

**Family Team Meetings (FTMs) a/k/a  
Family Team Decision Meetings (“FTDMs”)**

***What is it?***

- A FTM is a planning meeting that works with the family to make decisions about services for your family, as well as logistical things like scheduling and coordinating visitation schedules. The goal is to do what is best for the family in order to move towards reunification.
- It is more like an informal discussion rather than a court hearing. You will be able to voice any concerns or ask any questions so that those may be addressed.

***Who will be there?***

- Because there are a number of people involved in your case, a FTM makes it easier to make decisions, because everyone is in the same room. There will likely be a number of people at this meeting, including:
  - A facilitator to run the meeting, record decisions, and send out the Notes after the meeting.
  - The parents and their attorneys.
  - The foster parent(s) will be likely be there.
  - The child’s *Guardian ad Litem* will be there (but not the child, typically)
  - Service providers and volunteers, such as DHS, FSRP, CASA, therapists (the child’s and/or the parents’ therapists), and sometimes school personnel.
  - Occasionally other family members will attend.
- The judge will *not* be there.

***Where is it?***

- Family Team Meetings are often held at the DHS building at 2309 Euclid next to the river (in a building called River Place). There is plenty of free parking there. The building used to house a Target, if that helps you.
- When you arrive, look at the large screens on the wall to see if your meeting is listed. If it isn’t, go to the DHS desk down the middle hallway. They will tell you where the meeting is.
- Typically, the room will be arranged in a way that encourages conversation, but there is no “assigned” seating. You will want to sit by me, however.
- There will be a sign in sheet so that the facilitator can make sure everyone in attendance gets a copy of the notes.

***When is it?***

- There is no set schedule for a FTM. Your attorney will let you know when one is scheduled.
- FTMs are always during the workday.

***What else do I need to know?***

- Family Team Meetings are confidential.
- Family Team Meetings are **not** legal proceedings like a hearing you would have at court.
- Sometimes you may not like what service providers, attorneys, or even the other parent/foster parents have to say. It may upset you. The key is to remain calm, and express your concerns and opinions in a civil and respectful way. Everyone there should be focused on what is best for the kids, but sometimes people's opinion as to what that is may be different.
- This is a good time to ask for any additional services you may want or need, or that you think would benefit your child. If you think visitation should be changed in some way (more, less, different days/times/locations), this is also a good time to bring that up. It's usually a good idea to talk to me about these things ahead of time, if possible.