



Michigan Department of
Health & Human Services

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2022

Michigan Team Decision Making (TDM) Protocol



Team Decision Making (TDM) Meeting Protocol

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I. Definition and Purpose of a Team Decision Making (TDM) Meeting

A. Definition

- A Team Decision Making (TDM) meeting is:
 - A facilitated meeting to make a live decision or recommendation that determines
 - whether a child can be safe at home or must be separated from their parents.
 - whether a child already in care must move.
 - when a child will return home to achieve permanency.
 - to include a diverse group: the family, youth (when appropriate), friends/others who support the family, agency staff, service providers, community partners, and others.
- TDM Key Elements:
 - The TDM meeting is held BEFORE a child is separated from parent(s) or moves while in care. In emergencies, the TDM meeting occurs before any court hearing for initial removals or within one business day.
 - Families invite anyone in their support system, formal or informal.
 - The public agency strives to include community partners to participate.
 - The meeting is led by a skilled, immediately accessible, objective facilitator, who is not a case-carrying worker or line supervisor, using a specific 6-stage model.
 - Information about each meeting, including participants, timing, and recommendations, is collected and linked to data on child and family outcomes to ensure continuing self-evaluation of the TDM process and its effectiveness.

B. Purpose

- To support workers in their efforts to engage parents, extended family members, community members, foster families, service providers and agency staff, in all decisions regarding where a child will live, and to ensure a network of support for the child and the adults who care for them.
- The focus of the TDM meeting is to ensure child safety and well-being while making every effort to keep the family intact and stable. The team carefully reviews the potential threats to child safety and seeks to identify relevant protective factors to build safety plans that will enable children to remain or immediately return home with appropriate services. When this is not possible, the team creates out of home plans that reflect the least restrictive

option possible that will both keep the child safe and nurture the child’s familial and community connections.

II. Key TDM Meeting Activities

TDM Meeting Type	Activities
<p>Initial: When safety threats are identified and parent-child separation is considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered Removals: As soon as considering removal and prior to removal • Emergency Removals Prior to the preliminary hearing or at the latest, the next business day after the removal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children may only be separated from their parents when separation is the only possible option that will ensure safety. • Utilize Safety Assessment tool to identify threats requiring consideration of parent-child separation. • Consider all available services and supports that could be used to build on parental strengths and prevent separation. • Establish safety plans that are realistic, achievable, and understood by the parent. • Document a parent initiated temporary voluntary arrangement on a Voluntary Safety Arrangement (MDHHS-5433). • Make trauma-informed plans when removal is necessary. • Maintain connections. • Utilize family/community supports and providers to strengthen plans.
<p>Placement Stability/Change of Placement: Before the child moves to a new placement, or the next business day, if an emergency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain placement and provide stability whenever possible. • If a placement move is necessary, decide as a team on the least restrictive level of care. • Ensure realistic and achievable safety, behavioral and transition plans are in place. • Utilize completed Relative Placement Safety Screen (MDHHS-5770) for planning. • Maintain connections. • Utilize family/community supports and providers to strengthen plans. • Make trauma-informed plans when a move is necessary. • Address sibling separations, seeking to avoid or end them. • Reunification must be considered whenever placement disruption is threatened. • Foster or kin care provider is fully engaged as a partner.
<p>Unsupervised Parenting Time: Before Unsupervised Parenting Time begins.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure realistic and achievable safety and parenting time are in place. • Develop progressive parenting time plans that incorporate parental protective capacity. • Utilize family/community supports and providers to strengthen plans.
<p>Return Home: Before returning home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure realistic and achievable safety and transition plans are in place. • Utilize the completed Reunification Assessment, DHS- 0147, to determine when to convene and to guide planning and decision making. • Utilize family/community supports and providers to strengthen plans. • Provide families with adequate support for reunification.
<p>Permanency 6-Months in Care:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held within 30-calendar days from the date the child has been in care for six months (FOM 722-06B).

