

MiTEAM SNAPSHOT

MiTEAM is Michigan's Child Welfare Practice Model. A practice model is an agency's guide of how staff, children, families, stakeholders, and community partners work together to achieve outcomes that focus on safety, stability, well-being and permanency of children and their families.¹ MiTEAM aligns with the agency's mission, values, and principles and incorporates the following practice skills: Engagement, Assessment, Teaming and Mentoring.

Why MiTEAM?

- **To establish a unified approach that:**
 - Provides for consistency in practice
 - Clarifies roles and expectations for staff
 - Informs policy, training and quality assurance
 - Explains how child welfare intervention and services are delivered to children and families.
- **To improve Michigan's outcomes in the following areas, but not limited to:**
 - Timeliness and permanency of reunification.
 - Adequately assessing and addressing the service needs of children, parents and foster parents
 - Diligent efforts made to involve parents and children in the case planning process
 - Absence of recurrence of maltreatment
 - Absence of child abuse or neglect in foster care
- To focus reform efforts on principals of good practice not process compliance.
- To encourage family driven solutions and move away from being overly formal and structured.

Engagement: Includes birth parents, legal guardians, relatives, foster parents, adoptive parents, and youth. Engagement is a series of intentional interventions that work together in an integrated way to promote safety, stability, wellbeing and permanency for children, youth and families.² The family actively participates in solution- and outcome-focused planning that is needs-driven and strengths-based.² Interactions with families are open, transparent, and non-judgmental and the relationship between families and professionals is viewed as a partnership.²

All management staff and case managers will utilize effective engagement, teaming, assessment, planning, and intervention skills when working with a family; from the time of CPS intervention throughout the child welfare continuum to permanency.

Family Team Meetings: Family Team Meetings will be utilized to engage families in safety planning, case planning, service identification and assessing progress. When families, children, youth and caregivers are engaged and involved in case planning, they understand their roles and are more empowered and motivated to make long lasting changes to protect the children in their care.

Some Key Elements of Family Team Meetings:

- Families are empowered to take the lead (setting agenda, selecting participants and meeting location).
- Staff, Foster Parents and Relatives serving as mentors.
- Diligent relative searches & full disclosure with families and caregivers.
- Dual Permanency Goal Planning (Plan A and Plan B).
- Case plans are made with a team and the responsibility of plan development is not with the case manager.

Activities that prompt the primary case worker to offer a Family Team Meeting to the family for safety, assessment, and case planning **for in-home cases:**

- CPS case opening/ transfer to ongoing CPS worker
- Safety and service planning
- Court Intervention
- Case closing

¹ National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement: An Introduction to the Practice Model Framework.

² The Child Protection Best Practice Bulletin (2007), <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/fewpt/definitions.htm>

MiTEAM SNAPSHOT

Activities that prompt the primary case worker to offer a Family Team Meeting to the family for placement, assessment, and case planning **for out of home cases:**

- Case planning (placement options, visitation schedule, permanency goal change, service referral, etc.)
- Placement preservation/disruption
- Permanency Planning (6 months) to discuss progress on the treatment plan, visitation concerns, placement, and permanency options
- Annual Transition Planning for Youth
- 90 Day Discharge Planning for Youth
- Case Closure

***Meetings can be held at other times as a family, youth, caregiver, child's Attorney, tribal social worker, case manager and/or supervisor see beneficial.

Strength Based Assessment: Assessment is a process rather than a one-time or point in time event. The process includes information gathering, analysis, and collaborative decision-making that include the family as partners. A thorough initial and ongoing assessment has a direct effect on better outcomes for children.

Mentoring: Partnership between managers, staff, caregivers, parents and children that guides and empowers others in personal or professional growth to achieve positive outcomes. Mentoring is vital to demonstrate and reinforce desired skills to promote outcomes for children, families and practice.

Practice Structure, Support and Quality Assurance:

- **Peer Coach Consultants:** There are four Peer Coach Consultants in the Foster Care Program Office who serve as the experts in the MiTEAM Model. They assist with bridging the gaps between field, policy, Quality Assurance, training, legal, fiscal, and/or other areas that have an impact on the practice. Peer Coach Consultants train all Peer Coaches.
- **Peer Coaches (Facilitators, Supervisors and other designees identified by the DHS County/Private Agency Director):** Peer Coaches are champions within their current position and have received additional training and support to serve in this role. Peer Coaches train all child welfare staff in the MiTEAM Model, which encompasses components of Concurrent Planning. Peer Coaches will be a resource for new implementation sites.
- **MiTEAM Committee:** A team of individuals from Program Office, Field Operations, Court, CWTI, DHS/PAFC Directors, and Native American Affairs who meet monthly to brainstorm critical issues identified in the field that impact practice change.

Some of the Benefits for All Involved:

- **Enhances the helping relationship.** When families feel valued and respected they are more willing to work with child welfare staff, thus increasing the chances for successful intervention.³
- **Families are more likely to comply with a plan they helped to develop.**²
- **Expands options to maintain family connections.** When the caseworker includes family members (including non-custodial parents and extended relatives) early in a case, there are more opportunities to use relatives as support and or placement/permanency options for children.²
- **Improves the quality and focus of visits.** By utilizing family engagement and increased visits, the family and caseworker forge a partnership that strengthens the assessment process, leads to more appropriate services, and visits that allow for strengthening the parent/child bond.²
- **Increases placement stability.**²
- **Enhances the fit between family needs and service.** When child welfare staff work collaboratively with families, they are more able to identify their unique needs and develop pertinent and culturally appropriate services plans that address their needs, build on strengths and utilize community supports. Collaboration leads to utilizing limited resources more effectively.²
- **Increases timeliness to permanency.**
- Staff will have practice skills that are reinforced through supportive supervisors.
- A model of practice that that is consistently applied through all levels of the agency.

³ Child Information Gateway. www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/f_fam_engagement/