**Ashtabula County Family and Children First Council**

Service Coordination Mechanism

Revised 2024

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**I. Overview**

* 1. History

The Ashtabula County Service Coordination Mechanism (SCM) was revised in 2010 as required by Ohio Revised Code 121.37 and 121.38. This document served as the guide for the coordination of services in Ashtabula County for children birth through age 21 with severe multi-systemic needs. In a 2016 SCM revision, members of the Ashtabula County Family & Children First Council (ACFCFC) made the commitment to ensure youth and their families in need of service coordination would not only receive comprehensive, coordinated, cost-effective services, but that they would receive them through an evidence-based model called High Fidelity Wraparound which emphasizes family engagement and participation. This 2018 revision of the SCM addressed these priority areas: consistency and accountability of the Service Coordination process, clarification of micro and macro planning for multi-system youth, development of a System of Care, further delineation of levels of coordination and intervention, clarification of the Service Coordination target population, and define data/outcome measurement tracking requirements. This revision in 2024 will address the continued development of a System of Care, further delineation of levels of coordination and intervention, clarification of the Service Coordination target population and data collection and outcome measurement as well as the development of programs providing a bridge for gaps in services in the community to serve the population most effectively.

* 1. Development & Review of the Service Coordination Mechanism

The Ashtabula County SCM serves as the guiding document for the coordination of services within the county when a youth with severe and/or complex, multi-system needs is referred to the ACFCFC for assistance as required in ORC 121.37 and 121.38. This document has been developed, reviewed and approved by the ACFCFC, which has the required membership to meet the specifications within ORC 121.37:

* Three Family Representatives
* Jobs & Family Services
* Children Services Board
* Health Department
* Early Intervention Collaborative
* Board of Developmental Disabilities
* Commissioner’s Office
* Local Child//Family Serving Non-profits
* Ohio Department of Youth Services
* Ashtabula Area City Schools, Buckeye Local School District, A-Tech
* Mental Health & Recovery Board
* Juvenile Court
* City of Ashtabula
* Ashtabula County Community Action Agency Head Start

The SCM is a living document that is reviewed minimally on an annual basis and edited as needed.

* 1. Community Awareness/Training of the Service Coordination Mechanism

Service providers, other local partner agencies, and families with high risk youth will learn about the SCM through a variety of means including but not limited to:

* Presentations at local partner agencies
* Cross system and community based trainings and workshops
* ACFCFC website
* ACFCFC Facebook page
* ACFCFC brochures
  1. Purpose of the Service Coordination Mechanism

Per ORC 121.37, the purpose of county councils is to streamline and coordinate existing government services for families seeking services for their children. Therefore, the purpose of the SCM is to define how ACFCFC and its community partner agencies will collaborate at both the micro and macro levels to best serve and meet the needs of youth and families in our county. Specifically, within those parameters, the SCM describes the continuum that is our System of Care, how needs that are not met by traditional agency systems will be addressed, how redundancies of services/resources is eliminated and gaps in service are identified, leading to the most efficacious and responsible use of resources and the best possible outcomes for the youth and families of Ashtabula County.

* 1. Key Values of System of Care and Service Coordination

The SCM describes a System of Care designed to offer services and supports that are coordinated at both the macro and micro level, integrating the following values:

* Collaborative team based approach that is individualized to each identified youth
* Family centered and driven process (or person centered and driven process for developmentally appropriate transition age youth)
* Families/youth are fully involved in decision making
* Families are offered advocacy and support options
* Strengths based approach
* Culturally competent to each identified youth and family
* Integration of natural supports
* Providing the least restrictive intervention in the least restrictive environment possible, using community based services and supports when feasible
* When possible/appropriate, evidence-based or best practice methods are used
* Available funding resources are fully utilized
* Redundancies of services/supports are reduced or eliminated
* Early identification of needs and intervention is emphasized
* Finding different help for those youths and families whose needs are not met by traditional service systems
* Outcomes are tracked and evaluated
  1. Service Coordination Mechanism, Levels of Care

The Ashtabula County SCM describes the wide range of levels of service coordination available to youth ages birth through age 21 (or 24 for those with developmental disabilities or transitioning youth) and families who have multi-systemic needs and reside in Ashtabula County. At all levels of service, the ACFCFC will remain a neutral venue/system for the provision and coordination of services. This SCM is not intended to override current agencies or systems, but rather to build on the strength of existing services and supports in the community and when needed, propose new services, supports and/or strategies to address unmet needs.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| System of Care | | | | | | |
| Less  Intensive Response |  |  |  |  |  | More  Intensive  Response |
|  | | | | Service Coordination | | |
| Community Information (Level 1) |  | **Case Consultation** (Level 2) |  | **Cross System Team** (Level 3) |  | **Comprehensive Family Support Team**  (Level 4) |
| Referrals to Other Services | | | | | | |

Community Information (Level 1) – Youth and families not eligible for ACFCFC service coordination (typically phone calls coming in where the family is looking for information regarding a single service and/or are not interested in the service coordination process) are provided information and/or connected to community resources and service providers.

