**Quick Guide** Child & Family Teams and the Teaming Framework  
*City and County of San Francisco, Family & Children's Services*

**Background:**

**Katie A. and the Inter-Agency Services Collaborative**

*Katie A. Lawsuit*, Katie A. et al. v. Bonta et al., refers to a class action lawsuit filed in Federal District Court in 2002 concerning the availability of intensive mental health services to children in California who are either in foster care or at imminent risk of coming into care. A settlement agreement was reached in the case in December 2011, which required all counties in California to collaborate with behavioral health agencies and to provide specific mental health assessments and services to children involved in child welfare.

In response to the settlement, San Francisco created the **Interagency Services Collaborative (iASC)**. iASC sets goals beyond what the settlement requires to better address behavioral health issues for families involved in multiple systems, and formally replaces the name ‘Katie A’. iASC expands the collaboration beyond child welfare and mental health, to include juvenile probation, SFUSD and community partners.

As part of iASC, FCS worked closely with our behavioral health partners to create and pilot the Child and Family Team (CFT) process that focused specifically on behavioral health issues. This pilot was completed in November 2015.

**The Teaming Workgroup**

While the pilot was underway, FCS was inspired to reframe the efforts of the iASC collaborative into a larger teaming framework. Instead of adding an additional type of team to our current work, we streamlined and consolidated multiple types of family meetings into one model.

A workgroup was convened and made recommendations for the framework that are outlined below.

**What is the CFT/Teaming Framework?**

A **Child and Family Team (CFT)** includes the family, their natural supports, and all of the ancillary individuals who are working with them toward their successful transition out of the child welfare system. The Protective Services Worker (PSW), mental health staff and other service providers collaborate to engage youth and families as partners in the team environment.

The **FCS Teaming Framework** creates an infrastructure for the team to meet and collaborate. **Child and Family Team (CFT) Meetings** are regular, structured, facilitated, topical discussions with the family and/or the youth, the youth/family’s natural supports, the FCS PSW, and other team members related to a particular topic. They feature solution-focused discussions to address the specific needs of the family so in order to meet the safety, permanency and well-being needs of the child.

**Key concept: A team is not a meeting**

FCS recognizes that a larger support team is necessary to address the youth’s and family’s needs. This larger support team is the Child and Family Team. Subgroups and sub-teams of the CFT will meet regularly in order to plan and address immediate needs. A CFT Meeting is called regularly to discuss particular topics, and only the essential team members related to that topic attend. CFTs are facilitated by the FCS Family Teaming Unit Facilitators.
These needs and plans to address them are documented in the Shared Family Care Plan, which guides the work of all of the members of the team. The Shared Family Care Plan is used as the basis for the FCS Case Plan, the behavioral health treatment plan, and other service plans.

**Why are we doing it?**
- To better serve families and youth
- To improve and simplify collaboration with partners
- To meet the requirements of *Katie A. et al. v. Bonta et al* settlement, and prepare for other changes coming soon, such as Continuum of Care Reform.
- To improve the efficiency of the work by consolidating meeting with families and partners
- To improve our engagement of families by creating a predictable environment and utilizing solution focused strategies (such as Safety Organized Practice) and the Core Practice Model elements.

**How does this fit with our other initiatives?**

Effective teaming is at the core of all of our practice improvements in child welfare. The Teaming Framework aligns with the California Child Welfare Core Practice Model (CA CPM). It also builds upon the work of the Inter-Agency Services Collaborative (IASC), and is a central component of the FCS Change Initiative. Teaming is essential to both processes.

The diagram below illustrates this.
What Happens Next:

- The Teaming Workgroup made recommendations that were reviewed by the Implementation Team, and integrated into the planning for the spread of the CFT meetings focused on behavioral health.
- FCS Program Manager Liz Crudo is leading the full implementation of the Child and Family Team Meetings and Teaming Framework. This work will have several phases:
  - **Phase I: Spreading the CFT on Behavioral Health** - All youth with new cases will have a CFT focused on behavioral health
  - **Phase II: Converting Team-Decision-Making meetings (TDMs)** – Initial TDM meetings will change to a solution-focused format and be called CFTs focused on Safety and Placement, consistent with the Framework. During this phase we will also pilot CFTs focused on visitation.
  - **Phase III: Full Implementation of the Framework** – All open cases will have regularly scheduled, topical CFTs throughout the time that the child is involved with FCS.

How will I be involved?

All levels of staff will play a part in the CFT process.

Leadership and Management will:
- Consider the Teaming Framework when developing new interventions and processes, so that all meetings involving families and youth will be consistent and predictable.
- Modify existing team meetings that involve the youth and family to make them consistent with the framework.
- Support staff in working collaboratively in a team environment with families, youth and partners.

Protective Services Supervisors will:
- Participate in the Shared Coaching Collaborative in order to learn about the Framework and support their staff in implementing it.
- Coach their staff to work collaboratively with partners in the team environment.
- Model collaborative practice with their staff.

Protective Services Workers will:
- In Phase I, schedule a CFT focused on behavioral health for all new cases. These will typically occur in the Court Dependency Units and Non-Court Family Maintenance units, but may occur in Family Services Units as well.
- In Phase II, schedule and participate in the CFT focused on Safety and Placement during Emergency Response.
- In Phase III, schedule and participate in CFT meetings throughout the time that the youth and family are involved with FCS. These will occur about once every 60 days during FSU and STU.
- During all phases, work collaboratively to develop the family and youth’s team, and develop and utilize a Shared Family Care Plan that guides the Case Plan and other treatment plans/service plans.

Support staff will:
- Participate as needed in CFT meetings. For example, CFTs focused on visitation may involve the Social Services Technician that provides transportation and supervision for the visits.
- Assist in scheduling and confirming the CFT meetings.
Where can I find more information?

- The **Teaming Workgroup Report** has more detailed information on the Teaming Framework.
- A report on the results of the pilot of the CFT for behavioral health has more detailed information on that particular CFT.
- CalSWEC has a variety of information about the **California Core Practice Model**.
- As further phases of implementation begin, the Policy Development Unit will develop and distribute policies on teaming.