<p>When youth are in care at least six months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once a child has been in out of home care for six months the caseworker must hold a meeting to review the permanency plan. At this meeting, the parent’s progress on addressing barriers to reunification will be reviewed to determine what barriers still need to be alleviated (FOM 722-07B). • This meeting can also be an opportunity to review whether the permanency goal needs to change and to determine if a concurrent permanency plan has been or needs to be developed; see FOM 722-07A, Concurrent Permanency Planning.
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III. Timely TDM Meetings/ Making a “LIVE” Decision

A key element of TDM meetings is that the family and community join the agency in making an informed placement related recommendation. The team provides its best thinking on immediate next steps to ensure safety and stability, rather than reacting to a plan or decision already made. Below defines when a TDM meeting is considered "live" (timely) based on the TDM meeting type.

A “LIVE” Initial TDM Meeting is one held:

1. When the caseworker **first identifies safety concerns** that could result in child-parent separation.
2. **Prior to** the child(ren)’s removal (CPS cases) or re-removal (Foster Care cases) from a parental home.
3. **Prior to separating a child** temporarily from a parent via a Temporary Voluntary Arrangement (TVA). Parents must enter the time-limited TVA without coercion and may revoke the agreement at any time; they retain full legal custody and responsibility as well as full access to child.

A “LIVE” Placement Stability/ Change of Placement TDM Meeting is one held:

1. **At the first sign** of issues or concerns in a placement or **within five (5) business days** of a caregiver submitting a request to replace the child.
2. **Prior to** a plan to move a child in care is underway (i.e., request already made to identify or approve a new placement).
3. **Prior to** the child(ren)’s replacement.

Note: Per the Team Decision Making Protocol, **Initial TDM meetings following emergency removals or emergency TVAs will be held the next business day** after the removal/separation **and** prior to the preliminary court hearing. In addition, if the court orders a child not currently involved with DHHS Child Protective Services into custody, a TDM meeting will be held by the next business day to determine the department’s response to the court order.

A live Unsupervised Parenting Time TDM Meeting is one that is held:

1. **Prior to** planning/beginning unsupervised parenting time.
2. **Prior to** developing and submitting a plan to request the court to approve unsupervised parenting time.

A “LIVE” Return Home TDM Meeting is one held:

1. **Prior to** the child(ren) returning home.
2. **Prior to** submitting a request to the court to reunify or prior to the court order to return home.
3. **Prior to** planning to return the child(ren) home.

Note regarding all not live TDM meeting types: At the latest, TDM meetings must be held **within five (5) business days** after a child’s move (removal, replacement, or re-removal); after the start of unsupervised parenting time; or after a child’s return home. After five (5) days, the TDM meeting can no longer be considered timely enough to meet TDM key elements, and the worker will need to convene an FTM for case planning purposes.

IV. Key Decision Points/ Types of TDM Meetings

All moves are traumatic to children. All parents, children, and caregivers deserve a voice and choice in making decisions that may result in a move for a child. Inclusivity, transparency, and ensuring all rights are respected are critical to decision-making.

- A. Initial TDM Meeting (Considered and Emergency Removal):** To decide if a child can remain safely in their own home or if a child needs to be separated from their parent(s) due to significant safety threats. When a child is in imminent danger, remaining in the home is contrary to the welfare of the child, and supports and services cannot be put in place to ensure child safety, Children’s Protective Services (CPS) must initiate protecting intervention to protect the child. If considering an in-home ward petition, an initial TDM meeting is required. TDM meetings are also required for mandatory petitions to determine whether the child(ren) need to be removed and to safety plan. A TDM meeting must be held prior to separation and/ or filing of the petition. In cases of an emergency, the TDM meeting must be held prior to the preliminary hearing --or at the latest, by the next business day. In cases where children have been reunited with their parent(s) and re-removal is being considered, or an emergency re-removal occurs, an Initial TDM meeting must be held. The TDM meeting for re-removal is held prior to removal for a considered removal and for emergencies, prior to the preliminary hearing --or at the latest, by the next business day.

Policy References for Initial Removal:

 [PSM](#)

[713-1 CPS INVESTIGATION - GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS](#)

- 713-8 SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE SITUATIONS
- 713-11 ASSESSMENTS
- 714-1 POST-INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES
- 714-2 SUPPORTIVE SERVICES
- 714-5 MALTREATMENT IN CARE
- 715-1 REMOVAL OF ALLEGED PERPETRATOR FROM THE HOME
- 715-2 COURT INTERVENTION AND PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN

Note: During the initial TDM meeting, the caseworker must be prepared to provide detailed information that clearly identifies the ***Risk Assessment of Abuse/ Neglect and Safety Assessment*** concerns. If these assessments are not completed, the caseworker should be able to articulate risk and safety factors based on knowledge of the tools and investigative evidence to date.

