

# Our Work

## THE MISSION OF THE FAMILY & CHILDREN FIRST COUNCIL

As the planning entity for Cuyahoga County, the Family & Children First Council (FCFC) promotes a system of care emphasizing coordination across a continuum of family centered, neighborhood based, culturally competent services for the wellbeing of every child, and to preserve and strengthen families in their communities.



We coordinate services for families, at any stage of a child's development, no matter how complex their needs.

### WHO WE ARE

The Council consists of directors and decision-makers from all public systems that work with children, who meet as mandated by state law. The staff of the FCFC office supports the ideas and initiatives of the Council, specifically the Child Wellbeing Plan for our area.

### WHEN TO CALL US

We connect families and agencies to the resources they need, so you can always call us to see what services exist and how to access them. Or review our Directory of Services online at [fcfc.cuyahogacounty.us](http://fcfc.cuyahogacounty.us).

We'll help you connect: **216-698-2875**

# is your child's wellbeing

# Our Programs

## Service Coordination

### Service Coordination Team

Service Coordination is a navigation process for systems and community providers to link families to the necessary services and resources through a family-driven, team process. This team works within the public systems to ensure families are not experiencing system barriers. The following systems participated on the Service Coordination Team, which meets monthly: Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County (ADAMHS), Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Catholic Charities, Cuyahoga County Child Support Enforcement Agency, Starting Point, Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court, Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Help Me Grow, Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services, Cuyahoga Tapestry System of Care, Positive Education Program (PEP), and Cuyahoga County Employment and Family Services.

### Family Centered Services and Supports

Family Centered Services and Supports (FCSS) is built on the foundation that family involvement in service planning and implementation is critical to successful treatment outcomes, strengthens the existing capacity of families to function effectively, and ensures the safety and wellbeing of each family member. FCSS funds are focused on maintaining children and youth in their own homes and communities by providing non-clinical, family-centered services and supports. The Family & Children First Council contracts with the Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County (ADAMHS) and Cuyahoga Tapestry System of Care to provide wraparound services to youth and families.

### Community Assistance

The Community Assistance Program was developed in 2004 by the Family & Children First Council, the Department of Children and Family Services and the Neighborhood Collaboratives to replace the Family Stability Incentive Program (FSIP), and provides funding for some family needs, after all other available funding options have been exhausted. Each Neighborhood Collaborative has a Resource Specialist who provides information and assistance to families who reside in their community. The Resource Specialist also can refer the family to the nearest Neighborhood Collaborative for services. These funds are also available to the public systems that participate on the Service Coordination Team. Funding for Community Assistance is considered a last-resort resource. Each Neighborhood Collaborative or Public System must show that all other available funding has been exhausted prior to the authorization of this funding.

**MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES**  
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## Child Wellbeing Initiative

The Child Wellbeing Plan for Cuyahoga County includes efforts to address the needs of children early (Invest in Children) and to continue supporting young people from kindergarten to high-school graduation (MyCom), plus other programs to enrich the lives of families.

### INVEST IN CHILDREN

The Family & Children First Council has a partnership with Invest in Children (formerly known as the Early Childhood Initiative-Prenatal-Three). To learn more about Invest in Children, look under “Partnerships” later in this document.

### MYCOM

MyCom stands for My Commitment, My Community, and was formerly known as the Youth Development Initiative: Kindergarten to Graduation). It is a youth development initiative that includes a vast network of people and efforts designed to connect resources by increasing access to existing opportunities for youth ages kindergarten to high-school graduation, as well as funding new opportunities. There are numerous funders that have contributed to MyCom to allow this initiative to happen: The Cleveland Foundation, Board of County Commissioners, City of Cleveland, Sisters of Charity Foundation, St. Luke’s Foundation, among others. Additionally, more than 250 community organizations, government agencies, faith-based groups, businesses and youth helped plan and continue to work with the MyCom network.

MyCom strengthens the resources in our neighborhoods in six key areas: youth engagement, youth employment, transitions (example: the change from middle school to high school or other difficult transitions in a child’s life), neighborhood engagement, out of school time, and advocacy.

The Family & Children First Council serves as the main agency responsible for the oversight of this project. There are six lead agencies responsible for managing each of the different focus areas. There also are eight identified pilot neighborhoods including: Central, Midwest (Cudell), Mt. Pleasant, Parma, St. Clair/Superior, Shaker Heights, Slavic Village, and West Park. Additionally, MyCom strives to expand youth-focused programs throughout Cuyahoga County.