Community Information is housed at the Ashtabula County Family & Children First Council and can be accessed by calling (440)998-8178. Time frame for this level is limited to a few phone calls.

Case Consultation (Level 2) – Youth and families with multisystemic needs who do not have previously identified or existing resources and supports in place are connected to appropriate community supports, resources, and service providers. After being connected to appropriate services, the youth/family will be followed up with at 2, 4, and 6 weeks, with a decision made at each follow up to do one of the following:

* Close the case
* Give the current effort 2 more weeks before deciding on a course of action
* Try a different service/support
* Move the youth/family to either a Cross System Team or Comprehensive Family Support Team

The decision to engage in one of the above courses of action will be based on the criteria below:

* The family is not engaging with referred services. An appropriate substitute service(s) will be offered up to two times (at the 2 and 4 week follow ups) if the family is interested. If the youth/family fails to engage with services multiple times (by the 6 week follow up), the case will be closed.
* The family has engaged with services and reports their needs to be met. In the interest of keeping to the least intrusive response, the case will be closed and the family will be informed that their case can be reopened by calling the ACFCFC office if their needs are not met in the future or they enter crisis due to the needs of the youth.
* The family has actively engaged with services and their needs remain unmet and/or have escalated. The family will be referred to a Cross System Team or Comprehensive Family Support Team based on their needs.

Families may also contact the ACFCFC office at any time between scheduled follow ups to: request that their case be closed, request that a referral be made to a different service provider/support, or report that their level of need has escalated. Upon receipt of this information, ACFCFC office staff will close the case or make a referral to the appropriate service provider/support or level of Service Coordination within 2 business days.

Case Consultation is housed at the Ashtabula County Family and Children First Council and can be accessed either through the submission of a release of information and referral form from a service provider or through a family self-referral by calling (440)998-8178. ACFCFC staff will assist self-referring families in completing the release of information and referral form. Time frame for this level of service is no more than 6 weeks.

Cross-System Team (Level 3) – Youth and family are actively engaged with multiple service providers, but their needs remain unmet. The family may occasionally experience crisis due to the complex needs of the youth, and the youth is at low to moderate risk of being removed from the home either voluntarily or involuntarily. A neutrally positioned, team of cross system service providers led/driven by the youth and family, will assist the youth and family in identifying strengths and prioritizing needs as part of the development of the Individual Family Service Coordination Plan (IFSCP) to help coordinate, align, and streamline previously identified and existing resources and supports to determine the least restrictive plan of success while providing a more intensive collaboration of multi-system providers. The IFSCP is developed using a strengths-based, collaborative, and culturally competent approach that is both community based and outcome driven. A Crisis Plan that can be mobilized to immediately respond to and stabilize emergencies is also developed. Families are encouraged to invite their family and friends or an advocate/mentor to attend team meetings. Additional meetings will be scheduled as needed/requested by the family to ensure that services are being provided and any additional needed referrals are made. Expected meeting frequency for this level of service is approximately once every two weeks to once a month, but may be adjusted to meet the needs of the family. All meetings require a minimum of at least 2 business days advance notice as well as written notice of the meeting. Once all services aligned and streamlined and any additional services needed are put in place and the family is satisfied with the progress being made towards the IFSCP goals, the case will be closed. The family will be informed that their case can be reopened by calling the ACFCFC office if their needs are not met in the future or they enter crisis due to the needs of the youth.

This level is defined as Service Coordination, per page 11 of the SCM guidance document.

The Cross-System Team level of Service Coordination is provided by contracted vendors of Ashtabula County Family & Children First Council. Time frame for this level of service is expected to be approximately 3-12 months.

