**Family and Children First Family Representative**

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Ohio Family and children First (OFCF) promotes coordination and collaboration among state and local governments, non-profit organizations, businesses, and families for the benefit of Ohio’s children. This work is carried out through Ohio’s 88 county-based Family and Children First Councils (FCFCs). The FCFCs mobilize their communities to identify and address the ongoing needs of children and families through planning, implementing effective strategies, monitoring, and reporting, and evaluating progress toward achieving desired outcomes. [ORC 121.37]

To provide “family friendly,” efficient, and effective services, family representatives are needed on councils to serve as the consumer’s voice. Each county council is required to have a minimum of three family representatives. Whenever possible, the number of members representing families shall be equal to twenty percent of the council’s membership. [ORC121.37 (B) (1) (a)] The specific responsibilities of a family representative will vary depending on the needs, structure, and resources of their county council.

Qualifications: A family representative should be receiving, or have received, services from a mandated agency represented on the county council on behalf of themselves or that of their child.

The primary role of the family representative is to encourage parents/consumers to become effective advocates for all children and families by working in the partnership with public and private agencies. This role is fulfilled through several activities, including but not limited to the following:

* Assist in providing community seminars/training for parents.
* Participate in FCFC meetings by voicing your opinion about the impact of proposed policies, activities, etc., on families.
* Assist in educating the public about FCFC goals and activities and promote family involvement in designing better services for families.
* Serve as a two-way information conduit between the community and the council.
* Review strategic plans, funding applications, policies, and resource allocations to enhance a family-centered and effective approach.
* Educate stakeholders about current issues that impact families such as school levies, child abuse and neglect, quality childcare, etc.
* Share information with county commissioners and other elected officials about current issues which impact families.
* Serve on committees such as executive, parent, planning, public relations, by-laws, etc.
* Give updates to FCFC on family involvement, consumer concerns, etc.
* Education professionals about how to work more effectively with families and how to create effective partnerships with families.
* Promote parent involvement in schools and with their children’s education.