



Defiance County Family & Children First Council

By-Laws and Rules of Operation

Article I: Name and Authority

Section I: Name

The name of this collaborative shall be the Defiance County Family & Children First Council hereinafter called the Council.

Section II: Authority

The Defiance County Family & Children First Council was established pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code Section 121.37.

Article II: Council Functions

Council functions shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Identifying service gaps in local community resources and developing strategies to assist children and their families.
- B. Develop and update a strategic community plan and service coordination plan.
- C. Promote the development of programs and projects to encourage coordinated efforts to improve the services provided for Defiance County families.
- D. Create necessary committees needed to carry out the planning, coordination and provision of services to families and children. Monitor the committees' work and give direction to the committee chairs.
- E. Appoint a fiscal agent, which shall receive and dispense funds pursuant to board resolutions and which shall maintain all financial records in accordance with state approved accounting practices.
- F. Review, ratify and make application to the Ohio Family & Children First Cabinet Council for an exemption from any rules adopted by a state department participating on the Cabinet Council if an exemption is necessary to implement programs and services for families and children. The application shall describe the proposed program and specify the rules from which an exemption is necessary.
- G. Review program reports at each Council meeting, monitor annual operating budgets and ensure maintenance of records of Council meetings.

Article III: Membership

Section I: Mandated & At-Large Members

Council membership will include those members mandated by the Ohio Revised Code Section 121.37 as well as a comprehensive representation of parents, advocates, community leaders and agency representatives within Defiance County who serve, support and/or advocate for children and their families.

A. Mandated Members

City of Defiance representative

Defiance City Schools Superintendent

Defiance County Board of Commissioners President or designee

Defiance County Board of Developmental Disabilities Superintendent

Defiance County Board of Developmental Disabilities Early Intervention Contract Manager

Defiance County Health Commissioner or Designee

Defiance County Job & Family Services Director

Family Representatives – No less than three

Four County Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services (ADAMhs) Director or designee

Local Nonprofit Entity that funds, advocates or provides services to children and families representative

Northwestern Ohio Community Action Commission – Head Start representative

Northwest Ohio Educational Service Center Superintendent

Ohio Department of Youth Services representative

B. At-Large Members

Any eligible agency, organization, school system or parent/family representative that passes a resolution and/or submits a letter endorsing the mission statement, agreeing to cooperate in the development and implementation of the Council goals and agreeing to abide by these By-Laws shall be eligible to apply for membership to the Council. At-Large members are approved by Council vote. At-large members shall be represented by their Director or a representative designated by their Director as long as Council is notified in writing.

Section II: Judicial Advisor

The Juvenile Court Judge, or another judge designated by the administrative judge, shall serve as the judicial advisor to Council.

Section III: Terms of Office

- A. Terms will follow a state fiscal year (July 1-June 30).
- B. There shall be no limit on the consecutive number of terms at-large members may serve.
- C. Members may resign by submitting a letter to the Council.

Section IV: Voting Rights & Quorum

- A. Each member of the Council shall be allowed one vote.
- B. A minimum of eight (8) members of Council, either mandated or at-large, constitute a quorum.
- C. Members need to be present to vote. Simple majority rules.

Article IV: Leadership & Council Structure

Section I: Chair

The responsibilities of the Chair shall include, but are not limited to, signing Council meeting minutes, signing grant proposals and reports, running Council meetings, running Steering Committee meetings, working with the Coordinator on Council meeting agendas, calling special Steering Committee meetings and coordinating Council operations with the Coordinator. The Chair shall be elected for a two-year term, commencing July 1 of odd numbered years.

Section II: Vice Chair

The responsibilities of the Vice Chair are to fulfill the Chair's responsibilities in the Chair's absence and serve on Steering Committee. The Vice Chair shall be elected for a two-year term, commencing July 1 of odd numbered years.

Section III: Steering Committee

- A. Membership will be comprised of the Council Chair, Vice Chair, Council Coordinator, Defiance County Board of Developmental Disabilities Early Intervention Contract Manager and County Commissioner or designee (as administrative agent). The Steering Committee members will select one at-large member of Council, one Family Representative and up to three additional members to serve on this committee, with approval by Council.
- B. The purpose and responsibility of the Steering Committee is to administer the operation of Council, such as issues related to public awareness, implementation of policy, strategies for programs and services including, but not limited to:
 - 1. Make recommendations regarding administration and staffing of Council. Provide direction to Council Coordinator regarding operations of Council;
 - 2. Monitor the implementation of the strategic community plan and the service coordination mechanism;
 - 3. Address and recommend resolutions to concerns identified by Council;
 - 4. Resolve service disputes referred from family team meetings and/or families as outlined in the service coordination mechanism;
 - 5. Make recommendations to apply, administer and coordinate grants designed for services for children and families.

6. Identify regulation and policy waiver requests necessary for the implementation of Council plans and strategies.
- C. Each member of the Steering Committee shall follow the applicable confidentiality procedures when exercising the committee's responsibilities. All members and parties shall maintain the confidentiality of case records.

Section IV: Nominations

Members of the Steering Committee shall discuss officer vacancies with individual Council members in order to nominate officers to Council. Elections will take place in June with assumption of office on July 1 of odd numbered years.

Article V: Committees

- A. By vote, Council may create and empower standing committees as deemed necessary and appropriate to carry out the purpose and mission of Council. Help Me Grow is one such standing committee.
- B. By vote, Council may authorize and empower work groups for a specific task and for a limited time.
- C. The Steering Committee may appoint ad hoc committees as deemed necessary.
- D. Committees shall appoint a chairperson. The chairperson shall make written reports back to Council.
- E. Committee members may include Council members, non-Council members who represent community service providers, family advocacy groups, community leadership and family representatives. All committee memberships shall be approved by Council.
- F. Committees will meet on an as-needed basis.

Article VI: Meetings

Section I: Council

Council shall meet no less than five times annually and meetings are considered public. Meeting schedules shall be published on Council's website and made available upon public request. The Steering Committee retains the option of calling additional Council meetings as needed.

Section II: Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall meet monthly. The Chair retains the option of calling additional Steering Committee meetings as needed or canceling meetings with the agreement of the Council Coordinator.

Article VII: Confidentiality

All matters referred to the Council shall be handled confidentially according to the standards set forth by member agency policies, state and federal laws and professional ethics. Each member of the Council shall follow the applicable confidentiality procedures when exercising its responsibilities.

Nongovernmental parties to state or Council proceedings shall maintain the confidentiality of case records.

Article VIII: Amendment of By-Laws

The By-Laws may be amended by a simple majority vote of all of the members of Council present. Members of Council will be provided with a written copy of the proposed amendments at least 30 days prior to a scheduled vote on said amendments.

Article IX: Conflict of Interest

Members of Council and its committees shall be prohibited from using their position on Council or their relationship to the Council for personal or financial gain. Members shall avoid situations where their personal affiliations or relationships could have or give the appearance of having influence on their judgment on matters being considered. When such situations occur, members shall disclose their relationship and excuse themselves from participation.

Article X: Meeting Procedure

Council meetings will be conducted in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order.

Article XI: Statement of Non-Discrimination

The Council shall not condone or permit any discriminatory policies or practices in respect to age, race, religion, gender, ethnic groups or disabilities in fulfilling its stated purpose.

Article XII: Adoption of By-Laws

Original By-Laws Approved—July 20, 1995

Updated—March 11, 2003

Updated—March, 2005

Updated—April, 2013