Comprehensive Family Support Team (Level 4) – Youth and family are experiencing crises due to the needs of the youth, and/or the youth is at high risk of being removed from the home voluntarily or involuntarily. The youth and family may be actively engaged in a Cross-System Team, and their needs continue to go unmet or escalate. A neutrally positioned, team of cross system service providers and natural supports come together to create a Comprehensive Family Support Team that is led/driven by the youth and family and based on the principles of High Fidelity Wraparound. This team will assist the youth and family in identifying strengths, prioritizing needs, and developing a creative, unique, and “thinking outside the box” type of help as part of the development (or the review) of the Individual Family Service Coordination Plan (IFSCP). The IFSCP is developed using a strengths-based, collaborative, culturally competent approach that is both community based and outcome driven, while maintaining the least restrictive plan of success. A Crisis Plan that can be mobilized to immediately respond to and stabilize emergencies is also developed. Families are encouraged to invite an advocate/mentor to attend team meetings. Additional meetings will be scheduled as needed/requested by the family to ensure that services are being provided and any additional needed referrals are made. As this is an exceptionally intensive process, the expected meeting frequency for this level of service is approximately once a week to once every 2 weeks, but may be adjusted to meet the needs of the family. All meetings require a minimum of at least 2 business days advance notice as well as written notice of the meeting. Once all needed services are aligned, streamlined, and any additional services needed are put in place, the youth and family have met many of their IFSCP goals, and the team has achieved its mission, the case will be closed. The family will be informed that their case can be reopened by calling the ACFCFC office if their needs are not met in the future or they enter crisis due to the needs of the youth.

This level is defined as High Fidelity Wraparound, per page 11 of the SCM guidance document.

The Comprehensive Family Support Team level of Service Coordination is provided by contracted vendors of Ashtabula County Family & Children First Council. Time frame for this level of service is expected to be approximately 12-18 months.

Ohio Part C Early Intervention – The families of infants and toddlers ages birth through three who have developmental disabilities are eligible to receive service coordination through Early Intervention. ACFCFC contracts with a local provider to provide these services to eligible children/families.

* 1. Implementation Oversight

The Ashtabula County SCM is implemented and overseen by the ACFCFC. Specific responsibilities of oversight include:

* The Administrative/Fiscal Agent is responsible for assisting with the establishment of a Service Coordination budget as well as the oversight of the dispute resolution process.
* The Finance Committee is responsible for the establishment of a Service Coordination budget, and is comprised of mandated Council members, community partner representatives, and the Finance Director of the Administrative Agent.
* The Service Coordination Team is responsible for reviewing, approving, and monitoring funding requests, as well as consulting with Service Coordination providers on open cases. The Service Coordination Team is chaired by the ACFCFC Coordinator and includes representatives from Ashtabula County Juvenile Court, Ashtabula County Children Services Board, Ashtabula County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Ashtabula County Early Intervention Collaborative, Ashtabula County Health Department, Ashtabula County Mental Health Recovery Services Board, local mental health and substance abuse service providers, and representatives from the county school districts.
* The All County Youth Council Committee identifies gaps in service at the community/macro level as well as barriers to service, and is made up of mandated members of Council as well as community partner representatives.
* The Early Childhood Coordination Committee provides identifies barriers and gaps in the community working with children under the age of five. This committee is comprised of mandated members of Council.

1. **Operating Procedures Required by ORC 121.37 (C, 1-9)**

Ohio Revised Code 121.37 outlines specific requirements of the SCM most of which are directly related to the Cross-System Team and Comprehensive Family Support Team levels of Service Coordination. While many of these requirements have been described earlier in this document, each statutory section will be individually addressed to ensure full compliance.

* 1. Overview of Eligibility, Intake/Referral Protocols and Timelines
* Eligibility – Ashtabula County children/youth aged birth through twenty-one years (or 24 for those who have developmental disabilities or are transitioning youth) who have complex or severe unmet needs in multiple systems, those who are at risk of out-of-home placement, and those who are alleged unruly/adjudicated unruly are eligible for services and supports described in the Service Coordination Mechanism.
* Community Information – All youth/families in Ashtabula County are eligible to receive Community Information from ACFCFC.
* Case Consultation – Youth/families with multi-systemic needs who do not currently have services and/or supports in place are eligible for Case Consultation.
* Cross-System Team – Youth/families engaged with multiple supports and service providers whose needs remain unmet, are at low to moderate risk of removal from their home, and may occasionally experience a crisis due to the needs of the youth are eligible for Cross-System Team Service Coordination.
* Comprehensive Family Support Team – Youth/families who are engaged with multiple supports/service providers whose needs remain unmet, are at high risk of being removed from the home, experience frequent crises due to the needs of the youth are eligible for Comprehensive Family Support Team Service Coordination. Youth/families who are active participants in Cross-System Team Service Coordination yet have ongoing unmet or escalating needs are eligible to step up to Comprehensive Family Support Team Service Coordination. Youth alleged to be unruly, adjudicated unruly or delinquent, regardless of involvement with juvenile court, who have needs across multiple systems are eligible for Comprehensive Family Support Team Service Coordination to prevent deeper involvement in the system.
* Early Intervention – Infants and toddlers birth through three years of age who are found to have a developmental delay are eligible for Early Intervention. All families who receive services under Ohio’s Part C Early Intervention program and who are also being served under the county SCM are assured that services received under Early Intervention Service Coordination are consistent with the laws and rules of Early Intervention requirements per federal regulations and DODD policies and procedures. If a child is receiving Service Coordination through ACFCFC and a referral is made to Early Intervention or vice versa, upon the determination of eligibility, the lead provider of Service Coordination shall be the Early Intervention Developmental Specialist/Service Coordinator to ensure compliance with ORC 5123.02. The ACFCFC Team Facilitator and support team will assist with the child/family’s Individual Family Service Plan as needed. If a child enrolled in Early Intervention is in need of supports across multiple systems, the county ACFCFC Team Facilitator and support team are available to assist as needed.
* Intake/Referral Protocols

