

**Circles of Support:  
An Innovative Approach to Aging Out**



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**Family Group Decision Making**  
An umbrella term that includes the following  
models used in Child Protective Services

- ★ Family Group Conferences (FGC)
- ★ Family Team Meetings (FTM)
- ★ Permanency Planning Meetings (PPM)
- ★ Circles of Support (COS)
- ★ Transition Planning Meetings (TPM)

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**Values and Beliefs of FGDM**

- All families have strengths
- Families know their children and family best
- Children deserve to be raised with family and maintain connection to family
- Children and families must be treated with respect
- All parents need support to be able to care for their children
- Families belong to a wider community system
- Children are safest when CPS and families work together

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## Child Protective Services: Mission, Vision, and Values

### Mission

The mission of Child Protective Services is to protect children and to act in the children's best interest. To seek active involvement of the children's parents and other family members to solve problems that lead to abuse and neglect.

### Vision

Children First: Protected and Connected

### Values

Respect for Culture  
Inclusiveness of Families, Youth and Community  
Integrity in Decision Making  
Compassion for All  
Commitment to Reducing Disproportionality

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TDFPS Child Protective Services

## Definition of Family and Youth Involvement

The process of meaningful and maximized engagement of, and shared decision making with, families and youth in planning for the safety, permanency and well-being of children and youth.



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TDFPS Child Protective Services

## Legislative Requirements for Transition Planning



Transition Planning is mandated by Senate Bill 6 for all youth age 16 and older in the conservatorship of the State of Texas

The goal of Transition Planning is to improve outcomes for youth transitioning out of foster care

Planning should begin early enough to identify needs and resources, and provide for these as youth age out of care

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**Searching for Family:  
Moments in the Lives of Children in  
Foster Care**

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TDFPS Child Protective Services

**What Is A Circle of Support?**



A youth-focused/driven meeting with the primary purpose of developing a transition plan for older youth/young adults from foster care to adulthood. It includes broad participation of the youth's support network

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**Referral Criteria for COS**

- All children in CPS conservatorship, including those in relative placement, should have a COS or TPM soon after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday
- There is a backlog of referrals at this time. CPS in this region is involved in a pilot project getting community partners to help facilitate COSs and TPMs

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### Unique Aspects of COS (Circles of Support)

- Youth is approached and asked if they would like to participate
- Youth identifies support persons to come to the meeting
- Family connections are explored
- Youth are consulted on every aspect of the meeting
- Create a plan of action alongside the youth to include next steps in reaching independence
- Follow-up re-conferences are held periodically until the youth leaves care
- Designed to be a positive and empowering experience for youth

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### Circle of Support Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Youth Opening/Tradition (optional)
- Purpose of the Conference
- Sharing of Hopes and Dreams for the Youth
- Identification of Youth Strengths
- Youth Needs and Concerns
- Resources Available to Youth
- Youth and Circle of Support Private Time (optional)
- Presentation of Youth's Transition Plan
- Discuss Re-conference if Needed
- Closing of the Conference

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### Transition Planning Meeting

A TPM is held after a youth reaches age 16. This tends to be a shorter and more agency driven conference that is used as an alternate to a Circle of Support. The primary purpose of the TPM, similar to that of a COS, is to develop a transition plan for older youth moving from foster care to adulthood.

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## Outcomes of Circles of Support

- Youth are able to reconnect with with their family members
- Youth are made more aware of the available resources and how to utilize them
- Youth have remained in care longer in order to graduate from high school
- There has been an increase in high school and college attendance

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## Everybody Up!

Chutes & Slides Activity

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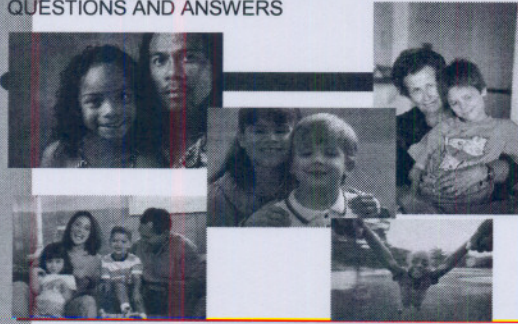
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TDFPS Child Protective Services

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



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**For further information about FGDM**

- <http://intranet/CPS/FGDM/default.asp>
- American Humane Society website
- Casey Family Programs Website
- Child Protective Services Handbook

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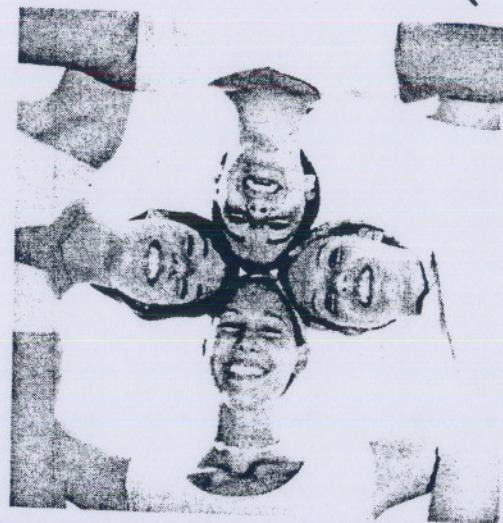
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Where Do I Begin?



