



# Clermont County Family & Children First Newsletter

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Clermont County Family & Children First

## Welcome to the Clermont County Family & Children First Newsletter

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In order to keep you and others in Clermont County up to date on what is happening with Clermont County Family & Children First (FCF) and other child-serving agencies, FCF is proud to bring you the first Clermont County Family & Children First Newsletter. The Newsletter will be distributed on a quarterly basis. The Newsletter will bring you information on programs funded by FCF, information on the agencies who participate on the FCF Council, general information about FCF, and

information from the State. Suggestions and agency or program updates for the Newsletter are always welcome. We hope you find the Newsletter helpful and informative.

The vision of the Clermont County Family and Children First Council is to ensure intersystem collaboration to improve the well being of the children and families of Clermont County.

The mission of the Clermont County Family and Children First Council is to promote and facilitate communication and collaboration among Clermont County child and family serving agencies to ensure that Clermont County infants, children, adolescents and their families receive the most appropriate services to enable youth to develop



### Ohio's commitments to child well-being, are:

- Expectant Parents and Newborns Thrive
- Infants and Toddlers Thrive
- Children are Ready for School
- Children and Youth Succeed in School
- Youth Choose Healthy Behaviors
- Youth Successfully Transition into Adulthood

## FAST \$ 2005 FAQs

- The Ohio Departments of Mental Health, Job and Family Services, Youth Services and Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services have pooled funds to target multi-need children and youth with behavioral health disorders.
- Clermont County's FAST \$ will be used for respite services and home-based services
- The child must have a mental health diagnosis to be eligible to receive FAST \$ services..
- If you feel that a child may be eligible for FAST \$ services, please call 732-5411 for more information.

## Looking to get involved in your community?

If you are looking to become more involved in your community, keep reading to learn about three groups that you may be interested in joining.

The Family Support Committee of the Help Me Grow (HMG) program is a parent driven group. The group meets to discuss HMG changes and to plan Family Support activities (i.e. the fall picnic, the holiday party). Members must be current or past HMG parent. If you are interested in learning more about the Family Support Committee, please call Brenda Cox at 732-5034.

The Clermont County Drug-Free

Coalition was developed to support children leading a drug-free life. The Coalition received a mini-grant from the Clermont County Mental Health & Recovery Board which is used to support after-prom parties and the Red Ribbon Event. Parents, students, or agencies may become involved. If you are interested in learning more about the Coalition, please contact your school after-prom coordinator or Jimmi McIntosh at 735-8237.



The Clermont County Suicide Prevention Coalition supports school

suicide prevention programs, the crisis hotline, and suicide survivor support groups. The Coalition works to get information to the community about suicide prevention and has provided free training on suicide prevention. For more information on the Suicide Prevention Coalition, call John Kies at 732-5406



## FCF Parent Representatives

The FCF Council is mandated to have at least 3 parents serve on the Council. The parents must have a child who is, or was, receiving services through one of the FCF member agencies (see back page for a list) in Clermont County or another county.

Often times parents see topics in a different light than "professionals" do. Parents bring a personal and unique perspective to the table. It is this perspective that FCF is looking for to help in developing policies, resolving disputes, developing budgets, and having con-

versations about issues at the local and state level.

Parent Representatives attend a monthly FCF Council meeting and may be asked to sit on various committees at the local and state level. Parent Representatives also help get the word out to other parents and community resources. Stipends are provided for participation to



cost of mileage or child care.

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about becoming a Parent Representative, please call 732-5411 for additional information.

## FCF spotlights... Gretchen Behimer

To help you learn more about FCF, a FCF employee or Council member will be highlighted in every Newsletter.

Gretchen is the Program Coordinator for Clermont County FCF. She oversees the day to day operations of the program, supervises FCF staff, and works closely with the various programs supported through FCF to ensure compliance with local, state and federal requirements.

Gretchen is an independently licensed social worker. She is a graduate of Kalamazoo (MI) College, receiving her

degree in psychology and business management. Gretchen earned her Master's in Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago and a Master's in Sport Behavior & Performance from Miami University.

Gretchen has worked as a front line staff person in a residential treatment facility, counseled heroin addicts, worked as a therapist in a day treatment program and most recently was the Director of Provider Relations for Magellan Behavioral Health. Gretchen joined the reorganization efforts of Clermont County FCF March 1, 2004.

Gretchen enjoys playing volleyball, water skiing and snow skiing. She is married and has 2 children, Ben and Will.