A referral to ACFCFC Service Coordination may be made by any agency, organization, parent, guardian, or school. The referral process is the same for Case Consultation, Cross-System Team Service Coordination, and Comprehensive Family Support Team Service Coordination. The referring party may obtain a Release of Information and Referral Form by: contacting the ACFCFC office at (440)998-8178, visiting the ACFCFC website [www.ashtabulacountyfcfc.org](http://www.ashtabulacountyfcfc.org), or contacting any ACFCFC Service Coordination Team representative. These forms include demographic information, and other pertinent information such as date/receipt of referral, contact information for the family, a brief description of the presenting problem(s), systems/agencies involved, identified needs, identification of Medicaid Managed Care Plan (if applicable), contact information for the referral source, and outcome of the referral. All state required intake data points will be collected for youth served under the Service Coordination Mechanism. All ACFCFC community partner agencies and organizations should submit completed Release of Information and Referral Forms to their ACFCFC Service Coordination Team representative for review. After reviewing for completeness and appropriateness of referral, the Service Coordination Team representative will submit the Release of Information and Referral Form to the ACFCFC office. Self-referring parents and guardians may call the ACFCFC office for assistance with the completion of the Release of Information and Referral Form or send their completed forms directly to the ACFCFC office. Decisions regarding which level of service will best meet the needs of a youth/family will be an internal decision made by ACFCFC staff and/or contracted service provider(s). These decisions will be informed by information contained in the referral packet, family interviews, and the Ohio CANS assessment tool, and noted on their referral form and/or IFSCP.

Referrals to Early Intervention made be made by calling Ashtabula County’s Part C Early Intervention provider for information or by contacting the centralized, statewide Central Coordination at 1-800-755-4769 or www.ohioearlyintervention.org/referral. Historically, common referral sources include parents/guardians, hospitals, physician offices, staff from social service agencies, etc.

* Timelines

Once a referral has been received by the ACFCFC office, ACFCFC staff will within two working days review the referral to confirm eligibility and follow up with the referral source if information is missing and/or referral is not appropriate. If the referral is found to be complete and appropriate, ACFCFC staff will within two working days call the referred family to confirm the accuracy of information in the referral form, confirm the family’s willingness to participate, and discuss the assignment of a Team Facilitator. If two attempts (within one working week) to reach the family are unsuccessful, ACFCFC staff will notify the referral source. If a third attempt to reach the family is unsuccessful the family will be informed via a letter sent via USPS that they have seven days to contact the ACFCFC office or the referral will be closed. Following conversation with the referred family, ACFCFC staff will process the referral, assign the Team Facilitator that was discussed with/approved by the family, hand the file off to the assigned Team Facilitator, and notify the referral source of the Team Facilitator assignment within two working days. The assigned Team Facilitator will make contact with the family within two working days of case assignment to explain the Service Coordination process and schedule a time to meet face to face with the family to complete appropriate paperwork, discuss who will serve on the family’s team, explore initial meeting date timelines, etc. This initial face to face contact will take place at a time and location that is convenient and comfortable for the family.

Ohio Part C Early Intervention referrals are made to and processed by a centralized, statewide referral system in accordance to state rules governed by the Ohio Department of Health in partnership with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities.

* 1. Meeting Notification for Support Teams

The Team Facilitator will provide a week’s advance notice for all regularly scheduled and rescheduled meetings as well as issue invitations to all members the youth/family request to participate in their team. This may include representatives from all appropriate agencies, including a representative from the child’s school district as well as support persons both formal and informal. The Team Facilitator will schedule emergency team meetings as required, giving as much advance notice as possible. All meetings will take place at a time and location convenient to the family. At the initial meeting, discussion is held regarding the best method of communication for notifying team members of approaching, cancelled, rescheduled, and emergency meetings. Team members will receive written notice of all meetings via posted letter or email per their preference.

