

## Mission and Philosophies

### Mission

Family Group Decision Making meetings will establish a supportive environment for family to join with their relatives, friends and/or service providers for the purpose of developing a plan that will manage safety and provide permanency and well-being for children.

### Philosophies

- ✓ All persons and families have a natural support system.
- ✓ Solutions can be found within family strengths.
- ✓ Families make well-informed decisions; they are their own experts.
- ✓ Families are capable of keeping their children safe.
- ✓ Families have many of their own resources.
- ✓ Empower families to take responsibility and commit to caring for their children.

## Contact Us

For more information, contact your local Family Group Coordinator:

**Region 1:** Rapid City  
605.394.2525

**Region 2:** Sturgis, Deadwood, Hot Springs, Martin  
605.347.2588

**Region 3:** Pierre, Eagle Butte, Mobridge  
605.845.2922

**Region 4:** Mission, Winner, Chamberlain  
605.842.0400

**Region 5:** Aberdeen, Watertown, Brookings, Huron  
605.688.4330

**Region 6:** Sioux Falls  
605.367.5444

**Region 7:** Mitchell, Lake Andes, Yankton, Vermillion  
605.668.3030

Department of Social Services  
Division of Child Protection Services  
**Phone:** 605.773.3227  
**Email:** [CPS@state.sd.us](mailto:CPS@state.sd.us)  
**Online:** [dss.sd.gov/childprotection/](http://dss.sd.gov/childprotection/)

# Family Group Conference



## A Guide for Parents

**DSS**   
Strong Families - South Dakota's Foundation and Our Future

# Why should I participate in a Family Group Conference?

## What are the benefits of a Family Group Conference?

Each family has their own strengths, knowledge and resources available to keep children safe. Families are experts on themselves and are able to commit to caring for the safety and well-being of their children.

## Who can come to my Family Group Conference?

Any person the group considers to be a part of the family or a support for the family is able to attend the meeting. This can include relatives, friends or neighbors. Each person involved in a Family Group Conference should have an interest in the well-being of the children and family. The child will be included in the meeting.

## When is a Family Group Conference held?

Family Group Conferences can be held any time a decision needs to be made for the safety, permanency and well-being of the child. Follow-up meetings can also be held to give updates on progress and adjust any plans that are made.

## Preparation for my Family Group Conference

- ✓ A Family Group Coordinator will meet with family and their supports prior to the meeting to discuss where and when the meeting should be held, what information will be shared, what additional supports are needed and any traditions or customs that will be included in the meeting.
- ✓ Parents will be asked to identify family members and other supports that could attend the meeting.
- ✓ Preparation for a Family Group Conference can take several weeks.

## What will happen during my Family Group Conference meeting?

- ✓ Each Family Group Conference is divided into three parts:
  1. Information Sharing
    - The family, Department of Social Services (DSS) and other service providers working with the family will provide information about their role in the case. This information is then used by the family group to develop a thorough plan that addresses safety, permanency and well-being of the child(ren).
    - DSS shares safety requirements that must be included in the family's plan.
    - Family members should have all needed information to develop their plan.
  2. Private Family Time
    - The family meets in private for as long as they need to develop a plan. DSS is available to answer questions if needed.
  3. Plan Presentation
    - The family presents their agreed upon plan to DSS.
    - If the plan meets the safety requirements, the family's plan will be supported by DSS.
    - If the court is involved, the family plan is presented to the judge for approval.