

Youth Engagement Matters

in Placement Child & Family Team Meetings

June 2022

Youth Engagement Matters is a publication of practice tips that are provided to Child Welfare Staff who lead, supervise, and/or deliver services to children and families. This publication is provided via email and stored on the Unite Site for access at any time.

Purpose

DSS strongly believes that children and youth are best served in family-like settings. We are committed to a planful transition of all children/youth who are currently in congregate care and whose level of need is appropriate for a family-like setting to either permanency via reunification with their family, with kin foster/adoptive families, or non-kin foster/adoptive families when family/kin are not viable options.

Goal

A Placement Child and Family Team Meeting (PCFTM) is focused on finding solutions for a child/youth's placement with a team of individuals that can support the identification of strengths, resources, barriers, and solutions. It is important that Child Welfare Staff are knowledgeable and understand the purpose and expectations of these activities.

Steps and Best Practices For Reducing Youth Placement in Congregate Care

Prep-work

- Document communication with all participants informing them about the date and time of the meeting.
- Interview family in preparation of the PCFTM to explore current and past connections with relative and fictive kin.
- Prepare youth and relatives to participate in PCFTM, by explaining the process and benefits of family-based placement and the need for permanency.
- Discuss the areas of concern and dynamics that could affect PCFTM with the facilitator.

During the Meeting

- Ensure youth and family participate in PCFTM and are given a chance to speak about concerns and needs.
- Read confidentiality disclosure to all present at the PCFTM.
- Schedule or offer a transitional meeting to youth that meet age requirement.
- Allow supports (formal and informal) for youth and family to be present and participate in meeting.

Post Meeting

- Case manager/facilitator provides a copy of meeting notes to all participating parties.
- Document conversations with youth in updating him/her on progress of step-down placement.
- Document if youth is discharged to a permanent home prior to 18th birthday.
- Document ongoing efforts to identify an appropriate permanent placement for youth
- Link PCFTM Summary form and complete dictation in CAPSS that the meeting occurred.



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Benefits of a Placement Child and Family Team Meeting (PCFTM)

- **Reduces** the number of youth in Group Care 1 & 2
- **Increases** use of Kinship Care
- **Shortens** time to Permanency
- **Enhances** youth and family engagement
- **Allows** teaming with providers
- **Creates** a family-centered practice outcome

Purpose of Youth Engagement

Youth engagement is the most critical component of the PCFTM.

Why it is so important:

- *It allows everyone to better understand the youth's needs and perspective*
- *Further explore possibilities*
- *Youth can identify kin or fictive kin*
- *Case manager can gain rapport and trust of youth*

“ I loved having a voice and input for my own plan” ~ Youth (17 y/o)

GPS Principles that Support Family-Centered Engagement

*Family-centered PCFTMs are purposeful for application of core practice skills including **engagement, planning, teaming, individualized & strength-based, and intervening.***

The PCFTM is documented within the month that it occurs. Documentation consists of three phases: before, during, and after the meeting.

The Case Manager plans and prepares before the meeting; engages, assesses, explores, and adjusts during the meeting; and documents all follow-ups after the meeting.

GPS Practice Model
Guiding Principles and Standards
Better Together: Enhancing Practice, Transforming Lives

VISION and VALUES

- Respect
- Excellence
- Community Invested
- Accountability

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Family-Centered
- Trauma-Informed
- Individualized & Strengths-Based
- Culturally Responsive

CORE PRACTICE SKILLS

- Engagement
- Teaming
- Functional Assessment
- Planning
- Intervening
- Tracking & Adapting

GPS (Guiding Principles & Standards)
is a model of casework practice for **Child Welfare Services** adopted by South Carolina

The GPS practice model explains the values, principle, and core practice skills used by staff to empower children and families to achieve the goals of safety, stability, permanency, and well-being. Inspired by GPS navigation technology, the model will serve as a road map to help practitioners arrive at desired practice model outcomes and to achieve uniform practice within the department.

DSS SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT of SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES DIVISION

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Documenting Best Practices

Case manager contacts with the child/youth, parents, foster parents, and relative and non-relative caregivers are documented in CAPSS dictation. Documentation for the PCFTM should be in narrative format capturing the following:

- *Participants*
- *Date, location, and duration*
- *Progress towards case goals and placement and permanency updates*
- *Needs and/or concerns expressed by the youth, parent, non-custodial parent, guardian, and provider*
- *Additional service needs*
- *Follow-up activities and priorities*
- *Link or copy & paste completed PCFTM Summary*



“If it’s not documented, it didn’t happen”

