



October 23, 2024

**Service Request Process:**

Submit a service request through Guardian. The following documents must be associated with the service request:

- Most recent completed FFA - Investigation (Assessment), FFA - Ongoing, or FFA - Progress Update;
- Completed safety plan if child assessed unsafe;
- Infant Care Plan (SENSE only);
- Current court report (if applicable);
- Current TDM Action Plan (if applicable);
- Current case plan (if referring for FC after FFA - Ongoing completed and available);
- Any other supporting information.

For service continuation, submit the EOC Summary through Guardian. If submitted within 30 days of the referral expiring, the family can continue with the same agency.

**FC benefits families in many ways:**

- FC uses a collaborative and strengths-based approach that empowers parents to make changes that strengthen the family.
- FC Consultants function as an advocate for the family.
- A signed Release of Information allows for coordinated services, and a single-family service plan outlining the FC Core Outcomes and UBSMART goals for the family.

## Family Connections (FC)

**Description of Service**

Family Connections services are provided with an empowering approach to families in their homes, in the context of their neighborhoods and cultures. Family Connections addresses emergency and concrete needs to help alleviate barriers to program participation or if it would meet a Condition for Return. The Family Connections Consultant (FCC) facilitates a comprehensive family assessment, outcome driven service planning, and change focused interventions. The services are tailored to the family's needs, in order to strengthen family protective factors, enhance caregiver protective capacities, and meet conditions for return.

**FC Core Outcomes:**

- Social Support
- Family Functioning
- Family Resources
- Child Well Being
- Parenting Attitudes and Behaviors
- Managing Parenting Stress

**Change-focused interventions may include:**

- Motivational interviewing
- Provision of concrete resources
- Social support interventions
- Child development remediation
- Parent education
- Cognitive behavioral interventions
- Genuine and empathetic helping relationship
- Education on Safe Sleep
- Problem-solving skills and coaching
- Stress management
- Behavioral management and modification
- Crisis intervention
- Grief and loss work
- Domestic violence psychoeducation
- Nutrition and home management
- Trauma-Informed approaches
- Family system interventions to improve role clarification, boundaries, communication
- Service facilitation and advocacy to obtain culturally relevant community resources



- FC is available to families with children in-home or out-of-home, without interruption if a child is removed or reunifies.
- FC may be provided at reunification transition, even if the family has met the FC goals in the service plan.
- Communication between DCS, FC, and other providers informs everyone of the family's progress, and provides a timely response to identified concerns, while continuing to coordinate services.
- Emergency Flex Funds, up to \$300 per referred family in a 6 month service period, are available to purchase resources not otherwise available, in order to meet a child's basic needs or to meet conditions for return (such as emergency food or clothing, assistance to prevent eviction, household supplies, home repair services).
- If DCS is involved, Flex Funds must be approved by the DCS Specialist and Supervisor. If DCS is not involved, Flex Funds are approved by the FC Service Coordinator.

## Eligibility

Family Connections Programs can serve:

- families whose DCS case will close following investigation;
- families receiving in-home case management with no impending danger and safety plan is not necessary;
- families receiving in-home case management with an in-home safety plan to manage dangers;
- families receiving ongoing case management with a child in out-of-home care; and
- families who are in the reunification transition process

Families may be referred to Family Connections when all of the following criteria are met:

- The FFA-Investigation has been completed, with sufficient information collection to make an impending danger decision;
- At least one child age birth to 18 resides in the home, or a parent in the home has parenting time (visitation) with a child;
- At least one parent is able and available to participate in FC, and does not currently have any of the following restrictions on participation:
  - ▶ No contact order between the parent/caregiver and the child,
  - ▶ Impairment requiring stabilization or improvement before the parent could benefit from FC (i.e. active psychosis, physical illness requiring hospitalization or residential care, pervasive substance use impacting reality orientation), or
  - ▶ Institutionalized or incarcerated;
- The DCS Specialist and family have discussed the family's strengths and needs, and the family has verbally agreed to meet with a FCC to learn about the program and services; and
- The DCS Specialist and DCS Supervisor have concluded one or more family members has a behavioral change goal that can be achieved by improving in one or more FC Core Outcomes, and there are no available and accessible community programs that provide the family an equivalent service.

