

Portage County Family and Children First Council
Bylaws
Approved March 17, 2016

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of the organization shall be Portage County Family and Children First Council (hereinafter called the **Council**). It shall function as a mandated Council under Section 121.37 of the Ohio Revised Code.

ARTICLE II MISSION

The Mission of the Council is to increase the access, capacity and effectiveness of services for the most vulnerable of our county's youth and their families whose needs extend beyond any one youth-serving program.

ARTICLE III PURPOSE

Ohio Family and Children First (OFCF) is a partnership of state and local government, communities and families that enhances the well-being of Ohio's children and families by building community capacity, coordinating systems and services, and engaging and empowering families, and sharing accountability. OFCF's vision is for every child and family to thrive and succeed within healthy communities.

Established in 1993, Ohio Family and Children First (OFCF) is defined as the Governor's Children's Cabinet with the purpose of streamlining and coordinating government services for children and families. The OFCF Cabinet Council is comprised of the following Ohio Departments: Aging, Developmental Disabilities, Education, Health, Job and Family Services, Medicaid, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, Rehabilitation and Correction, Youth Services, and the Office of Budget and Management.

Locally, the county commissioners establish the 88 county Family and Children First Councils (FCFC). These local FCFC councils connect the dots to eliminate redundancy and bring resources together for planning, monitoring, and improving outcomes for families and children.

The purpose of the Council per ORC 121.37 (B) (2) 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:

- (1) Referrals to the state cabinet council of those children for whom the 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) 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, as established pursuant to federal grants received and administered by the department of health for early intervention services under the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004";
- (4) Maintenance of an accountability system to monitor the Council's progress in achieving results for families and children;
- (5) Establishment of a mechanism to ensure ongoing input from a broad representation of families who are receiving services within the county system.

ARTICLE IV GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Council will strive to maintain the following guiding principles per Ohio Revised Code 121.37 (B) (3):

- (1) Develop and implement an interagency process to establish local indicators and monitor the county's progress toward increasing child well-being in the county.
- (2) Develop and implement an interagency process to identify local priorities to increase child well-being and to monitor progress on meeting these priorities. 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.
- (3) Establish a service coordination mechanism which shall serve as the guiding document for coordination of services that includes all of the things required in a family service coordination plan as outlined in ORC 121.37. The service coordination plan outlines procedures for referring a family to the council, setting up a meeting, identify family strengths and needs, paying for services (especially out of home), designating service responsibilities and an individual to track and monitor progress, and a local dispute resolution process.
- (4) Complete an annual plan that identifies the county's interagency efforts to increase child well-being in the county.
- (5) On an annual basis, the Council shall submit a report on the status of efforts by the county to increase child well-being in the county to the Portage County Board Commissioners and the Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council. This report shall be made available to any other person on request.

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

Section A The Portage County Commissioners establishes the Portage County Family and Children First Council and 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 or temporary member of the Council.

Section B The following are mandated members with voting privileges as established by ORC 121.37 and may be appointed:

- Three Family Representatives who are or have received services from an agency on the Council.
- Director, Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County
- Health Commissioner or designee, Portage County Combined General Health District
- Health Commissioner or designee, Kent City
- Director, Portage County Department of Jobs and Family Services
- Superintendent, Portage County Board of Developmental Disabilities
- Superintendent of the city with the largest number of pupils residing in the county (Kent City School District)
- Superintendent representing all other school districts in the county as designated at a meeting of the superintendents of those districts
- Representative of the municipal corporation with the largest population in Portage County (Kent)
- President or designee, Portage County Board of Commissioners
- Representative, Regional Office of Department of Youth Services
- Representative, Portage County Head Start
- Representative, Portage County Help Me Grow
- Representative of a local nonprofit entity that funds, advocates, or provides services to children and families (Children's Advantage)

The following are non-mandated members who are voting members of the Council:

- Portage County Juvenile Court
- Townhall II
- Family & Community Services
- Coleman Professional Services
- Bair Foundation
- Children's Advocacy Center

Section C A form will be sent to all mandated and non-mandated members that requires listing both the lead representative to the Council and the designee. The designee has the authority to vote when the lead representative is not present at meetings.

Section D Members of Council shall serve without limitation of terms. If a mandated member or his/her designee fails to attend three consecutive meetings of Council or from one-quarter of such meetings in a calendar year, whichever is less, the administrative agent shall send a notice to the County Board of Commissioners and the governing body for the organization that the individual represents.

Section E Compensation may be authorized by the Council for travel expenses incurred by members. Only family members may receive compensation of expenses to attend Council or Committee meetings.

ARTICLE VI OFFICERS

Section A The officers of the Council shall be Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Administrative Agent.

Section B Officers shall serve one (1) year term.

Section C Vacancies in any office of the Council shall be filled at any regular meeting of the Council or at a special meeting called for that purpose.

Section D The officers of the Council shall have such powers and duties as generally pertain to their respective offices, and such further powers and duties as from time-to-time may be conferred by the Council, including but not limited to:

- (1) Chairperson: Preside at all meetings of the Council; appoint Council Committees and serve as ex-officio members; represent and act on behalf of the Council as authorized; and exercise other such duties as may pertain to the office.
- (2) Vice-Chairperson: Exercise the authority and fulfill the duties of the Chairperson in the person's absence; and exercise such other duties as may be assigned by the Chairperson.
- (3) Administrative Agent: The Administrative Agent shall be designated by Council. The primary focus of the Administrative Agent is to carry out the governance and desires of the Council. The following public entities can serve as Administrative Agent: Mental Health and Recovery Board; Board of County Commissioners; Board of Health; Department of Job and Family Services; County agency responsible for the administration of children's services; Board of Developmental Disabilities; Board of Education; and Juvenile Court.

