



## North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services

325 North Salisbury Street • Raleigh, North Carolina 27603  
Courier # 56-20-25

James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor  
H. David Bruton, M.D., Secretary

E. C. Modlin, ACSW, Director  
(919) 733-3055

October 3, 2000

**Dear County Director of Social Services (Family Group Conferencing counties)**

**Subject: Funding for Family Group Conferencing Coordinator Positions**

**Attention: Child Welfare Supervisors  
Child Welfare Social Workers  
Fiscal Officers**

**Effective Date: Immediately**

Following completion of the required training, several of you have asked for clarification of sources of allowable funding to support a Family Group Conferencing (FGC) Coordinator position. We recognize the importance of having a dedicated staff position to coordinate this activity as described in the attachment by Dr. Joan Pennell. The purpose of this letter is to provide the requested clarification and to ask for information regarding your plans to implement FGC in your county.

We are in the process of establishing a new service definition/code specifically to capture and reimburse the time spent by a dedicated FGC Coordinator. The "Family Group Conferencing" service definition/code will be in effect by November 1<sup>st</sup>. It will include the planning, arranging and conducting of family group conferences on behalf of:

- children reported for abuse, neglect or dependency who are at-risk of removal from their home in the absence of effective, preventive services; or
- children in DSS custody or placement responsibility.

Reimbursement for expenditures associated with the arranging of family group conferences, such as transportation costs for extended family members, can be charged to the service definition entitled "Other Child Welfare Services" (service code 390). This service definition/code is already in effect.

The six counties that have completed the required FGC training through N.C. State University may receive reimbursement for the Coordinator's time through a variety of sources of funds.

I. IV-E Waiver Counties

A IV-E Waiver county may use IV-E maintenance funds (flexible spending) or reinvestment funds to support a FGC Coordinator position. A IV-E Waiver county DSS may provide or purchase FGC services for a child, irrespective of IV-E eligibility) as long as the service is included in your approved plan and is targeted to achieving one of the 3 Waiver project outcomes:

- prevention of entry into legal custody;
- shortening the length of stay in foster care; or
- preventing the child from returning to foster care.

The child's IV-E eligibility still must be determined for tracking purposes. You must submit a plan amendment to Sandra Sink, IV-E Waiver Project Coordinator, if you choose to fund a FGC Coordinator under the Waiver. The program codes for this funding source are 5,6,7 and 8.

II. (New) TANF: CPS and Foster Care /Adoption Funds

TANF funds may be used to support FGC Coordinator positions created on or after July 1, 2000 for services on behalf of children who meet all TANF eligibility requirements (see Dear County Director Letter dated August 7, 2000). The use of these funds to support a FGC Coordinator position may only be done when the county DSS is in compliance with established staffing standards. The program code used for these newly hired positions is 0 (zero).

III. Other Allowable Funding Sources

The other funding sources that may be used in compliance with their applicable eligibility criteria to support a FGC Coordinator position include: Permanency Planning, TEA (100% federal TANF), MOE (Work First Block Grant), TANF transferred to SSBG, SSBG, IV-E Administration, and LINKS (formerly Independent Living). These funding sources are available to support DSS-based positions or contracted positions.

The chart below identifies the funding sources that are available to reimburse the cost of the Coordinator's time (indicated by "FGC" in the SERVICE column) and the costs associated with arranging family group conferences (indicated by "390" in the SERVICE column).

SERVICE	FUNDING SOURCE	PROGRAM CODE
FGC, 390	IV-E Waiver	5,6,7,8
FGC, 390	(New) TANF CPS and Foster Care/Adoption	0 (zero)
FGC, 390	Permanency Planning	P
FGC, 390	TEA (100% federal TANF)	R
FGC, 390	MOE (Work First Block Grant)	9
FGC, 390	TANF Transferred to SSBG	V
FGC	IV-E Administration	Z
FGC	SSBG	X
FGC	LINKS (formerly Independent Living)	K
FGC, 390	DSS Non-reimbursable	N

#### Requirements of Family Group Conferencing Model

The Family Group Conferencing model approved by the Division for use in the child welfare system involves the building of critical partnerships within the community to better serve children and families. The family conference consists of two parts. The first is a discussion of the issues facing the family. No recommendations are made. The second part of the meeting is a time when the family members discuss the issues and develop a plan of action to address them. The plan is then presented to the agency social worker for approval. The DSS agency always has the final word on implementation of the plan.

Counties wanting to use the new Family Group Conference Coordination service code and to use the term "Family Group Conferencing" **must** meet four basic requirements:

- Successful completion of Division-sponsored FGC training (through NCSU) by anyone who coordinates or conducts a family conference;
- Submission and approval of a formal FGC implementation plan;
- Participation in regional and statewide FGC training and support events sponsored by the Division; and
- Submission of quarterly reports (format to be determined) on the number of children and families on whose behalf family group conferences have been held and related outcomes (for evaluation purposes).

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We believe that Family Group Conferencing is an important strategy for effective child welfare practice. In the next few weeks, we will be issuing new information about expanding the Family Group Conferencing Project to other counties.

Please provide us with your plan to implement Family Group Conferencing, including your plan to secure (employ or contract) an FGC Coordinator. The plan should include information on how and when these conferences will be held, how the coordination will be managed, and a description of any variation from the model taught by Dr. Pennell. We would like to receive this information by the close of business on Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. If you have questions regarding information contained in this letter, please contact Sue Bell at (919) 733-2279.

Sincerely,

Charles C. Harris, Chief  
Children's Services Section

Attachment

cc:	Chip Modlin	Sandra Sink
	Nancy Coston	Children's Services Team Leaders
	Melinda Hamrick	Local Support Managers & Business Liaisons
	Joan Pennell	Children's Programs Representatives
	Sue Bell	Karen Anderson