

Family Group Decision Making

is a process designed to empower and strengthen families to make their own decisions about children who need protection or care. By participating in a conference (meeting), creating solutions and developing a plan that can be supported by OCY, the family finds a way to solve problems. In FGDM, a trained facilitator brings together the family group (children, parents, extended members, friends, professionals, community members) and agency personnel to create and carry out a plan to safeguard children and address the needs of other family members.

High Fidelity Wraparound

is a team based process for families with youth who have a mental health diagnosis and are in need of additional supports. In Montgomery County, the focus is making sure that a child is in placement for as short a time as possible or to prevent placement altogether. The Hi-Fi process involves professional assistance to family members with formation of their own treatment plan and identification of both formal and informal supports/services to assist with supporting the family unit. Professional peer support (youth) and family support are included in order to assist youth and family on an ongoing basis.

Child Prep & Profile

Whenever possible, the Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth strives to prepare children for permanency, or to help them to gain an understanding of the often complex events of their past. Our office has partnered with the Statewide Adoption Network (SWAN) who assist in preparing children for permanency, and are otherwise available to help youth sort out their life timeline.

For more information on family engagement practices please contact the Montgomery County Office of Children & Youth by calling (610) 278-5800.

Montgomery County

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY CHILDREN & YOUTH

Family Engagement

Embracing Family Engagement Practices in Montgomery County



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FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

What is Family Engagement?

Family Engagement is an umbrella term for all of the various engagement tools and strategies available to families and youth who receive services from the Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth.

Why do we need to Engage Families?

Best plans cannot be made without the inclusion of family and their natural supports. Engaging family insures dignity to those involved while exploring family resources within the context of their community and natural support systems.

What is Family Finding?

Family finding is a process in which The Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth attempts to identify family connections and resources who might offer solutions for children and families that we serve. Our office utilizes many tools and strategies to aid us in locating family and Kin (people who are regarded as being part of a family even if not related by blood or marriage) and securing the often scarce resources available to assist in avoiding placements, or reconnecting family and youth to those naturally occurring resources.

Strengths-Based Approach

Our Agency has adopted a strengths-based approach to the way we work with our families and youth. Rather than operate strictly from a problem centered perspective; caseworkers are trained to look at what is right with families in order to seek out solutions that address a family's needs in a respectful and meaningful way.



Team Decision Making is a meeting used to engage family, community, and professionals at specific intervals related to placement practices to aid in planning and decision making for children. TDM is a strengths-based practice which emphasizes parents as our partners and focuses on strengths of the parents and community. The goal of TDM is to make placement related decisions in the least intrusive, least restrictive manner by involving the key people in a child's life. TDM meetings are lead by a neutral, trained facilitator and can be utilized to prevent or stabilize a placement. TDMs can also be used to explore the benefit of planned moves while insuring that all options have been considered. In addition, the TDM process can assist in planning for youth 18 years of age who are preparing to exit county custody.

Family-to-Family Meetings

Family-to-Family Meetings are held when children are placed in OCY foster Homes. The purpose of the meeting is to improve communication between foster parent/birth parent, to work out any potential placement issues, and to create a relationship between the birth parents and foster parents. Family-to-Family Meetings are also a place where the family's goals are discussed so that all involved can assist and share in resolving placement issues and achieve permanency for children.

Family-to-Family as a Philosophy

Family-to-Family principles support close proximity of birth and foster parents, direct communication and mentoring between birth and foster parents. The philosophy also involves the deliberate placement of children within their home or adjacent school district, preserving a child's community connections and existing resources.

The Philosophy is rooted in the Annie E. Casey Foundation as part of their National effort to support practices for Children and Youth.