

Youth and Family Service (Logan City) Inc is a community based, not-for-profit organisation that provides innovative and dynamic services to families and young people in Logan City and surrounding areas. Operating from two sites, the organisation provides a range of client focused solutions through six key service areas.

Privacy

Youth and Family Service (Logan City) Inc is committed to protecting your privacy. We understand and appreciate that clients are concerned about their privacy and the confidentiality and security of any information that may be provided to us.

YFS has a Privacy Statement and a Confidentiality Policy. These are available to you on request.

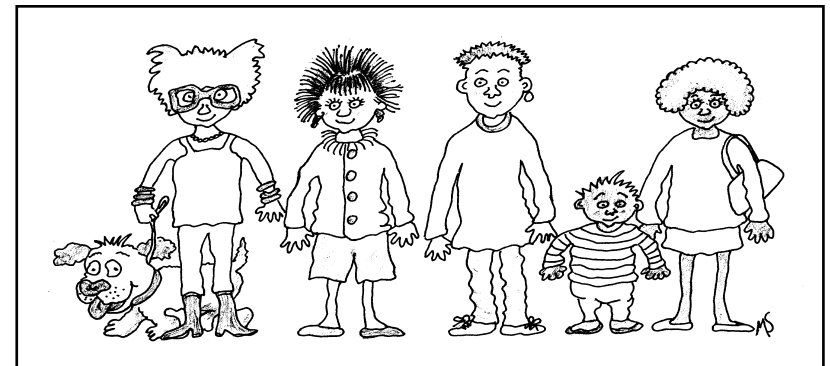


Information for professionals

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Family Group Conference Supporting Families to make decisions and to plan for the care of their children

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What is a family group conference?

A family group conference (FGC) is a meeting where members of the child's immediate family come together with extended kin and members of the child's community who are, or might become, involved to develop a plan to keep the child safe. The conference is organised and facilitated by a Facilitator. The role of professionals is to provide information and offer consultation to families and not to influence or make decisions. Non-negotiable items will be presented by the Child Safety Officer (CSO) from the Department of Child Safety (DoCS). The family is provided with private time during the conference to develop a plan that will keep their child safe.

Who makes the referral to the FGC?

Once the CSO and the parent have discussed the situation and are in agreement, the CSO refers the family to the Facilitator.

Why should I participate in a FGC?

FGC helps to promote and develop the capacity of families and communities to care for and protect children and supports child and family development. The FGC process is intended to use the strengths and resources of the family to take ownership of the concerns and decide how to best manage within their capacities and culture.

When are FGC used?

Firstly, child protection concerns have been identified by the CSO and acknowledged by the parent/s. Then, the CSO recommends the family hold a FGC to resolve the concerns. The family's participation in a FGC is strictly voluntary. Examples of decisions to be made in a FGC include;

- How and who will keep a child safe
- Where a child should live
- Planning for a child's future
- Planning around supports and resources that are available to the family to help keep their child safe.

What happens after a Child Safety Officer refers a matter to FGC?

A Facilitator contacts the family to inform them about the FGC purpose, process and goals and to prepare them. The family identifies who should be invited. The Facilitator invites all relevant family members and professionals involved with a child and their family. The Facilitator will arrange a venue and time for the conference, that is suitable to the participants (including outside business hours as required). There are five (5) components of the conference, including 'Introductions', 'Information Sharing', 'Private Family Time', 'Plan Presentation' and 'Closing'. The FGC is family driven and each conference will proceed in a manner that is comfortable for the family with a process that is flexible enough to meet the unique needs of each family.

What is a professional's role at FGC?

The Facilitator will contact you to discuss your involvement and role within the FGC, including issues to be addressed. You will be asked to identify information, resources and services you or your agency can provide to the family. You may be asked to:

- Provide a written report or a verbal presentation
- Provide information in user-friendly terms that are factual, clear, concise and specific
- Be flexible and open to answering family questions and clarifying questions
- Support, resource and assist to implement the plan as required
- Assist in monitoring and reviewing the plan as required.

What is the Family Plan?

The family's plan forms the basis of how the family intends to provide safe care for their child. Once the family has decided upon a plan for the child, the CSO will review the plan with the family. The plan must identify how it will keep the child safe and how it will be monitored and reviewed. The plan is accepted, supported and resourced where possible and will only be not accepted if it does not keep the child safe, (meet the non-negotiables), or resources are not available.

"Families have the prime responsibility for the upbringing, protection and development of their children' and 'The child's need to maintain family and social contacts and ethnic and cultural identity must be taken into account" (Child Protection Act, 1999)