

Kent County
Family & Children's
Coordinating Council

2006 ANNUAL REPORT



Kent County
Family & Children's
Coordinating Council Annual Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2004, the KCFCCC adopted an action plan for 2004-2006. Since its adoption, the KCFCCC has made significant strides toward reaching its identified goals.

Highlights from the past two years include the following:

Executive Committee

- Continued to oversee the allocation of Strong Family Safe Children (SFSC) funds in Kent County and initiated an evaluation process for each of the SFSC programs
- Assisted the Circuit Court in the application of a Safe Haven Grant for Kent County

Children's Partners Executive Council

- Adopted the report ***Kent County's Early Childhood System: A Community Plan*** with the goal that "every young child in Kent County will be ready to succeed in school and in life"
- Secured the second Early Learning Opportunities Act Grant (\$943,072) through the Heart of West Michigan United Way (HWMUW)
- Implemented a "governance structure" to oversee early childhood coordination that included a Children's Commission, Children's Partners and necessary Subcommittees
- Obtained a \$60,000 *Great Start Collaborative* Grant through the State's Early Childhood Investment Corporation

School Age Services Committee

- Conducted seven parent focus groups from three different school districts to determine which, if any, human services would be welcome at area schools
- Conducted three focus groups with school personnel and human service providers to determine need and capability of providing human services at non-traditional locations
- Adopted a four-point framework for creating a Kent School Services Network to support student achievement through an integrated human services delivery system
- Created a MOU between the Network providers regarding the implementation of the four-point framework

Youth Connections Committee

- Adopted a Memorandum of Understanding with the HWMUW and Arbor Circle to ensure the long-term stability of the Kent County Mentoring Collaborative (KCMC)

- Secured an Americorp grant to staff the KCMC

Ongoing Family Support Committee

- Supported best practice guidelines for identifying and addressing issues of substance abuse among Early Impact clients
- Provided four sets (Phase I and II) of substance abuse training sessions for child welfare staff throughout Kent County. These training sessions educated over 200 caseworkers regarding substances, how they are involved in our culture and their effect on behavior as well as the stages of change and therapy interventions that can be successful.

KCFCCC MEMBERS

Carol Paine-McGovern, Chair
Consumer Advocate

Debra Holmes-Garrison
Consumer Advocate

Savior Selden-Johnson, Vice Chair
Kent County Department of Human Services

Judge Patrick Hillary
17th Circuit Court Family Division

Susan Broman
Steelcase Foundation

Lynn Heemstra
City of Grand Rapids

Tony Campbell
Heart of West MI United Way

Paul Ippel
network180

Candace Cowling
Child & Family Resource Council

Sharon Loughridge
DA Blodgett

Tom Czerwinski
Area Agency on Aging

Cathy Raevsky
Kent County Health Department

Beverly A. Drake
ACSET

Diana Sieger
Grand Rapids Community Foundation

Lynnette Ferrell
Frey Foundation

Patti Warmington
Life Guidance Services

William A. Forsyth
Kent County Prosecutor

Mike Weiler
Kent Intermediate School District

Arlen-Dean Gaddy
SBC

Mary Alice Williams
Arbor Circle

Andrew Zylstra
Kent County Department of Human Services

Kent County

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ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW 1991 – 2000

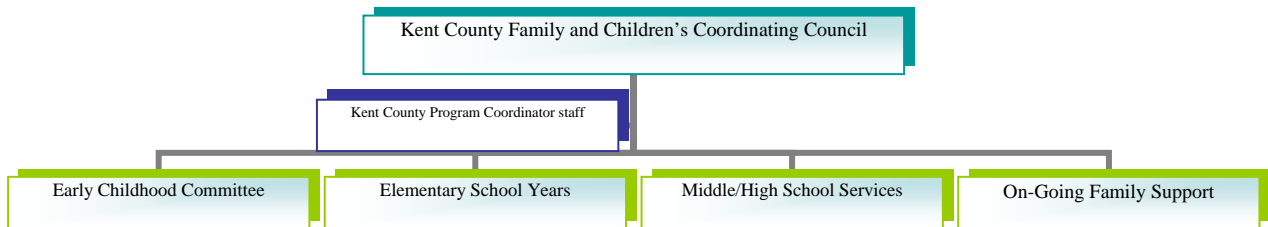
- 1991** **Kent County Children's Services Coordinating Council Formed**
- 7 Members 4 County Department/Agency Directors
 3 Commission designated representatives
- Mission: To Develop a County-wide plan for services to children to be reviewed annually.
-
- 1994** **Kent County Family and Children's Coordinating Council Enhanced**
- Organizational structure revised to include Strong Families/Safe Children proponents with expanded Committee membership. Kent County Board of Commissioners via County Resolution 11-23-94-147 granted Committee authority to enter into agreements.
-
- 1995** **State Requires Counties to Create a Multi-Purpose Collaborative Body**
- Kent County Board of Commissioners designates itself via the existence of the KCFCCC. In November 1995, KCFCCC creates committee structure to include an Executive Committee, a Nominating Committee, a Membership Committee, a Consumer Advisory Focus Group, and a Competitive Bid Review Committee.
-
- 1996-2000** **KCFCCC Strengthens**
- During its first ten years of existence, the Council evolved from a small informal networking group of six human service directors to a diverse collaborative body of thirty-seven. With administrative support of the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, the Council began a major restructuring of its organization in April 2000. The purpose of this restructuring was to streamline its membership and increase its effectiveness. This was accomplished through a redefined membership process, a new set of bylaws, a new mission statement, and a new committee structure based on the main intervention points in a child's life. The Council was granted by the Board of Commissioners to act in the capacity of the MPCB for certain activities, resulting in greater efficiency in its approval process.
- As a result of the restructuring, the Council was positioned to take a more proactive approach to service coordination and systems improvements to improve the lives of children, youth and families in Kent County.

