

Crisis/Rapid Response Family Meetings

In 2017, the Pennsylvania State Roundtable selected *Crisis / Rapid Response Family Meetings* as a core component of the Family Engagement Initiative (FEI). The FEI is designed to assist select counties in furthering collaborative efforts to enhance family engagement practices within the child welfare system.

Both **crisis** (immediate to 24 hours) and **rapid** (within 72 hours) response family meetings involve gathering family, kin and community supports quickly, directly following an emergent event that will likely result in an out of home placement for the child. This inclusive, family approach is designed to not only give family a voice, but to actively involve family in decision making. This approach strengthens partnerships between family and child welfare professionals with the common goals of safety, permanency and well-being of the child.

The goal of the family meeting is to address the *immediate concern(s)* that is leading to the need to remove the child from his/her home.

In some instances the family meeting may eliminate the concern and the need for out of home placement. In other instances, when the concern remains and the child must be placed, the family meeting can help reduce trauma through kinship placement and maintenance of family/community connections.

Crisis or Rapid Response Family Plans are not Safety Plans.

Elements of Crisis/Rapid Response Family Meetings for FEI Counties

- ◆ The **referral process** must be **streamlined and automatic**.
- ◆ Skilled Facilitator/Coordinator must be **neutral**.
- ◆ Facilitator/Coordinator should attempt to **get as many family/kin as possible to be involved** in the meeting unless there are safety concerns.
- ◆ The meeting must be employed at the **earliest possible time**.
- ◆ Agency administration and the courts must **fully support the process and set expectation for genuine, ongoing family engagement** as “routine practice” for all dependency professionals.
- ◆ **Plans** developed by families and approved by the Agency **must be provided to the court when there is court involvement**.
- ◆ **Private family time must be offered at the meeting** during plan development.
- ◆ **Follow-up meetings if needed, must occur within thirty (30) days**. Further follow-up meetings should be scheduled as needed.
- ◆ **Agency staff must be trained** on the benefits of the practice and must be provided with regularly scheduled training updates.



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When must a Crisis or Rapid Response Family Meeting Occur?

Prior to Court Involvement

Crisis/Rapid Response Family Meetings must occur at a *minimum* on every case when an emergent event exists that will likely lead to an out of home placement for a child. If court does become involved, the Crisis or Rapid Response Family Plan must be submitted to the court for consideration.

Post Adjudication—First Out of Home Placement

Crisis/Rapid Response Family Meetings must also occur if an emergent event happens which will likely lead to an out of home placement for an adjudicated dependent child who lives at home. The Crisis or Rapid Response Family Plan must be submitted to the court for consideration.