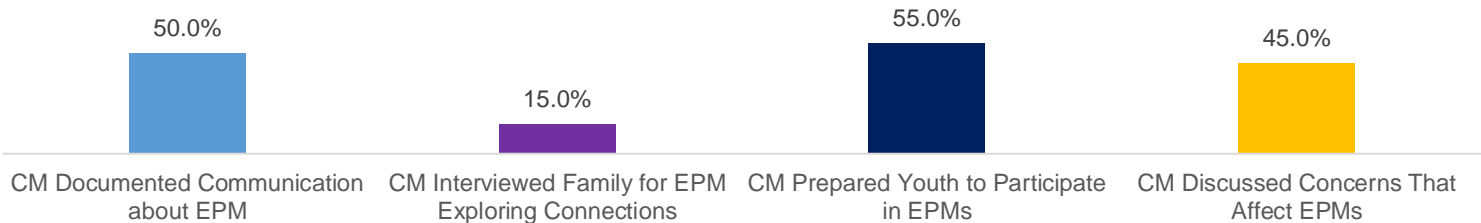
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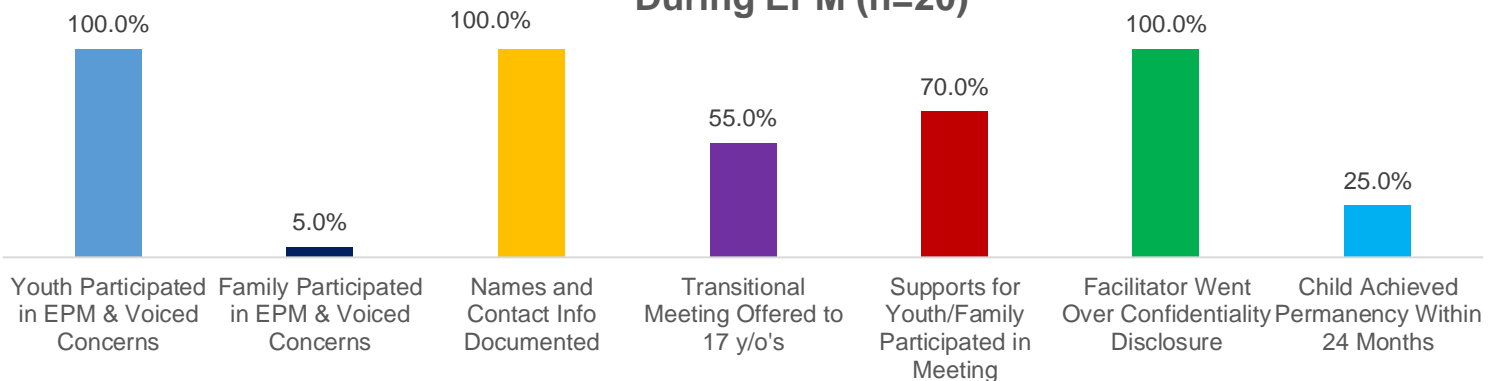
June 2022

Expediated Permanency Meeting (EPM) was a three-part process that included preparatory work, a facilitated team meeting, and a structured follow-up. It aimed to sharply reduce the number of youth living in unnecessary group care placements. Below is data from **20 case reviews from Cohort IV**:

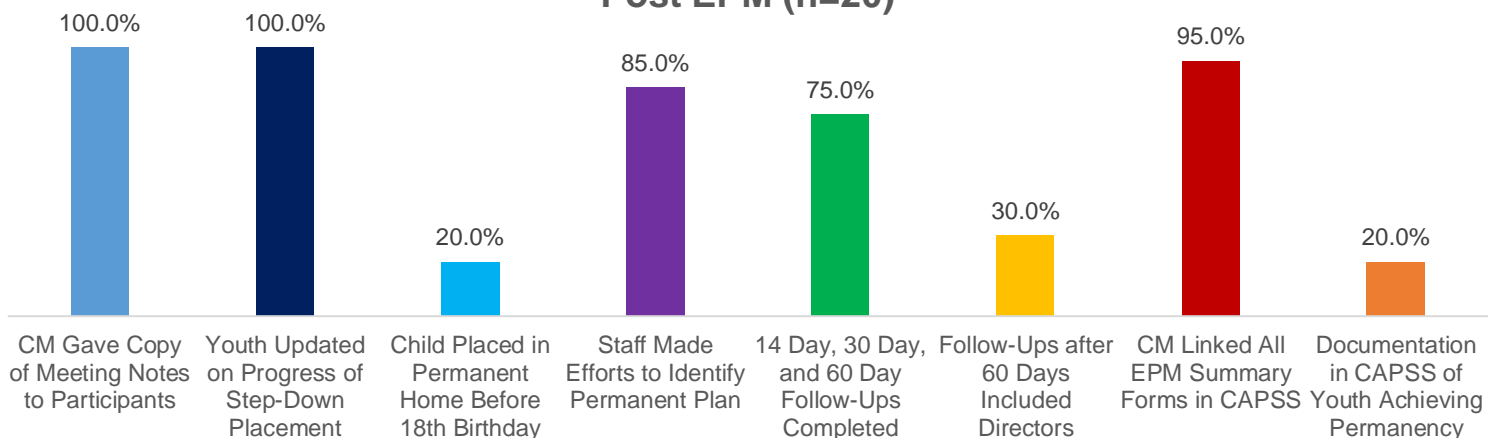
Pre EPM (n=20)



During EPM (n=20)



Post EPM (n=20)



Thank you for helping us strengthen South Carolina families.

