



Working in Collaboration with the Case Team

In-Service e-Learning (PRIDE)

Course Description

This module explains the concept of teamwork and how collaboration within the team ensures the best outcomes for children and youth in care. The first session focuses on the five steps of decision making and how to collaborate within the case team. It reviews the purpose and function of the various team meetings and supports a caregiver to understand their role, so they can support the case team in achieving safety, permanence and well-being for children and youth. The second session focuses on conflict, how conflicts can influence a team and how it can be beneficial to teamwork. It supports a caregiver to reflect on their own feelings and responses to conflict, so that while they are learning the different conflict management styles, the caregiver becomes aware of, and can work with their own conflict management style.

Learning Objectives

Session One: Strengthening Teamwork Skills

1. Define teamwork and its importance in caring for children and youth in care.
2. Describe the skills and processes needed for effective teamwork.
3. Identify the value of shared vision, purpose and goals in teamwork.
4. Recognize your responsibilities as a caregiver, including supporting the plans for a child or youth's safety, permanence and well-being.
5. Understand the various roles of others working with the child or youth.
6. Identify the steps to making decisions as a team.

Session Two: Conflict as Opportunity

1. Review the definition of teamwork and its importance in working with children, youth, families, caseworkers and other professionals.
2. Describe how conflict can be beneficial to teamwork.
3. Explain the different conflict management strategies.
4. Identify your feelings about and responses to conflict.
5. Determine your own conflict management style.

Resources

Dispute Resolution

There may be times when caregivers disagree with a decision made by a caseworker. In those situations, it is recommended that you discuss the decision with the caseworker to understand how and why the decision was made. As you are working to understand the decision, it is important to think about how it is in the child/youth's best interest.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

When agreement cannot be reached about what is in the best interest of the child/youth, there are several informal and formal alternatives for managing the dispute. The first step in that process is informal. When caregivers disagree with a decision made by the Director, they should initially collaborate with the case team to address the issue.. They should have a:

- discussion of the matter with the casework supervisor,
- discussion of the matter with a manager, if the matter cannot be resolved with the casework supervisor, and
- discussion of the matter with the Child and Family Services Regional Director or DFNA Director if the matter cannot be resolved with a manager.

If a disagreement is not resolved to the satisfaction of the caregiver, or if the caregiver chooses not to engage in a dispute resolution process, the caregiver may proceed with the administrative review process.

Administrative Reviews

Caregivers can request a review of the decision; however, caregivers need to understand there are a number of things that can and cannot be reviewed. An example of what cannot be reviewed is any order made by the court. This process is set out in the Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act (CYFEA) policy s.117.1 and 120.

If the issue is still unresolved, any person who is affected by the decision may ask for an administrative review. The decisions which may be reviewed, are specified in the CYFEA. Ask the caseworker if you are unsure which decisions can be reviewed. In general the following matters can be reconsidered through an Administrative Review:

- a licensing decision made by the Director,
- the placement of a child or youth into a facility (home),
- the removal of a child or youth from a facility (home),

There are a number of matters that cannot be considered through an Administrative Review:

- operational or administrative matters, such as the transfer of a file or the assignment of a caseworker,
- financial matters that have provincial fixed rates attached,
- decisions that are made by the Director, but not under CYFEA,
- matters where a decision has been made or an opinion formed by someone other than the Director and which are integral to case planning, including: a child or youth's diagnosis, educational planning, probation requirements, and assessment findings or recommendations,
- whether the Director investigates a concern,
- outcomes of child protection investigations, or
- court orders or decisions of the court.

If you decide to proceed with an Administrative Review, you must complete and submit the required form within 30 days of receiving the decision(s) in question, from the caseworker. You can obtain the form from any Children's Services (CS) or Delegated First Nation Agencies (DFNA) office. In most cases, a manager and one other employee from outside the office will carry out the review. The review committee must let the caregiver know their decision within 15 calendar days of their request. After the Administrative Review is complete, the caregiver has 30 days to appeal the decision to the Appeal Panel. The Enhancement Act stipulates that most decisions must first go through an Administrative Review, with exceptions that can be directly appealed.

Appeals

If you are still unsatisfied with the outcome, the caregiver may then choose to appeal. The process is set out in CYFEA policy s. 1.4.2. A caregiver may appeal specific decisions of the Director. The caregiver must have had continuous care of a child/youth for more than six of twelve months preceding the decision of the Director, and may appeal the following decisions of the Director:

- the removal from, or placement in a caregiver's home of a child/youth,
- terms or conditions imposed on a renewal of, but not on the original issuance of, a foster home license,
- the refusal to renew a foster home license,
- the variation, suspension, or cancellation of a foster home license, or
- the terms of an order following an inspection of the caregiver's home.

The decision of the Director remains in effect until the appeal decision is made, unless the decision is to move a child/youth. If the decision involves placing or removing a child/youth, the child/youth is not moved before the appeal decision unless they

are at risk. The Appeal Panel is the most formal method of appeal. Members of the Appeal Panel come from the general community and are not Children's Services staff. An appeal form is available at CS or DFNA office and must be completed for an appeal to proceed. The form gives notice and sets the appeal process in motion. CS and DFNA staff are available to help complete the form. The decision of the Appeal Panel can be appealed to the Court of Queen's Bench. If a caregiver has any questions about an Administrative Review or Appeal Panel, they should contact the caseworker who will direct the caregiver accordingly. The caregiver may also ask for advice from the Alberta Foster and Kinship Association.

2 Resources Attached to Session 2:

Children Have Rights:

https://www.ocya.alberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/OCYA_ChildrenHaveRights_Oct2016.pdf

Youth Have Rights:

https://www.ocya.alberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/OCYA_YouthHaveRights_Nov2016.pdf