
The Juneau Family Group Conference Program

What is a family group conference?

A Family Group Conference (FGC) is a meeting of extended family and close friends where decisions and plans are made to resolve care and protection concerns about children or youth. A coordinator will help organize the meeting.

Who is the coordinator and what do they do?

The coordinator works with the family to plan the FGC. She will want to learn from the family how they want to do things. She will help with communication, sharing important information, and many other details. The coordinator is not involved in the child protection case. The coordinator helps with the conference: she is not a decision maker, and is not an advocate for anyone.

The conference has 3 parts

Part 1. Information Sharing

The Office of Children's Services (OCS), and possibly others, will explain their concerns regarding care and protection of the children. The family can ask questions to gain a clear understanding of the concerns.

Part 2. Private Family Time

Family members will be alone to discuss the concerns and decide what needs to be done. Family may request that community services and resources be included in their plan.

Part 3. Agreement On The Plan

Everyone comes back together to hear the family's plan. There is discussion about the plan and when it's agreed that it addresses the concerns it is signed and filed with the court.

Next steps

Arrangements are made to see how the plan is working:

- Is everyone doing their part?
- Are things on track?
- What progress is being made?
- Do changes need to be made?

Often, a follow-up conference is scheduled.

What if we don't agree on a plan?

If there is not agreement about the plan, the family could decide to go back into private family time for more discussion.

Mediation might be considered.

Everyone still has the option of going on to court. Participants in the FGC may talk about their plans and ideas in court even though no agreement was reached about them. In court, a judge will make a decision.

Does this cost anything?

There is no cost to the participants for the services of the coordinator. Those will be paid by the program.

How can I find out more so I can decide if this is right for my family?

You can let your attorney; OCS worker; guardian ad litem (GAL); or your tribal representative, if you have one, know you are interested in learning more about this.

For more information about this publication, please call the
Alaska Court System Administrative Office at
(907) 264-8240
820 West Fourth Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501