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ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW 2000 - 2005

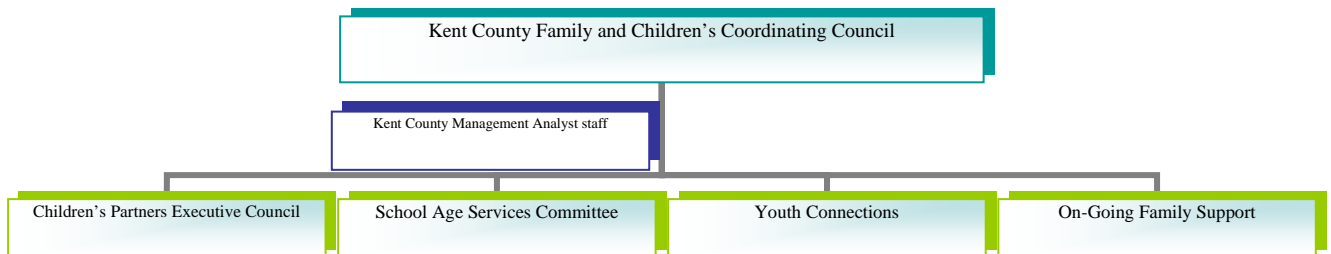
***The Mission of the Council is to
provide leadership to enhance the well being of children, youth and families
in Kent County so that they may achieve their greatest potential.***

2001 – 2004 Committee Structure



Membership reduced to 19 individuals including directors of the County and State departments that provide services to families in Kent County and representatives from education, business, private agencies, private funding organizations, consumers and advocates.

2005 Committee Structure



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CHILDREN'S PARTNERS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(Formerly Early Childhood Committee)
2001 – 2005

Service Coordination Goal: To develop a coordinated, integrated system of services that are voluntary, accessible, culturally competent, and universal and foster broad community and legislative support for these services for all families. All families should be able to access quality services in four core areas: Early Childhood Care & Education; Family Health Services; Family Support Services; and Parent Education.

- 2001** The Committee members focused their efforts on increasing community awareness about the importance of the first five years of life, and worked to ensure that every family in Kent County had access to quality family support services, parenting education, health care and early childhood education and care.
- 2002** Federal Grant Application for Connections for Children was made and granted in the amount of \$878,821 to facilitate the coordination among existing community collaboratives and service providers to fill in specific, identified gaps in Kent County's early childhood learning system.
- 2003** On going discussions took place whereby core services were defined, needs assessments conducted, and gaps in services analyzed in an effort to move toward developing a coordinated, integrated system of services that all families may access for early childhood care and education. In addition, the Cerebellum Superkid! Community awareness project was launched; the ASQ Universal Access project initiated and parent groups were hosted.
- 2004 – 2005** Development and Adoption of Connections for Children Early Childhood Systems: A Community Plan. Connections for Children Early Childhood Plan calls for the development of a governance structure headed up by community power brokers and named the Early Childhood Children's Commission. A Memorandum of Understanding was created by and between the KCFCCC and the Children's Commission. The Committee adopted a new name: Children's Partners Executive Council reporting to both the KCFCCC and the Early Childhood Children's Commission. A \$943,072 federal grant was received to continue the development of an early childhood system.

2006 Children's Partners Executive Council Goals & Challenges

Goals:

1. Develop a business plan for the Kent County Early Childhood System
2. Identify and enfold parent consumers into the leadership structure

Challenges:

As Kent County moves forward in its efforts to define and fully develop an Early Childhood system, there is a struggle to ensure that we have comparable Early Childhood data. There are a variety of data sources throughout the community, but as of yet, there is not a consistent nor standard process in the collection, maintenance and monitoring of data. Data must be a cornerstone of an Early Childhood system for it will allow us to measure the effectiveness of such a system.

