

Nebraska Family Group Conferencing Competency Policies and Standards

Promulgated by the Nebraska Mediation Center Association

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Each affiliated mediation center will adopt these minimum standards for the practice of Family Group Conferencing.

A. Candidate Standards: Minimum Standards to be Accepted as an FGC Coordinator Candidate

1. Successful completion of an approved Basic Mediation Training;
2. Demonstrated readiness to be accepted as an FGC Candidate, which includes at minimum the following:
 - a. Completion of approved domestic violence training
 - b. Additional training in and/or demonstrated competencies in working with family dynamics;
 - c. Training in the child welfare system or experiential requirements; and
 - d. Additional training or experiential requirements as required by the affiliated mediation center.
3. Acceptance by the mediation center

B. Coordinator Standards

Minimum Coordinator Standards: A written statement by the FGC Program Director of compliance with the requirement that all FGC Coordinators will have successfully completed:

1. Approved training in Family Group Conferencing*(see criteria below) /or apprenticing with a Lead Coordinator or FGC Director. The apprentice shall take the approved Family Group Conferencing training within one year of beginning the apprenticeship.
 - Equivalency (reading FGC manual)
2. Training in and/or demonstrated competencies in interviewing, Facilitation, reporting and record keeping, and working with family dynamics
3. Additional training or experiential requirements of the Coordinator's affiliated mediation center;
4. Demonstrated competencies as a Coordinator while co-coordinating with Lead Coordinator; and
5. A contract with the affiliated center, or hired which is at the discretion of the individual center.

- C. **Lead Coordinator Standards:** -In order to be designated a Lead FGC Coordinator, all Lead FGC Coordinators will have successfully completed or attained:
1. Demonstrated success and competencies after completion of a minimum of three 3 full FGC cases, which includes Preparation Phase; Conference Phase, including Family Time and Follow-up, including reporting;
 2. Demonstrated ability to lead each phase and mentor coordinator development;
 3. Demonstrated ability to accurately evaluate competency of a co-coordinator;
 4. Maintain competencies as a lead coordinator through approved continuing education; demonstrated practice including Preparation Phase, Conference Phase, including Private Family Time, Follow-up, and Reporting; and Lead Coordinator responsibilities; and
 5. Individual centers may have additional training or experiential requirements.
 6. Contracting with a lead coordinator will be at the discretion of the individual center.

D. **Minimum Center FGC Program Director Standards** (*when applicable; some centers may not have an FGC Program Director*)

1. Successful completion of Lead Coordinator Standards
2. Demonstrated ability to promote and develop external community and systems relationships integral to the FGC program, including but not limited to HHS, courts and legal system, service providers, NMA, ODR and community members;
3. Demonstrated ability to promote and develop internal capacity and relationships, including but not limited to, the FGC Coordinators, Center staff, and prospective candidates;
4. Demonstrated ability to produce, maintain, disseminate records and reports in an accurate and timely manner;
5. Maintain competency and leadership in FGC through participation in advanced training and workshops, staff development, and continuing education and active practice in mediation, facilitation, and/or FGC cases;
6. Demonstrated commitment to progress through the ODR-NMA approved training curricula, including Basic, Family, Facilitation, Restorative Justice and FGC training; and
7. Diligence in following the FGC appropriateness and referral guidelines as set forth in the NMA procedures.
8. Individual centers may have additional Program Director requirements.

E. **FGC Practice Definitions**

1. Family: Persons related by blood or by marriage or non-married partners; those who are defined as family by the family consensus. “Family: does not include persons who are paid to be involved with the family.
2. FGC (Prep/Conference/Follow-up): A Family Group Conference (FGC)

consists of three stages:

Preparation Stage, the pre-conference period during which the Coordinator meets and/ or communicates with each participant;

- a.) Active search for extended family members of the children through contacts with providers, family and others.
- b.) Critical logistics planning of the meeting itself which includes the time of day, the location of the meeting and the planning of the meal.

Conference Stage, in which all the participants meet for a three phase session including Private Family Time;

- a.) Private Family time in which **only** family members meet
- b.) Required component for FGC

Follow-up Stage, in which a Follow Up conference session occurs within 90 days of the FGC, as well as the activities of evaluation, record keeping and reporting occurs.

3. Child Abuse/Neglect: FGC cases that focus on children whose families have been identified as putting the children at risk through neglect or abuse.
4. Juvenile Justice: FGC cases that focus on children who are in the Juvenile Justice system.

F. **Reporting, Record Keeping, Evaluation**

1. Coordinators will use standardized reporting forms.
2. Coordinators will use standardized evaluation forms.
3. Program Directors will maintain accurate records of FGC activities and will submit required reports.

G. Family Group Conferencing Training Standards

1. FGC Training will be a minimum of 16 hours of training to include:
 - a. National Family Group Decision Making principles and practices
 - b. Child abuse and neglect; juvenile status offence; delinquency
 - c. Family systems; genogram; ecomaps
 - d. Juvenile justice system
 - e. Family engagement, child centered decision making principles
 - f. Role of FGC coordinator; facilitator
 - g. Preparation phase; FGC meeting stages; follow up
 - h. Ethics of FGC Coordinator
 - i. Communication strategies during interviews
 - j. Facilitation strategies during conference
 - k. FGC plan writing
 - l. Practice role play
2. FGC Coordinators will have a minimum of 8 hours of continuing education every year in areas relating to FGC such as child abuse and neglect; family dynamics; facilitation skills; FGC practices.