B. Placement Stability/ Change of Placement TDM Meeting: To decide whether a child under Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) jurisdiction, regardless of goal and wardship, can remain in their current placement setting with supports or if a new placement is needed. Since most moves are detrimental to children in care, the goal of this TDM meeting is usually to preserve the current placement, if concerns can be alleviated and safety and well-being assured. Therefore, caseworkers must request a placement change TDM meeting as soon as any sign of concern arises or no later than one (1) business days of receiving a request for movement. The Placement Stability/Change of Placement TDM meeting is to focus on the needs of both the child and caregivers during the transition, should a plan be made to move the child. If the child has moved due to an emergency, the TDM meeting must be held within one business day after the child’s move. Other situations that require a Placement Stability/Change of Placement TDM meeting are requests involving a youth being discharged from a mental health hospitalization, a child caring institution, or a youth returning from AWOL status.

A Placement Stability/Change of Placement TDM meeting is also held to ensure playful transition for positive moves, such as a step down from congregate care or a move from a foster home to a relative caregiver.

Policy References for Placement Stability:

Placement Selection Criteria

- [FOM 722-03](#)

Placement Change Reason

- Evaluate the threat towards the stability of placement.
- Evaluate the reason why a placement change is a best interest move.
- FOM 722-03D

Relative Engagement and Placement

FOM 722-03B

Older Youth: Preparation, Placement, and Discharge
FOM 722-03C

Note: Utilize completed **Relative Placement Safety Screen (MDHHS-5770)** for planning in the TDM meeting.

- C. Unsupervised Parenting Time:** To develop a safety plan (proactive and anticipatory/reactive—i.e., reflecting consideration of quick response should problems arise) and visitation plan to ensure a progressive, phased approach to timely reunification. This TDM meeting must be held prior to the recommendation of unsupervised parenting time or within one business day after an unplanned court ordered change to parenting time.

Policy Reference Parenting Time:

- Based on **FOM 722-09B**, foster care must consider unsupervised visits when the results of the Reunification Assessment and Safe Assessment show:
 - Both the parenting time and overall barrier reduction assessments are substantial or partial (but not poor)
 - One is substantial and the other is partial, and the safety assessment decision is safe or safe with services
- Consider the following tips from the Children’s Bureau when planning parenting time:
 1. Understand the Role of Trauma and the Power of Connection.
 2. Seek Tailored Family Time Plans that Encourage Meaningful and Natural Interaction.
 3. Family Time Should Be Unsupervised Unless There is a Clear Safety Threat.
 4. Recognize that “Acting Out” Is Often a Normal Response to the Trauma of Separation.
 5. Consider the Parent’s Circumstances and Challenges When Crafting Family Time Plans.
 - For further details, the link below provides a summary and the full information memorandum:
<https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/childrens-rights/practice/2020/five-tips-for-lawyers-to-secure-family-time/>

- D. Return Home:** To develop a plan to return home that includes a focus on safety planning (proactive and anticipatory/reactive), and which builds supports, predicts potential barriers, and plans for long-term success. This TDM meeting must be held prior to the

recommendation of reunification or within one business day after an unplanned court order change to return home.

Policy Reference Reunification:

- FOM 722-09B
- DHS-0147 Reunification Assessment
- Based on **FOM 722-09B**, foster care must consider return home when the results of the Reunification Assessment and Safety Assessment show:
 - Both the parenting time and overall barrier reduction assessments are substantial or partial (but not poor)
 - One is substantial and the other is partial, and the safety assessment decision is safe or safe with services
- Rely on progress documented on the Reunification Assessment in MISACWIS to drive timing of a Reunification TDM Meeting.