* 1. Family Initiated Meeting and Advocate/Support Persons

At any time, youth/families may request a team meeting to develop or review their Individualized Family Service Coordination Plan (IFSCP) by contacting their Team Facilitator. The Team Facilitator will then take necessary steps to arrange the meeting. At the initial meeting, the youth/family are informed by the Team Facilitator that they may invite a family advocate, mentor or support person of the family’s choice to any/all meetings. The Team Facilitator is responsible for letting all youth/families know that formal parent advocates are available through Ohio’s Parent Advocacy Connection.

* 1. Scheduling Team Meetings for Placement Decisions

For families involved in ACFCFC Service Coordination, non-emergency placement decisions are only made as a result of a Comprehensive Family Support Team meeting if after all options have been explored the team believes out of home placement best addresses the needs of the youth. When an emergency placement of a youth engaged in ACFCFC Service Coordination occurs, a Comprehensive Family Support Team meeting shall take place within 10 days of the placement to address immediate needs and begin transition planning for the youth’s return to the community. These meetings help ensure that the most appropriate services are provided in the least restrictive environment.

* 1. Monitoring Progress and Tracking Outcomes

The monitoring and tracking progress of each IFSCP takes place at multiple levels:

* An IFSCP will be created by each Support Team and will include SMART

(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely) goals and action steps that the team will review/monitor at each team meeting. At each meeting, the team will rate progress and this rating will be entered into an electronic health record and tracked over time.

* The Ohio CANS assessment tool will serve as another monitoring tool. The Team Facilitator will work with the family to complete the initial CANS score, which will serve as the baseline, within the first 30 days of the case being opened. Thereafter, the CANS will be repeated every 90 days with team input.
* Additional data that is tracked and monitored in a locally housed excel database for the purposes of annually evaluating and prioritizing services, filling service gaps and inventing new approaches to achieve better results for families and children include, but are not limited to:
  + Demographic information (age, gender, race, school district)
  + Reason for referral
  + Systems involved
  + Numbers served
  + Staffing levels and case load size
  + Type of service(s) provided and length of stay
  + Number of youth in placement
  1. Confidentiality

Each family signs a Release of Information (ROI) at the outset of the ACFCFC referral process. Per 42CFR, if the youth has ever participated in Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment, the youth is also required to sign the ROI. The ROI document contains a statement that an electronic health record will be created for each youth that is referred to ACFCFC, and that this electronic health record is HIPAA compliant. This document also contains a list of formal as well as informal supports and service providers, unique to each youth/family, which may be contacted for the express purpose of creating a cross system service plan/support team. An updated ROI is obtained minimally every 180 days in addition to anytime new providers/potential providers need to be added. The ROI may be revoked at any time upon written request of the parent/guardian.

A Confidentiality Agreement is signed by all parties at the beginning of each Team Meeting, serving a dual role as the meeting sign in/attendance.

All hard copy documents containing confidential information are stored in a locked file/storage room in an employee only area of a secure building.

* 1. Strengths, Needs, and Cultural Discovery Process

The combination of information garnered from the Ohio CANS (Child & Adolescent Needs & Strengths) and the strengths, needs and cultural discovery process completed with the youth/family at the outset of Service Coordination culminates into a comprehensive picture of the youth and family needs, strengths and culture and informs service planning efforts. For youth/families engaged in a Comprehensive Family Support Team, the strengths, needs and cultural discovery (SNCD) process is both an event and ongoing process that begins when the Team Facilitator first meets with the family. Additional information may be obtained from team members. Based on information gathered from the family and other team members a short narrative that is pre-approved by the family is created. The narrative is then presented to the team at the first meeting and is used to formulate the family IFSCP. The SNCD helps the team understand the culture of the family so they know the family’s values & priorities and the eventual plans looks like and feels like the family.

Life domains evaluated by the Ohio CANS include:

* Life Functioning/Independent Living
* Child Strengths
* Behavioral/ Emotional Needs
* School
* Child Risk Behaviors
* Developmental Needs
* Trauma
* Juvenile Justice Needs
* Substance Abuse Needs
* Vocational/Employment Needs
  1. Procedure to Develop Individualized Family Service Coordination Plans

Utilizing information gathered from the Ohio CANS and the SNCD process, the Support Team works with the youth/family to develop an IFSCP that is respectful of the family’s culture and utilizes the least restrictive environment, using a plan template based on the data tracking requirements of the Ohio Family & Children First Council. If multiple mandates inescapably require multiple plans, such plans should be coordinated to eliminate duplication and conflicting expectations of the family. The IFSCP is a living document and can be edited as needed. Progress is regularly tracked at each meeting and documented in the electronic health record.

