

Colbert County
Children's Policy Council
Needs Assessment
2005

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Part I Assessment and Planning

HEALTH

Issue 1: Childhood Obesity

Description (*See Appendix A*): Nutrition & Eating Disorder/Physical Activity/Exercise

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Educate on health risk of obesity.
2. Promote increased activity in schools and at home.
3. Nutritional Counseling – promote classes for the public and require schools to add to the curriculum.
4. Parental involvement – stress the benefits of increased exercise/activity with a balanced diet.

Issue 2: Teen Smoking

Description (*See Appendix A*): Substance Abuse Prevention

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Educate on hazards of smoking.
2. Introduce smoking cessation plan.
3. Encourage parental involvement and support.

Issue 3: Low Birth Weight Rate for Teens

Description (*See Appendix A*): Teen Pregnancy

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Provide education on pregnancy prevention/dangers for teen pregnancies.
2. Refer to appropriate agencies to ensure prenatal care.
3. Encourage parental involvement.

SAFETY

Issue 1: Juvenile Substance Abuse

Description (*See Appendix A*): Prevention & Education Programs

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Implement science-based substance abuse programs for classrooms and after school programs.
2. Bring in speakers to talk with students and parents at our Colbert County Youth Center.
3. Implement a Train-the-Trainer Program for local experienced leaders to present seminars as needed.

Issue 2: Delinquency Prevention

Description (*See Appendix A*): Prevent first offenders from becoming repeat offenders.

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Appoint a committee to design a program.
2. Secure the speakers and resources.
3. Secure funding.

Issue 3: Domestic Violence/Ungovernable Behavior

Description (*See Appendix A*): Juveniles physically abusing parents

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Provide training for anger management/conflict resolution to parents.
2. Utilize Governor's Safe & Drug Free Schools & Communities program resources to teach students anger management, conflict resolution strategies.
3. Continue to find Violence Prevention Programs.

EDUCATION

Issue 1: Last Chance/Day Treatment Center for at-risk youth

Description (*See Appendix A*): Early Intervention / Education

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Secure funding from various sources.
2. Develop an Advisory Board to oversee Center.
3. Collaborate with other agencies to bring in programs.

Issue 2: Delinquency Prevention/Parent Involvement Skills

Description (*See Appendix A*): Mandatory Parent Education Program for at-risk youth.

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Develop curriculum for mandatory parent education program.
2. Secure funding.
3. Develop Advisory Board to oversee program.

Issue 3: Attendance Enhancement Program for students/parents.

Description (*See Appendix A*): Mandatory student/parent program to help increase school attendance.

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Develop programs for students to help increase their attendance.
2. Develop programs for parents to help increase student attendance.
3. Work with Juvenile Court System and District Attorney.

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Issue 1: Funding for Quality Childcare

Description (See Appendix A): Access to childcare, funding, quality childcare, and school readiness.

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Support current state funded Pre-K programs, Head Start and Even Start and other quality pre-school programs letters of support, talking to state senators and representatives on their importance.
2. Promote N.A.E.Y.C. accreditation for pre-schools in the area by offering mentors to help with process.
3. Develop a means to improve communication between childcare and public schools to improve transition and school readiness.

Issue 2: Family Support

Description (See Appendix A): Family Resource Centers and Parenting Skills.

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Continue support and utilization of Resource Center.
2. Continue and expand distribution of packets to new parents at Colbert County Hospitals informing them of available services in the area.
3. Continue improvement of developmental screening and referral with area Pediatricians by supporting the PEDS screening tool.

Issue 3: Early Intervention (0-5 years)

Description (See Appendix A): Intervention with children 0-5 years.

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Educate parents as to the developmental stages of children.
2. Work with area Pediatricians with identifying children with developmental needs.
3. Public Awareness of services available to families of children with special needs.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND SKILLS

Issue 1: Coordinated Intervention for parent/child, when child is identified at risk for developmental or educational failure.

