

Community Services Bureau/ **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**
... about Comprehensive Services

What are Comprehensive Services?

Comprehensive Services is a team approach to serving families that is used in Community Services. This approach advocates for families and children to have resources and services available so they can improve their lives. It also includes empowering parents to be their own advocate and to advocate for their children. Comprehensive Services include health, nutrition, mental health, social, disabilities, and early childhood education services.

Everyone has heard the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child." That saying sums up Comprehensive Services pretty well. It takes a whole community to be responsive to the children and families within it so that these children and families can prosper and grow into responsible citizens and someday give back to the community that raised them.

What is the role of a Comprehensive Service?

Community Services realizes that children cannot learn if they are in poor health, do not have enough to eat, or if they do not have a stable home. Parents cannot support their children's learning if they are worried about where they will sleep, how they will pay the utilities, or where they will get food for breakfast. When families enter our program, the Comprehensive Services staff assesses where the family is, where they are coming from, and where they would like to go. A Comprehensive Services staff member is there to help families to identify their strengths and interests and build on them so that each family can achieve its goals.

What is a Family Partnership Agreement?

A Family Partnership Agreement is the process of identifying the strengths and interests and needed resources of each family and assisting them in setting and achieving their goals. It begins upon enrollment with a Parent Interest Survey. Later, when the family feels comfortable with the Comprehensive Services staff, they will sit down together to plan goals and the steps to achieve those goals, and identify appropriate community resources.

Parent Involvement - What's in it for me?

FACS programs require that we have parents involved in nearly every aspect of our programs. We welcome parents to help in the classes, we offer internships for office skills, and we hire parents as Teacher Assistant Trainees. Parents plan activities for parent meetings and we have parents who are elected from each center on a County-Wide Policy Council. Parents can use this work experience on job and college applications. The most important benefit of all is the look of pride on your child's face when he/she sees his/her parents involved in their school. You are the

biggest influence your child will ever have. When you value their educational experiences enough to get involved, your child will learn how important learning is and they will be well along the road to success.

What is the Policy Council?

The Policy Council, an elected group of parents from each center, shares in the planning and decision-making, along with the staff and the Director and the County Board of Supervisors. They must approve all major decisions about the program, including hiring new staff and annual budgets and grant applications. This is a wonderful opportunity for parents to gain leadership skills, experience and knowledge about how businesses operate. Parents can help plan program that meet THEIR needs and the needs of their children.