* 1. Dispute Resolution Process

There are times when one or more members of an ACFCFC Service Coordination Support Team may question decisions or the process of decision-making. For this purpose, the ACFCFC has established a formal process to ensure the rights of families involved with ACFCFC programming. Families are encouraged to ask questions and become knowledgeable of available services/supports, what their child may need, and what rights and responsibilities are theirs as parents. Parents/guardians and young adults (18-21) will be fully informed about the local dispute resolution process and their right to access it. Dispute resolution does not replace other rights or procedures that parents or custodians may have under other sections of the Ohio Revised Code. The local Dispute Resolution Process also must not be interpreted as overriding or effecting decisions of a juvenile court regarding out-of-home placements.

Conflicts may arise in three distinct areas:

The family is in disagreement with an agency

The family is in disagreement with the IFSCP

An agency is in disagreement with another agency or with the IFSCP

The process for handling each of the above situations is dependent on the premise that individuals will, in all instances, seek clarification and resolution at the team or individual level prior to initiating the formal resolution process. The family may request the assistance of a parent advocate to attend their team meeting if they are unsure of how to handle a particular situation. Advocates are available to a family any time during their involvement with Service Coordination.

Disagreement with an agency

If the family is in disagreement with an agency, the family should contact the individual professional involved with that agency to facilitate resolution. If that is unsuccessful, the family shall follow the dispute resolution process if that particular agency.

Disagreement with the IFSCP

If the family is in disagreement with the IFSCP, they are strongly encouraged to attempt to handle the issues directly with their Team Facilitator. It is important to note that both the family and team members are required to sign the IFSCP when developed. It is expected that participants in a service planning process will, in all instances, seek clarification and resolution of issues at the point of planning. By signing the IFSCP, the family and team members are stating that they are in agreement with the plan and enter into a quasi-contractual agreement to comply with the goals and procedures. If the dispute occurs before the plan is signed, no one is required to sign or implement the plan. If the dispute occurs after the signing of the IFSCP, the plan shall be followed until the dispute is resolved.

For a dispute occurring after the signing of the IFSCP, the first informal step should be for the family to contact their Team Facilitator. If the dispute cannot be resolved within the constraints of the team, the ACFCFC Coordinator may be asked by any team member to join the team as a mediator for conflict resolution.

If informal conflict resolution cannot be found at the Family Team level, the family may file a formal dispute by submitting a complaint in writing to the ACFCFC Coordinator. The written complaint should include as much detail as possible, including an outline of specific concerns, parties involved, and action requested. In response to the written complaint, the ACFCFC Coordinator shall convene a special meeting of the Service Coordination Team for review and resolution of the complaint within seven (7) calendar days. Youth/families may attend this meeting with a representative of their choosing to present their concern. The ACFCFC Coordinator will provide committee members with copies of the written complaint and summary of any steps previously taken to resolve the matter in advance of the meeting. After presentation and discussion of the complaint, the Service Coordination Team will develop recommendations, the results of which will be issued in writing within seven (7) calendar days. It should be noted that no persons involved earlier in the process shall be able to vote, having already had a voice in the matter. It should further be noted that each organization represented on the Service Coordination Team has only one vote.

A family who is not satisfied with the recommendations offered by the Service Coordination Team has seven (7) calendar days to request advancement to the next level of dispute resolution.

For conflicts not being resolved at the Service Coordination Team level, the process will proceed to a special ad hoc committee consisting of ACFCFC members appointed by the Council Chair. ACFCFC members may not be appointed to the ad hoc committee if they or the organization they represent have any conflict of interest. This special ad hoc committee shall be appointed and convene within seven (7) calendar days. Members of this committee will be provided a copy of the written grievance and summary of steps previously taken to resolve the matter in advance of the meeting. Members of this committee shall have fact-finding functions and may require any additional information or ask any participants for further details regarding the conflict. The meeting will include a review of aforementioned information, as well as discussion with the complainant. After the presentation and discussion, the committee will develop recommendations and/or responses and issue its results in writing within seven (7) calendar days. It should be noted that no persons having participated earlier in the process shall be able to vote having already had a voice in the matter.

This is the final stage for any family initiated disputes; this ad hoc committee of ACFCFC members serves as the final decision maker for family initiated disputes.

