

Knox County Family and Children First Council
Bylaws

Amended and Adopted: 5/28/25

Current Revision: 5/28/25

1.0 NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Knox County Family and Children First Council, hereinafter the Council.

2.0 AUTHORITY

2.1 The Council is established pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 121.37 and shall have the authority granted by the Ohio Revised Code and such additional authority as may be agreed upon by the members.

2.2 No action of the Council shall interfere with the fiduciary responsibility of any permanent statutory government member.

2.3 The service area of the Council shall be Knox County, Ohio.

2.4 The principal office and place of business of the Council shall be located in the City of Mount Vernon or at such other place as may be designated from time to time by the Council.

3.0 PURPOSE

3.1 The purpose of the Council is to streamline and coordinate existing government services for families seeking services for their children, and to promote and facilitate collaboration among community agencies serving children and their families.

3.2 The Council shall:

- a. Develop a comprehensive, well-coordinated continuum of services by annually evaluating and prioritizing services, filling service gaps where possible, and inventing new approaches to achieve better results for families and children;
- b. Participate in the development of a county-wide, comprehensive, coordinated, multi-disciplinary, interagency system for infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities or delays and their families;
- c. Knox County Family and Children First Council will develop and implement:
 - An interagency process to establish local indicators and monitor progress toward increasing child well-being in the county;
 - An interagency process to identify local priorities to increase child well-being;

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- An annual plan that identifies interagency efforts to increase child well-being in Knox County.
- d. Develop and support a process of service delivery that is comprehensive, family focused, family strength based and consistent with the resources available;
- e. Identify service gaps in the service area and develop strategies and resources to fill those gaps;
- f. Maintain an accountability system to monitor the Council's progress in achieving its purposes;
- g. Monitor and evaluate the quality of services provided;
- h. Consider and recommend resolution of policy issues and concerns identified by the Council;
- i. Resolve disputes regarding services and between provider members in accordance with the Council's dispute resolution process;
- j. Promote services which focus on family preservation and empowerment;
- k. Encourage member agencies and the community to focus on prevention and early intervention;
- l. Arrange services with due consideration for the long-term needs of the child and most effective use of resources;
- m. Establish a mechanism to ensure ongoing input from a broad representation of families who are receiving services within Council's system;
- n. Make recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly regarding provision of programs and services for children and families;
- o. Make application to the Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council for a waiver of any rule(s) adopted by a state agency when that rule interferes with the delivery of the most appropriate service to children and families;
- p. Refer to the Ohio Family and Children First Cabinet Council those children for whom the Council cannot provide adequate services;
- q. Make periodic reports to the State Cabinet Council regarding the number of children referred to the Council, the progress made in meeting the needs of each child, and the operation of the Council.

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- r. Serve as the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Advisory Board, with representatives of Council serving on Semi-Annual Review family conferences, while meeting at least twice per year under Ohio Revised Code 3109.

- 3.3 The Council shall not become a super agency or impose an additional bureaucracy and administrative procedure on children and families.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 The Council membership will include those members mandated by Ohio Revised Code Section 121.37 and such additional persons representative of parents, advocates, community leaders, other service providers, agencies, and organizations within Knox County who serve, support, and/or advocate for children and their families and who support and subscribe to the purposes of the Council as may be elected from time to time by the Council members.

- 4.2 Statutory permanent members, as defined by statute, the chief executive officer of the following governmental entities shall be permanent members of the Council:
 - a. A school superintendent representing all school districts, other than the Mount Vernon City Schools, with territory in the county
 - b. Mount Vernon City Schools
 - c. Knox County Department of Job & Family Services
 - d. Knox Public Health (or designee)
 - e. Knox County Board of Developmental Disabilities (or designee)
 - f. Mental Health & Recovery Board of Licking and Knox Counties (or designee)
 - g. Knox County Commissioner Board President (or designee)
 - h. Mount Vernon City (or designee)
 - i. Ohio Department of Youth Services, Regional Office
 - j. Knox County Head Start representative
 - k. Early Childhood Coordinating Committee representative
 - l. Parents who are not employed by an agency represented on council and whose families are or have received services from an agency represented on council or another county's council (at least 3 parents)
 - m. A representative of a local nonprofit entity that funds, advocates, or provides services to children and families – United Way of Knox County

- 4.3 Non-statutory permanent members, individuals representing the following organizations or groups, shall be permanent members of Council:
 - a. Behavioral Healthcare Partners of Central Ohio, Inc.
 - b. Freedom Center
 - c. Knox County Metropolitan Housing Authority
 - d. Knox County Transit (KCT)
 - e. OSU Extension
 - f. New Directions
 - g. The Salvation Army of Mount Vernon
 - h. Interchurch Social Services of Knox County, Inc.

