

## How is the Child's Voice included?

Children's thoughts and feelings are important.

If saying what they feel is hard for them, your FGC Co-ordinator can help with this.

There are many ways a child's voice can be shared. For example, they can make pictures or record themselves speaking.

Children can talk to someone they know and trust or to an independent person called an 'advocate' who can be at the meeting to help them say what they want or say it for them.

Children will be invited to all or part of the meeting— it is their choice.



## Principles of Family Group Conferencing

Family Group Conferences are based on the principle of working in partnership. This helps shift the power from professionals to you and who you consider family:

- Families have more knowledge about what works than professionals, which can lead to better plans and decisions
- Families are able to make good decisions about their children, provided they are given the opportunity and information to do so
- Family difficulties can be resolved by involving friends and extended family
- Families have the strongest potential and motivation to care for their own children
- You can make a plan that focuses on what is important to you as a family
- Children are generally best looked after by their own families

### General contact info

[familygroupconferencing@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:familygroupconferencing@suffolk.gov.uk)

Find out more about Family Group Conferencing at:

[www.suffolk.gov.uk/FGC](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/FGC)

Family Rights Group- [www.frg.org.uk](http://www.frg.org.uk)



## Family Group Conferencing

A guide for

Parents and Carers



## What is a Family Group Conference?

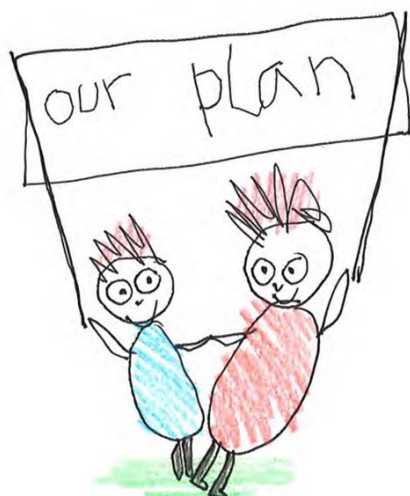
A Family Group Conference offers the chance for your family, relatives and friends to get together and make a plan that best supports you.

## Why have a Family Group Conference?

We believe families who develop their own plans have the most success.

Research from around the world also tells us that this success is likely to last longer when families work together to develop their own plans.

The Family Group Conference can help you to come up with solutions and a plan that works for everyone.



## Who can come?

Anyone who cares about you and supports you can be invited: close family; other relatives, including those who live a distance from you; friends who are important to you, people from your community or faith group.

The referrer will also need to be there to agree the plan.

There may be other people supporting you and your family who you may wish to invite to the meeting.

## Where is the meeting held?

You can help decide where the meeting will be held. We will always try to find somewhere that works for you like a hall or community centre near to your home.

## Who arranges the meeting?

You will have your own worker. They are called a Family Group Conference

Your FGC Co-ordinator will come to see you, talk to you about the meeting and answer any questions you may have.

Your FGC Co-ordinator will make sure the meeting is as accessible, comfortable and as easy to understand as possible.

## What happens at the meeting?

### Information sharing

Your FGC Co-ordinator will welcome everyone and you can help with this if you want to. Don't worry, you won't have to sit around a big table with everyone looking at you!

Everyone will talk about what is going on, and what they can do to help to reduce the worries. Everyone can have their say and ask questions.

### Private Family Time

You and your family and friends will have some private time to talk and make a plan that works for everyone. Food and drink will be available, and you can take as much time as you need to come up with your Family Plan.

### Agreeing your Family Plan

When your Family Plan is ready, the FGC Co-ordinator and the referrer can help you to make sure it has all the things in it that will be needed to make it work. The plan will be agreed unless it places the child at risk or does not address the original worries– it needs to be safe, legal and address the concerns.