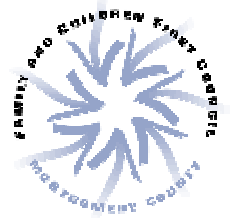




OFFICE OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN FIRST



FACT SHEET

The Office of Family and Children First provides administrative support to the **Family and Children First Council** and **Human Services Levy Council**. Visit our website at www.fcfc.montco.org.



The Montgomery County Family and Children First Council (FCFC) was created in late 1995 in accordance with state law and also to fulfill the local desire for a "lead collaborative" to deal with issues affecting children and families.

Members include the heads of the major public human services agencies, school superintendents, local elected officials, people from the business community, representatives of the United Way and other non-profit agencies, and at-large community members including a number of specifically designated "family representatives."

The Council has articulated and built consensus around the following **six "Desired Community Outcomes"**. A report is prepared annually to chart their status.

- Healthy People
- Young People Succeeding
- Stable Families
- Positive Living for Special Populations
- Safe and Supportive Neighborhoods
- Economic Self-Sufficiency

The Council has been focused on helping advance progress toward achieving these Outcomes.

The Council recently launched **three "Strategic Community Initiatives"**, collaborative attempts to make a dramatic and measurable impact on the community outcomes in the specific areas of **Preventing Family Violence, Promoting School Readiness and Fourth Grade Success, and Promoting Alternative Learning Opportunities**.

The Council also coordinates a small amount of funding passed through from the state, and provides input on several Human Services Levy Council funding awards:

- Erma's House: a unique family visitation center for children to visit with non-custodial parents within a safe and secure environment

- CARE House: a children's advocacy center where child serving agencies can work together on cases of suspected child abuse and provide a singular approach to interviewing children traumatized by abuse.
- Sojourner Program: provides enhanced drug and alcohol treatment services to the parents of children at risk of being placed in foster care. The program is located at DMHA's Parkside Homes.
- Wellness Program: programs have been implemented with several agencies to prevent teen pregnancies.
- Help Me Grow: coordinated, family-centered services for expectant parents; newborns and their families; and infants and toddlers at risk for or with developmental delays and disabilities and their families.
- The Diversity Program: community programming and discussion designed to assist formal and non-traditional human services agencies toward cultural competence; support the need for community-wide cultural awareness and sensitivity to improve client services; and engage human service agencies in a dialogue toward solutions.
- AgencyLink (www.agencylink.org): a network designed to increase communication and collaboration and decrease duplication of services. The network will be utilized by health and human services agencies, courts, and law enforcement to meet their goals and mandates to the community. The network now consists of two modules: The Online Community provides general information of interest to the human services community, as well as the public, and supplies specific information on many agencies. The Resource Directory provides a way to find local services. Two more modules are planned: a Family Violence Cross-Jurisdictional database and a Collaborative Case Management Application.



The **Human Services Levy Council**, created by the Board of County Commissioners in 1983, administers the distribution of funds raised by the Human Services Levy. The Council includes members from the major public human services agencies, government, the business community and the United Way.

The Levy process includes many citizen-based review committees who evaluate agency and service needs and results on behalf of the community. The Council makes recommendations to the County Commissioners regarding property tax millage for ballot issues and allocations of property tax revenue. It administers Levy support for ADAMHS, Children Services, Combined Health District, MR/DD, Juvenile Court, Stillwater, County View Manor, as well as other community-based services.

The Human Services Levy community based funding currently supports programs such as:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| - Prescription Assistance | - Elder Care | - Intervention Services |
| - Home Delivered Meals | - Case Management | - Attendant Care |
| - Emergency Shelter | - Legal Services | |
| - Prevention Services | - Adult Day Care | |

Montgomery County Family and Children First Council Strategic Community Initiatives



The FCFC has identified high priority needs in the community. Teams are in place to analyze issues facing the community and recommend solutions.

PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE

Coordination tools are being established to provide a community response to ending family violence:

- Improve community response to family violence.
- Create a countywide database of domestic violence offenses and convictions.
- Provide a county cross-jurisdictional information sharing tool for law enforcement and the court system – Evidence Collection System.

PREPARING YOUTH FOR SCHOOL READINESS / SUCCESS

Programs are being developed for youth to better support their learning needs and school readiness.

Examples:

- Early Childhood Development Media Campaign – *Easy Steps to Grow Great Kids* (www.easysteps.Chisano.com)
- Parents as Teachers Program (PAT)



Program objectives include: to increase parental awareness of and involvement in their child's education; to better prepare children for school; and, to increase the number of children who pass the 4th grade proficiency test as a means of ultimately increasing their chances of being self-sufficient.

PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Programs are being designed to support the needs of youth who remain in school settings but are at-risk of not succeeding. Concerns include truancy, chronic absenteeism and poor success rates. Interventions could include mentoring, tutoring, assessment tools, alternate career development and training. Activities are being coordinated with the Out-of-School Youth Task Force initiatives.

Examples:

- Media Campaign to encourage youth to stay in school and reduce truancy – *Education – Think About It*
- Development and coordination of Mentoring Services



