



**Ohio Family &
Children First
Coordinators
Association**

THE OHIO FAMILY & CHILDREN FIRST COORDINATORS ASSOCIATION

POSITION PAPER:

Partnerships for Success

Since 1998, the Ohio Department of Youth Services in partnership with the Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council has made available to Ohio counties a comprehensive, cross-system, community planning process focused on addressing the needs of children and families. Ohio State University's Center for Learning Excellence provides the training and technical assistance to support the ongoing implementation of this planning model, now known as Partnerships for Success (PfS).

The PfS model has become the primary planning process for local Family and Children First (FCF) Councils across the state that have competed annually to participate in the program. PfS provides a set of procedures and processes that assist communities in building local capacity to prevent and respond effectively to child and adolescent problem behaviors while promoting positive youth development. To date, over forty-five (45) counties have participated in the two-year PfS experience, expanding their capacities to strategically mobilize their communities around identified needs. Through the PfS initiative, the PfS Academy (Center for Learning Excellence) has provided on-going technical assistance and training to FCFC Councils that is responsive to local needs, while still maintaining practice uniformity statewide. Approximately 1.5 million dollars are currently invested annually for this program, providing significant statewide impact and raising the bar for community collaboration and capacity building.

Local FCFCs have utilized the PfS model to identify priorities, develop meaningful strategies, introduce quality programming, and monitor the outcomes of their efforts. The PfS planning model is well suited to meet the fiscal and programmatic challenges that communities will face in the next few years. As funding challenges continue to emerge, it will be even more important for local FCFCs to work collaboratively and strategically focus their efforts. These current financial conditions make community planning, collaboration, and accountability even more important.

The Ohio Family and Children First Coordinators Association (OFCFCA) wishes to thank the OFCF Cabinet Council for investing in the PfS initiative and bringing these important resources to our counties. We believe that continuation of the PfS initiative is crucial to the work of local FCF Councils to create conditions in Ohio counties that help children and families make healthy life choices and achieve success. Maintaining PfS support to counties through the local FCFCs enhances their ability to meet present and future challenges. We recommend that PfS become a resource to all FCFCs requesting this type of technical assistance.

In addition to assisting local counties, this Association believes the information and data that results from the PfS processes across the state will be very useful to the Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council as they strive to create positive, meaningful, statewide impact for Ohio children.

OFCFCA understands the fiscal situation in Ohio and the future challenges we will face in meeting the needs of Ohio's residents. In addition, we understand the funds available from the Ohio Children's Trust Fund for PfS are no longer available. However, it is our sincere hope that the Cabinet Council will be able to identify some level of funding to support this important county resource. OFCFCA members are willing to work closely with CLEX to develop program improvements and cost efficiencies, such as peer mentoring that may increase cost effectiveness.

For all of the reasons stated above, the Ohio Family and Children First Coordinators Association continues its support for the Partnerships for Success initiative and commits to working with the PfS Academy to:

- 1) Identify improvements and efficiencies that will enhance the PfS model and its implementation at the local level.
- 2) Develop strategies to expand PfS to all Ohio counties requesting assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Giga, Greene County
OFCFCA President
937-562-5600
sgiga@co.greene.oh.us

Chad Hibbs, Guernsey County
OFCFCA Vice-President
740-432-6815
hibbsc@odjfs.state.oh.us

Kathy Kelly, Holmes County
OFCFCA Regional Representative
330-674-6070
Kellyk01@odjfs.state.oh.us

Kathy McLeish, Muskingum & Licking Counties
OFCFCA Regional Representative
740-454-9908
kathymcleish@promuskingum.org