## Clermont County Retreat A Success

Since April 2004, management from Clermont County Department of Job & Family Services, Mental Health & Recovery Board, Juvenile Court, Children's Protective Services (CPS), and Family & Children First have been meeting to brainstorm about ideas to address the financial situations faced by Clermont County and all counties in Ohio. While the number of children entering into the custody of CPS has in-

creased significantly over the last few years, funding has not. While ensuring the safety of the children, their families and the community, Clermont County agencies have been diligently working to move children into the least restrictive level of care to meet their needs. In order to move children

to the least restrictive level of care and reunify children with family in a timely manner, Clermont County is expanding its array of out of home care services and increasing supportive home-based services.



## Did You Know?

- Clermont County is Ohio's 13th largest county. Although Clermont County has many rural parts, it is considered an urban county by the State.
- The State of Ohio ranks 49th out of 50 in funding Child Welfare
- The State of Ohio ranks in the bottom ten for funding of Mental Health Services

- In 2004 Clermont County Children's Protective Services has removed more than 20 newborn babies from custody due to drug use by the mother
- According to 2002 data, Clermont County has a child population of 49,696, 693 of which have



- been neglected, physically or sexually abused or emotionally maltreated.
- In 2002 Clermont County had 29 suicides

More than 20 newborn babies have been removed from custody due to drug use by the mother

## Learn More About Families Connected

Families Connected of Clermont County was organized by parents of children with disabilities to provide support and information to other families who have a member with a disability.

Their goal is to help all families become knowledgeable about programs which will assist them to make informed choices

for their family.

They provide services through contracts with Clermont Help Me Grow, Clermont County Department of Job & Family Services, and the Ohio Coalition for the



Education of Children with Disabilities. Services are at no cost to families. Families Connected is housed in the Wildey Center, Clermont County MRDD, Owensville.

For more information, call 732-5034

## Clermont County Family & Children First

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Clermont County FCF was reorganized in 2004 with the hiring of new staff and the development of new goals. Throughout 2004, FCF has worked to reinstate "clusters" to develop unified plans for children in Clermont County. Clusters are team meetings facilitated by a FCF staff member. Families and children, when appropriate, are an integral part of the cluster process. During the cluster the options for the child and family are discussed and a plan is developed. By getting all the members of a team together, ideas may be generated and creative thinking is supported. To learn more about the cluster process or to refer a child to cluster, please call 732-5413.

## Clermont County FCF Council Members

Every county FCF is overseen by a Council. The FCF Council is mandated to have certain members. These members are:

- Karen Scherra, Executive Director, Clermont County Mental Health & Recovery Board
- Dr. Janet Rickabaugh, Health Commissioner, Clermont County General Health District
- Tim McCartney, Director, Clermont County Department of Job & Family Services
- Sharon Woodrow, Superintendent, Clermont County Board of Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities (MRDD)
- Judge Stephanie Wyler, Clermont County Juvenile Court
- Jim Carter, Chief Executive Officer, Child Focus, Inc.
- Berta Velilla, Early Childhood Director, Clermont County Head Start/Child Focus, Inc.
- Jeff Weir, Superintendent, Felicity-Franklin School District
- Dr. Gary Brooks, Superintendent, West Clermont Local School District
- David Spinney, County Administrator, Board of Clermont County Commissioners Office
- Beth Popich, Director, Early Childhood Services, MRDD & Help Me Grow
- Sylvia Raibon-Davis, Parole Officer, State of Ohio DYS

- Loretta Rokey, City Manager, City of Milford
- Anne Arbaugh, Deputy Director, Clermont County Children's Protective Services
- Beth Lockwood, Parent Representative
- Jean Houston, Parent Representative/Families Connected
- Brenda Cox, Parent Representative/Families Connected

The FCF Council may also have non-mandated members, of which Clermont County's include:

- Bill Jones, Assistant Superintendent, Clermont County Educational Service Center
- Ron Halcomb, Program Coordinator, Help Me Grow
- Linda Wash, Fiscal Support Coordinator, Clermont County Department of Job & Family Services
- Maureen Warren, Fiscal Supervisor, Clermont County Department of Job & Family Services
- Mike Pride, Fiscal Deputy Director, Clermont County Department of Job & Family Services
- Marty Lambert, Assistant Health Commissioner, Clermont County General Health District
- Doug Brothers, Director, Clermont County Juvenile Court

- Al Delgado, Assistant Superintendent, West Clermont Local School District
- Steve Goldsberry, President/CEO, Clermont Recovery Center

If you are an employee of a child serving agency in Clermont County or are a parent who has (or had) a child involved with a child serving agency and are interested in becoming a member of the FCF Council, please call 732-5411 for more information.

