

## PREPARATION INTERVIEW: KEY STEPS

The preparation interview is one of the most important events in the family team process. It is during the preparation interview that a working agreement is established. Here the facilitator helps parents identify their outcomes and define their team; helps the team members determine if they are ready, willing and able to participate on the team and what role they will play in the team process; and identify any barriers to contributing toward outcomes. The preparation interview enables team members to participate and contribute fully by helping them: 1) focus on strengths as well as on needs; 2) explore any potential conflicts and discover ways to manage emotions positively; and 3) determine what the team members need to participate in a positive way.

### KEY STEPS IN THE PREPARATION INTERVIEW

1. Engage the team member genuinely, with empathy and respect.
2. Describe the meeting process and explain purposes of the meeting.
3. Explain that the focus is on strengths and needs.
4. Explain that family members will tell their family's story. For the family member (s) convening the team, discuss their story and how they will tell it.
5. Define and come to agreement on the goals for the family.
6. Identify potential team members. Explore what the team member can contribute toward the outcomes and what is needed to contribute toward the outcomes.
7. Determine if there are any potential conflicts (emotional, legal, etc.).
8. Determine what is needed to be able to fully participate.
9. Discuss time and place and work toward resolving any conflicts.
10. Explore alternatives for input if some team members cannot attend.

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR PREPARATION INTERVIEWS

Listed below are sample questions that may be used in preparation interviews. These are not steps; they are just some possible questions you might want to use.

To the parent:

- What would you like to have happen as a result of this meeting?
- What do you see as family strengths? What do you need?
- What are your child's strengths? What does your child need?
- Describe what success is for your family. What would (family member or support person) be doing differently to achieve success?
- Can you think about what you would like team members to know about your family story, including how you got involved with the agency?
- Who are the people who care about you...your family...your child?
- Who would you want to be at your team meeting?
- If we invited all the people who care about your family to come to a meeting, what would be some good things that might come from their participation?
- Where would be the best place for the Family Team Meeting?

to other team members (and possibly the parent as well):

- Family Team Meetings come from the heart and can be emotionally charged. What might be some of your concerns?
- Considering we are bringing together a lot of folks, what can go wrong? What are your concerns?
- What is the family doing at this time that may help the family achieve its goals?
- Can you identify strengths now (and possibly jot them down in preparation for presenting them at the meeting)?
- Can you be prepared to discuss the needs of the family?
- Do you have any concerns about your participation on the team?
- Do you need more information about the role of the facilitator?