



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



COUNTY: ATHENS

MISSION STATEMENT / LOCAL FOCUS:

The ACFCFC strives for community collaboration in order to enable children & families to reach their fullest potential in the most supportive, natural environment. These partnerships serve as a community forum to collaborate, coordinate, and develop local resources and comprehensive services.

OPERATING STRUCTURE:

The Full Council is made up of 27 members including 4 parents who represent a full continuum of representation for children & families in Athens County. Council responsibility is oversight and strategic planning. Sub-committees of the Council provide oversight for service coordination and community planning. Athens County is known for its collaborative efforts across systems and on behalf of families.

LOCAL FCFC CORE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Community Capacity Building/Planning:** strategies and outcomes
Commitment to children and youth engaging in healthy behaviors. Goal is to off-set the effects of underage substance abuse by establishing summer and after-school programs, especially for high risk youth. Partnering with schools and Bridge Builders, we are in Year 3 of achieving the goal that 80% of all children will participate in after-school programs.
- **Service Coordination:** strategies and outcomes
To establish a seamless system of early identification of the highest risk children - autism spectrum, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, dual-diagnosed MRDD-mental health children, as well as continued management of the behavioral and non-behavioral health care needs of youth. To provide long-term service coordination mechanism to families and children in an effort to keep youth stable and the family functioning at an optimal level.
- **Family Empowerment:** strategies and outcomes
To increase Parent Advocacy capacity to 5 parents. To establish parent support groups for individuals who are caring for the toughest behaviors and emotional problems in children, but who are not necessarily the child's birth parents. To prevent out-of-home placements by working with birth parents experiencing extreme difficulty with a child's emotional well-being.
- **Early Childhood System of Care:** strategies and outcomes
To establish a rural health care clinic through IPAC, a community-university partnership to develop a clinic with the capacity to assess socio-emotional development (for children 0-6), FASD, and autism (for children 0-18). To integrate FCFC service coordination into the continuum of care in order that seamless transitions happen at every stage of the child's life.

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

- **Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention:** strategies and outcomes
To provide professionals and parents with the ability to recognize the effects of trauma and its relationship to child development, emotional well-being of the child, and child abuse.

OTHER LOCAL INITIATIVES: strategies and outcomes

To expand assessment capacity for multi-systems evaluation teams for young or special needs children. To implement prevention programs for suicide and substance use during pregnancy. To continue the development of the ECCC collaborative early childhood community & parents. To enhance service coordination systems to be entirely inclusive for children with behavioral and non-behavioral needs. To participate in a year-long study through the ADAMH Board of the service coordination system as it

pertains to successful solutions to out-of-home placements. To continue developing a comprehensive mental health system that includes intensive home-based services, sophisticated wrap-around teams, and moving resources to local community sites rather than from one existing site. To develop interactive technology systems for psychiatric care, training, and meetings to reduce dependence on travel.

FUNDING:

Athens County collaborates well across systems. Funding is through grants (as in IPAC, IHBT), state & local (as in FAST, ABC, & GRF), and agency contributions (Pooled Funding).

STAFFING:

Athens County has a full-time Council Administrator and a part-time Administrative Assistant.

CHALLENGES:

The challenges continue to exist for our families. Poverty at 30%, coupled with low paying jobs and no industry creates extreme hardships for our families. The working poor do not have access to affordable insurance. Social service agencies are being hit hard for help with the basics. Providing help at a behavioral level when the basic needs go unmet makes the front-line staff's jobs all that much tougher. It's hard to fix maternal depression and substance abuse when people are hungry and homeless.

FUTURE PLANS:

Continued collaborative efforts at all levels of community involvement. Bridge Builders includes key community players. They are invested in their own local operations. They know what the community needs and what works. By providing a universal system of care it is hoped linkages to at risk parents will occur before abuse begins. Providing support, encouragement, and access to help may prevent long-term disabilities for our parents, which in turn leads to long-term disabilities in our children.

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