

# **FOSTER PARENT ROLE IS IMPORTANT**

## **BEFORE THE MEETING:**

- Help the child prepare for the day – answer questions, reassure, consult with the CAS Worker
- Be mindful the child may show anxiety during the week prior to the meeting and help the child to manage that anxiety
- Do not make promises to the child you cannot keep
- Contact the FGC/FGDM coordinator if you have questions about the process, the child's role, or the family's role in the meeting
- Redirect family members to the FGC/FGDM coordinator with all questions and do not talk with family members about the upcoming meeting unless you are a member of the family
- Meet with the FGC/FGDM coordinator for your preparation and to discuss the level of your involvement in the meeting
- Ask for support from your support worker as needed to help manage your own anxiety or reactions to the process

## **DURING THE MEETING:**

- Transport child to and from meeting (usually)
- Be available to meet family members
- Participate in meeting as agreed upon beforehand with the FGC/FGDM coordinator
- Remember that you are a guest in the family circle and that the family is responsible for the child's well-being that day
- Find out the outcome of the meeting (if you are unable to stay for the day) – talk to the worker at the end of the day or arrange with the worker how you will find out. Ask the worker what the child knows and who told the child the outcome of the meeting

## **AFTER THE MEETING:**

- Assist child in managing anxiety (if any), answer questions, reassure child about the plan
- Talk with the CAS worker about questions, worries you or the child may have about the family's plan
- Talk with the FGC/FGDM coordinator about the overall process if you feel a need to debrief
- Talk with your support worker or foster parent mentor about your personal feelings associated with the meetings, as needed

## **FOSTER PARENT WORRIES BEFORE THE MEETING:**

- CAS is turning over too much responsibility to the family
- Family will defend the parents
- Family won't be held accountable
- Child will be at risk
- Children can't handle what's going on or the long day
- Children will be exposed to family conflict
- Children will be put on the spot or will be set up

## **FEEDBACK FROM FOSTER PARENTS AFTER ATTENDING AN FGC/FGDM MEETING**

“From a foster mother’s perspective: This went exceptionally well, it was informative, it was a get together amongst family, I’m overwhelmed.”

“Nobody got out of control, after fostering for many years I believe this is an excellent program, more children should have an opportunity to go through this.”

- FGC/FGDM includes foster parents in service planning
- FGC/FGDM promotes relationship building between extended family and foster parents
- FGC/FGDM ensures child safety by larger extended family
- Child’s voice, participation and safety are crucial to the process and success
- FGC/FGDM is a positive environment for everyone and a neutral and safe place for foster parents to meet the extended family
- Everyone who is important to the child is there (family & service providers)
- FGC/FGDM holds the family accountable for keeping their children safe

- No secrecy about what has been happening to the children – everyone in the family knows the same information

## **WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PLANS OF CARE MEETINGS AND FGC/FGDM**

### **Plans Of Care**

- Purpose: planning for the child while child is in CAS care
- Workers: foster parents community professionals and some family members attend professionals outnumber family members
- Meeting chaired by a CAS worker
- Minutes are taken during the meeting and distributed

### **FGC/FGDM**

- Purpose: family to make decisions about child safety in partnership with CAS
- Family (including extended family) workers foster parents, community service providers & FGC/FGDM Coordinator attend- Family members outnumber professionals
- First & third parts facilitated by Coordinator, second part of family's private time with no professionals present
- A copy of the plan is distributed to everyone present after the meeting. No one takes minutes.

### **FOSTER PARENT TIPS FOR FGC/FGDM**

Your preparation with the FGC/FGDM Coordinator is important. This will include your level of participation, CAS bottom lines, and information that will be shared with the family. Keep asking the Coordinator until you feel prepared for the day. This may happen during one meeting or it may happen during several meetings and phone calls.

The foster parent level of participation is voluntary

The family makes decisions about child level of participation in FGC/FGDM

The family is the child's primary support system during the FGC/FGDM

**If you know a child that may benefit from such a meeting let the worker know who can then make the referral to the FGC/FGDM coordinator.**

