

Stable Families



OUTCOME TEAM ROSTER

John North

Better Business Bureau
Co-Champion, 3/07 – present

Christy Norvell

Mont. Co. Dept. of Job & Family Services
Co-Champion, 3/07 – present

Donna Audette

YWCA of Dayton
Co-Champion, 1/07 – 2/07

Fred Baxter

Ohio Department of Youth Services

Ken Betz

Coroner's Office/Regional Crime Lab

Elaine Jelly

Catholic Social Services of the
Miami Valley

Jan Lepore-Jentleson

East End Community Services

Connie Lucas-Melson

Community Volunteer

Jim McCarthy

Miami Valley Fair Housing Center

Patricia Meadows

The National Conference for Community
and Justice of Greater Dayton

Bonnie Parish

Family Service Association

Rev. Dr. William Brodis Schooler

Dayton Baptist Pastors and Ministers
Union of Greater Dayton

Joe Spitler

Criminal Justice Council

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VISION

The community respects and supports families, recognizing that family composition in a diverse society is varied. Family members have healthy relationships with each other. Families nurture their members and provide a sense of well-being and safety. Family members work together and feel that they also belong to something larger than themselves.

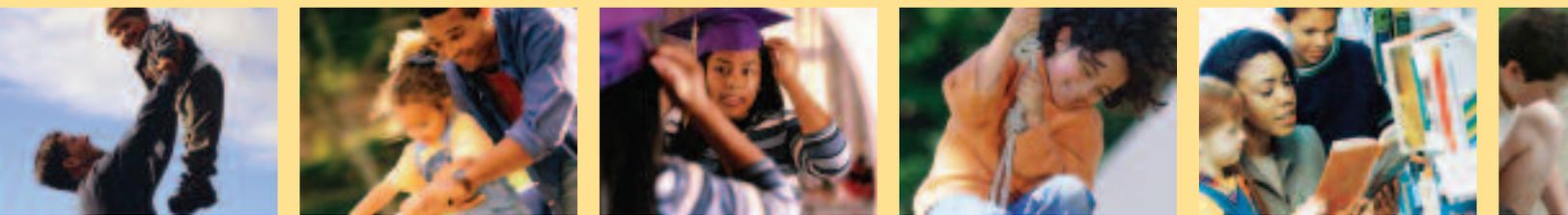
STABLE FAMILIES OUTCOME TEAM REPORT

Domestic violence remained a concern to the Stable Families Outcome Team during 2007. The Team continued monitoring the implementation of recommendations from the domestic violence safety assessment completed in 2006. Progress was made in the following areas:

- ✿ enhancing the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), which improved information sharing between law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, public defenders, courts, and coroner's office;
- ✿ providing victims with information about community resources that will help them create a safety plan and address other needs;
- ✿ meeting the needs of child witnesses at scenes of domestic violence; and
- ✿ using interpreters with non-English speaking victims, victims with limited English proficiency, and victims with other communication barriers.

The Team will continue monitoring progress in these areas.





OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

The Stable Families Outcome Team engaged in many conversations about several issues of concern that negatively impact family stability. It was evident early on that many of these issues also related to the work of other Outcome Teams. Two areas in particular have presented opportunities for collaboration: poverty and substance abuse.

- ❁ **Poverty** can increase children’s exposure to a wide array of problems including inferior housing, insufficient food, poor-quality diets, deficient health care, inadequate parenting, and poor-quality child care, and can result in delayed physical, cognitive, and socioemotional growth.¹ The harm is particularly strong for children whose families are trapped in poverty for a long time.

Go to page 55 for more in-depth data analysis



In 2006 the Census Bureau estimated that 10.7% of Montgomery County’s families were living in poverty, up from 8.3% in 1999. Many members of the Team see the destructive and sometimes devastating impact of poverty firsthand in their work. Thus, adopting poverty and its impact on

family stability was a natural course of action for the Team.