Resolution for any family initiated disputes will be expedited to the extent possible but shall take no longer than 60 calendar days.

Disagreements between agencies

If there is a disagreement between agencies as to the appropriate course of action, need, or agency responsibility, the Team Facilitator shall convene a meeting of the involved agency representatives in order to clarify and resolve the issues within seven (7) working days of the disagreement being made known. If the issue remains unresolved, the Team Facilitator shall refer the dispute to the ACFCFC Coordinator who will contact the respective agency supervisors within seven (7) working days of the agency representative meeting. Should the involved supervisors be unable to resolve the issue, the dispute shall be referred to the ACFCFC Chair and Administrative Agent for review with the respective agency directors within seven (7) working days at which time they will negotiate a resolution. If resolution of an agency to agency dispute cannot be found through the previous steps of the Dispute Resolution Process the final arbitrator will be the Juvenile Court Judge. The request for a court hearing must be filed within seven (7) days after the failed dispute resolution. The ACFCFC Coordinator will assist in preparing all pertinent information for the court and may seek assistance from the County Prosecutor. The court shall hold the hearing as soon as possible, but not later than ninety (90) days after the motion or complaint is filed. At least five (5) days before the date on which the court hearing is to be held, the court shall send each party subject to the determination written notice by first class mail of the date, time, place and purpose of the court hearing. The decision of the court is final and binding.

The dispute resolution process shall be modified in emergency situations. Emergency is defined as a situation that requires an immediate response due to the safety and well-being of the child. In this instance, the ACFCFC Coordinator shall consult with the Council Chair and the Administrative Agent and based on their responses, will provide written recommendations within three (3) days. Once the immediate emergency is handled, any continuing conflict will follow the outlined Dispute Resolution Process.

Families served by Ohio Part C Early Intervention may utilize the ACFCFC Dispute Resolution process. If this option is selected by the family, ACFCFC Coordinator shall provide DODD, the lead agency responsible for Ohio’s Part C program, a copy of the complaint within 5 days of its filing and provide documentation of complaint findings/recommendations within 5 days of issuance. Families enrolled in Ohio Part C Early Intervention may forego the ACFCFC process and directly file a complaint with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities to access their established dispute resolution process and/or request formal mediation or a due process hearing.

1. **Operating Procedures Required by ORC 121.37 (D, 1-6)**
   1. Process and Components of Individualized Family Service Coordination Plans and Designating Service Responsibilities

The Team Facilitator will help the youth/family in determining the composition of the Support Team. The purpose of the Support Team is to assist the youth and family in identifying strengths and prioritizing needs as part of the development of the Individual Family Service Coordination Plan (IFSCP) while bearing in mind and being sensitive to the culture of the youth/family. The designation of service responsibilities is discussed by the Support Team and included in the IFSCP. Following its creation, the IFSCP is stored in an electronic health record system.

Components of the IFSCP include:

* Identification of youth/family
* List of Team Members & Team Strengths
* Family Mission and Vision
* Team Mission and Goals
* Identified youth and family strengths and needs
* Crisis Plan
* Designation of service responsibilities (i.e. agency and/or person responsible for setting up, delivering and reporting progress of services delivered)
* Timelines for services and supports to be delivered
* Designation of financial responsibilities
* Date of next team meeting
* Needs Outcomes and Strategies, Timelines, Assignments & Progress Reporting
* Level of Family Engagement
* Identification of Community Resources Accessed & any Service Gaps
* Reason for Case Closure
  1. Selecting a Team Leader/Facilitator

Upon acceptance into ACFCFC Service Coordination, a family will be assigned a Team Facilitator who is responsible for organizing the process (i.e. scheduling meetings, inviting team members, facilitating meetings, monitoring progress of the IFSCP and Crisis Plan, etc.). As much as possible, the culture and needs of the youth/family will be taken into consideration when selecting a Team Facilitator. The Team Facilitator must be approved by the youth/family.

* 1. Culturally Appropriate Services in Least Restrictive Environments

All services and supports shall be selected and provided in a least restrictive environment leading to a path of success and in consideration of the child and family needs, strengths and culture. Family voice and choice is paramount in service planning and selecting service providers. As much as possible, early intervention and the use of evidence based/informed supports and services are strongly encouraged.

* 1. Diversion of Allegedly and Adjudicated Unruly and Delinquent Youth

The juvenile court may refer any child alleged to be unruly, adjudicated to be unruly or delinquent to ACFCFC for Service Coordination. Juvenile courts operate under statue on the premise of rehabilitation. Ashtabula County Juvenile Court is a Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative court and as such has established diversion programming for alleged or adjudicated unruly or delinquent youth. These youths may be referred to ACFCFC for Service Coordination in conjunction with their diversion programming.

