

Frequently Asked Questions

- Q. Who attends the meeting?
- A. Children, parents, extended family and members of the community may all be invited. If the Coordinator is provided information about an individual that could be harmful to other participants, in the FGDM process, family consensus is required to exclude a family member. Safety plans will be developed to support the participants.
- Q. Does my child(ren) participate?
- A. Yes. It is the legal right of the child to have their voice present along with their participation and the participation of their parents, relatives and extended family. The child(ren)'s wishes and views are developed in advance and will be shared at the meeting. The child(ren) may share their views themselves or ask someone else to share on their behalf. There may be time scheduled in the meeting specifically for adult-only discussion.
- Q. What if I don't consent to meetings and/or if I don't want my family to know what is happening?
- A. FGDM is voluntary. However, the process can happen without your consent if your child(ren) is in the care of the Society. It is important that families and children have connections and a circle of support. You can withdraw consent to have your child welfare information shared with your family.

NOTE: While FGDM is available to all individuals involved with CFSGE, referrals to an appropriate organization for an Indigenous Alternative

Our practice is guided by:

- ♦ Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA)
- ♦ An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families (Bill C-92)
- ♦ United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples
- ♦ United Nations Rights of the Child
- ♦ Ontario Human Rights Code

Your Role as a Family Group Member

Before the FGDM Meeting

- ✓ Imagine what the meeting might be like and how you might feel.
- ✓ Plan what you want to say and if it helps, write it down. Think about how this may affect others and how they might feel.
- ✓ Consider what you want from the meeting.
- ✓ Think about what you will do if you get upset and who will help you.

During the FGDM Meeting

- ✓ Keep the child(ren) at the centre of the planning.
- ✓ Share how you understand the situation.
- ✓ Share ideas about how the family/child(ren) can be supported.
- ✓ Help family group members say what's on their mind and to feel heard.
- ✓ Listen to everyone's ideas so that the family group can develop a plan to make sure the child/young person is safe and cared for.



Child and Family Services of Grand Erie

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Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)



Working with Families
to Find Solutions

cfsge.ca

What is Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)?

Family Group Decision Making is a way for a child/young person and their family circle to lead the decision-making process when they are involved with Child and Family Services of Grand Erie (CFSGE). It is an approach to empower families in developing their own solutions and safety plans to protect and support children. FGDM can also be used as an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process in an effort to avoid or resolve the court process.

Children, young people, caregivers, extended family, and community may all be members of the team to create and implement the plan. At the center is the child's and family's voice, recognizing that all participants have the right to plan for the child/young person and maintain family connections.

The following are values associated with Family Group Conferencing (FGC)/FGDM:

- The family group develops solutions for child protection worries and not the Society.
- Family groups know their own histories and they use that information to construct thorough plans.
- Children and their parents belong to a wider family system that both nurtures them and is responsible for them.
- Children have a right to maintain connections to their family circle and culture.

CFSGE has made seven specific commitments to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. See the full EDI Statement on our website at: [EDI Statement - Child and Family Services of Grand Erie](#)

When is FGDM available?

FGDM can be accessed to:

- ♦ build family support
- ♦ create family safety plans
- ♦ consider family placement options
- ♦ assist youth planning towards independence
- ♦ avoid or resolve the court process (ADR)
- ♦ develop a family file closure plan

How is a referral made?

The child or anyone in their family circle may ask their worker to make a referral, or contact the FGDM Coordinator directly to ask for a referral or more information. *Note: Young people may also ask for a Youth Transition Conference to help them plan their independence / transition to adulthood under the Ready, Set, Go (RSG) program.*

How long does it take?

This depends on how quickly all of the participants can be contacted and the meeting is scheduled. It may take several weeks to prepare everyone involved and set up the meeting. It is determined by the needs of each family.

What happens after a referral is made?

The coordinator will reach out to you to prepare you for the Family Group Conference. There is no cost for this process. The Society is required to make a referral to the Office of the Children's Lawyer. If they determine they would like to be involved in the process, their role would be to support your child(ren).

What happens in a FGDM meeting?

Part 1—Welcome and Information Sharing

Part 2—Private Family Time—The family group has time to meet alone to decide on a plan that will meet the Society's and the family group's concerns.

Part 3—Review of the Plan—The family group presents their solution to the CFSGE team. The family group and the CFSGE team discuss the plan and collectively agree to work together to implement the plan that will keep the child/ren safe.



**DIVERSE
INCLUSIVE
ACCEPTING
WELCOMING
SAFE SPACE
FOR EVERYONE**

You are a part of our community. We offer a positive and anti-oppressive space where every individual, regardless of age, is valued and respected whatever their culture, faith, ethnicity, race, ancestry, class, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity.



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