E. Permanency 6-Months in Care

The goal of MDHHS is for children to achieve permanency within twelve months of entering care when it is safe to do so. To support timely permanency, TDM facilitators will host TDM meetings for youth noted on a monthly list as being in care for six months. If a TDM meeting cannot be held, an FTM will occur. This is consistent with foster care policy regarding permanency goal review for children who have been in care six months, FOM 722-06B and 722-07B.

Recommended participants at TDM/FTM should include youth, parents, caregivers, extended family, informal supports, service providers, tribal partners, case workers, educators, and child’s attorney, whenever possible.

This permanency TDM meeting type is time driven (6-month mark) and does not fit the TDM Model fidelity as being event driven. TDM facilitators will make every effort to fit this meeting type into the above listed TDM meeting types as appropriate (A-C). This TDM meeting is an opportunity for the participant team to develop action steps and safety planning towards achieving permanency.

V. Caseworker Facilitated FTMs

Any FTM that does not result from a TDM meeting trigger is not a TDM meeting. Case Planning FTMs (Opening/ ISP, Reassessment/ USP, Closure FTMs, etc.) will not be facilitated by a TDM trained facilitator, unless they can be combined with a TDM because of a legitimate TDM meeting trigger.

Make sure to follow FTM Policy:

- *PSM 714-1 Post Investigative Services (CPS Ongoing)*
- *PSM 765-2 Removal and Placement of Children (CPS)*
- *FOM 722-06B Family Team Meeting Policy (Foster Care)*

VI. Participation and Roles in TDM Meetings

TDM meetings are most effective when there is participation by a group of people representing diverse perspectives regarding the decision to be made. The agency works with the parent to determine who is invited, with the recognition that certain individuals are expected to participate based on their connection to the case-

A. Parents, Family and Other Support People

Parents/Legal Guardians

- Expert on the family and child—essential to the TDM meeting process.
- Parents identify and invite their support people to the meeting; their worker should assist.
- If a parent declines to attend or participate in the TDM meeting, efforts will be made to proceed with the meeting. Engagement efforts and a parent's non-attendance should be documented on the TDM Meeting Report (MDHHS-5966).

Child

- Children aged 11 and older are invited and encouraged to attend unless a specific and credible reason exists for them not to participate. The caseworker must evaluate on a case-by-case basis, whether attendance would be harmful to a child's safety or well-being (FOM 722-06B page 11).
- Accommodations can be made by the agency, with the facilitator's input, for children to participate in certain stages of the meeting.
- If the child is unable to attend, his/her voice should be represented in the meeting by those present, and the reasons they were not in attendance must be documented in the narrative section of the TDM Meeting Report (MDHHS-5966) and the case services plan.

Caregivers (*i.e., foster parents, relative/ kinship caregivers, child caring institution facility staff*)

- Provides information on the needs of the child and are treated as valuable members of the team.

- Are expected to attend all Placement Stability/ Change of Placement, Unsupervised Parenting Time and Return Home TDM meetings for children in their care.
- Active participant in determining placement options.
- Actively involved in safety planning pertaining to placement.
- Assist with planning and implementing a visitation plan, if applicable.
- Provide support to the child and parents.
- Advocate for the child's and own needs to be met for placement stability.

Extended Family and non-related support people

- Participate with the parent's consent.
- Provide support to the child, parents, and/or caregiver.
- Help generate positive options for safety and placement.

When parents and family members are not able to be present, telephone and videoconferencing participation is encouraged.

B. Child Welfare Agency Staff

Caseworker (the agency worker who has primary responsibility for the case at the time of the meeting)

- Is the convener of the TDM meeting.
- Provides a presentation of the case and leads the discussion about safety and risk, referring to the safety assessment tools in language appropriate for non-professionals.
- Maintains receptivity to group input regarding safety, stability and out of home care placement planning, and permanency.
- Makes final decision (along with his or her supervisor) if team consensus among participating staff cannot be reached.
- Follows up with service referrals and with support connections for the family.

***Note:** If there was a recent caseworker/agency assignment change related to the TDM meeting trigger, both caseworkers must participate in the meeting. When caseworker changes have occurred within the past 30 calendar days or there is a known upcoming case transfer, both caseworkers are invited and strongly encouraged to participate in the meeting.