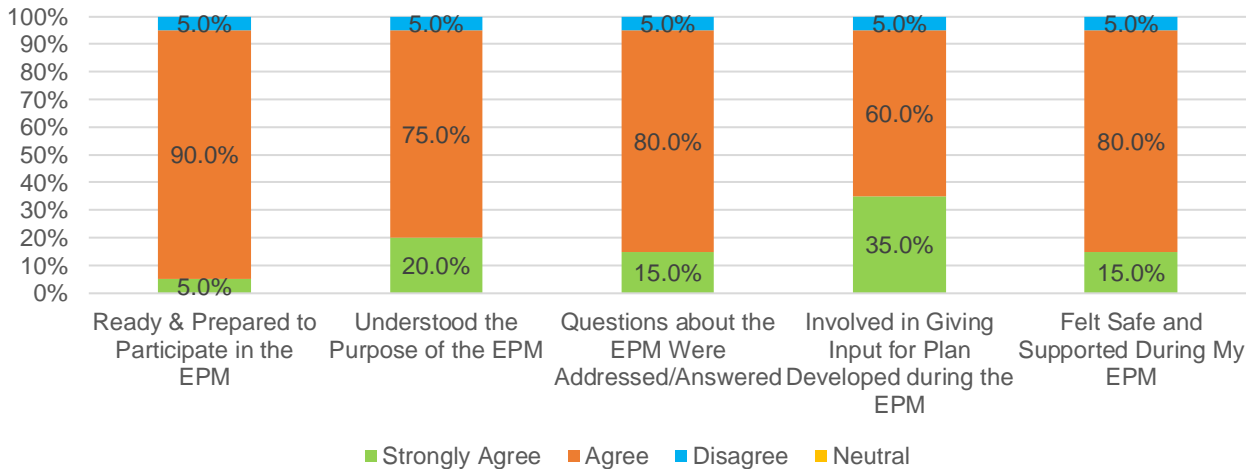
Youth Engagement Matters

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June 2022

The Youth Voice (n=20):

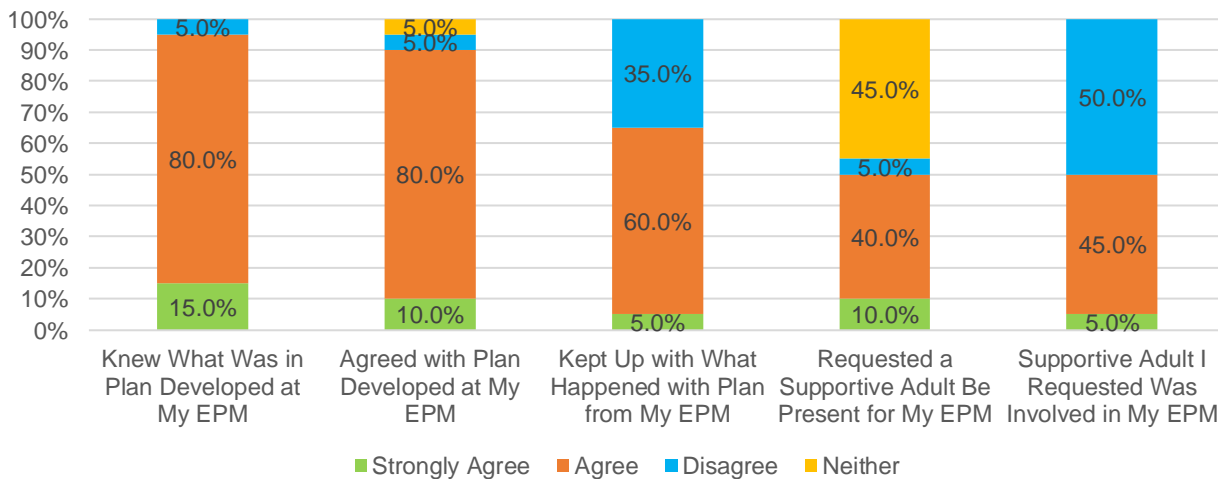
EPM Experience



Demographics:

Age:
 35% 16-year-olds
 30% 17-year-olds
 20% 18-year-olds
 10% 15-year-olds
 5% 14-year-olds

EPM Experience



Race/Ethnicity:

50% Black
 35% White
 10% Hispanic
 5% Bi-Racial

Gender:
 55% Male
 45% Female

[Click here to complete a brief survey on the Best Practices Newsletter](#)



If you prefer, scan the survey's QR code with your phone.

Due June 30, 2022

Thank you for helping us strengthen South Carolina families.

