

"In The Zone" News About Teaming with Families and Youth

16th Judicial District Child Welfare Collaborative ~ "Transformation Zone" ~ No. 3, December 2012



Family Involvement Changes Child Welfare

In 2008 after 5 years of an initiative entitled, *Improving Child Welfare Outcomes through Systems of Care*, The Children's Bureau concluded that child, youth, and family involvement had a "transformative" effect on child welfare agencies.

Child welfare agencies can involve families at three levels to shape policy and practices in many ways:

1. At the case level, family teaming promotes the engagement of parents and their support networks in making decisions, developing case plans, and realizing changes to strengthen families and promote better outcomes for children and youth. *In the TZ*, Family Team Meetings will be utilized at this level.
2. At the peer level, parents who had been involved with the child welfare system serve as mentors and guides to help parents currently receiving child welfare services navigate the system and meet their goals. *In the TZ*, two peer "Mentors" have been trained and have begun to assist parents receiving child welfare services (more below.)
3. At the systems level, family and youth representatives act as advocates for recipients of child welfare services, serve

on decision-making bodies, provide input about agency policy and plans, assist with the training of child welfare staff, and serve as spokespersons in their communities. *In the TZ*, family members with an interest in efforts to improve the child welfare system serve on several workgroups implementing Louisiana's Child Welfare Program Improvement Plan.

TZ Web Links (Click Below!)

- Please Rate "Draft" 16 JD Court Rules ([Survey](#))
- Child Health Policy in the United States ([Video](#))
- How Family Teams Assist Families ([Article](#))

The Louisiana Parent Partner Program

The LA Parent Partner Program, administered by The Extra Mile Family Resource Center, involves those committed to improving child welfare as leaders for community development and system change and as mentors to parents currently receiving services from the child welfare system. The Parent Partner approach "celebrates individuals that have overcome obstacles through change, recovery, and accountability" at the same time Parent Partners "demonstrate advocacy and effective communication, while holding families accountable in meeting their case plan goals." * ~ From the "Louisiana Parent Partner Approach Handbook"

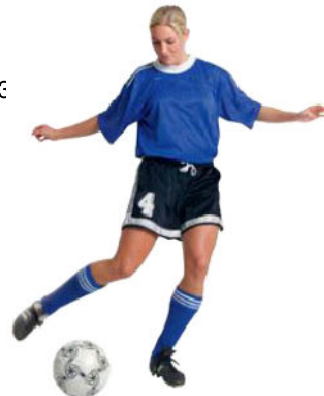
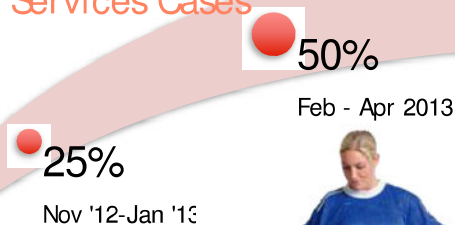
Goals for Increasing the Use of Family Team Meetings

DCFS plans to increase the use of Family Team Meetings as an essential strategy to create more productive working relationships with families and their supports in the pursuit of promoting safety, permanence, and well-being for children and youth and strengthening families.

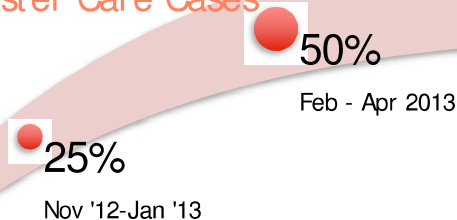
FTM's for In-Home Services

To stay on track with increasing the use Family Team Meetings with more families, DCFS has set benchmarks for three-month periods. Those benchmarks reflect the percentage of new cases that will utilize FTM's.

New Family Services Cases



New Foster Care Cases



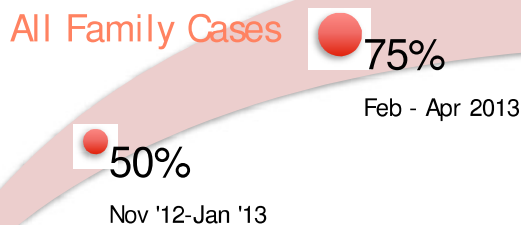
FTM's for Foster Care

The benchmarks set goals for use of Family Team Meetings with families beginning to receive in-home (Family Services) and out-of-home (Foster Care) services.



FTM's for All Services to Famil

As more families and their supports use Family Team Meetings facilitated by DCFS child welfare specialists to make decisions and to develop service plans and goals, the percentage of families and their children and youth benefitting will increase to keep pace with benchmarks for all family cases.



The Transformation Zone

"The Transformation Zone (TZ) is a model for engaging leadership, management, supervisors, staff, courts, and other stakeholders in transforming practice with families within a judicial district, focusing on safety and permanency outcomes and three core practice areas, namely family engagement and the quality of assessment and decision-making. The transformation zone will be the site for integration of evidence informed policies and practices, assessment of what works and what does not, and devising of methods to achieve success." -Louisiana's Program Improvement Plan