Description (See Appendix A): Delinquency Prevention/Education Enrichments

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Expand existing Parent Project to serve all members of families with at-risk children.
2. Increase community awareness and support of Parent Project.
3. Formalize protocol for referrals to Parent Project from Court System, Education System and Providers.

Issue 2: Therapeutic Day Treatment for youth with Parent Education.

Description (See Appendix A): Family Support Programs, Parent Involvement Skills, Delinquency Prevention, and Education Enrichments.

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Identify an appropriate service provider.
2. Collaboratively plan with community participants.
3. Write policy and protocol to assure needs will be met.

Issue 3: Family Resource Center with education, prevention, and skill building programs.

Description (See Appendix A): Parent Involvement Skills, Delinquency Prevention, and Education Enrichments.

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Expand our Youth Center into a full-service Family Resource Center.
2. Collaborate with faith-based community for funding and support.
3. Initiate child/parent involvement programs and activities.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Issue 1: Family Resource Center

Description (*See Appendix A*): Community Collaboration Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Bring together the identified resource partners to build the Resource Center.
2. Continue collaboration with Colbert Youth Center.
3. Secure funding.

Issue 2: Families need reliable transportation.

Description (*See Appendix A*): Transportation

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Agencies should clearly identify the transportation needs of their client base.
2. Collaborate with existing provider NACOLG to enhance that program.
3. Secure funding.

Issue 3: Job Training Programs

Description (*See Appendix A*): Job Training for Adults & Youth

Policy Council Action Step (s):

1. Encourage youth & parents to participate in State employment training.
2. Increase public awareness of existing resources.
3. Continue and expand job training programs.

Part II Policy Recommendations

1. Increase tobacco funding for teen smoking/drug abuse prevention.
2. Funding for abstinence program.
3. First time offender program funding with state protocol.
4. Anger Management programs mandated through school extra-curricular.
5. State mandate and funding for Last Chance/Day Treatment Center.
6. State mandate for Parent Education and training with at-risk youth.
7. Fund our Resource Center. Reliable funding will insure consistent delivery of services.
8. Transportation is a multi-jurisdictional issue. State support is required through legislation and revenue.
9. Fund quality child-care for low-income/single parents.
10. Fund community resource/referral centers.
11. Mandate education on health risks, life long responsibilities, and legal teen sexual activity.

List policy changes that would help address children's needs in the county. This could include specific policy changes for state agencies or specific changes to legislation that would (1) improve the way services are provided, (2) eliminate road blocks or red tape that hinder quality services, or (3) provide for local flexibility to state programs. These recommendations will be shared with the Alabama Children Policy Council and the appropriate state agencies but will not be statistically analyzed.

Part III Priority Recommendations

2005 Desired Outcomes

Priority Number 1: Family Resource Center

Description: Community Collaboration (See Appendix A)

Explanation: Colbert County needs funding for an adequate Family Resource Center. The Colbert County Youth Center is a local effort to serve families and is operating on limited funds through peanut sales, outdoor movies, etc. We need funds for an office manager, grant writer, utilities, and to expand services. All needs identified in this Colbert needs assessment can be met by a Family Resource Center. All programs and services identified can be administered from this Center.

Priority Number 2: Helping Juveniles who are at-risk

Description: Drug Abuse, Domestic Violence, Delinquency (See Appendix A)

Explanation: Colbert County needs to put programs into place that will educate juveniles on the dangers and risks of drug abuse. We also need to have programs into place on anger management. Juveniles who are at risk need positive role models in their life also. We could have mentoring programs at the Youth Center. We need to secure funding to put the programs into place.

Priority Number 3: Early Intervention with children 0-5 years

Description: Intervention with children 0-5 years. (See Appendix A)

Explanation: Colbert County needs to educate parents as to the developmental Stages of children 0-5 years of age. Parenting classes need to be offered at our Family Resource Center. We need to work with local hospitals and pediatricians educating parents on the services and programs that are available to them. We need to increase public awareness of services available for children with special needs. We need to have open communication with area pediatricians.

Part IV Evaluation

Appendix A