One example of the challenges that exist related to data is the concept of readiness assessments. School readiness assessments are important so that the community can have a measure of the cost/benefit of early childhood programs. Over the past few years, knowledge of developmentally appropriate assessment practices has significantly increased, but the community continues to use a variety of techniques for assessing readiness. The challenge lies in developing an assessment that is multi-dimensional, linked to curriculums, supported by appropriate resources and strategies, and which can be universally implemented.

This is, but one example of the challenges that face us in the arena of a data system. There are additional significant gaps in an Early Childhood data system that must be addressed to attain maximum impact in Kent County; we must align data collection and maintenance efforts if we are to be able to monitor progress of an Early Childhood system.

Finally, incorporating parent/consumer involvement into the development of the business plan will be essential to ensure that the system meets the needs of its users.

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SCHOOL AGE SERVICES COMMITTEE
(Formerly Elementary School Years Committee)
2001 – 2005

Service Coordination Goal: Realign community health and human services to support student achievement through the development of a collaborative, integrated, effective, and cost efficient human service delivery system.

- 2001** The committee worked to address the issue of children who were eligible for free and reduced lunch and not accessing food programs during the summer months. Committee members worked with community partners to increase participation in food programs at existing sites within Grand Rapids and establishing new sites in out-county areas that had high need.
- 2002** The Elementary School Years Committee organized a massive outreach campaign in 2002 to educate families about the free USDA Summer Food Service Program, but to no avail. The public service campaign did not increase the participation levels in the program. Committee members then attempted to implement a pilot program to better utilize USDA resources and improve coordination of summer food provision between the USDA program and pantries.
- 2003** A pilot project, Family Food For Thought, was developed and implemented. The concept incorporated school children's summer nutrition needs into a broader strategy of providing families with free fresh food products not typically available from the pantry system combined with a parent education program on nutrition. The project coordinated existing efforts of three systems – MSU Extension, ACCESS and GRPS Food & Nutrition Service. The strategy and coordination goal was taken on by the Emergency Needs Task Force collaborative body.
- 2004–2005** The Grand Rapids Education Reform Initiative (ERI), in looking for ways to improve the Grand Rapids Public Schools, identified the concentration of poverty in the district and the accompanying social problems as significant issues affecting student achievement. ERI requested the help of Kent County to assist in facilitating the development of a joint strategic direction for aligning health and human services delivery with the school system. The Committee expanded its original County focused membership to include other key community stake holders and changed its name to the School Age Services Committee. The Committee adopted a four-point framework for creating a Kent School Services Network to support student achievement through an integrated human services delivery system.

2006 School Age Services Committee Goals & Challenges

Goals:

1. Create detail level plans for the four-point framework
2. Implement the Kent School Services Network in targeted schools

Challenges:

With the globalization of the economy, a well educated workforce is essential for a community to remain economically vibrant. This is, but one reason why it is necessary for human service providers to support student achievement and ensure that their clients receive the best education possible.

In the next year, the Committee must adopt cost effective methods to implement the four-point framework it has created and determine appropriate data to gauge its work as well as methods to collect the identified data.

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YOUTH CONNECTIONS COMMITTEE
(Formerly Middle/High School Years Committee)
2001 – 2005

Service Coordination Goal: To increase opportunities for positive adult involvement in the lives of at risk adolescents and teenagers through strengthening existing mentorship programs and expanding mentorship opportunities.

- 2001** The Middle/High School Committee chose to explore possible strategies to improve the community's response to providing opportunities to engage "hard to reach" youth.
- 2002** In order to better understand why many adolescents do not engage in their community and the many positive opportunities for youth, the Committee spent several months gathering information from youth. The challenge the Committee faced was narrowing down the myriad of issues which adolescents said they faced and galvanizing community support to address them.
- 2003** Committee takes on mentorship for adolescents. Committee members hosted focus groups to research why adolescents are so hard to reach. A mini summit for mentoring organizations was sponsored to research what types of programs were available and where the gaps in service existed and to get a sense of an interest in starting a mentoring collaborative.
- 2004-2005** Committee writes and receives a VISTA Grant. The Mentoring Collaborative is formed and the VISTA employee tackles daily duties of mentoring collaborative. A mentoring celebration is hosted in August and an initial phase of standardizing recruiting, screening, training efforts began. The Committee offers oversight to VISTA grant and a Memorandum of Understanding is created to define roles by and between the Mentoring Collaborative and KCFCCC. The reapplication for the Michigan Mentor Vista is completed.

