



BLENDED PERSPECTIVES PREPARATION AND PLANNING MEETING

The purpose of the Blended Perspectives meeting is to:

- Bring the identified family members and others who care about the child/youth together:
 - Do this so that they have the opportunity to learn more about the young person's essential, lifelong need for support and affection. Those in the meeting must have a voice in the process.
- Based heavily on the family's perspective, make decisions about the future of the child/young person:
 - The Child Welfare and related professionals and court will make final decisions that include consideration of the team's perspective about the future of the child/young person. Equal value will be placed on the need for a family to live with an enduring network of support. Challenges will be identified and solutions created.
- Form plans on a "Plan's fail, our children do not" basis:
 - Despite the discussions had during the meeting, any concepts associated with failure cannot rest on the child/youth. It is the responsibility of the family and all involved in the life of the child/youth to assure that his/her needs are met.

Prior to meeting:

- Talk to participants and explain meeting format and purpose
- Use this discussion to learn about youth's functional strengths and needs. A service should not be a need. When you talk to the youth ask youth what are his/her strengths and needs
- Make a list of strengths and needs on flip chart (not prioritized) for use at the meeting
- Work to have 12 or more natural supports and family members. Youth *may* attend. Youth attendance is a safety decision which you need to make in each situation.
- Offer 3 meeting date possibilities.
- Try to meet in a family- friendly and family selected location. Most importantly the location should be safe.
- Offer food/ snacks and soft drinks. Encourage the family to provide when possible
- Plan for no longer than 2 hours...aim for 90 minutes

Welcome and Introductions

- Each person: name/ connection to youth/ why person came to the meeting/ what person most hopes will come from the meeting
- Address any necessary ground rules
- Introduce Blended Perspective exercise:
“As the facilitator I want to be sure we learn from each other about our perspective about (youth.) What has and is happening in his/ her life. We will use what we learn to make decisions about the future.”

On a flip chart ask about and record. *Do not assume you know the answers to these because you read the record*

Name, Age, Gender, Ethnicity/ Cultural Identity of the youth.
of years youth has had a social worker
of placements

Strengths and needs: On a flip chart ask about and record. Youth's greatest strengths and needs. Each person can pick what they think are the two greatest strengths needs. Youth gets to pick 4

Do a connect-o-gram for the youth. The connect-o-gram identifies who is important to the youth and is a visually compelling image of the loneliness of youth separated from consistent adult relationships. They build a blended perspective among the meeting members. The connect-o-gram captures tiers of connections:

Kinship: family relationships in 3 generations: the youth/ siblings; parents and their siblings and their siblings kids; grandparents and their siblings and siblings children.

Friends

Non relative adult supports

When all tiers are completed ask:

“Who loves this child?” make connecting lines;

“Who does the youth love?” make connecting lines

For the non relative adult supports ask “If youth moved or adult support stopped getting paid (if a therapist) who would stay involved?”

If youth attends and you have already done a connectedness map with the youth, as a tool to get to know youth's important relationships, you could use that as a discussion.

If youth **does not** attend: after doing the connect-o-gram for the youth; do one for a youth known to a relative but not in placement. Do not do this part of the exercise if the youth is present because the difference in the # of relationships each connect-o-grams shows can overwhelm the participating youth.

The goal is to get all meeting participants on a similar page about the youth's lack of and need for connections....Do we need to change anything on the list of needs? Want the group to agree that at the top of the biggest unmet need is a lack of a forever family, connections; or someone to love.

Write a big unmet need statement.

Do we need to meet again to make decision about how to meet the big unmet needs?

Ask participants to think about what role they can play in meeting the unmet needs.

Schedule the decision making meeting.