

## Family Partnership Program

### What is the Family Partnership Program?

A Family Partnership Program brings together families and their extended supportive networks to receive input and make decisions regarding placement, case plan development and the overall safety, stability and well-being of the child(ren).

### Who's involved?

People who have been identified as being part of the family's support system, including parents, other family members, and individuals external to the family such as friends, service providers, teachers, clergy or other individuals significant to the family.

### How does it work?

When a family comes to the attention of a county agency because of a concern about their child's safety or well-being, they are referred to the Family Partnership Program. The Family Partnership Coordinator, with the help of other county staff and family members, identify individuals who are part of the family's support network to convene a meeting. Family Partnership meetings can be convened quickly (within 24 hours, if necessary). Family Partnership meetings are led by a trained facilitators, who otherwise are not associated with the case and do not carry a caseload. Family Partnership meetings could include the following activities:

"The family group conferencing process provides a venue of effective communication, in a neutral place, where private family time is respected. I felt this process helped to bring our family together." - Family member on participating in a Family Partnership meeting

- Gathering and assessing information in order to visualize the family system
- Matching strengths and needs with solutions and services
- Identifying behaviors and conditions that need to change
- Reviewing, tracking, and acknowledging progress regularly
- Determining readiness for key case transition points, such as reunification
- Preparing for case closure
- Marshaling supports for relapse prevention, as needed

### Why do them?

Successfully involving family members in case planning may be the most critical component for achieving positive outcomes in child welfare practice. Research suggests that when families are engaged and supported to have a significant role in case planning, they are more motivated to actively commit to achieving the case plan, resulting in more positive outcomes for the child. Additionally, families are more likely to recognize and agree with the identified problems to be resolved, perceive goals as relevant and attainable, and be satisfied with the planning and decision-making process when they are part of the process.