“Empowering young people to become independent, contributing citizens by realizing their full potential as they transition toward young adulthood.”

Circle Of



Support

Your Voice...  
Your Dreams...  
Your Life!!!

How Do I Get A ...

- *Social Security Card*
- *Birth Certificate*
- *Texas I.D.*
- *Voter Registration Card*
- *High School Transcript*



## What is a Circle Of Support?

A Circle of Support is to help you **develop a plan** for your future **beyond foster care**.

It's a **meeting** with you, your family, your foster family, friends, and professionals who care about you and **your future**.

We want to hear what you want for your future.

We're here to get you there.

Your voice is most important!!

## What happens at a Circle of Support?

Together we will talk about your **strengths, hopes, dreams, and goals** realistically.

We will help you **connect** with someone **experienced** who cares and will support you to **make positive decisions**.

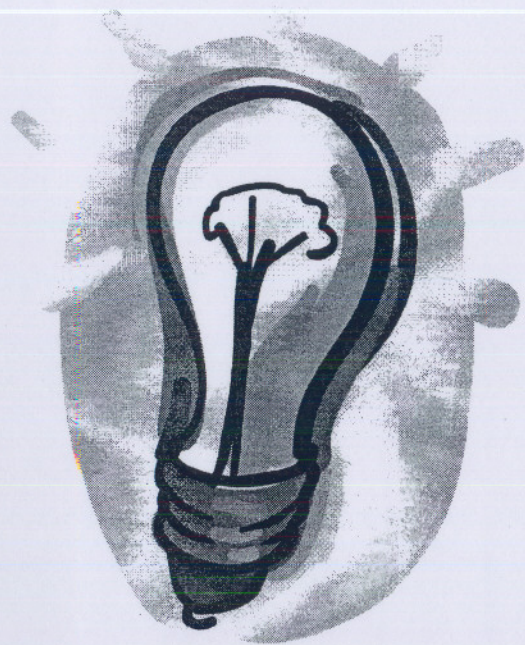


We will discuss your:

- Living Situation
- Family Connections
- Educational Needs
- Employment Needs
- Financial Needs
- Medical Needs
- Basic Life Need
- Concerns



We will meet again before you leave care to discuss how your plan is going and make any changes necessary.

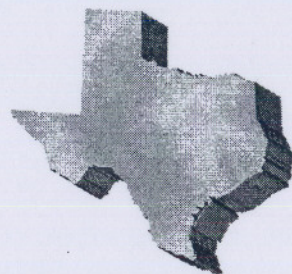


How do I start planning  
for my future???

Start with a  
Circle of Support  
or...

**Formal Transition  
Planning Meeting**

**Texas Department of Family  
and Protective Services**



For More information about  
Circle of Support or  
Formal Transition Planning  
Meetings in your area contact:

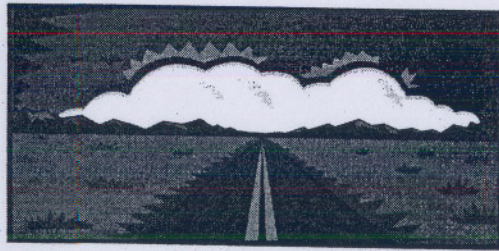
# Formal Transition Planning Meetings



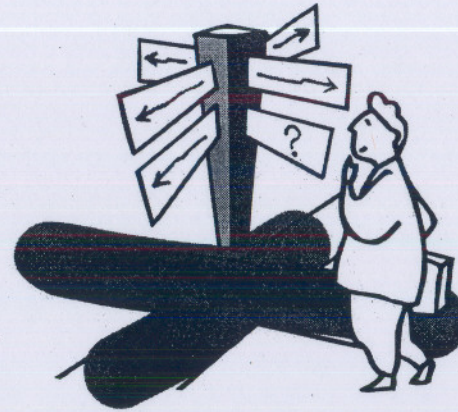
**a team approach  
to planning for  
adulthood**

# What is a Formal Transition Planning Meeting?

It's an alternative to the Circle of Support



It's to help you develop a plan for your future as a young adult and beyond...



If a Circle of Support is not available a Formal Transition Planning Meeting is set up by the primary caseworker