Rather than duplicate the efforts of others, the Team partnered with the Economic Self-Sufficiency Outcome Team (ESS) to address this issue. Three Stable Families Outcome Team members joined the Poverty Reduction Work Group of ESS. After conducting extensive research the Work Group recommended that the ESS Outcome Team focus on impoverished families with children and use a multi-generational approach to poverty reduction.

The Stable Families Outcome Team will continue its partnership in poverty reduction with ESS to develop a plan that will offer hope to families and make a positive impact in this area.

- ❁ **Substance abuse** or addiction of one or more family members creates family instability in many ways.

The use of financial resources to pay for alcohol or other drugs can cause financial strain on a family. In many instances, the outcome is an inability to maintain safe housing or meet other basic needs. Employment may be threatened by poor performance resulting from substance abuse. The side effects of substance abuse will affect a person’s health (short-term and long-term) and could lead to

increased medical expenses—another financial strain.

A significant consequence of substance abuse and addiction is that family relationships suffer and the risk of violence increases. The most profound impact can be on children. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, one in four (25%) children under the age of 18 is living in a home where alcoholism or alcohol abuse is a fact of daily life. Countless others are exposed to illegal drug use in their families. The toll substance abuse takes on these children can be substantial. Children living in a home with substance abuse are at significantly greater risk for:

- ❁ mental illness or emotional problems, such as depression or anxiety;
- ❁ physical health problems; and
- ❁ learning problems, including difficulty with cognitive and verbal skills, conceptual reasoning and abstract thinking.

¹ *Children and Poverty, From The Future of Children, a publication of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation (1997) 7:2; available at <http://www.futureofchildren.org>.*

Children whose parents abuse alcohol or drugs are almost three times more likely to be verbally, physically or sexually abused, and four times more likely than other children to be neglected.

Add together the impact of the above consequences and family members are caught in a whirlwind of turmoil from which there may be no escape for the most vulnerable members—children.

Representatives from the Stable Families Outcome Team will be joining representatives from other outcome teams and other community members on a task force, which will convene in 2008, to identify solutions to alcohol and other drug abuse.

OTHER AREAS OF INTEREST

✿ **Family-centered services.** Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) is a family-driven, evidence-based model in which families have a primary decision-making role in planning for the health and well-being of vulnerable members. A key goal of this model is to expand a family's support network during crises. While FGDM has its roots in child welfare and juvenile justice, it has a growing number of additional applications including education, children with special needs, the frail elderly and prisoner re-entry.

Recognizing the importance of family-driven services, the Stable Families

Outcome Team endorsed the use of FGDM in Montgomery County's child welfare and juvenile justice systems. To support this work, the Team requested partial funding of a training series to prepare workers in several agencies to utilize the model. The FCFC approved the \$1,700 request, which was matched by contributions from Montgomery County Juvenile Court and the Children Services Division of Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services. Subsequently, 50 professionals were introduced to the model and 30 of those went through an additional three-day intensive training session. These family workers will be implementing this model in their organizations to improve services and successes for families in Montgomery County.

✿ **Fatherhood.** There is extensive information about the consequences of absent fathers and the impact of fathers' involvement on the well-being of children and society. For starters, children whose fathers do not live with them are more likely to live in poverty. In addition, those children are also more likely to experience emotional problems, use alcohol or other drugs, or engage in delinquent behavior. A young person's physical health is also impacted by the relationship with his/her father. The research is clear: fathers factor significantly in the lives of their children. There is simply no substitute for the love, involvement, and commitment of a responsible father.

Various fatherhood initiatives across the nation—some in Ohio—are providing resources to help fathers pay child support and maintain nurturing relationships with their children. Job training, job search assistance, and encouragement to continue their education help fathers improve their economic status and financial support of their children. Parent education and support specifically geared to non-residential fathers helps men provide the nurturing their children also need.

In Montgomery County, several organizations and other interested individuals are working to establish such an initiative. The Stable Families Outcome Team supports these efforts and looks forward to the emergence of innovative services for fathers that will result in greater stability and success for children.