* 1. Establishing Timelines for Completing Team Goals

Timelines and expectations for goal completion will established by the Support Team, incorporated into the IFSCP, and monitored at each team meeting.

* 1. Crisis and Safety Planning

Recognizing that families experience crises, the Support Team will develop a written Crisis Response Plan, detailing strategies for the prevention of a crisis and responses to a known crisis by those supporting the youth and family and based on family need and preference. A crisis is defined as perceived by the family and is not a threshold of threat based on community safety standards. Safety concerns or the need for safety programming will be addressed as needed on an individual basis. Individualized family crisis plans will position the Support Team to be prepared to respond appropriately and immediately in the event that a crisis occurs. It allows the team to plan its response during a time when everyone is positive and calm, helping to ensure that members will not overreact if the need arises to implement the crisis plan. Recognizing that family crises do occur, such an event will not be viewed as a failure by team members.

1. **Fiscal Strategies**

ACFCFC aligns multiple funding streams in order to maximize resources and create the most effective and efficient cross-system teams possible for youth/families who have multi-systemic needs in our county.

Funding sources used to provide services through ACFCFC include:

* FCSS – Family Centered Services and Supports – funds Service Coordination as well as allowable services and items needed to progress towards goals in the IFSCP. These funds are received through the Ohio Family & Children First Council.
* Laura Miller Trust Fund – pays for services and items for those with medical and/or adaptive needs. These funds are received from a private trust fund.
* BHJJ – Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice - funds Service Coordination for youth who are alleged unruly, adjudicated unruly or delinquent. BHJJ funds are provided by the Mental Health & Recovery Services Board directly to a Service Coordination provider.
* Competitive Reclaim – funds Service Coordination for youth who are alleged unruly, adjudicated unruly or delinquent. Competitive Reclaim funds are provided by the Mental Health & Recovery Services Board directly to a Service Coordination provider.
* Strong Families Safe Communities – funds Service Coordination for youth who have both a developmental disability and a mental health diagnosis. Safe Families Strong Community funds are provided by the Mental Health & Recovery Services Board directly to a Service Coordination provider.
* Ohio Part C Early Intervention Service Coordination Funding – pays for Early Intervention Developmental Specialists and Service Coordination. These funds are received from DODD.

Funding packages are often developed with a variety of funders as often times, no one funder has the resources to meet the entire cost of service intervention. When more than one funder is responsible for the cost of a service or intervention, the list of responsible funders is included on the family’s IFSCP and agreed upon by the various funders prior to the implementation of the plan.

For all expenses apart from Service Coordination, a Funding Request Form is completed by the Team Facilitator on behalf of the Support Team and submitted to the ACFCFC office to be reviewed and approved by the Service Coordination Team.

1. **Quality Assurance of Mechanism**

A large variety of modalities are implemented in assuring the quality of the SCM.

* Tracking data points entered into both an electronic health record as well as an excel database as discussed previously in the SCM enables ACFCFC staff to learn where service gaps exist, what services are working, where cross system coordination works well and where it needs improvement.
* ACFCFC staff meets with Service Coordination provider(s) and their supervisor(s) on a quarterly basis to monitor the validity and reliability with which Service Coordination is being provided.
* At monthly Service Coordination Team meetings, members review the progress of the children and families, ensure that Service Coordination is being provided with a high degree of validity and reliability and discuss any barriers that may arise with the SCM. The team also reviews quarterly other quality assurance data such as referral source data, service delivery timeline data, types of services delivered, the length of time a case is open, the ages of those being served, school district and child/abuse/neglect/dependency cases, number of juvenile delinquency/unruly incidents, and any other data that becomes pertinent.
* On a quarterly basis, the Program Committee reviews Service Coordination and Early Intervention reports, providing fiscal and quality oversight of the SCM. Following the Program Committee meeting, the committee chair reports back to Council.
* The Advisory Committee convenes on a quarterly basis and advises Council on gaps in service at the community/macro level as well as barriers to service.
* It is the responsibility of Council to consider the reports and information brought before them by the Advisory Committee, Program Committee, and Service Coordination Team on an on-going basis and to make recommendations and/or take appropriate actions to address the needs of the youth/families in the community.
* Annually, the SCM is reviewed by ACFCFC staff and Council.

The meta-analysis of this information informs decisions on how to improve Ashtabula County’s system of care to better serve families.

1. **Attachments**
   1. ACFCFC Release of Information
   2. ACFCFC Referral Form