Supervisor (of caseworker with primary case responsibility)

- Reviews case circumstances with caseworker to determine whether situation warrants a TDM meeting.
- Prepares for the TDM meeting in advance with caseworker.
- Attends all TDM meetings with each of their caseworkers.

- Prepares and sends an alternate designee if not able to attend.
- Maintains receptivity to group input regarding safety, stability, and placement planning, and permanency.
- Supports caseworker's role as convener of the TDM team.
- Actively participates in group discussion.
- Ensures that decision and action plans are carried out by caseworker.

Facilitator

- This individual is a dedicated non-case carrying DHHS staff person.
- Has field experience including knowledge of laws, agency policies and procedures, community resources and best practice.
- Leads the group through a structured 6-stage process, focusing first on child safety, and modeling respectful family engagement throughout the TDM meeting.
- Seeks to bring the group to a consensus decision.
- Completes the TDM Meeting Report (MDHHS-5966) during the meeting and distributes to all participants at the end of the meeting.
- Emails the completed TDM Meeting Report (MDHHS-5966) to the worker within two business days for the worker to distribute to participants, if the TDM meeting is held remotely.

Other Agency Staff

- May include placement worker; representatives of programs such as intensive in-home services; adoption staff; health liaison; Maltreatment in Care (MIC) caseworker, agency attorney if other parties' attorneys are present; etc.
- Represent DHHS as full team member, actively participating in group discussion.

When a team cannot reach consensus, the participating child welfare staff with **primary** case responsibility (whomever is responsible for the decision or child i.e., foster care vs. MIC, PAFC for specific child), are responsible to make the TDM final recommendation/decision.

Professionals Involved with the Family (This can include attorneys, CASA staff and supervisors, Guardians Ad-litem, foster parents, service providers, parent partners or any other professionals that are involved.)

- Provide support for the child or parent.
- Provide information regarding needed resources and services.
- Attorneys for the family may or may not be included in TDM meeting; each site should determine, as a matter of policy, whether to invite attorneys. The

agency attorney should be invited if parent attorneys are attending. A TDM meeting is an agency's internal meeting, intended to develop a social work-based recommendation.

Community Partners/Representatives: Persons who represent the family's "community," broadly defined. They could be from the same neighborhood, a place of worship, an ethnic identity, or other connection with the family. The TDM meeting approach expects the public child welfare agency to seek such representatives.

- Provide support and advocates for the family; may balance out the family's sense of a power differential at the TDM meeting.
- Brings cultural and neighborhood perspective to the discussion.
- Provides resources and additional supports.
- Creates the potential for a long-term safety net for the family.

***NOTE:** In the rare instance that no other participants are identified, the caseworker and supervisor must proceed with a TDM meeting to assess and plan for the child's safety, permanency, and well-being. Substantial and continual efforts will be made to include additional participants at all meetings.

VII. Scheduling Process/Logistics

A designated TDM scheduler receives referrals requesting a meeting via the TDM Meeting Referral Form (DHHS-5987). The scheduler gathers information about the case and its' urgency, which guides in determining a time slot for the meeting. Information is also collected from the referral form about any issues which may affect scheduling, such as size of group, a history or present concern around intimate partner violence, concerns for participant mental health or history of violent behavior, developmental handicaps of participants, need for language or deaf interpreter support, childcare needs, etc.

The scheduler assigns day/time for TDM meeting based on established timelines, as guided by urgency of the situation and legal considerations about agency intervention and court involvement. Scheduler will then use Outlook to confirm the appointment. They may also need to contact staff for follow-up information. The scheduler provides the date and time of the TDM meeting to the caseworker to add to the Family's Guide to TDM meetings and/or the Community Partners Guide (for family's support and or service providers) to prepare participants prior to the TDM meeting.

When case activity which would trigger the need for a TDM meeting occurs outside of business hours, staff are to notify the scheduler on the next business day that a meeting is needed; staff are able to invite family and others to the upcoming meeting.

The caseworker will invite those part of the family’s case planning process (e.g., parents, age-appropriate child), placement provider, GAL, parent's attorney). The scheduler may help to inform others (e.g. informal and formal supports, interpreters as appropriate, advocates, school personnel) as requested by the caseworker.