ARTICLE VII

COUNCIL COORDINATOR

Council Coordinator: The Coordinator shall be hired by the Council and has the responsibility of overseeing the Council's mandated functions and activities and works in coordination with the officers of the Council to ensure that the Council is fulfilling its Mission and Purpose.

ARTICLE VIII

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Section A Pursuant to ORC, the Portage County Auditor shall serve as the "Fiscal Agent" for the Council.

Section B The Council shall file an annual budget with its Administrative Agent with copies filed with the County Auditor and with the Board of County Commissioners.

Section C Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code, the Council shall request the creations of such "funds" within the Office of Portage County Treasury as are necessary and proper to carry out the fiscal operations of the Council. The Portage County Treasurer shall act as "depository" for Council funds.

Section D The fiscal year of the Council shall commence July 1 and end June 30.

ARTICLE IX

APPOINTING AUTHORITY

The Councils' Administrative Agent shall serve as the Council's Appointing Authority. The Council's Administrative Agent shall ensure that all expenditures are handled in accordance with policies, procedures and activities prescribed by the State Department in rules or interagency agreements that are applicable to the Council's functions. The Administrative Agent may do any of the following on behalf of Council:

1. Enter into agreements or administrative contracts with public or private entities.
2. As determined by the Council, provide financial stipends, reimbursement, or both, to family representatives for expenses related to Council business.
3. Receive by gift, grant, device, or bequest of any monies, lands, or other property according to the terms of the gift, grant, device, or bequest. Any interest or earnings shall be treated in the same manner and are subjected to the same terms as the gift, grant, device, or bequest from which it accrues.
4. Notify the County Board of Commissioners and the governing body for the organization that the individual represents if a mandated Council member is

absent from either three consecutive meetings of the Council or from one-quarter of such meetings in a calendar year, whichever is less.

ARTICLE X MEETINGS

- Section A: The Council shall hold a minimum of six (6) regular meetings between July 1 and June 30.
- Section B: Special meetings of the Council may be held at any time upon the call of the Chairperson.
- Section C: The Coordinator of the Council shall be responsible to notify each member of the Council of every regular meeting at least five (5) days prior to such meeting in writing by regular mail, email or fax.
- Section D: The Coordinator of the Council shall be responsible to notify each member of the Council of every special meeting at least two (2) days prior to such meeting in writing by regular mail, email or fax.
- Section E: All regular and special meetings of the Council shall be open to the public pursuant to law. At each meeting, a sign-in sheet will be distributed for members and the public to sign. Each member must indicate on the sign-in sheet if they are the lead representative or the designee.
- Section F: A quorum shall be declared when seven (7) or more of the members are present at a regular or special meeting.
- Section G: Each Council member is entitled to one (1) vote. If more than one (1) person is present at a meeting from the same organization, only one (1) member is eligible to vote. When voting, a simple majority is needed to approve any agenda item. In the case of a tied vote, the Council Chair is authorized to make the final decision.
- Section H: Council and Committee meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order.

ARTICLE XI COMMITTEES

- Section A Inter-Agency Clinical Assessment Team (ICAT)
- (1) ICAT membership consists of any mandated Council members, particularly a clinical designee, as well as any other child-serving agency or organization in the county who is willing to commit to discussing the needs of high risk children and families in the county on a monthly basis.
- (2) A report will be made by the ICAT Coordinator, who is hired by the Council, at each Council meeting along with an annual report for each fiscal year.

- (3) ICAT shall request assistance and/or funds (if available) from the Ohio Family and Children First Council when local resources are not available to carry out plans for children and their families.

Section B Resolution of ICAT Disputes

- (1) ICAT will follow the Service Coordination procedures to ensure that all children and families have access to coordinated services and to a dispute and resolution procedure.

Section C Help Me Grow

- (1) Help Me Grow shall be comprised of all agencies and family representation required by the Ohio Department of Health.
- (2) It will provide leadership to the community to ensure that all families with young children have access to the supports and services their children need to reach their fullest potential.
- (3) Help Me Grow disputes shall be resolved according to the process identified in the Council's Service Coordination Plan.

Section D Executive Committee:

- (1) An Executive Committee shall be comprised of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Administrative Agent and Council Coordinator. The Executive Committee will carry out the business of Council in a timely manner including but not limited to personnel and financial matters of the Council.

Section E Other Committees may be established by the Council as deemed necessary and appropriate in carrying out the Mission of the Council.

ARTICLE XII CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Section A Any Council member who has a direct or indirect conflict of interest relative to any work or contract authorized by Council shall be responsible for disclosing such conflict prior to any recommendation or vote taken by Council. The Council member that has disclosed any conflict of interest shall abstain from voting on any relative contract.

ARTICLE XIII AMENDMENTS

Section A These Bylaws may be altered, amended or appealed, either in part or entirety, upon written notice of the proposed changes to the membership of the Council at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the Council meeting at which the proposed changes will be considered and acted upon.

Section B These Bylaws (and any future alteration, amendment or repeal) shall require approval by majority vote of Council members, Portage County Prosecutor and the Board of Commissioners.

Portage County Family and Children First Council

Date of Revision:	March 15, 2016
Date of Amendment:	November 18, 2004
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