

***It is important that the referring entity:***

- ◆ Know the family well
- ◆ Recognize the referring entity needs to assist the family in the invitation process
- ◆ Recognize that there is a broad enough base of participants to invite to the meeting
- ◆ Be able to communicate with other providers that work with the family on “the plan” that is developed from the meeting

**THE MEETING**

The facilitator will greet the family and review the purpose of the meeting to participants. Following introductions, concerns from the family and providers will be identified. Family strengths will be acknowledged. The family will be asked for their best thinking and solutions. The family will present to the facilitator and referring person their plan. If the plan is legal and safe, then the facilitator will assist the family in devising their written plan. A date is set to review the plan to ensure responsibilities are being carried out for the plan’s success.

**EVALUATION**

Families and providers may be asked to complete an evaluation for the project following the family team meeting.

**Family Team Meetings**  
Creston & Leon Decat Clusters  
*Serving:*

*Adair, Adams, & Union  
Clarke, Decatur, Lucas,  
Ringgold, & Wayne Counties*

**For More Information or to  
Make a Referral Contact:**  
Jocelyn Blazek, Family Team  
Meeting Coordinator

Phone (641) 202-1522  
Fax (641) 782-1754  
[jblazek@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:jblazek@dhs.state.ia.us)

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**FAMILY TEAM  
MEETINGS**

Brochure for Potential  
Referral Sources

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**LINKING FAMILIES  
AND  
COMMUNITIES**



*Funded by the Creston & Leon  
Decategorization Projects*

## WHAT IS A FAMILY TEAM MEETING

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Family Team Meetings are about increasing safety for children by increasing resources and inviting additional people to the table. It is about inviting and engaging untapped, valuable, and often hidden or ignored resources together to use their best thinking in creating solutions for a family. Benefits in using this model include:

- 1) The model removes the referring entity from the role of problem finder and giving advice.
- 2) Listening, compassion, and responsibility are the hallmarks of the model.
- 3) The model provides for a family-centered and community-based system.
- 4) The model speaks in the language of “concerns” and not “problems”.
- 5) Families are strengthened through the model and respected for their ideas and decision making.
- 6) Professionals are provided with an opportunity to work collaboratively through the use of this model.

## WHAT IS THE GOAL OF A FAMILY TEAM MEETING

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The overall goal of a Family Team Meeting is to assist the family in

developing a plan specifically tailored to fit their needs and to prevent families from becoming involved with the child welfare or juvenile justice systems.

## WHEN WOULD A FAMILY TEAM MEETING BE APPROPRIATE?

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- ◆ Keeping a child safely at home
- ◆ Returning a child safely home
- ◆ Helping a family become more self sufficient
- ◆ Resolving disruptive behaviors
- ◆ Helping students become more successful in school
- ◆ Resolving concerns of suspension
- ◆ Resolving concerns of expulsion
- ◆ As a restorative justice tool
- ◆ Involving family and community in treatment and recovery
- ◆ Increasing safety for family members
- ◆ Resolving court/agency/family concerns in a collaborative process
- ◆ Involving the family and community with their elders
- ◆ Involving family and community in health concerns

## EXPECTATIONS OF THE REFERRING ENTITY

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The Department of Human Services, community agencies, schools and churches may contact the project coordinator to make a referral for a Family Team Meeting. The coordinator will contact a

trained Family Team Facilitator. These meetings may not be appropriate if the purpose is not clearly defined, or if the family does not agree to participate, or allow extended family to participate. Trained facilitators will contact the referring entity to ask the following specific questions to engage referring entities and families that are appropriate and ready to proceed with a Family Team Meeting:

- 1) **What is the purpose of the meeting?** The purpose of the meeting needs to be specific and motivational for the family.
- 2) **Are you as a referring entity willing to listen to and give the family’s ideas a chance as long as the plan that the family develops is legal and safe?** The referring entity must be willing to be “an endorser of the family’s solutions” rather than “decision maker of how the issues must be resolved”.
- 3) **Have you encouraged the family to bring in anyone they want to help?**
- 4) **Are you and the people you invite willing to put concerns, NOT problems on the table honestly?**
- 5) **Does the family know whom the referral source is inviting?**