



# Lorain County Children and Families First Council Full Council Meeting

October 24, 2024

## Attendees:

- Chelsea Freeman Yates
- Yacylyn Velazquez
- Franco Gallo
- Emily Kirsch
- Kristen Fox Berki
- Michael Doud
- Barabara Tamas
- Aimee Matusik
- Valerie Gonzalez
- Heather Noble
- Melissa Mack
- Shanna Matelski
- Billi Olsen
- Dorena Gilchrist
- Dr. Amber Fisher
- Jeff Riddell
- Jon Paul Filipkowski

## Opening:

- The Full Council Meeting of the Lorain County Children and Families First Council was called to order at 9:04 am on October 24, 2024 in Elyria by Barbara Tamas.

## Approval of Minutes

- Barbara Tamas made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the previous Full Council Meeting. Franco Gallo seconded the motion.
- The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

## Open Issues

1. Early Intervention
  - Quarterly report will be provided to Council in January
  - Survey data was collected during the Early Intervention playground event. The data is being compiled and will be used to plan future events. Youth in the community are already utilizing the playground.
  - New referrals for Early Intervention are up.
2. Current Program Update
  - Children and Families First Council has received an influx of new referrals for service. Even though new referrals are coming in the waitlist time is down. New referrals are coming in from new sources such as community health organizations. Not all referrals are as high need as Council is used to providing for.
  - There are 6 cases being serviced under the Plan of Safe Care. There are 3 cases that are currently residing in a residential facility. There are 2 cases pending placement.
3. Shared Plan
  - The Annual Shared Plan was sent out to council members several times for review. A new Share Plan is currently being created that will include new data and ideas from the recent Kids Summit. All metrics for the current shared plan have been met or exceeded.
  - Kristen Fox Berki made a motion to approve the Shared Plan update. Billie Olsen seconded the motion. The motion to approve the Shared Plan update was unanimously approved.
4. Outreach

- Children and Families First Council continues to find new opportunities to do community outreach. The events are not focused solely on Elyria and Lorain, but are reaching the County at large. Many of the events are trying to educate the community on Early Intervention. The billboards created for this purpose were a success.
- A campaign was started to support school social workers in Lorain County. This includes public, private, and charter schools. One goal of the campaign is to get more referrals from schools.
- 5. Youth Leadership Council
  - The Youth Leadership Council is currently being housed with the Urban League. The Council is finalizing paperwork to take leadership from the Urban League. More effort will be put into getting the Youth Leadership up and running.
- 6. Finance
  - The meeting for the Finance subcommittee was held on 10/02/2024. Chelsea Freeman Yates gave a brief financial overview. Funding continues to increase year over year.
- 7. Data
  - Children and Families First Council is currently working on creating a visual presentation that will be presented at the January council meeting.
- 8. Early Childhood Committee
  - The Early Childhood subcommittee is currently transitioning from the Early Intervention subcommittee. This is being done to expand the purpose of the collective work done in this subcommittee. Dr. Amber Fisher commented that the work of the Board of Developmental Disabilities is not understood by all workers in the county. Because of this a new position has been created for community training. Dr. Fisher would like to receive input from the community and Council to help identify what this position will become.
  - Council has attempted to give trainings to teachers/workers identify and manage difficulties at school. This will free up resources and help long term outcomes. More kids are qualifying for services with Autism than ever before.
  - Michael Doud commented that the MHARS Board has a mental health trainer on staff.
- 9. Council Growth
  - A new website for Council has been launched. The website can be used for exposure in the community and to receive referrals.
  - A new Family Support Specialist program has been lightly rolled out. This program will provide basic parenting skills training for a hub of surrounding counties. However, only \$4,000 was awarded to perform this task. Denise Henry will trial the program and will receive training. Internal referrals will begin in January 2025.
  - A new Service Coordination Mechanism and Dispute Resolution is due December 31, 2024. Progress on this has already begun. Because the old mechanism was not being regularly updated the new Service Coordination Mechanism will be a complete overhaul.
  - Council has been heading and participating in both a truancy work group and a respite work group. The truancy workgroup is making steady progress. A toolkit and programming are being created. Many community workers are involved and there is diverse input to finding solutions. The respite work group is identifying why youth in crisis are not getting access to respite care and how respite can be applicable to more families.
- 10. LC CFFC Mini Grants
  - Council would like to begin providing mini grants to other agencies in the community to empower other to do new and meaningful work in the community. Community providers will be able to write grants for different types of programming in the community. Chelsea Freeman Yates has been in contact with other agencies who have done similar programming.
  - Aimee Matusik commented that other counties have given small grants to youth serving agencies with much success.
  - These grants can be used to enhance prevention programming.
- 11. Kids Summit Update
  - The Lorain County Kids Summit is still in the works. Kristen Fox Berki commented that the goal is to incorporate as many child servicing agencies as possible. We want any and all people who serve

children to be at the table.

12. OFCF Systems of Care Self Evaluation

- Aimee Matusik led the Systems of Care Self Evaluation for the Council. The goal of the evaluation is to help get the Council more in the community and reengage all mandated members.
- Coordinating Systems and Services
  - Almost all mandated members participate regularly and support from members is increasing. Progress has been made at the local level, but there are still barriers at the state level. Education of the community about Council initiatives is lacking. Lorain County benefits from Inner System Partnerships which are collaborations between multiple agencies to prevent custody removal.
- Engaging and Empowering Families
  - Work has been done to get 3 family representatives on the Council Board. Council now has applications in waiting.
- Building Community Capacity.
  - Council is finding creative ways to provide funding for preventing placement and finding appropriate placements. Council may consider increasing its communication to the community on where some of the funding is coming from and where it is going. The community would like to know more about the outcomes. Council will try to get into the County Newsletter put out by the Commissioners. More data needs to be collected to help communicate effectively to the community.
- Shared Accountability

**Next Meeting**

- The next Full Council Meeting will be held on January 23, 2025 at 9am. The subsequent Full Council Meeting will be held on April 17, 2025 at 9am.

**Adjournment:**

Franco Gallo made a motion to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Kristen Fox Berki.

Minutes submitted by: Jon Paul Filipkowski