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- i. Knox Learning Center – Knox Educational Service Center
- j. Pathways of Central Ohio
- k. Children and Family Services Division of Knox County Department of Job & Family Services
- l. The Village Network
- m. Kno-Ho-Co Ashland Community Action
- n. ANEW Behavioral Health

Also, any agency, school system, parent/family representative, or other interested party not listed above that passes a resolution and/or applies endorsing the purpose of the Council and requesting membership may be eligible for election to the Council. Individuals representing these organizations, groups, and individuals may be elected at any regular meeting by the Council members.

- 4.4 The county's juvenile court judge senior in service or another judge of the juvenile court designated by the administrative judge or, where there is no administrative judge, by the judge senior in service shall serve as the judicial advisor to the county family and children first council. The judge may advise the county council on the court's utilization of resources, services, or programs provided by the entities represented by the members of the county council and how those resources, services, or programs assist the court in its administration of justice. Service of a judge as a judicial advisor pursuant to this section is a judicial function.
- 4.5 Membership Annual Contributions for the activities of Council other than pooled funding may be assessed to each statutory and non-statutory permanent member with the exception of the parent representatives and the Early Childhood Coordinating committee. This assessment shall be voted upon by the Council at the annual meeting each year.
- 4.6 Stipends will be provided to all parent representatives of the Council for any Council activities. The Council should review and approve parent representative stipends annually.

5.0 MEETINGS

- 5.1 The Council shall meet at such frequency as determined by the membership, but not less than three times in each fiscal year. Meetings shall be held at a time and place designated by the Chair.
- 5.2 Special meetings may be called by the Chair, the Executive Board, Council Coordinator, or by the written request of five members. Not less than five days written notice stating the purpose of the meeting shall be provided to all members for any special meeting.
- 5.3 A member of a public body shall be present in person at a meeting open to the public to be considered present or to vote at the meeting and for purposes of determining whether a quorum is present at the meeting. Each member of the Council shall have one vote.

A quorum shall consist of six (6) or more members.

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- 5.4 Meeting of the Council shall be public and shall be conducted in compliance with Ohio Revised Code 121.22. (Sunshine Law)
- 5.5 The public shall be given the opportunity to address the Council, under rules adopted by the Council, during regular meetings of the Council. The Council shall defer any action requested during public participation to a subsequent meeting.
- 5.6 The annual meeting for the Council shall be during the month of May each year.

6.0 EXECUTIVE BOARD

- 6.1 The Executive Board shall consist of seven members. The Chair and Vice Chair and a representative of the administrative agent shall be members of ex-officio with the same rights and privileges as other members. The past-Chair shall serve at least one-year as an ex-officio member of the Executive Board, with the same rights and privileges as other members, to support the transition of the newly elected Chair. Additional members shall be elected from among the Council's membership with at least one being a parent representative to bring the total membership to seven.
- 6.2 Members of the Executive Board shall be elected annually at the annual meeting. There shall be no limit on the number of consecutive terms an individual may serve as a member of the Executive Board.
- 6.3 The Executive Board shall function as a finance committee. The Board shall recommend an annual budget for the council and be responsible for oversight of the administrative agent.
- 6.4 The Executive Board shall supervise any staff and coordinate the work of Council.
- 6.5 The Executive Board shall meet at the call of the Chair or on written request of any Executive Board member. Not less than five days written notice stating the purpose of the meeting shall be provided to all members for any special meeting.
- 6.6 The Executive Board shall have the authority to conduct business of the full council in months that the Council does not meet. Any actions taken by the Executive Board will be reported to the Council at the next Council meeting.
- 6.7 The Council Coordinator is an ex-officio member of the Executive Board with no voting privileges.

7.0 OFFICERS

- 7.1 The officers of the Council shall be a Chair and a Vice Chair.
- 7.2 The Chair and Vice Chair of the Council shall be elected at the annual meeting each year by the membership as noted in Sections 4.2 and 4.3.