## Service Intensity Levels

FC Level 1:

- Families whose DCS case will close following the investigation (no DCS oversight).
- In-Home case with children assessed as safe (no safety plan managing dangers).
- Out-of-home/ongoing case with all children residing in out-of-home care and it is not expected for a child to reunify with the parent during the service authorization period.

FC Level 2:

- In-home case with children assessed as unsafe due to impending danger (safety plan managing dangers).
- Ongoing case with a child in out-of-home care and one or more children residing in the home of the parent receiving services.
- Ongoing case with a child in out-of-home care and a child in OOH care is expected to reunify with the parent receiving services within the service authorization period.
- SENSE Case (infant remains in the home with a parent and has an open in-home case)



Families who only need concrete supports, where the lack of these supports is not creating a safety threat and risk of out-of-home care, shall be assisted by DCS to locate community resources and shall not be referred to FC.

FC Consultants are Bachelor's level professionals with a minimum of one year of human services related experience. FC Supervisors are Master's level professionals with a minimum of one year of human services related experience.

FC Programmatic Reports that will be uploaded into Guardian will include:

- CA-Self Interview
- Family Profile with NPP Assessments
- Comprehensive Family Assessment Summary
- Weekly Progress Reports
- Outcome Driven Service Plan
- Evaluation of Change Summary
- Service Closure Summary

All reports except the Weekly Progress Reports are to be uploaded within 10 days of completion. Weekly Progress Reports are uploaded by 5:00pm the Friday following the week services were provided.

## Time frames for Outreach, Engagement, Assessment & Services

1 business day of referral receipt:

- The FC Consultant (FCC) makes concerted efforts to have the initial face-to-face contact with the family.

5 business day of referral receipt:

- The FCC holds the intake meeting in the family's home, unless the family requests another location or there are safety concerns for professionals entering the home. The FCC should obtain DCS approval for any exceptions.
- During the intake meeting, the FCC will describe FC and the benefit to the family; explore the reason for services and DCS case; outline the roles of FC and DCS; obtain a Release of Information; explain the use of computerized assessment tools; identify and address issues impacting participation; answer questions; and schedule the next meeting.

30 days of referral receipt:

- The FCC engages the family to complete the Comprehensive Family Assessment (CFA), including the Computerized Assisted-Self Interview.
- The DCSS and FCC will participate in an assessment coordination meeting via video conference to review information and results gathered during the FFA(s) and CFA, resolve discrepancies between assessments, and reach consensus on behavioral change statements that will be discussed with the family at the DCS case plan staffing.

45 days of referral receipt:

- The FC Service Plan is developed, describing the FC Core Outcomes and UBSMART goals for the family.
- If DCS is involved, DCS must approve the Service Plan.

90 days following the FC Service Plan:

- The FCC delivers change-focused interventions related to the FC Core Outcomes and the identified UBSMART goals for 90 days.
- Families will participate in an Evaluation of Change with the FCC every 90 days, to assess progress.
- The DCSS and FCC will participate in another assessment coordination meeting via video conference to review information and results gathered during the FFA(s) and Evaluation of Change, resolve discrepancies between assessments, review progress and reach a conclusion or recommendation on service continuation or service closure.
- If the family has made sufficient change, the FCC will complete the Service Closure Summary connecting the family members with ongoing community resources and expanding on the DCS Aftercare Plan. If DCS is involved, DCS must approve service closure.
- Service continuation can occur in 90 day increments, if the family members are attending appointments and actively engaging in services and either the family has not made sufficient behavioral changes or the family is in or entering the reunification transition period. DCS must approve continued services and submit a new service request in Guardian..