

CARE AND PROTECTION

ADVOCATES TIP SHEET

FAMILY ACTION PLAN FOR CHANGE - DCJ SAYS THAT A CHILD NEEDS A PLAN TO STAY SAFE IN THE FUTURE

This tipsheet is designed to help advocates ensure that DCJ safety plans are accessible, fair, and practical for parents with cognitive disability

Family Action Plan For Change

If DCJ decides the child needs ongoing protection, they move to a Family Action Plan for Change (FAPFC).

During the meeting

- ☐ Clarify with DCJ any abstract language. Abstract language or goals can be hard for parents with intellectual disability to understand because they lack clear instructions, e.g.,

Abstract: 'I will look after my mental health'

Concrete: 'I will meet my psychologist, Sarah, every Wednesday at 10:00 AM'

Abstract: 'I will keep the home clean and safe'

Concrete: 'I will put all the rubbish in the bin every night before I go to bed'

- ☐ Does the plan rely on the parent doing something their disability makes too difficult?
- ☐ Does the plan name specific people or agencies to step in if the parent hits a road bump?
- ☐ Prompt the parent to ask, "Can you explain that differently?" if they look confused.
- ☐ Are the deadlines for improvements realistic, given the parent's available funding and the wait times for some disability services?

After the meeting

- ☐ Rewrite the instructions in a format the parent can clearly understand, e.g., Easy Read or pictorial.
- ☐ Translate goals into concrete actions, e.g., goals that include words such as 'Appropriate,' 'Sufficient,' 'Regularly,' 'Improve,' or 'Adequate' might be too abstract. Concrete actions include, e.g., 'Which day?' 'How many times?', 'Who exactly?'
- ☐ Are there any tasks that might be hard due to the parent's specific disability, e.g., memory, literacy, or executive functioning? Can a support plan be put in place?
- ☐ Create a visual calendar or checklist fridge magnet with all the FAPFC tasks.
- ☐ Does the parent have a single sheet of paper with the names of their caseworker, lawyer, and support workers?
- ☐ Set up phone alarms or SMS reminders for things like medication, appointments, and home visits
- ☐ Does the parent need a notebook or diary to record when they attend appointments or finish tasks? This acts as proof for the caseworker.
- ☐ Talk to the parent about answering private or unknown calls that might be from DCJ or returning calls from DCJ that have gone to voicemail?