The caseworker should not communicate with the TDM facilitator prior to an Initial Removal TDM meeting or any other key decision point, other than to convey safety and special needs information that could impact the meeting process. Pre-Meeting discussions with facilitators are not typically held in the TDM model except to ensure preparation for any special needs of participants or to alert the facilitator of concerns around participant safety.

However, the TDM facilitator may be available, along with the caseworker’s supervisor, to advise caseworkers on preparing participants for the TDM meeting.

Note: If the caseworker is aware that a family has a history of domestic violence, or if the caseworker suspects such activity, the situation may require separate meetings, generally held consecutively, and facilitated by the same person. See FOM 722-06B, page 12.

VIII. Before the Meeting: Caseworker Preparation Expectations

Gather sufficient information to meet the “trigger” for a TDM meeting: *Please see triggers below.*

Key Decision Points/ Meeting Types:	Initial: All considered and emergency removals (and parent-child separations resulting from Voluntary Temporary Arrangements	Placement Stability: All potential changes of placement (DHHS & PAFC)	Unsupervised Parenting Time: Transitioning to unsupervised parenting time and reunification (DHHS & PAFC)	Return Home: Transitioning to reunification (DHHS & PAFC)	Permanency 6-Months in Care:
Trigger:	Held prior to any separation of child and parent and/ or prior to filing a petition. In cases of an emergency, a TDM must be held prior to the preliminary hearing when possible or at the latest the next business day.	Held as soon as concerns arise regarding the placement or safety issues are present, or within one (1) business day after an	Held prior to the recommendation of unsupervised parenting time or within one (1) business day after an unplanned court order change to parenting time.	Held prior to the recommendation of reunification or within one (1) business day after an unplanned court order change to return home.	Held within 30-calendar days from the date the child has been in care for six months (FOM 722-06B). A monthly list will be provided to the counties.

	<p>There should be enough of a safety threat to suggest the need to consider the child leaving home to ensure safety.</p> <p>Held within one (1) business day following the use of a Temporary Voluntary Arrangement.</p>	<p>emergency placement change.</p>			
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Before the TDM Meeting, the Caseworker will:

- Conference with their supervisor to jointly determine readiness for a TDM: Be prepared to lead the team discussion regarding case history and the safety concerns that brought the family to the attention of the agency.
- Help family to identify persons they would like to attend the TDM as their support and assist family in notifying/inviting such participants.
- Invite other persons such as service providers or community representatives to attend the meeting; request progress reports from all current service providers, if they are unable to attend the meeting; be prepared to explain community representative’s presence and obtain parental approval for their participation, if necessary.
- Prepare older youth (11 and up) to participate in the TDM meeting (Per FOM 722-06B). Obtain input from youth not in attendance, so their voice can be represented during the meeting.
- Caseworkers should come prepared with the facts of the case, including identified and potential safety and risk factors, strengths, service progress, etc. Bring supporting documentation and relevant SDM assessments.
 - Examples Include:
 - Initial TDMs/Considered and emergency removals – Safety and Risk assessments, Relative Home Studies, petitions, professional reports/evaluations
 - Placement Stability TDMs/Change of placement – CANs, Relative Home Studies, Relative Search form, change of placement request letter, IEP and other child evaluations.
 - Reunification TDMs/Transition to unsupervised visits– FANs, CANs, previous visitation plan, reunification assessment, previous safety plans, clearances.

IX. TDM Meeting Etiquette

During the meeting, make the family as comfortable as possible so that they can discuss their concerns and issues. Because the meeting is about critical issues involving their child(ren) and family, child welfare staff must give their full attention to the discussion. By doing so, child welfare staff are indicating the importance of what is being said in the meeting and being respectful to the family. No cell phone use is permitted and other electronic devices such as laptop or tablet computers may only be used, if necessary, to identify a resource or service.

The facilitator assures a 6-stage structured process is followed:

1. **Introduction** - includes ground rules to ensure respectful communication.
2. **Identifying the Situation** - to ensure common understanding about what led to the meeting.
3. **Assessing the Situation** - to focus on safety concerns and potential protective factors.
4. **Developing Ideas** - to brainstorm alternatives for ensuring safety in least disruptive fashion.
5. **Reaching a Decision** - with a goal of consensus around a plan for both placement and custody.
6. **Recap/Closing** - to ensure that all attendees understand the recommendation/decision and what the follow up steps will be.

