

What is family group conferencing?

From time-to-time, families have difficulties caring for their children and this can be for many different reasons. Family group conferencing is a way to bring family members together in a positive way with an impartial facilitator to make a plan for their child or young person.

Families have found family group conferencing to be a really helpful way to work out a plan that everyone has participated in and agrees to.

How does family group conferencing work?

A FACS caseworker will discuss with you the reasons why your family may benefit from being part of a family group conference. If you agree, the caseworker will complete a referral and you'll be contacted by a family group conference facilitator.

The facilitator will organise the family group conference and make sure everyone who is at the conference is able to speak and be heard.

The facilitators aren't involved in making any decisions about your children or family. They are there to support your family to develop a plan that has the wellbeing of your child or young person in mind.

Everything that's said in the family group conference is confidential. This means no one is allowed to talk to anyone else that wasn't at the family group conference about what was said.

Who can attend a family group conference?

Before the family group conference is held, the facilitator will spend time with you and ask who you want to attend. This could include members of your family, extended family and kin, a support person or a community elder. You may also want to invite agencies that have been working with you.

Children and young people may attend the family group conference. This will depend on their age, maturity and what needs to be discussed. They can also write down their thoughts and someone else attending the conference can read this out for them.



Family group conferencing

The family group conference has **three** stages:

1

Information sharing – everyone introduces themselves and talks about the difficulties the family is having and why this is a concern.

2

Family time – is private time for only the family to discuss and develop a plan about the concerns that were raised.

3

Agreeing to the plan – the plan has to say what needs to be done, by who, and when these actions need to be taken. This will ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child or young person. All participants need to agree to the plan and all will receive a signed copy of the plan.

The facilitator will ask the family when they would like a review meeting. This is an opportunity for the caseworker, your family and other agencies working with your family to meet and talk about progress of the plan.



Useful numbers

FACS caseworker details:

Phone:

Your caseworker's manager:

Phone:

Parent line

Free professional help for parents and carers
Phone: **1300 130 052**

FACS enquires, feedback and complaints

Phone: **1800 000 164**
<https://pra.community.nsw.gov.au/CSComplaints/>

Link2home

Homelessness information and referral service.
Phone: **1800 152 152** (24 hours/7 days)
TTY users phone **133 677**, then ask to be connected to **1800 152 152**

Legal Aid free legal advice and assistance

Phone: **1800 551 589**

Child Protection Helpline

Report suspected child abuse or neglect.
Phone: **132 111** (24 hours/7 days)
TTY phone: **1800 671 442**

Telephone interpreter service

If you need an interpreter to speak to your caseworker, please phone TIS on **131 450**

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Information for parents and carers

The Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) understands that everyone's family situation is different.

Family group conferencing helps to build on people's strengths and support families to overcome challenges.

