



Who will be at the family group meeting?

The convenor will decide who should attend the meeting.

People who may attend are:

- the child when they are old enough to participate and it is appropriate
- the child's parents
- other members of the child's family who will continue to be involved in the child's life
- other people who have a significant relationship with the child eg. a carer, guidance officer, health worker
- a legal representative or support person for the child
- a legal representative or support person for the parents
- if the child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, a member of a Recognised Entity or a member of the child's community
- the Child Safety Officer or Team Leader
- service providers, as appropriate.

What happens at the family group meeting?

At the family group meeting, the convenor will introduce all the participants and explain what will happen in the meeting.

The Child Safety Officer will talk about the reasons the department is involved with the child, and the assessed strengths and needs of the child and family.

The convenor will invite other people attending to provide information for discussion.

The convenor may also present information from significant people who are unable to attend.

The family will be given the opportunity during the meeting to spend time alone to discuss the information that has been provided.

A case plan for the child is then developed that states:

- what issues will be addressed
- how the issues will be addressed
- who will address the issues
- when the issues will be addressed.

Family group meetings are a collaborative and participatory process between the child, the family, the Department of Child Safety, other significant people and service providers.

What happens after the family group meeting?

The provision of services to the child or their family will be formalised in the case plan. The Child Safety Officer will complete referrals to identified service providers and gain approval for any costs involved.

A Team Leader endorses the case plan within seven days of the family group meeting. A copy of the endorsed case plan will be sent to people who will be involved in the case plan.

Service providers identified in the case plan will be required to deliver the services for the child and family and report back to the department, as agreed to in the case plan. The case plan will be reviewed within six months.

Family group meetings

Information for service providers



What is a family group meeting?

A family group meeting is convened by the Department of Child Safety to develop a case plan when the department believes that a child is in need of protection under the *Child Protection Act 1999*. The family group meeting involves the child (when it is appropriate), the family, other significant people and service providers who can participate and contribute to the case plan for a child.

A family group meeting must be convened to develop an initial case plan for a child. The case plan is a

written agreement between the department, the child, the family and representatives from other services who have agreed to provide services to address the protection and care needs of the child.

The family group meeting is organised by a convenor who will prepare for and facilitate the meeting. The convenor may be a departmental officer or a person independent of the department, but will not be the Child Safety Officer involved with the child or the family.



What is the role of other government departments and community agencies?

The role of service providers (government departments and community agencies) is to give support to the child and family, and provide information and services as described in the case plan for the child and family.

Service providers can give information to the family group meeting by providing written reports, or the convenor may invite a representative of the service to attend the family group meeting to provide information.

A child or parent may nominate a service they want involved and request that a representative from that agency support them at the family group meeting.

What preparation is required prior to the meeting?

Prior to the meeting, the Child Safety Officer may request information from service providers and other people significant to the child to assess the strengths and needs of the child and the family.

The convenor will contact the service providers and discuss whether they will attend the meeting and, if so, whether they will be present for all or part of the meeting.

The convenor or Child Safety Officer will discuss with the child (where the child is at an appropriate age) and family which service providers will be involved.

The convenor will inform participants in the family group meeting:

- the purpose of the meeting
- why the meeting is being held
- the time and place for the meeting
- the importance of maintaining confidentiality.