## Family and Civic Engagement

The Family and Civic Engagement (FCE) Initiative in Cuyahoga County is a collaboration among schools, families, and community partners to develop healthy communities that lead to the academic success, safety, and well-being of youth to enable them to transition into productive and responsible citizens. FCE is led by the Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County with partnership of the Family & Children First Council. Each school district in Cuyahoga County submitted a 5 year FCE plan that prioritizes school-family-community partnerships designed to engage families and communities in creating shared vision and responsibility for the education and well-being of children within their community. Cuyahoga County’s goals for FCE are to increase awareness of social agencies, dissolve silos between education and community agencies, enhance coordination of services/ programs to address non-academic and academic needs, and to expand partnerships and collaborations.

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## Parent Advisory Committee

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) consists of civic-minded parents interested in sharing information, concerns, and suggestions to improve the lives of children, families and their community. The committee supports MyCom by providing a venue for parents to discuss their concerns and participate in the development of a support system for their children. The goal of the committee is to strengthen families and communities by providing information, education and support. Through information sharing and relationship building, the PAC will be able to champion the needs of all families in Cuyahoga County. A portion of the membership population comes from the eight MyCom communities and a portion of the membership population comes from the community at large. The major focus of the Parent Advisory Committee will be developing leadership skills in the members to prepare them for relationship building with community leaders in the interest of advancing the needs of children. This parent forum will allow the membership to share concerns occurring in their individual communities and allow group problem solving to create a resolution.

## Youth Advisory Committee

Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) provides young people with opportunities to discuss issues important to them, solicit opinions of peers, serve as youth representatives, and promote youth development. Through participation on the Youth Advisory Committee, young people work in partnership with adults to become leaders on issues that matter to them and develop skills that will be useful for the rest of their lives. The YAC has identified six focus areas: Advocacy, Education, Multimedia, Health and Fitness, Event Planning, and Serving Learning.

## Families and Schools Together (FAST)

Families and Schools Together (FAST) is an early intervention/prevention program to empower and involve parents and to foster family development and cohesion with the ultimate purpose of helping all children succeed at home, in school, and in the community. The Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County (ADAMHS) is contracted to implement the programming. The following school districts are involved with FAST: Cleveland Heights/University Heights, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Lakewood City Schools, Parma City Schools, and Garfield Heights City Schools. The schools involved implement “Kids FAST,” which is a program for parents and their student children, kindergarten through fifth grade.

## Wellness Initiative

This is a set of prevention strategies focused on reducing teen pregnancy through school, community-based education and service programs. A comprehensive sexual education curriculum is taught in 7th and 8th grade. Cleveland Metropolitan School District is the first district to teach an age-appropriate kindergarten through graduation curriculum. “Plain Talk” is also available for communities that are interested. The Casey Foundation launched the Plain Talk initiative in 1993 to help communities protect their youth from the consequences of early sexual activity. The initiative responded to high teen birth rates in many low-income communities of color and research that shows adolescent childbearing can have long-term negative effects on both mother and child.

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# Children's Trust Fund

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The Ohio legislature created the Ohio Children's Trust Fund Board in 1984. The Ohio Children's Trust Fund Statute is Ohio Revised Code 3109.13-18. The Children's Trust Fund is funded by revenues from surcharges on birth and death certificates and divorce and dissolution decrees. The funds are earmarked for each county through a formula based on the number of children living in each county. OCTF also earns investment income from the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention federal grant which is made available for additional prevention programs and special initiatives. Local Allocations are awarded on a biennial basis for primary and secondary prevention programs, serving children and families in all of Ohio's 88 counties. The Children's Trust Fund is Ohio's largest funding source for child abuse and neglect prevention in the state.

Funds from OCTF can only be used for:

### *Primary prevention programs*

Primary programs include activities or services designed to prevent or reduce the prevalence of child abuse and neglect by education the public, strengthening families, or influencing policy issues.

### *Secondary prevention programs*

Secondary programs are those activities or services targeted at special populations at-risk of abuse and neglect.

Programs can be administered by public or private agencies including schools and universities. Programs comprising activities or services that provide ongoing treatment or services to identified abusers or victims, the tertiary prevention programs, are ineligible for funding. The criteria used by OCTF in determining an identified abuser or victim is whether or not the individual has an open protective services case existing in the system (SACWIS).

The local body, the Child Abuse Prevention Committee, is a subcommittee of the Family & Children First Council with direct reporting responsibility to the Family and Children First Council Executive Committee.

## Partnerships

### Other Partnerships & Initiatives

**Cuyahoga Tapestry System of Care** – The Family & Children First Council, through Service Coordination, can assist in identifying children and families with significant behavioral health needs who need more intensive services to Cuyahoga Tapestry System of Care (CTSOC). Children must be involved with the Department of Children and Family Services and/or Juvenile Court to be referred to CTSOC. The system of care implements a family-centered, team approach (High Fidelity Wraparound) to serving children with multiple needs. Rather than looking at what is “wrong” with a family, the family and team look at the family's strengths and take action based on those strengths. It is a process that respects children, parents, caregivers and families, and is sensitive to the family's culture, language and community. It also values the importance of social networks, “natural” supports, the faith community and neighborhoods.

