



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



COUNTY: GAUGUA

MISSION STATEMENT / LOCAL FOCUS:

Gaugua Family First Council brings together family representatives and local agencies who work collaboratively and pool resources to promote safe, healthy, stable families and children in Gauga County.

Many Gauga County families require the support of more than one agency. One of the functions of Gauga Family First has been to develop and help fund a broad continuum of community-based services ranging from prevention to treatment for families.

OPERATING STRUCTURE:

19 Council Members (16 mandated, 3 non-mandated). Only 2 standing committees - Early Childhood and Finance - the rest are ad hoc. Gauga JFS is Council's Administrative Agent.

LOCAL FCFC CORE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Community Capacity Building/Planning:** strategies and outcomes
Provides the framework for county agencies, non-profits and community representatives to coordinate collaborative efforts. Through Council, members take a pro-active approach to sharing information, discussing concerns which impact families, and developing community solutions to identified issues.
- **Service Coordination:** strategies and outcomes
Council has worked hard to insure that Gauga has a viable, easily accessible Service Coordination system. The entry point for families to obtain Service Coordination, i.e. access to a wide range of services funded by Council, is one of Council's multi-disciplinary treatment teams. The Service Coordination process only occurs because of the commitment to the process of Gauga's major family-serving agencies. MR/DD, JFS, Juvenile Court, the Health District, the schools, and the local mental health agencies not only have been critical to Service Coordination development, but their representatives all play key roles on our interagency teams.
- **Family Empowerment:** strategies and outcomes
Council now has 4 Family Reps, each one with a unique perspective re: a type of service their family receives/received from Council. Gauga has a strong and active Early Childhood Subcommittee composed of agency reps and parents, which shares ideas, plans activities for young families, and provides input to Council re: early childhood issues. Families play an active role in their case presentations to our various treatment teams and in their individual service plan development
- **Early Childhood System of Care:** strategies and outcomes
Council oversees Help Me Grow (HMG) in Gauga. Services are provided through Gauga Health District (newborn home visits) and Gauga JFS (ongoing HMG services). The numbers served have almost doubled since HMG began in 2001. Gauga HMG is essentially a partnership between JFS, the Health District, MR/DD and Council and is helping hundreds of families get their kids off to a healthy, stable start.

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

- **Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention:** strategies and outcomes

Gaugua Educational Service Center - Life skills training for young parents thru information,

education, and support.

Family Pride – Aftercare and follow-up services for graduates of Parent Project, a parent education program.

Womensafe - Counseling for children whose mothers access WomenSafe services due to domestic violence issues.

OTHER LOCAL INITIATIVES: strategies and outcomes

All the programs listed below are funded through local Council dollars:

All-Stars: Resiliency building prevention program (provided to 6th & 7th graders) in 5 local school districts.

BRIDGES: Youth partial hospitalization program offering intensive group-based therapeutic services.

Family Strengths: Family support services for children, birth to 4 and their families who face social, medical, or financial challenges.

Therapeutic Group Home: Therapeutic residential program for youth 11-17, who because of mental health or substance dependency issues, are unable to remain in a family setting.

FUNDING:

Geauga Family First has a budget of approx \$1.7 million. 72% of our FY08 budget came from local revenue; 27% from the state; and 1% from federal funds.

STAFFING:

Council Coordinator/Help Me Grow Project Director (full-time); Case Services Coordinator (3/4 time); Administrative Assistant (1/2 time).

CHALLENGES:

Need flexible funding from the state which can then be more easily channeled to meet local needs.
Determine how best to allocate resources between prevention and treatment.
Help our older “Council kids” transition to adulthood.

FUTURE PLANS:

Council’s work is primarily locally driven within the context of the “Commitments to Child Well-Being.” Gathering input to determine which local needs should receive highest priority is a key part of any further planning.

Contact Information:

Nancy Seelbach - Council Coordinator
Geauga Family First Council
12480 Ravenwood Drive
Chardon, OH 44024

Phone 440-285-1201
Fax 440-286-6654
email seelbn@odjfs.state.oh.us