

# Ohio Family and Children First

An overview of OFCF structure,  
membership, and responsibilities.

# OFCF Overview

- Ohio Family and Children First (OFCF) is a partnership of government agencies and community organizations committed to improving the well-being of children and their families.
- OFCF started as an initiative of the Office of the Governor in 1991 building upon previous legislation.
- The Ohio General Assembly codified OFCF in 1993.

# Cabinet Council

Section 121.37 of the Ohio Revised Code outlines that:

The OFCF Cabinet Council was created to streamline and coordinate government services for families needing help for their children.

# Cabinet Council Membership

Membership is comprised of the directors of the Ohio Departments of:

- Alcohol & Drug Addiction Services
- Budget & Management
- Education
- Health

# Cabinet Council Membership Continued...

- Job & Family Services
- Mental Health
- Developmental Disabilities
- Youth Services
- Aging
- Rehabilitation and Correction
- Rehabilitation Services Commission

# Chair of the Cabinet Council

- The OFCF Cabinet Council is chaired by Ohio's Governor or a designee.

# Cabinet Council Roles

- Review service & treatment plans for children when requested
- Assistance as the council determines necessary to meet the needs of children referred by county FCF Councils.
- Monitoring & supervision of a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multi-disciplinary, interagency system for infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities or delays and their families, as established pursuant to federal grants received & administered by the department of health for early intervention services under the IDEA of 2004.

# Child Well Being

- Develop and implement an interagency process to select the indicators that will be used to measure progress towards increasing child well-being in the state. The indicators shall focus on:
  1. Expectant Parents and Newborns Thrive
  2. Infants and Toddlers Thrive
  3. Children Are Ready for School
  4. Children and Youth Succeed in School
  5. Children and Youth Engage in Healthy Behaviors
  6. Youth Successfully Transition into Adulthood



# Cabinet Council Roles Continued...

- Develop and implement an interagency system to offer guidance and monitor progress toward increasing child well-being in the state and in each county.
- Develop and implement an annual plan that identifies state-level agency efforts taken to ensure progress towards increasing child well-being in the state and annually submit a report to the Governor and General Assembly.

# Local FCF Councils

ORC 121.37 (B)(1) outlines that:

- The board of county commissioners shall establish a county family and children first council.
- The board of county commissioners may invite any local public or private agency or group that funds, advocates, or provides services to children and families to have a representative become a permanent member or temporary member of its county council.
- Each county council must include the following individuals:

# Local Council Membership – ORC. 121.37 (B)(1)(a-o)

- At least three individuals *who are not employed by an agency represented on the council and* whose families are or have received services from an agency represented on the council or another county's council. Where possible, the number of members representing families shall be equal to 20% of the council's membership.
- The director of the board of alcohol, drug addiction and mental health services.
- The health commissioner or a designee of the board of health of each city & general health district.

# Local Council Membership Continued...

- The director of the county department of job and family services.
- The executive director of the public children services agency.
- The superintendent of the county board of developmental disabilities.

# Local Council Membership Continued...

- The superintendent of the city, exempted village, or local school district with the largest number of pupils residing in the county.
- A school superintendent representing all other school districts.

# Local Council Membership Continued...

- A representative of the municipal corporation with the largest population in the county.
- The president of the board of county commissioners, or an individual designated by the board.
- A representative of the regional offices of the department of youth services.

# Local Council Membership Continued...

- A representative of the county's Head Start agencies, as defined in section 3301.32 of the Ohio Revised Code.
- A representative of the county's early intervention collaborative.
- A representative of a local nonprofit entity that funds, advocates, or provides services to children and families.

# Juvenile Court participation

The county's juvenile court judge may advise the county council on the court's utilization of resources, services, or programs provided by the entities represented by the members of the county council and how those resources, services, or programs assist the court in its administration of justice.



# Purpose of local FCF Councils

The purpose of the county council is to streamline and coordinate existing government services for families seeking services for their children. In seeking to fulfill its purpose, a county council shall provide for the following:

# Local Roles & Responsibilities outlined as defined in ORC 121.37

1. Referrals to the cabinet council of those children for whom the county council cannot provide adequate services.
2. Development and implementation of a process that annually evaluates and prioritizes services, fills service gaps where possible, and invents new approaches to achieve better results for families and children.
3. Maintenance of an accountability system to monitor the county council's progress in achieving results for families and children.

# Amended Substitute HB 289

- A county council shall develop and implement an interagency process to establish local indicators and monitor the county's progress toward increasing child well-being in the county.
- A county council shall develop and implement an interagency process to identify local priorities to increase child well-being. The local priorities shall focus on expectant parents and newborns thriving; infants and toddlers thriving; children being ready for school; children and youth succeeding in school; youth choosing healthy behaviors; and youth successfully transitioning into adulthood and take into account the indicators established by the cabinet council under division (A)(4)(a) of this section.

# Local Roles & Responsibilities Continued....

4. Participation in the development of a countywide, comprehensive, coordinated, multi-disciplinary, interagency system for infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities or delays and their families.
5. Establishment of a mechanism to ensure ongoing input from a broad representation of families who are receiving services within the county system.

# Local Roles & Responsibilities

## Continued....

6. Development of a County Service Coordination Mechanism that includes the following:
  - A referral process that can be accessed by agencies or families voluntarily seeking services.
  - A process to invite families and all appropriate agency and school staff to all service coordination meetings. The process must also allow families to initiate meetings.

# SCM continued....

- A procedure to assess the needs and strengths of the child and family, that also provides families with an opportunity to participate.
- A procedure for conducting a team meeting prior to any non-emergency out-of-home placement being considered; and a procedure to conduct a meeting within 10 days on an emergency out-of-home placement.
- A procedure to monitor and track the outcomes of each family service coordination plan.

# SCM Continued....

- A procedure to protect the confidentiality of all person family information, ensure that services are culturally responsive and provided in the least restrictive environment.
- A local process to resolve disputes concerning the provision of services to children that can be accessed by families or agencies.

# Comprehensive Family Service Coordination Plan

Each Family Service Plan must:

- Designate service responsibilities
- Have timelines for completion of plan goals
- Assign a “lead”, who is approved by the family, to track progress, schedule regular reviews and facilitate team meetings.



# Comprehensive Family Service Coordination Plan Continued.....

- Services must be responsive to family needs & strengths.
- When applicable, include a process to divert child from the juvenile court system.
- Must develop a short-term crisis/safety plan for each family.