

## PHILOSOPHY

Families Come First aims to empower families to better meet their needs and the needs of their children. Families Come First works with families and children who are often experiencing difficulties within their homes, schools, and communities.

We bring together families, their support networks and the community systems in which they are involved to work together as a team. By doing this we help families to have:

- *ACCESS* to services
- A *VOICE* in how to solve the problems
- The ability to take *OWNERSHIP* of their needs.

We believe that sharing our resources, expertise, energy, and hope will result in more Sauk County families remaining intact while becoming safer, more nurturing and more connected to our community.

## PARENT REACTIONS

*“There wasn’t a thing I can name that I didn’t like. Everyone was very supportive of our family.”*

*“We met as a team and made decisions as a team. Team members were supportive and gave new ideas to family members to try. No matter how difficult the situation was, we hung in there and kept trying.”*

## COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The Families Come First *Coordinating Committee* provides oversight and direction to the program. Members act as liaisons and ensure involvement on FCF teams by the systems and services they represent.

The *Coordinating Committee* has representatives from human service agencies, local school districts, law enforcement, clergy, other community service providers and parents themselves.

For more information or to make a referral to Families Come First, please contact:

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Please visit our website for forms and other information:

[www.co.sauk.wi.us/dept/hs/FCF/index.html](http://www.co.sauk.wi.us/dept/hs/FCF/index.html)

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### MISSION

*“The Sauk County Families Come First Initiative strives to **keep children in their homes** through the establishment of a comprehensive, coordinated, community-based interagency system of care, centered on the child and family.”*

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- Sauk County Residents.
- Families with a child age 0-17.
- Families with multiple needs or services involved (special education, child welfare, juvenile justice, medical, mental health, chemical dependency, and others).
- Families who can identify goals for change.
- Families who need a team approach to help meet their needs.
- Families who are willing and able to participate in a team process.

## TEAM MEMBERS

Team members include the parent(s), the child, the FCF Service Coordinator, and individuals who are important and influential in family members' lives.

Examples of natural supports include neighbors, caregivers, religious leaders, relatives, and friends.

Additional professional supports may include social workers, mental health or chemical dependency treatment providers, law enforcement, school personnel, family advocates, and others. Meetings are scheduled around the family's schedule in a way that the majority of team members are able to attend.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

- When a referral is made, FCF staff set up an **Introductory Meeting** with the family to explain the process and gather information. Together, the family and FCF staff make a decision about starting an FCF team. The family will be directed to other services if needed.
- During the **Assessment** stage, the Service Coordinator and the family work together to identify specific strengths and needs. The *Assessment Summary* includes family information about 12 life domains. The team also clarifies the challenges facing the family.
- In the **Planning** stage, the team brainstorms about how the family's needs may be addressed. The team develops a *Plan of Care*, which includes long- and short-term goals, tasks, and timelines based on the family's needs. Team members take responsibility for completing tasks. All team members commit to supporting the Plan of Care.
- Throughout the **Monitoring** stage, the team meets to follow up on the progress of the *Plan*. The team reviews and updates the *Plan* regularly to reflect the family's changing strengths and needs.
- To prepare for potential crisis situations, teams develop *Safety Plans* to help ensure the safety of the youth, family, and community.

## SERVICE PRINCIPLES

1. Family and team member involvement is voluntary.
2. Services are child and family-centered, strength-based and oriented to the least restrictive options.
3. Decisions are reached by team agreement whenever possible. All members have input into the plan and take ownership of the plan.
4. Teams meet regularly, not only during crisis situations.
5. Teams work on a full range of life needs that could affect the child and family.
6. Teams develop crisis and safety plans.
7. Teams focus on reaching attainable goals and regularly measure progress.
8. Teams celebrate success.
9. Care is unconditional; services change if something is not working.
10. Competent, trained Service Coordinators provide services.
11. Teams meetings are places of trust. All discussions stay within the group. Confidentiality is emphasized and respected.