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**Invest in Children** (formerly known as the Early Childhood Initiative/Prenatal-Three) is a community-wide, public/private partnership of individuals, organizations and agencies, including government agencies, community-based service providers, medical institutions, and philanthropic and private organizations, all working together to help increase the development, funding, visibility and impact of early childhood services in Cuyahoga County. Each of Invest in Children's goals is pursued through a number of service strategies for children, from prenatal to the start of kindergarten. These strategies focus on better preparing our children to enter school ready to learn, and in good mental and physical health. Each of the programs is administered by lead agencies and implemented through partnerships with community-based organizations.

- *Effective Parents and Families:* Offering Home Visiting Services for qualifying expectant parents and families with children under the age of three; Offering professional services to children under the age of four who experience social emotional concerns and their parents/caregivers through the Early Childhood Mental Health Program
- *Safe and Healthy Children:* Enrolling children in Healthy Start, free health insurance, for children of low-income and working families through the Healthy Start Outreach campaign; Promoting the importance of preventive health care through the establishment and use of a family's Medical Home; Preventing newborns from lead exposure through Lead Safe Living
- *Children Prepared for School:* Establishing a quality early care and education system through professional development, training and technical assistance to center based and family child care home providers. This includes a new focus on providing voluntary universal pre-kindergarten; Helping child care programs provide the appropriate care and support to children with special needs through the Special Needs Child Care Program; Universal Pre-kindergarten-working with local and state governments to develop quality and comprehensive programming for children ages 3 to 5, to ensure that they are ready for school.
- *Community Committed to Children:* Raising the awareness and bringing the community to a call to action, recognizing the importance of the early years and being committed to the success of every child.

**Fatherhood Initiative** – This initiative seeks to strengthen families in our community by encouraging fathers to play a more active role in nurturing and raising their children. The Initiative responds to escalating social concerns regarding “father absence” by providing fathers with access to services designed to prepare them to better meet the emotional, psychological, and financial needs of their children.

**Cleveland Metropolitan School District Family Academy** – The Family & Children First Council has played an integral role in assisting the Cleveland Metropolitan School District in developing a network of programs and services individually tailored and delivered to children and their families in their neighborhood. These services address barriers to learning and youth development. The Family Academy builds upon the strengths and assets that already exist for CMSD families to create healthy home learning environments. The Family Academy seeks to actively build strong community partnerships among businesses, churches, universities, community organizations, parent groups, student groups and government institutions. These partnerships provide opportu-

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nities and/or resources for school district families to engage in their neighborhood through family development programs and events, community development programs and events and family education.

**Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) Committee** – This countywide initiative is led by the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court. A team of local and county agencies works to identify and assess where DMC for juveniles is taking place. With this information, the Committee is working toward intervention strategies with the goal of reducing DMC over time.

**Health Care** – The Family & Children First Council is represented on the Cuyahoga County Health Care Council which focuses on family health care and includes teams that focus on the health care of youth. These committees are comprised of health care professionals and community agencies, along with local city and county representatives.

**Behavior Health Juvenile Justice (BHJJ)** – This program’s purpose is to enhance the community’s ability to locally serve juvenile offenders with serious behavioral health needs by transforming the community’s capacity to identify, assess, evaluate, and treat multi-need, multi-system youth and their family. BHJJ services include Wraparound Case Management, Multi- Systemic Therapy, Gender-Specific Day Report, In-Home Integrated Co-occurring Treatment, Intensive Outpatient Treatment, Short-Term Inpatient Treatment and Residential Treatment. Court Placement Aftercare Coordinators also provided an intensive level of Court supervision for these offenders.

## Committee Memberships

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Staff from the Family & Children First Council are members of several committees with the focus of improving collaboration and community-based involvement, such as:

- Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice Grant,
- Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) Family Academy,
- Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs Witness Victim Center,
- Cuyahoga County Health Care Joint Advisory Council,
- Directors Meeting (Help Me Grow),
- Directors Meeting (Invest in Children)
- Early Childhood Coordinating Committee (Help Me Grow),
- Family Support Agencies and Organizations (Education Services Center),
- Fatherhood Initiative Steering Committee,
- Invest in Children Communications Workgroup,
- Partners Meeting (Cuyahoga Tapestry System of Care), and
- United Way of Greater Cleveland Organizational Assessment.

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