

Team Discussion Guide



Let's Be Better Together - Five Questions Your Court Team Must Discuss Before Serving In-Home Families

After viewing the video presentation *Let's Be Better Together - Five Questions Your Court Team Must Discuss Before Serving In-Home Families* use this Discussion Guide to facilitate further conversation within your team. Feel free to discuss the questions that are most relevant to your program. At the conclusion of the discussion, formulate and assign specific action steps as a way to move forward.

1 DISCUSS THE WHY

- Discuss the financial and human costs of out-of-home placements in your community. Is there available data on removals, length of stay in foster care, termination of parental rights, or outcomes on transitional youth that your team can review? Is there a need to do better and be better for families?
- Discuss what would it take to keep more children with their families in your community? What mind-sets would need to change? What practices and policies would need to change? What partnerships would need to be secured to make that vision happen?
- What areas of agreement and disagreement exist amongst your team to serve in-home families? Explore values and beliefs around substance use disorders, parent-child relationships, and child safety.

2 DISCUSS WHAT FAMILIES NEED

Review the following list of key strategies shared during the presentation. Select 2-3 strategies which your team or jurisdiction are doing well. Then select 2-3 principles in which you are struggling or need to improve. Were there any strategies that were not mentioned that you are doing or would like to improve?

- Engagement and building trust
- Intensive and individualized approach towards case management
- Building protective capacities of families
- Ensuring early access to treatment
- Building a community of recovery support
- Basic needs

3 DISCUSS THE ROLE OF THE COURT

- Discuss and share concerns regarding working upstream and "widening the net." How will your team ensure racial equity and fairness?
- Discuss what quality legal representation mean for in-home families and during the early phases of dependency proceedings.
- Discuss reasonable efforts as a tool for preventing removal of children. Has reasonable efforts been raised in your jurisdiction, particularly on cases involving parental substance use?
- Discuss reasonable effectiveness and why the Court, including judges and attorneys should know about quality and evidence-based services.
- Has your team considered implementing a pre-file model? If so, what concerns were raised?

4 DISCUSS YOUR CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Review the following list of key strategies shared during the presentation. Select 2-3 strategies that your team should prioritize in order to understand your local CWS system.

- Conduct a systems walk-through
- Integration of substance use disorders in CWS risk and safety assessment tools
- Building protective capacities of families by using a Protective Factors Approach
- Alignment with parallel initiatives - including CAPTA and CFSR? Is your team familiar with Plans of Safe Care? If not, what questions do you have and how will you get them answered?

5 DISCUSS FUNDING

- Is your team familiar with the funding provisions of the Family First Act?
- Rather than discuss "how will we pay for it?" discuss "who can we partner with?" What local partnerships in the prevention funding continuum does your team need to develop and nurture - food security, housing, prenatal care, maternal and child health, financial support, and early childhood development?
- What can your team do to advocate and establish data systems that track information critical to your prevention efforts? Which of the data do you currently have access to and monitoring?
 - Number of children entering foster care, including those affected by parental SUD
 - Data on alternative response cases and what happens to them
 - Data on ethnic disparities and disproportionalities
 - Treatment data, including length of stay in treatment and positive completions

6 NEXT STEPS

- Identify 1-2 specific priority action steps your team should focus on as a result of your discussion. Share any challenges or barriers with your Steering Committee.
- Download the Take Action Guide for additional next steps for your team.



CONTACT INFO

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