



Ashland County
Family & Children
First Council

OFCFCA

Promoting healthy children, strong families,
and thriving communities county by county.



COUNTY: ASHLAND

MISSION STATEMENT / LOCAL FOCUS:

The Ashland County Family & Children First Council (FCFC) is a network of local service providing organizations, government, advocates, parents and funders of services for children and families. The FCFC holds as its purpose to improve understanding and knowledge of county-based services. It serves to identify services/gaps and improve delivery for families seeking assistance with their children.

OPERATING STRUCTURE:

Ashland County FCFC has sixty-five members from thirty-four agencies who participate on committees and in various capacities with Council activities. The nineteen mandated members, which includes five family members, actively guide the Council's operation. The Mental Health and Recovery Board of Ashland County serves as Council's Administrative and Fiscal Agent.

LOCAL FCFC CORE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Community Capacity Building/Planning:** strategies and outcomes
Ashland County FCFC promotes community problem solving by partnering with public and private agencies and individuals to identify gaps in service needs and resources for children and families. This has been accomplished through regular data collection using community surveys, focus group discussions and professional input from a diverse representation of county services and programs. Our strategic planning mechanism assures informed selection of long-range county goals and ongoing evaluation of progress and outcomes. Key informants for planning are the family members of Council and when possible youth/children.
- **Service Coordination: strategies and outcomes**
Our Council has two levels of service coordination for individual children and families. One is the Preventive Care Team that meets with lead workers and families who have needs not being met from a single service provider and who may benefit from a coordinated multi-system support. The goal is to prevent family disruption and long-term negative consequences for children. A second service coordination team meets to assist children involved with multiple services who are at high risk of going out of home and out of county or who are returning to home and county. This team seeks to design an effective service plan that may not be available by a traditional treatment team approach.
- **Family Empowerment:** strategies and outcomes
Ashland County FCFC highly values its family members and strives to empower families to be active in all Council initiatives and committees. The Council's Family Networking Team (FNT) provides family to family support and also functions as a vehicle to provide family input and ideas for Council planning. The team is a standing committee of Council. A father support group has grown out of this team.
- **Early Childhood System of Care:** strategies and outcomes
Ashland County FCFC implements the Help Me Grow program and has an active Early Childhood Coordinating Committee that contains representatives from all agencies/services for young children as well as business partners, school partners, libraries, etc. It oversees the Help Me Grow program and monitors service and program needs of children prenatal to age five. Maternal depression screening, teen parenting curricula and father involvement has been implemented through Help Me Grow with partnerships with member agencies. The Council participates in a multi-county school readiness committee which is part of the regional Pre-K – 18 initiative. School readiness has been identified as a major long-term intermediate goal.

LOCAL CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND RESPONSIBILITIES (As Applicable):

- **Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention:** strategies and outcomes
Through the use of Ohio Children's Trust Fund money, Ashland FCFC has provided home-based parent support mentoring services to help families improve family-child relations. In SFY 2010 , the Council efforts will focus on reducing the chances of child abuse/neglect with families with children identified with conduct disorders.

OTHER LOCAL INITIATIVES: strategies and outcomes

The Council implemented High Fidelity Wrap Around to help children at high risk of going out of home. This proved highly successful in finding viable solutions not available through traditional services. Due to loss of staff and funding the service has been put on hold. It is hoped that our Council can reinstate the program with new revenue sources.

Our Council recognizes the importance of using a holistic approach to servicing the needs of the entire family rather than a single child or individual in the family. Where possible, service plans include parental needs and the needs of siblings in addition to the target child. The Council is trying to engage families with our service coordination teams using a strengths-based and solution-focused approach.

FUNDING:

Ashland County FCFC receives funding from its member agencies, as well in kind staff support from its administrative agent. The total budget of over \$ 470,000 includes funding to implement Access to Better Care, Help Me Grow, Council administration and Ohio Children's Trust Fund programming as well as some miscellaneous small private grants.

STAFFING:

The Ashland County FCFC Coordinator is the only full time employee.

CHALLENGES:

In order to meet the unique needs of each child and family, flexible funding is a necessity. The majority of funding for all county agencies prohibits the use of allocated dollars in areas of specific need.

FUTURE PLANS:

Holmes County FCFC will continue its work to provide leadership, advocacy and collaboration to support current initiatives and identify emerging concerns for children and families.

Contact Information:

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