## Who attends?

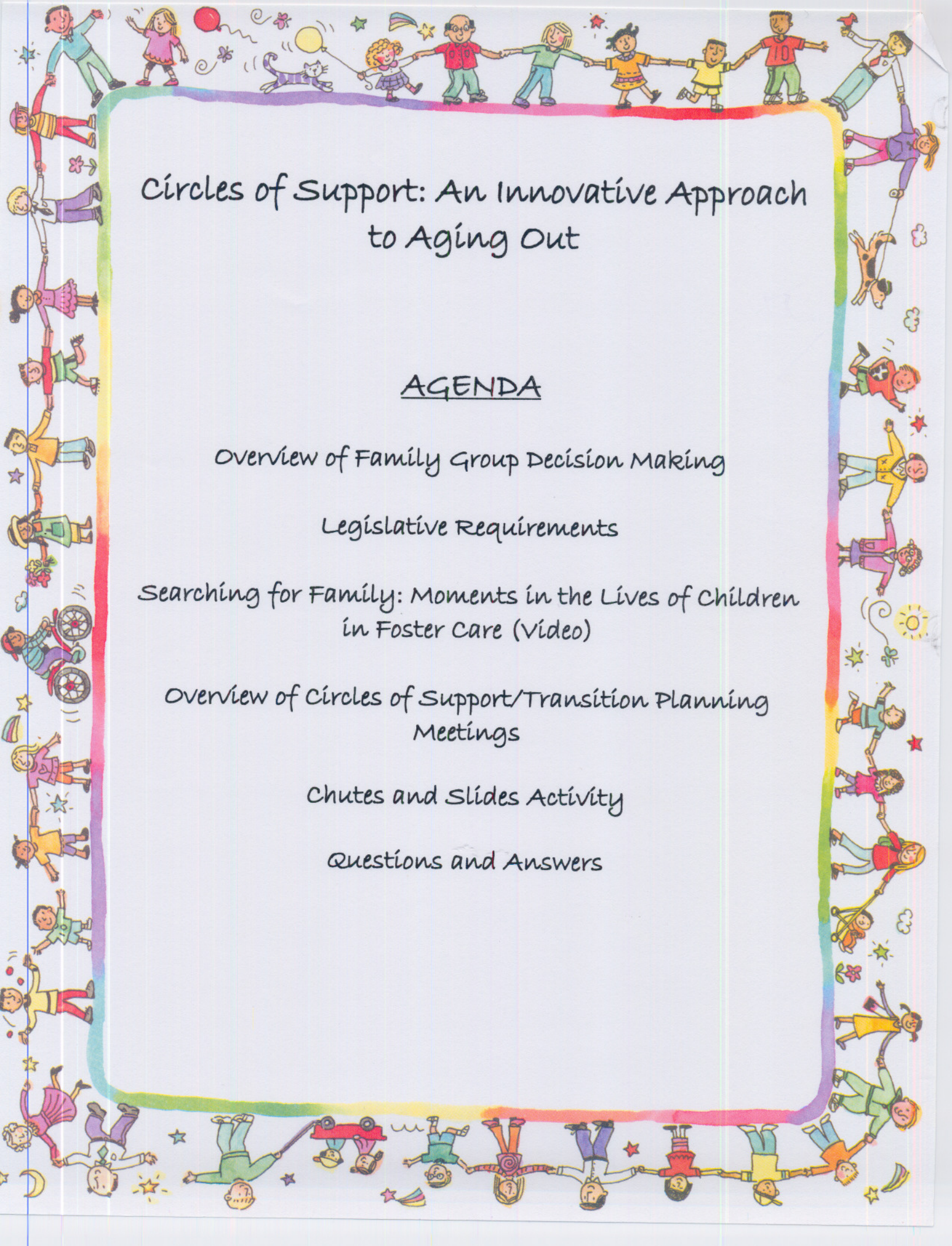
You invite who you want to be there, the important people in your life, friends and family

## We will discuss...

- ✓ Education
- ✓ Personal Needs
- ✓ Family
- ✓ Support Systems
- ✓ Jobs
- ✓ Finances
- ✓ Housing
- ✓ And more

*We will meet again before you leave care to discuss how plans are moving along and make adjustments if needed*

**The choices are yours!!!**



# Circles of Support: An Innovative Approach to Aging Out

## AGENDA

Overview of Family Group Decision Making

Legislative Requirements

Searching for Family: Moments in the Lives of Children  
in Foster Care (Video)

Overview of Circles of Support/Transition Planning  
Meetings

Chutes and Slides Activity

Questions and Answers

## Family Involvement Strategies

**Family Group Conference (FGC)** is a process where families join with relatives, friends and the community to develop a plan that ensures children are cared for and protected from future harm. This broader constellation of family convenes with information providers/community supports and DFPS caseworkers in a unique partnership that vests the “family group” with a high degree of decision-making authority and responsibility.

**Family Team Meetings (FTM)** is designed as a rapid response to child safety and placement concerns and are used to achieve positive outcomes for children in the earliest stages of DFPS and family interaction.

**Circles of Support (COS)** is a youth-focused/driven meeting with the primary purpose of developing a transition plan for older youth from foster care to adulthood; it may be used for other purposes as well. It includes broader participation of the youth's support network.

**Transition Planning Meeting (TPM)** is held after a youth reaches age 16. This tends to be a shorter and more traditionally facilitated case review conference that is used as an alternate to the other models when youth do not desire a COS or a COS cannot be convened.

**Permanency Planning Meeting (PPM)** is organized when DFPS has managing conservatorship. It is a permanency planning meeting to develop or to review the permanency plan for children and youth, or to resolve barriers to achieving permanency. The above described family involvement processes can all fall under this rubric. More traditionally focused case planning conferences/meetings may fulfill this obligation when the above processes cannot be utilized.