X. Reaching a Decision

The goal of the meeting is to reach a consensus by the team regarding placement and related issues, which protects children and seeks to preserve or reunify family. However, the caseworker maintains the responsibility to make the decision if consensus by the team cannot be achieved. The decision-making process follows this framework:

Step 1: Team reaches a consensus on a recommendation/decision. If they cannot reach a consensus go to Step 2.

Step 2: Facilitator determines if participating DHHS and PAFC FC Staff agree on a decision. If not, go to Step 3.

Step 3: Facilitator invites the primary caseworker to make decision for group. If any participating DHHS or PAFC staff cannot support caseworker's decision, that individual should immediately request a review.

Step 4: Facilitator will then request a review/appeal meeting. (See XI below.)
Review is immediately held.

Step 5: The review will be conducted by a DHHS county mid-manager or above.

Step 6: Review/appeal decision becomes final agency position and recommendation to Court when applicable. All child welfare staff are to support the decision and carry it out.

XI. Review Process

In the rare circumstances that a participating child welfare agency staff member, including the facilitator, feels the team's final decision does not address the safety concerns, is harmful to the child by being too restrictive, or violates a law or Department policy, that individual should request a review immediately. (See Steps 4-6 in IX. above.) The facilitator notifies the designated review manager, not in the caseworker's chain of command when possible. The review process will include all participants in attendance. The decision made by the manager becomes the official decision/recommendation. In the instance a review is being called regarding MIC filing a petition, the MIC Director or designee would conduct the review and make the final decision.

XII. Privacy

The confidentiality of information shared at the TDM meeting is not guaranteed. Privacy and respect are emphasized, but parents are informed that information from the meeting may be used for case planning, in subsequent court proceedings if necessary, and in the investigation of a new allegation of abuse or neglect should such information arise. Staff must be fully aware that specific information as outlined in SRM 131, Confidentiality, is not open to discussion unless the participant reveals the confidential information or signs a release of information.

XIII. Responsibilities at the End of and After TDM Meeting

Caseworker

- Debriefs with facilitator and their supervisor, obtaining and providing feedback.
- Ensures that the TDM Meeting Report (MDHHS-5966) accurately documents the decision made, the identified formal safety plans and follow up actions needed.
- If the TDM meeting was conducted remotely, the caseworker distributes the TDM Meeting Report (MDHHS-5966) to all participants once received from the facilitator (within two business days).
- Contacts key persons who were not present at the meeting to share information regarding the meeting recommendations and next steps.
- Follows up with family and meeting participants to assure the TDM meeting decision is implemented.
- Completes the FTM section in MISACWIS and ensures the TDM Meeting Report (MDHHS-5966) is uploaded in MISACWIS to the FTM section (note: if the worker creates the shell prior to the TDM meeting being held, the facilitator will upload the form to the proper section. Otherwise, the worker will need to retrieve the uploaded form from the general documents section to place in the FTM documents section).

- Update relevant areas of MISACWIS with information obtained during the TDM meeting.
- Manually links the FTM meeting to the case services plan to ensure that information populates to the case service plan report.

Caseworker's Supervisor

- Attends the debrief after the meeting and provides feedback to the facilitator and worker.
- Ensures that a new TDM meeting is convened if family circumstances change, and a new placement-related decision must be made.
- Reviews TDM meeting activities assigned to the caseworker during monthly caseworker/supervisor case conference.
- Ensures that caseworker implements meeting's recommendations and action steps.
- Ensures that caseworker inputs/uploads applicable information/documents in MISACWIS.
- Ensures meeting information and action plan expectations are passed along to the next caseworker if case transfers.

