

Collaborative Meetings

When you are well prepared for a meeting, you can communicate your needs, concerns, and ideas more effectively. It also gives you a clearly thought out plan to follow which will help you have more confidence in yourself! Remember, you have a lot to offer in a meeting.

Things to consider when you attend a meeting:

Asking for a meeting:

- Write out specifically why you need this meeting. What are your priorities? What is your goal? Why are others participating?
- Who needs to attend this meeting? It is your right to ask anyone to attend. Consider asking your Foster Parent Coordinator or a support person. Contact each person and organize a date, time and place agreeable to all
- Find childcare or plan a time when children/youth are in school

When you are called to attend a meeting:

- Understand why the meeting has been called
- Focus on one issue at a time, remain focused
- Decide if you need to take someone with you for support and to take notes (see FAQ Support Workers)

What information will I need to participate effectively?

- Come prepared with all reports and documentation
- Make a list of the points you want to cover

During the meeting:

- Acknowledge out-loud if there is a conflict and describe it to establish a starting point to begin the conversation. Discuss and present the points on your list. Say what you need to say, as kindly as possible, to make the conversation more effective and efficient. Take notes about responses and possible resolutions
- Use your active listening skills and enter the meeting with a collaborative attitude, with the intention to think critically and solve problems. Are there areas where you agree? Do we have mutual goals? Is there room for negotiation?
- Be prepared as best you can to hear something you don't want to hear. Take a minute to process what was said and to formulate your next questions.

Be aware of negative feelings. It is ok to take a minute to calm yourself during intense situations or to reschedule the meeting for another time. It is reasonable to feel defensive, insulted, and/or misunderstood, however it is important to try to understand different perspectives.

Are their requests reasonable? Are yours? Is this difficult for them too?

- Ask for clarification if you do not understand something and ask again until it is clear. Request that the person speak in plain language for clarity.

If you need more time- ask for it. You may need to reflect on the needs of your child or to gather more information.

It is often better to delay a decision rather than decide something important under pressure.

- Review your concerns, the purpose of the meeting, and goals of the meeting to decide if they have been addressed.

Note if there is a follow-up plan-of-action; one step forward is a good start.

After the meeting, reflect on what was said to formulate questions for the next meeting.