



# Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) TRANSITIONAL PLANNING CONFERENCES



**What is a Transitional Planning Conference?** The idea of Family Meetings began in New Zealand in 1989. It was recognized that family and community play a major role in making and carrying out decisions to maintain children in a safe environment. Orange County Children and Family Services began offering Family Group Decision Making meetings in January 2002. Due to an increasing concern about the needs of youth transitioning from the Court dependency system, in the fall of 2002, the decision was made to expand the FGDM program to include the Transitional Planning Conferences. The Transitional Planning Conferences emerged from the Santa Clara County Emancipation Conference model. The goals and objectives of Transitional Planning Conference are to empower foster youth by providing them with the skills necessary to transition to independent living.

**What is the purpose of a Transitional Planning Conference?** The purpose of the Transitional Planning Conference is to help transitional youth make a successful transition into adulthood. The youth identify their individual goals. Meeting participants join the process by identifying the strengths of the youth as well as the needs towards completion of the goals. A plan is developed for the youth to meet his/her educational, employment, housing, medical, documentation and social support needs.

**Who participates in a Transitional Planning Conference?** During the coordination phase of the conference, preceding the actual conference, the youth are assisted in identifying their “circle of support” for their transition into adulthood. The assigned social worker is included as well as therapists, teachers, past caregivers, mentors, CASAs and family members. The coordinator identifies and invites resource people who might be able to assist the youth in regard to his/her goals. The youth determines who he/she would like to have in the room to help develop their individualized plan.

**How long do the Planning Conferences last?** The initial Transitional Planning Conference might last a few hours in order to develop an adequate plan for a successful transition from the dependency system. A follow-up conference might be set after the initial planning conference in order to strengthen the plan or to check progress.

**What happens in a Transitional Planning Conference?** TPC’s are usually held at the Children & Family Services office in Orange. However, if, necessary, other sites might be determined to be more appropriate to meet the child’ and participants’ needs. Each individual participates by identifying the youth’s strengths and needs after the youth has stated his/her goals for the transition. Resource people will share with the youth and the youth’s “circle of support” about the options available after dependency is terminated. Private time provides an opportunity for the youth to meet with the supports he/she identifies in order to develop a Transition Plan. Facilitators, social workers and resource people can rejoin the group for the youth’s presentation of the plan.

**What happens after the Planning Conference?** The Facilitator will prepare and distribute a written summary to all participants. In Court cases, the Transition Plan is included in the youth’s next report to the Court. The youth, resource people, the youth’s “circle of support” and social workers agree to work together to see that the goals set in the Transitional Plan are achieved.