Facilitator

- Recaps recommendations for safety, visitation, child placement and custody and follow-up on action steps planned at the meeting. Ensures each participant understands the plan and their responsibilities for action items.
- Makes certain all meeting attendees have an opportunity to sign the TDM Meeting Report (MDHHS-5966). If remote, the TDM facilitator will identify participants who agreed to the confidentiality statement via teams in the signature section.
- Completes the TDM Meeting Report (MDHHS-5966) and any needed addendums for all TDM Types including Permanency 6-Months in Care TDM meetings.
- Makes and provides copies of the completed TDM Meeting Report (MDHHS-5966) to all participants (in person and by phone), parents/legal guardians, and caseworker supervisor at the end of the meeting. If remote, the TDM facilitator will email the completed TDM Meeting Report (MDHHS-5966) to the worker within two business days for the worker to distribute to participants.
- Provides a satisfaction survey (either online or hard copy survey with pre-stamped envelope to participants).
- Debriefs with caseworker and caseworker's supervisor, seeking and providing feedback.
- Enters the following required documentation:

Within 2-5 business days:

- The required TDM meeting data is entered into a data application.
- If the Permanency 6-Months in Care TDM meeting fits into the existing TDM meeting types, the TDM facilitator will enter the TDM information into the TDM Database as such. If the Permanency TDM meeting cannot fit into one of the existing TDM meeting types, the TDM facilitator will not enter the TDM into the database.

Within 5 business days-

- Enter a social work contact of the TDM meeting into MISACWIS, including for all Permanency 6-Months in Care TDM meetings.
- Upload the TDM Meeting Report (MDHHS 5966), and any addendums to MISACWIS on all TDM meeting types including all Permanency 6-Months in Care TDM meetings (note: if the specific FTM shell has been created in MISACWIS, the forms are to be uploaded to that FTM document's section, if not, they are to be uploaded to the general documents section.)
- Seeks opportunities to inform the local leadership about trends, policy concerns, community service gaps, or other issues that the facilitator becomes aware of while leading TDM meetings.

ADDENDUM

Temporary Voluntary Agreements (TVAs) and Team Decision Making

TVA Principles

- In accordance with Policy PSM 713-01 there may be times *“when a caseworker identifies safety concerns that do not necessitate court involvement and the parent decides to allow his/her child to stay in a voluntary temporary arrangement.”*
- A parent with physical custody or a legal guardian can voluntarily allow their child to temporarily stay with the other parent, a relative, or friend to allow a caseworker time to gather more information to accurately assess safety. TVAs may be appropriate in the following scenarios:
 - While the CPS investigation is conducted and the safety of the child in the home is uncertain.
 - Until services can begin.
 - Until the family can immediately complete a task to remove risk and/or ensure safety.
- The parent/guardian will retain full legal responsibility for their child(ren) during the duration of the TVA; their agreement to limit contact with their child may be revoked at any time with notice to MDHHS, as it is truly a voluntary arrangement.
- During a family-made arrangement, CPS and/or temporary caregivers may not restrict a parent's physical custody or access to their child.
- The Voluntary Safety Arrangement (MDHHS-5433) must be completed, signed, and uploaded into MiSACWIS documentation section.
- Voluntary arrangements may not be used in lieu of filing a petition when the CPL requires that a petition be filed.

TVAs in the TDM Meeting Process

- No child will be separated from a parent without a Team Decision Making (TDM) meeting. In the event of an emergent situation during work hours, the TDM meeting should be held within the same business day. If the emergent situation occurs and separation is needed to ensure safety after normal business hours, a TDM meeting is to be held the next business day. Supervisory approval is required before entering a TVA with parents if this occurs after hours and no TDM meeting is held.
 - A TDM meeting will be held even when the TVA is with the other parent.
- A TDM meeting will be held to discuss all immediate safety and risk concerns that need to be addressed prior to the child(ren) returning to the home. Caregiver(s) must be fully informed of the parameters of the voluntary agreement, including its duration and the plan for the child to live separately from parent while the TVA is in place. The caregiver must be invited to the Initial TDM meeting.
- In such circumstances, a parent or legal guardian should lead a discussion regarding a TVA; and the decision to change, extend, or stop the arrangement rests with the parent.

- TVAs should not exceed 14 days and immediate actions steps should be outlined to ensure the child(ren)'s safe return. In the event an extension is required after 14 days, second line approval will be required and another TDM meeting is required to discuss possible need for court intervention.

****Note:** If there are further questions regarding Temporary Voluntary Arrangements contact your local management. If your question is related to TDM meetings, contact a TDM Manager or the TDM Coordinator.*