

Family Centered Engagement Meetings Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

1. Can we still refer for a FCE when you have a TCO and the shelter care hearing is continued? Can we hold a FCE up until adjudication?

No, once the shelter care hearing has taken place or been continued it no longer falls within the eligibility criteria. However, if during this time the youth is identified as Dual Status Youth (DSY), the youth may meet the DSY in Foster Care eligibility criteria.

NOTE: The above is CORRECTED information that was clarified after 5/25/22 training.

2. A shelter care hearing has already taken place and the child was placed into foster care. Two weeks later the HSZ staff believe it would be helpful to have an FCE. Can I make the referral?

No, this situation does not fall within the eligibility criteria because the shelter care hearing has taken place. If after the shelter care hearing the HSZ staff feels like a meeting would be beneficial they should pull together the necessary participants and have a Child and Family Team meeting (CFT).

3. How are we supposed to refer for FCE meetings if there are no FCE facilitators in our area?

FCE meetings are offered both in person and virtually through Zoom. When there is a facilitator in the area, the meetings may be either in-person or through Zoom. However, when there is no facilitator in the area the only option is to meet through Zoom. This ensures all families have access to the service regardless of their location.

4. What if families don't have the capacity or technology to attend through Zoom?

In these situations, the facilitator along with the referring worker will help to locate a place for the family on finding a location where they connect through Zoom. For some meetings the family is around the table with the HSZ staff while the facilitator is on virtually through Zoom.

5. Is the follow up meeting for Dual Status Youth facilitated by The Village?

No, it is arranged for and facilitated by the lead agency.

6. What do we do if a parent is adamant and refusing to do the FCE and do we document it?

Yes, you would document that the FCE meeting was offered and the parent declined.

When explaining the FCE meeting to the parent it should not be presented as "Do you want to have a FCE meeting?" But rather explaining to the parent as to WHY a FCE meeting could be beneficial as it engages the family in the decisions and development of a plan. When the worker is aware the children are unsafe and there is a need to develop a safety plan, it should be done with open and honest communication with the parent; the worker should state to the parent what danger threats have been identified and that the next step in the process is to hold a Family Centered Engagement Meeting which will offer the parent the opportunity to lead the development of the safety plan to assure the children can remain safely in their home. A good example of this is "in home safety plans with safety services are the least restrictive way to keep children in their homes so we need to identify safety services for your family that you agree with, these are services that offer you and your children support. If we are unable to have an FCE we still have to develop a safety plan to address the identified danger and if you are unable or unwilling to participate in the process the agency will have to move to a more restrictive plan to assure your children's safety."

An additional option when a parent is unsure is to have them speak to the FCE facilitator. The facilitator can offer more information about the meeting, the process and the benefits to the family. Sometimes hearing from someone outside of the agency can be helpful. The Village also has brochures that are available to you to offer to the parents.

7. Why have an FCE meeting when we have no services in our area anyway? What are we supposed to plan around?

The FCE meeting is not only about finding services. It is truly to make a decision about whether or not the child can remain in the home safely with an appropriate plan in place. We do recognize some areas of our state have fewer services than others. A great resource is the 2-1-1 resource guide which lists services in your area, some of which may be appropriate to use within a safety plan. Additionally, we have seen success with providing “informal” services through community members such as the school or faith community.

8. Can I use an FCE meeting be held for a pregnant woman assessment?

No, there is no child born yet therefore no child that falls within the eligibility criteria.

9. Can I use an FCE to develop a plan of safe care (safety plan) for a substance exposed newborn?

Yes, they would fall under the *Front-End* criteria “*at any time during the CPS assessment or case management when present or impending danger is identified, and child removal is possible.*” All substance exposed newborns are required to have a plan of safe care. This population is one of the most vulnerable populations in our child welfare system. The FCE can facilitate the development of a plan of safe care, by wrapping service providers and natural supports around the newborn and their caregivers and assuring everyone understands their role in keeping the SEN safe.

10. I’m a CPS worker and have received a 960 report on an infant. The family has never been involved with juvenile court. Do I have to collaborate with them?

Yes, all FCE referrals from the HSZ should include Juvenile Court as a requested participant. Juvenile Court will then decide on whether or not to attend the meeting. Agency staff should continue to collaborate as appropriate, based on the family’s circumstances.

11. We have a child in the home with a Present Danger Plan in place but this plan is no longer adequate to assure child safety, can I use an FCE to manage present danger planning?

Yes, this falls under the *Front-End* criteria “*child in the home with a present danger plan or safety plan in place.*” The FCE should be used to either update or revise the present danger plan or if the present danger plan is no longer needed the meeting can be used to develop a safety plan.

12. I have completed my CPS assessment and have identified impending danger is it too late to refer the family for an FCE?

No, it is not too late. A FCE referral can be made as this fall under the *Front-End* criteria “*at any time during the CPS assessment or case management when present or impending danger is identified and child removal is possible.*”

13. When will children in foster care be able to have FCE meetings?

The only time children in foster care are eligible for an FCE meeting is when they are removed through TCO and before the shelter care hearing or if they are identified as Dual Status Youth and are at risk of placement disruption.

14. Can we have an FCE meeting without any parent there?

No, at least one parent must be present.

15. We have custodial parent who does not want the FCE and a non-custodial parent that does, can we have a meeting?

Yes, one parent must be in agreement and present. However, the parent in agreement must still have parental rights to their child and not have a termination.