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- 7.3 The term of the Chair and Vice Chair shall be two consecutive years, coinciding with the fiscal year.
- 7.4 Upon the expiration of the Chair's term of office, the Vice Chair shall be elected Chair of the Council for a new two-year term. In the event of a vacancy or the resignation of the Chair, the Vice Chair will serve as Chair until the next annual meeting and be elected Chair of the Council for a new two-year term.
- 7.5 The Chair and Vice Chair shall have such duties and powers as generally pertain to their respective offices, and such further conferred powers and duties as, from time to time, may be conferred by the Council.
- 7.6 A vacancy in the office of the Vice Chair shall be filled by the Council at a special meeting if a regular meeting is not scheduled within the next 30 days at its next regular meeting.
- 7.7 The duties of secretary shall be vested in staff and the duties of treasurer shall be vested in the designated administrative agent.
- 7.8 In the event the Chair and Vice Chair are unable to fill their seats, the nominating committee will meet to find qualified members for those vacancies that shall be voted upon by Council.

8.0 COLLABERATIVE TEAMS

8.1 Community Team

The Community Team is a multi-agency group committed to developing and facilitating comprehensive, family-centered, and creative solutions to support and empower Knox County families with children facing multiple life stressors. This is accomplished through multi-agency collaboration to ensure the most effective use of existing services and the development of family specific services. Quarterly reports are provided to the Council.

8.2 Pooled Funding Collaborative

The Pooled Funding Collaborative is the representative of each provider who participates in pooled funding of services for multi-need children and families. The Collaborative determines how pooled funds will be used. A written report from this component group shall be included in the financial report to the Council at each regular meeting.

8.3 Early Childhood Coordinating Committee (EC3)

The Early Childhood Coordinating Committee consists of parents/guardians, and early childhood professionals who provide service and support to families with children birth through kindergarten completion. The EC3 is charged with the responsibility to make recommendations to Council that impact supports to the target population. A report from EC3 shall be submitted to the Council at each regular meeting.

9.0 COMMITTEES

- 9.1 All standing, project and special committees shall be appointed by the Chair with the approval of Council. The Council Chair shall designate the Chair of each committee. All committee chairs shall be members of the Council.
- 9.2 The terms of all committee members shall be for one year. There shall be no limit to the number of terms a member may serve on any one committee.
- 9.3 Project Committees. A Project Committee may be appointed to oversee and/or be advisory to any project being conducted by Council.
- 9.4 Special Committees. The Chair, with the approval of the Council, may appoint such other special or *ad hoc* committees as may be deemed necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes and activities of the Council. Such committees shall confine their work to the charge given to the committee and shall report to the Council. They shall not have the power of action unless such is specifically granted in the charge to the committee.

10.0 STAFF

The Council may employ staff under such terms and compensation as it may determine to be necessary. Any staff employed shall work under the supervision of the Chair and the Executive Board.

11.0 ADMINISTRATIVE AGENT

The Council shall designate one of the statutory members as its administrative agent. The administrative agent shall be responsible for the receipt, management, and disbursement of all Council funds and the preparation and presentation of regular financial reports to the Council.

12.0 REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

Reimbursement of expenses incurred by members of the Council in attending meetings of the Council, its component groups, or committees, or in the performance of duties for the Council may be made in accordance with policy and procedure established by the Council.

13.0 INDEMNIFICATION

The Council may, in accordance with adopted policy and procedure, provide for the indemnification of any member for any claims and defense costs arising from the performance of required duties for the Council.

14.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

All members of the Council shall protect the confidentiality of any information that is protected under law, rule or regulation.

15.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No member of the Council, its component groups, or committees shall use their position on the Council or their relationship with the Council for personal or financial gain. Members shall avoid situations where personal affiliations could have, or would give the appearance of having, a conflict of interest. Members shall disclose any conflict of interest when it occurs.

16.0 GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

The Council may accept gifts, bequests and donations of money or property from any source to be used as designated by the donor and/or determined by the Council.

17.0 PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The parliamentary authority for all meetings of the Council, its component groups, and committees shall be the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

18.0 NONDISCRIMINATION

The Council shall not condone or permit any discriminatory policy or practice with respect to age, race, religion, gender, ethnic group, or disability in fulfilling its stated purpose.

19.0 AMENDMENTS

- 19.1 Notice of any proposed amendment shall be given in writing to all members of the Council at least twenty-one days prior to the date of the meeting at which a vote is to be taken on the proposed amendment. Except for agreed upon minor editorial changes, no change may be made to a proposed amendment after notice is given and prior to the vote on the amendment.
- 19.2 Any proposed amendment to these Bylaws shall be approved by a majority vote of the mandated membership of the Council. Unless specified differently in a resolution proposing the amendment, any amendment approved by the Council shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.
- 19.3 Any changes to the Bylaws regarding the addition, deletion, or correction of a member agency's status or name, once approved by Council, shall be made to the Bylaws without further voting to amend the Bylaws.

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