2006 Youth Connections Committee Goals & Challenges

2006 Goals:

1. Strengthen the KCMC to ensure its viability at the conclusion of the MOU in 2006
2. Determine a new coordination goal for the future and identify appropriate partners to meet the goal

Challenges:

With the myriad of youth development organizations and issues facing young people, the Committee must seek to identify a coordination goal that will have a strong and positive impact in the community.

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ON-GOING FAMILY SUPPORT COMMITTEE
2001 – 2005

Service Coordination Goal: Prevent and reduce child abuse and neglect, improve family functioning, and keep children safe in their own homes by enhancing current efforts to identify and treat family substance abuse issues early.

- 2001** According to the Family Independence Agency, substance abuse was the primary cause for approximately 60 percent of child abuse or neglect cases resulting in removal of a child from the home. The On-Going Family Support Committee decided to tackle this issue to enhance efforts in identifying and treating substance abuse early for families at risk of child abuse or neglect.
- 2002** As a result of findings from social workers, substance abuse training needs were identified and a pilot training program was created and offered to P21! Early Impact social workers in identifying drug use, accessing available treatment resources, understanding confidentiality rules, and engaging families in seeking treatment.
- 2003** Training continues to remain a high priority for the Committee. The training curriculum and trainers are subject to evaluations to ensure attendees are receiving quality and pertinent information. Providers track individuals where substance abuse is identified as a problem in their case files 1) if a family is assessed for substance abuse, and 2) if a family is referred for substance abuse. In addition, FIA provided data regarding substance abuse prevalence in substantiated reports and Category 1 Removals which may prove to be helpful in identifying whether the training for early identification and referrals has any impact on those specific families receiving help and whether there was any long-term impact from the Committee's greater goals (e.g., systems coordination around substance abuse/child abuse and neglect linkages and greater community awareness).
- The Committee discussed that data shows substance abuse is pervasive throughout all areas of mental health and social services, and thus universities and colleges should consider substance abuse training as a requirement for anyone working in those fields.
- 2004-2005** The Committee continues to support, evaluate, and coordinate the Phase I & II substance abuse training program for P21! Early Impact social workers. A more in depth level of training is offered in 2005 as a result of requests from participants. The Committee continues to try to influence university decisions on curriculum requirements for social workers hoping to impress upon them that substance abuse education should be a required course for the real world experiences faced by social workers once employed. A review of goals and objectives concludes that the Committee will stay focused on substance abuse

training, education and will strengthen its focus on systems communication. The group identified the need for all levels of the system – prevention, CPS, courts, foster care, etc. – to understand the stages of change and how the stage that the family is in may have an impact on when it is appropriate to remove a child vs. when it is appropriate to wait and delay that decision.

2006 Ongoing Family Support Committee Goals & Challenges

2006 Goals:

1. Determine a cost-effective way to maintain Phase I & II training while developing a curriculum for Phase III
2. Develop a model to more efficiently provide basic needs for Early Impact families

Challenges:

After providing several years of initial substance abuse training for child welfare workers, the Committee believes that more advanced training needs to be offered as the next step to ensure that front line staff is knowledgeable about substance abuse and its impact on the community. This may include discussions with the Court system regarding its needs from child welfare workers related to substance abuse language. Likewise, the Committee is seeking methods to systematically provide the information from Phase I & II training sessions into employee orientation for child welfare workers.

Additionally, the Committee desires to proactively seek more efficient methods to ensure that Early Impact families' basic needs are met. To date, this has involved discussions of a coordinated project between the KCFCCC and ENTF.

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GRANTS RECEIVED
 AS A RESULT OF THE
 KCFCCC COLLABORATIVE WORK

Grant	Year	Amount
Early Learning Opportunities Act (I) – Facilitate the coordination among existing community collaborative efforts and service providers to fill specific, identified gaps in Kent County's early childhood learning system.	2002	\$878,821
Early Learning Opportunities Act (II) – Facilitate systems change, promote results accountability, and ensure that every young child in Kent County is ready to succeed in school and life.	2004 – 2006	\$943,072
Americorp Grant – To staff the Kent County Mentoring Collaborative.	2004 – 2006	\$28,260
Great Start Collaborative – To expand the capacity to build a comprehensive Early Childhood System for the residents of Kent County.	2006	\$60,000
Institute for Systematic Change – To assist the School Age Services Committee in developing a collaborative, integrated, effective, and cost efficient human service delivery system to support student achievement.	2006	\$25,000
Grand Rapids Community Foundation – To assist the School Age Services Committee in developing a collaborative, integrated, effective, and cost efficient human service delivery system to support student achievement.	2006	\$10,000
TOTAL		\$1,945,153