

## Family Group Conferencing

- Allows family groups to lead decision making for the care of their children;
- is a group decision making process;
- widens the circle to include the broadest family group as defined by the family; and
- is a process where all information needed for planning for children's safety, possible placement and well-being is shared with the family group.



**DSS**  
*Serving Children and Families*



**SC Families First**  
Preserving families,  
restoring their future

Anyone, including family members, Guardian Ad Litem, counselors, school staff, etc. that knows of a family with children in foster care, may refer a family to SC Families First. Simply contact the service worker or one of the staff listed below.

### SC Families First Staff

**Pat Patrick**  
*Director*

843-412-3474

**Susan Wilson**  
*Region I Coordinator*

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**Sheila Johnson**  
*Greenville County FGC  
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**Janice Mosley-Boyd**  
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Edition of MAY 10 is obsolete.

## South Carolina Families First Family Group Conferencing



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## What is Family Group Conferencing?

Family Group Conferencing (FGC) is a practice that believes that families are often best able to make decisions about their own family. With the support of SCDSS and the community, the family will develop their own plan to make sure the emotional & physical safety and well being of their children are met.



## How is FGC Different?

Family Group Conferencing is voluntary. In an FGC, the family will work with a neutral person, a coordinator, who helps them with their family meeting.

The family group conference tries to include as many family, friends, community members and helping professionals as possible.

The family decides whom they define as family and together they address areas of concern and how to keep children and others safe.

## How Does it Work?

### Step 1

A DSS Social Services Worker will ask if the family would like to have a FGC.

### Step 2

The DSS worker will then make a referral to SC Families First, who will select a family coordinator.

### Step 3

The family coordinator meets with the family, gathers information, including a list of people the family would like to invite to the conference. A date, time, and place is set for the meeting.

### Step 4

The coordinator will contact the people to be invited. The family also has the right to contact anyone on the list.

### Step 5

The coordinator will review the purpose and goals of the meeting with all invitees.

### Step 6

The family group plans a menu of food to share with one another at the conference.

### Step 7

The family conference is held and the plan is made.

### Step 8

A follow up meeting is held if agreed upon by the family.

## Why Does it Work?

Family Group Conferencing believes that:

- Children have a right to keep their family and cultural connections throughout their lives;
- Children and their parents belong to a wider family system that both loves and takes care of them;
- Ideally, child welfare and protection decisions can be made within the family group;
- The state supports and wants to build the family group's ability to protect and care for their young relatives;
- Family groups know their own histories, and they use that information to develop a plan to make sure the emotional and physical safety and well being of their children are met.

