



Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Protocol for Provider Agency Appeal of Child & Family Team Meeting (CFTM) Decision

Supplemental to DCS Policy: None

It is the intent of the Department to maintain the integrity, structure and decision-making authority within the Child and Family Team. The Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM) model is the main decision-making tool used by the Department, contract agencies and families to review and discuss case management related issues. Effective teaming requires that every team member's perspective is heard and considered before a consensus is reached. This consensus indicates a resolution that can be conditionally endorsed by all team members, but does not necessarily reflect each individual team member's opinion. However, if a decision is made by the team that is contrary to what a contract agency believes to be in the best interest of the child, the contract agency may appeal that decision. Contract agencies will not be penalized for exercising this appeal right.

Contract agencies may appeal CFTMs in limited circumstances. Those circumstances and the process for contract agencies to appeal CFTM decisions are outlined below. The appeal of a CFTM decision can only be requested to resolve the following issues:

- ◆ A child's type of placement;
- ◆ A child's level of care, or
- ◆ The continuation of a child's current services.

Each child remains in his or her current placement throughout the appeal process and all members of the team must understand the placement plan before leaving the meeting. The contract agency's intention to appeal should be announced to the team before the meeting is concluded. However, the provider is afforded one (1) business day after the adjourning of the CFTM in which to lodge their request of appeal.

In order to ensure an efficient review of matters relating to a child, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The contract agency must document their contention that the CFTM decision is contrary to the best interest of the child and family by submitting their request to Network Development within one (1) business day at:
https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/request_cftm_appeal.
2. Within **one (1) business day** of the receipt of the request for an appeal, a Network Development Program Manager contacts the contract agency to discuss the appeal. If resolution is reached at this level, the Program Manager will inform the Child and Family Team members associated with the case and enter documentation of the resolution in the electronic case file.
3. If resolution is not reached with the Program Manager, the request including all documentation provided by the contract agency will be sent to the Network Development Director who coordinates the State Level appeal within **three (3) business days**.

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4. During the appeal, the Central Office Multidisciplinary Team reviews the material submitted, hears both the Department's and the contract agency's positions, and makes a determination. This decision is made verbally during the meeting and followed up with a written explanation to the contract agency and the assigned Family Service Worker, Team Leader, and Regional Director. The results are also documented in the child's electronic case file by the Network Development Director.