16. A referral comes in and the ‘target child’ is identified as DSY. He has younger siblings who also live in the home. Is the FCE just for the target child or does the meeting (and the plan developed during the FCE meeting) include the other children in the home, too?

The eligibility for the FCE meeting is met because a child has been identified as DSY. Therefore, the meeting and the participants are based on the needs of the ‘target child.’ As the family situation and

circumstances are discussed during the FCE meeting, the plan may end up including the other children if it's determined they need any services or supports.

17. Can we refer for an FCE following the shelter care hearing?

No, the FCE meeting must occur prior to the shelter care hearing.

18. Why should I refer for an FCE meeting? Making the referral is a lot of extra work and the plans that come out of them aren't anything different than what I would do anyway.

A FCE meeting is an opportunity to bring the family, their identified safety supports, and service providers together when working with families and gives us an opportunity to discuss, review, and develop a plan with all supports present. This plan is based on the identified concerns and could be the present danger plan, the in-home safety plan or an out of home safety plan. It enables all participants at the meeting to understand and commit to their responsibilities within the plan and how important it is to work together on behalf of the children. Though the FCE meeting may feel like additional work upfront, it will create less work in the long run because it strengthens family engagement and helps you sustain these coordinated efforts with safety supports and service providers on the back end.

19. My schedule is already busy. Why do the meetings have to be so long?

The facilitator, HSZ worker and JC worker can help keep meeting participants on task to focus on the goal of the meeting. However, FCE meetings are also an excellent opportunity for collateral information to be gathered or information may be learned from participants that may not otherwise have been shared, which may assist with the child protection assessment and prevent additional collateral contacts needing to be made later by the worker.

20. I see on the hard card reference to the shelter care program, what is this?

Shelter care may be used as a support and service when present danger exists and out of home placement is warranted, agency staff engage in reasonable efforts to prevent removal by identifying appropriate support for the family, which may include a temporary out of home placement with a licensed foster home or certified shelter care site. Certified shelter care sites are only eligible to accept placement of children 10 to 18 years of age. Placement of a child in shelter care may not result in the request of a temporary custody order (TCO). Shelter care should be used as a diversion and early intervention for children with an open CPS assessment or In Home program where present danger exists. Placement in shelter care shall not exceed 7 calendar days. If an additional 7 days is warranted in a certified shelter care site, an extension request must be completed by the certified site and submitted to CFS for review.

SUBSEQUENT QUESTION: Where are the current certified shelter care sites?

Currently there are no certified shelter care sites, the Department continues to work with providers across the state to meet certification.

21. We received a 960 report with concerns of medical neglect. The child may have a terminal condition and to determine if that's the case, the doctor wants to do an invasive procedure. However, the parents refuse to authorize the procedure and instead want to use holistic treatments. Is this child eligible for an FCE?

Yes, this case is eligible for a FCE. The FCE referral would fall under the *Front-End* criteria "at any time during CPS assessment or case management when present or impending danger is identified AND child removal is possible."

22. The child was identified as DSY several months ago and had an FCE meeting at that time. Recently the youth had another citation. Can we complete another FCE referral?

Yes, per DSY policy additional FCE meetings on subsequent referrals and/or child welfare involvement may take place if:

- Additional information has been received, or significant change in circumstance has occurred that elevates the child's risk for out of home placement/removal
- There is an additional concern that differs from the original notification/report or another legal charge on the child has been received

<https://www.ndcourts.gov/Media/Default/other-courts/juvenile-court/DSYI/Dual%20Status%20Youth%20Protocol%20and%20Practice%20Guide%20October2021.pdf>

23. Where can I find the FCE referral form?

The FCE referral form can be found on the CFS Training Center's website.

<https://und.edu/cfstc/files/docs/2021-fce-fillable.pdf>

24. What type of citations, court action, etc? I have been told they are no longer going to cite kids for running away and things like that.

Prior to August 1, 2022, any citation to Juvenile Court will qualify the child for an FCE so long as they're currently involved with the Zone or have been within the last year (including CHINS (runaway, tobacco, unruly, truancy) and delinquent acts (acts that would be a crime if committed by an adult)). After August 1, 2022, any delinquent act will qualify the child for an FCE so long as they're currently involved with the Zone or have been within the last year. CHINS cases will fall under the responsibilities of the Zones.

25. I understand that the DSY protocol has a timeframe, how long should we keep trying to communication with no meeting being set?

Best practice would be to continue reaching to the other agency until a meeting is set – even if it is after protocol timeframe. If you are struggling with receiving communication from the other agency, then reaching out to your perspective Dual Status Youth Liaison to staff the situation is recommended. Also, you may set a meeting without response from the other agency, make documentation in case notes, and proceed with discussing with the Village on how they may assist in outreach.

26. If the Juvenile Court facilitator does not set up a FCE meeting, the HSZ staff will document that into our case narrative. Is there someone we should notify, because the HSZ staff cannot note that in the juvenile court data base, because we do not have that ability?

Yes, in a situation like this you should respond to the DSY email notification and cc' in either Heather Traynor or Andy Chintis or both.

Child Welfare Practice policy manual link:

https://www.nd.gov/dhs/policymanuals/60705/60705.htm#Archive%20Documents/2021/ML%203614/607_05_35_25_10_05%20ML%203614.htm?Highlight=fce

ND Dual Status Youth Initiative Protocol and Practice Guide link:

<https://www.ndcourts.gov/Media/Default/other-courts/juvenile-court/DSYI/Dual%20Status%20Youth%20Protocol%20and%20Practice%20Guide%20October2021.pdf>