

Family Guide to

Building Child & Family Teams



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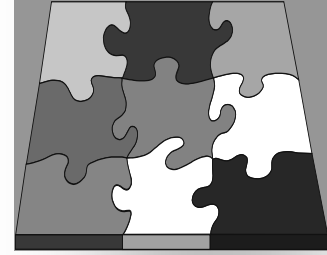
Updated 10/17/05

What are Child and Family Teams and How Do They Work?

The first thing to remember is that this is NOT a program or a service

It is a PROCESS, or a WAY of working with your Child and Family team.

*Is the concept of a
Child & Family Team*



a bit puzzling to you?

This process is based on the idea that services and family supports should be tailored to meet the needs of your child and family. There is an underlying value and commitment to create services and supports "one child at a time"; to promote community based options for children and youth with complex needs and their families.

Often, one or more agencies are involved with the family and they work together in a collaborative way - meaning they talk with each other and function as a team to help your family and each other to work toward common goals.

Usually, the Facilitator (and the Family Support Partner if the family has one), discover the strengths and culture of the child and family that will be the basis for setting goals, determining needs and developing strength-based options to meet the needs of the family.

As described above, in this process, you, your child, other family members and other people that YOU select are part of the Child and Family Team. This is your team. Together you make a Child and Family Team Plan. This plan is built around the strengths that you, your child and your family possess. This is called STRENGTH-BASED planning. The plan becomes your child's and family's plan of care.

The Child and Family Team process has many parts including:

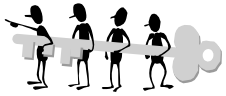
- Deciding who is on your team.
- Getting together with your team at times and places that are convenient and comfortable for you.
- Identifying strengths of your child and family.
- Setting goals and outcomes and identifying changes you want to see as a result of being involved in a Child and Family Team.
- Listing needs by looking at all areas of your child's life and your family's life.
- Choosing which needs to work on first.
- Brainstorming options - there may be many different ways to meet each specific need.
- Designing strength-based strategies to make progress.
- Creating a Crisis Plan to ensure your family has all the supports and resources needed in a time of crisis.
- Knowing you are not alone and do not have to do it all by yourself.

NEXT...take a look at how these parts of the Child and Family Team Plan may work for you and your family. Remember that no two plans look exactly the same... as no two families are exactly the same.



This is called **INDIVIDUALIZED** planning.

Deciding Who is on the Team



The people you choose to be on your team may include close friends, neighbors, church members, and even people from where you work. These should be people who know you and perhaps have helped you out in the past. Also, include agency staff who are already involved with your child and family as well as the Team facilitator, Family Support Partner and other supports.

It takes time to really feel supported by your team, but it helps if you start with team members that you feel comfortable meeting with. Remember, other people can be added to the team at a later date.

Identifying Strengths

You will notice that your team facilitator will ask you questions about things such as your likes/dislikes, what your hobbies are, your interests, what you are good at doing, etc. The same kind of questions will be asked of each family member. This is done to discover your individual strengths of your family members. Remember this is a **STRENGTH-BASED** process. Plans are built around things your family likes, is good at and has interest in, as well as what has worked for you. The facilitator looks for strengths in order to:

- Learn about your family and child.
- Get a balanced picture of your family (maybe people have only heard the negative and problems).
- Discover what resources your family already has available.



Resources may include other family members, neighbors, community resources - and whatever has helped your family in the past. ***THE STRENGTHS OF YOUR FAMILY AND OF YOUR CHILD ARE THE MOST USEFUL INGREDIENTS FOR MAKING PLANS THAT WORK.***



Outcomes or Goals



Identifying outcomes is VERY important for these reasons:

1. The outcomes or goals you decide upon will determine what services and supports your child and family team will receive;
2. The outcomes are like a map that tells your team where you want to go – if they are accomplished, you know the child and family team plan was useful. If not, your team will know they need to create new strategies or ways to meet your child and family needs (or think about what else may be happening that is keeping your child and family team from reaching its outcomes.)

Outcomes in your plan will usually be described as GOALS. Your team facilitator can explain them to you. Just remember that it is important that your team discuss outcomes and that they are important to you and your family. Sometimes outcomes are also determined by court mandates. These will be part of your Child and Family Team plan. **Your job is to let your team know what supports and resources you need, to be able to do what you are being asked to do.** If you have a Family Support Partner on your team, they can provide assistance, information and support in this area. Never let anyone ask you to do something that you are unable to do because: 1) you do not have supports or resources--such as transportation, childcare, money; 2) you do not know how to do something; 3) you do not know exactly what you are expected to do; or 4) you do not want to do something alone.

