



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



COUNTY: HARDIN

MISSION STATEMENT / LOCAL FOCUS:

The focus of the Hardin County Family and Children First Council is to make Hardin County a "Great Place to Call Home". Our mission is accomplished through a commitment by the Council to improve the quality of life for children and families in Hardin County. The Hardin County FCFC is working to build a strong and compassionate partnership with families as well as to develop a collaborative relationship within our community.

OPERATING STRUCTURE:

Hardin County Family and Children First operates as a department of the Hardin County Board of Commissioners. The Commissioners serve as the administrative agent for the Council. Our membership consists of fifteen mandated members and twelve discretionary members. Our Council is organized into four committees that oversee the core responsibilities of family and children first councils.

LOCAL FCFC CORE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Community Capacity Building/Planning:** strategies and outcomes
During SFY09, Hardin County was the recipient of a Partnerships for Success (PfS) grant. In the first year of the grant, Hardin County FCFC accomplished the following goals: community mobilization with involvement of more than 52 volunteers, the establishment of 6 workgroups responsible for implementing each phase of the PfS process, and assessing the needs of our community. Unfortunately, due to the state economy, Hardin County will not receive continuing funding to implement the remaining phases of the PfS model. Our Council is looking for other funding sources to help support community capacity building in Hardin County.
- **Service Coordination:** strategies and outcomes
The Hardin County FCFC has established a Family Preservation Committee to oversee the service coordination process for families and children residing in Hardin County. The Council collaborates with our local Job and Family Services/Children's Services, MHR SB, Juvenile Court, children's mental health providers, and other area systems to facilitate and support referrals for service coordination. Keeping the child and family together in a safe and nurturing environment is our overall goal.
- **Family Empowerment:** strategies and outcomes
The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) of Council helps to promote family engagement strategies in Hardin County. The PAC helps to recruit new parent representatives for Council and coordinates workshops on family-focused topics for parents.
- **Early Childhood System of Care:** strategies and outcomes
For the past year, Hardin County has been prioritizing the commitment of "Infants and Toddlers Thrive." We have been working to provide families with an array of comprehensive health services to meet their children's vision, hearing, nutrition, and behavioral health needs. Council has invested resources into implementing early childhood mental health programming in the community to address our commitment to child well-being.

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

- **Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention:** strategies and outcomes
The Hardin County FCFC serves as the Local Advisory Board for child abuse and neglect prevention programming in the county. Our grant recipient is the Hardin County Educational

Services Center. The ESC operates a "Home and School Outreach Project" with the funding. The Project Coordinator works with families identified as "at-risk" or "in-crisis" in a proactive manner to educate and reinforce parenting skills and prevent the physical abuse and neglect of children. The Project Coordinator refers family members to a network of social and community service agencies and resources for additional support. She also works with school personnel to ensure the safety and growth of the children involved with the program.

OTHER LOCAL INITIATIVES: strategies and outcomes

Planning for children and families has been a joint effort between our children's mental health provider and the FCFCs of Allen, Auglaize and Hardin Counties as we share the same mental health and recovery services board. Our tri-county collaborative meets regularly to review the services being offered to families and children by our shared service providers. Three gaps have emerged as a result of these meetings: 1) early childhood programming, 2) mentoring opportunities for youth, and 3) services for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Hardin County's partnership with Allen and Auglaize County has allowed us to develop an early childhood mental health program known locally as the "Bright Beginnings" program for children birth to five years old. Our early childhood group also sponsors a conference for area early childhood and family service providers on social and emotional issues in young children.

We have worked to engage representatives from Rhodes State College to help develop a mentoring program. We are actively recruiting college students from our individual counties who attend the local community college. The college students are enrolled in a practicum class and receive a stipend for mentoring a child from their community. The youth who participate in the mentoring program are involved in the council's service coordination process.

Our tri-county collaborative is just beginning to address the issue of services for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. A learning team meets monthly to discuss resources and challenges. The Autism Learning Team recently sponsored a workshop for parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and the professionals who serve them.

FUNDING:

During SFY09, Hardin County FCFC operated on a \$327,161 budget. Council receives \$236,480 for HMG from ODH; \$15,000 for CA/N from OCTF; \$5,681 for non-BH services from the ABC Initiative; \$50,000 from DYS for PfS and a \$20,000 Operational Capacity Building Grant from Ohio Family and Children First. We are expecting to lose over \$159,000 in funding for SFY10.

STAFFING:

In SFY09, Council maintained a staff of seven individuals: one full-time Council Administrator, one full-time PfS Coordinator, one full-time HMG Project Director, two full-time HMG Service Coordinators, one full-time HMG Intake and Referral Specialist, and one part-time HMG Family Support Specialist. Our Council has had to lay off three staff members thus far in SFY10.

CHALLENGES:

Sustaining the initiatives of the Council due to funding limitations.

FUTURE PLANS:

Piece together a plan for our county to continue with the PfS process since we have not completed each stage of the PfS model.

Contact Information:

Sarah Jeffries, Council Administrator
Hardin County Family and Children First
1021 West Lima Street, Suite 103
Kenton, Ohio 43326

Phone 419-673-1531
Fax 419-675-0896
email sdjeffries@rroho.com