\_

- Initial Family Finding Report
- Family Finding Update

**METHODS OF IDENTIFICATION**

**ACCURINT SEARCH**

Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

*Who was identified?*

NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	CONTACT INFORMATION

**INTERVIEW OF CHILD**

Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

*Who was identified?*

NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	CONTACT INFORMATION



**INTERVIEW OF MOTHER**

Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

*Who was identified?*

NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	CONTACT INFORMATION

**INTERVIEW OF FATHER**

Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_

*Who was identified?*

NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	CONTACT INFORMATION

**INTERVIEWS OF OTHERS**

NAME OF PERSON INTERVIEWED	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD/FAMILY	DATE(S) OF INTERVIEWS

*Who was identified?*

NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	CONTACT INFORMATION

**SOCIAL MEDIA SITES**

NAME OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITE	DATE CHECKED

**Who was identified?**

NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	CONTACT INFORMATION

**GENOGRAMS, FAMILY TREES, & MAPPING**

NAMES OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROCESS	DATE(S)

**Who was identified?**

NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	CONTACT INFORMATION

- Genogram, Family Tree or Map is Attached

**OTHER METHODS**

OTHER METHOD OR PROCESS	DATE(S)

**Who was identified?**

NAME	RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD	CONTACT INFORMATION

Other Documents Attached: \_\_\_\_\_

**EFFORTS TO CONTACT POTENTIAL SUPPORTS**

NAME	DATE OF ATTEMPTED CONTACT(S)	CONTACT MADE?	POTENTIAL PLACEMENT?	POTENTIAL SUPPORT?	NOT ABLE AT THIS TIME

**NEXT STEPS**

**What are the next steps to identify supports for this child and family?**

- Continue efforts to contact persons who have been identified
- Continue efforts to identify kin and supports—Specify methods \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Engage the child and other family members about persons who have been identified
- Arrange contact between persons who have been identified as potential placement resources or supports
- Complete home inspections and background checks on persons who have been identified as potential placement resources or supports
- Search for the whereabouts of kin that have been identified, but not located
- Continue to check social media on an ongoing basis

Other—Specify

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## ATTACHMENT D

**CHESTER COUNTY  
FAMILY FINDING  
COURT REPORT**

Date of Report: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Completing Report: \_\_\_\_\_ Provider Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

_____ DCYF In-Home Family		_____ DCYF Placement Child	
Children Receiving Family Finding Services:		Date of Referral for Family Finding:	
		Date of Referral to Provider Agency:	
Mother's name:		Father's name:	
CYF Case Worker's Name/Department:		Any Other CYF Workers Involved:	

**Family Finding Update:**

Date Accurint Search Provided to Provider Agency:	Step Reached in Family Finding Model:
Date of Alignment meeting:	Number of Adult Kin Connected:
Number of Family Identified At Time of Referral:	Was a Genogram Completed? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes   Date:
Number of Family Identified through FF Efforts:	Was Mobility Mapping Completed? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes   Date:

<p>Number Of Family Members Interviewed: (List names &amp; dates in narrative)</p>	
<p>Was a Blended Perspective Meeting Held?   <input type="checkbox"/> No    <input type="checkbox"/> Yes    Date:                   # Family                      # Professionals</p>	<p>Was a Decision Making Meeting Held?   <input type="checkbox"/> No    <input type="checkbox"/> Yes    Date:                   # Family    # Professionals                   How Many Plans were Developed:</p>
<p>List Life Network meetings                   Date:                  # Family Attending: ____ # Professionals Attending: ____                   Date:                  # Family Attending: ____ # Professionals Attending: ____                   Date:                  # Family Attending: ____ # Professionals Attending: ____</p>	<p>Was Permanency reached?   <input type="checkbox"/> Yes    <input type="checkbox"/> No    Date:                   Describe:</p>

**Chester County Family Finding Court Report (Continued)**

**Family Finding Efforts:** Include all efforts directly related to the identification and contact with family/kin resources.

Describe each parent’s willingness and participation with the Family Finding process.

Maternal Family Members Identified:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Date/How contacted</b>	<b>Response</b>

Paternal Family Members Identified:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Date/How contacted</b>	<b>Response</b>

Meetings Held: Include names of participants and summary of meeting and decisions made. Attach the report for each meeting held. If no meetings were held explain why.

Next Steps with Timeframes:

Barriers (If any):

Anything Needed from the Court or CYF:

Attach copies of any tools used (ex: genograms, connectograms etc.), if not previously submitted.

Submitted by:

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Caseworker's signature

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Supervisor's signature