Here are some examples of outcomes from a Child and Family Team plan:

- ***Mike will control his emotional behavior at school. When he feels he is losing control in the classroom, he will go to a quiet place like the library or school nurse's office for a break. When he regains control of his emotions, he will return to his classroom.***
- ***The family will eat dinner together at the kitchen table every evening without food fights, shouting, or physical aggression.***
- ***Grandma will take Sally to her doctor's appointment while mom is at work.***
- ***Dad will take Miles out to play basketball on Thursday evenings.***

Listing Needs



Once the team has decided on the outcomes, it is time to find out what the child, the family and the team need from each other in order to reach them. Some examples of **needs** from other plans are things like:

- A way to get to the doctor.
- Help to get up in the morning.
- Someone to talk to when upset.
- Help with homework
- Help taking the right medication at the right time.
- Someone to watch the baby one night a week.
- Help with making friends.
- Help riding the bus.

Be careful not to list or name services. For example: a tutor, mentor, big brother, therapist...are considered services, not needs. There are many ways to meet needs.... List exactly “what the need is” and “when it is”. Be sure your team looks at all areas of your child’s and family's life when listing needs. Needs usually fall in these areas: home/family, medical, school/job, financial, legal, emotional/behavioral, social/fun and spiritual/cultural. List needs of ALL family members. This is called a **FAMILY-CENTERED** approach.

Later, we will discuss how services, supports and community resources can be utilized as possible ways to meet the needs you have listed.



Choosing which Needs to Work on First

Once you have listed the needs, the family will determine the importance of each need. The team will need to think about how these needs relate to achieving the outcomes you have decided upon earlier.

Next the team will take a close look at the needs chosen. Two or three critical needs might be a practical number to work on first. For each of these needs, the team should list all possible options that might help you with that need.

This is done quickly, without judgement, criticism or lengthy discussion. Ideas are suggested, no matter how silly or impractical they may seem. The facilitator should write down EVERY suggestion so the entire team can see the list. This is called “BRAINSTORMING”. The team can get as creative and inventive as possible; no options are too far out. For example if a top need was "help with handling anger" some options might be:

- * Design a volcano.
- * Tape record your thoughts to discuss them later with an adult.
- * Take an anger management class
- * Master karate.
- * Take up jogging.
- * Become a peer conflict resolution person.
- * Begin an "anger journal".
- * Work out at a health club.

Designing Strength-Based Strategies

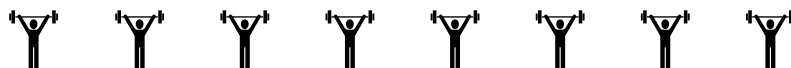
Now the team will look at the list of brainstormed options and decide which strategies to utilize to meet the need. From the list of all possible options choose only those that you can match with strengths (look at the list of strengths that were listed earlier). Do not choose an option just because someone likes it or because that service or program has an opening.

When an option matches the strengths of your family members, it is much more likely that it will work to meet your needs.

For example, if your child is outspoken, honest, stands up for other kids and thinks he may want to be a lawyer when he grows up.

Options might be:

1. Participate in peer conflict resolution.
2. Tape record thoughts for later discussion.



CRISIS PLAN

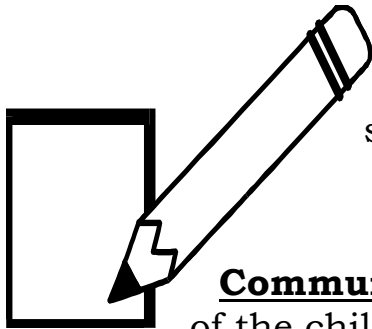
Crisis is part of life, and keeping you, your family and your child safe are VERY important parts of the Child and Family Team planning process. You have probably lived through what you would call "crisis situations" with your child and may be worried about what may happen in the future because of certain behaviors. The CRISIS PLAN



will indicate what steps your family and team members should take to prevent a crisis as well as steps to take if something does happen. It will be a plan that will work any time of the day or night, or any day of the week. The plan will be easy to follow and will include answers to the questions of "who, what, when, and where". The team ensures that your family has all the supports and resources you will need to carry out the plan.

Child and Family Team Report Card

What grade would you give YOUR plan?



YES, your family will be asked! What you tell us will be used in improving our processes, services and supports for your family and other families!

A good plan is:

Community Based - Services are based in the home community of the child and family whenever possible. **Individualized** - The plan considers all aspects of your lives and is flexible to meet the needs of your child and your family. **Strength Based** - Services and supports are based on the identified strengths of your child and family. **Family Voice** - Are your family's choices, preferences, cultural values and ways of doing things showing up in the plan? **Family Access** - Are you included in all meetings about your child and family? **Family Ownership** - Do you and your child feel like the plan is YOUR plan? Is there a **blend of formal and informal resources?** Is there a **hopeful, "never give up---we can make it" attitude?**

**Adapted from: The Parent's Guide to Wraparound, Association for Children's Mental Health, 941
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