



Children and Family Connection of Russell County: A Brief Description and Historical Overview

The services and programs provided by Children and Family Connection of Russell County, Inc. (CFC) actively seek to strengthen and empower family members to become self-sufficient and responsible community members. We believe that the family is the ideal setting in which children and parents can experience meaningful growth with regard to incorporating positive values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. At CFC, we believe that a stable and healthy family provides the ideal environment for children to grow and prosper. Also, we fully believe that families, whether thriving or in crisis, can be most readily strengthened if they receive objective encouragement and support. Hence, strengthening families strengthens the community; as well, strengthening the community strengthens families. All quality-driven service components offered by CFC are highly individualized; family-focused, work in partnership with existing community-based resources, and is provided in accordance with value-based goals that respect diversity. To this end, *our mission is to help strengthen, empower, and uplift families. We accomplish these priorities by providing education, survival needs, preservation/prevention-oriented services, need-based services and follow-up. Our goal is to help make Russell County a safe place for families to thrive.*

Because child abuse and neglect exist, there is a need for mentoring, education, and support for at-risk families in Russell County. According to recent health department statistics, more than 300,000 children in Alabama live in a mother-only household; and, additionally, over 200,000 children have a father who is either in prison, on parole, or on probation. Also, a recent statewide study involving 13,000 14-to-21 year olds revealed that only 23% of all dislodged fathers surveyed maintained ongoing contact with their children past the age of seven. Furthermore, according to Kid's Count – a statewide child advocacy/monitoring initiative, in 2005 there were more than 341 at-risk births involving Russell County residents.

Children and Family Connection is a multi-service family center that has served Russell County since 1996. The CFC Executive Director has over 35 years experience administering human service programs. Based on the complexity of each presenting need, every CFC consumer receives a comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment that determines intervention strategies, goals, and the nature of the services to be rendered. The assessment process utilized by CFC is multidisciplinary, holistic, interactive, goal-directed, based on family strengths, and designed to cultivate a realistic sense of self-sufficiency. The goals that are developed with direction and guidance from the family are measurable, achievable and designed to encourage personal investment, accountability, and empowerment. At CFC, goal identification represents a collaborative and ongoing process that involves all family members. Goals and objective are periodically reviewed by both the family and CFC staff to determine continued appropriateness, and suitability, and progress.

At present, CFC provides the following programs and services: family support and preservation, parenting education, education for parenting teens, referral and case management services, on-site and in-home professional counseling, limited clothing distribution, an on-site Food Pantry,
Updated January 2010

Cooperative and Divorcing Parents Program, prevention education (“Baby Think It Over” Program – a school-based, teenage pregnancy prevention initiative), Psychological Evaluations, Healthy Marriage and Relationships Program, budget classes, job readiness/re-entry, and Behavioral Aides (to assist families experiencing acute crisis and instability).

The CFC “How Can We Help” intake assessment form allows families to indicate any unmet basic need (s) they may have. All CFC consumers expressing a basic need(s) have immediate access to our on-site food pantry, clothing bank, and resource directory. There is no cost to the consumer for any service provided by CFC. At CFC, we have developed an extensive and user-friendly referral network to assist our families. For example, through our collaborative relationship with the Phenix City Housing Authority, we are able to provide immediate assistance to families in crisis with regard to housing. At CFC, we have developed an extensive emergency referral plan that provides immediate services to families experiencing medical and/or psychiatric crisis. Every CFC staff member is provided with a comprehensive resource directory and has access to the local “211” emergency information network. In our community, transportation represents a basic need; therefore, CFC provides cost-free transportation assistance (bus passes) to families with unmet needs in this area. Furthermore, we have also developed a network of local providers to assist with transportation needs we cannot meet at CFC.

At present, CFC has on-site five master’s level clinicians to provide adult, child and adolescent individual, couples, family, and group counseling. At CFC, our clinicians provide various assessments, crisis intervention, and referral services. CFC counseling services are provided in accordance with established State and Federal guidelines and the national governing body associated with that particular discipline, i.e., National Association of Social Workers and the American Counseling Association. Furthermore, CFC counseling services are made through the establishment of a professional referral network to provide services for those consumers whose needs exceed the counseling services currently offered by CFC.

CFC occupies a spacious facility (3800 square feet) that is centrally located. Our center exudes a warm and welcoming atmosphere that is highly conducive to assisting our consumers and families. Our location is within walking distance of virtually every community within Phenix City, and is easily accessible via public and private transportation with regard to our outlying service areas. Since opening our doors in 1996, CFC has successfully helped more than 2500 families annually in Russell County and surrounding communities.

The push to develop a family resource center in Russell County came long before funding was available. In 1991, a cross-section of concerned community leaders began meeting to explore the possibility of developing a family resource center to assist Russell County residents in need. Today, CFC is incorporated and operates under the guidance and direction of an Executive and an Advisory Board comprised of stakeholders from every segment of the community at-large. At present, the CFC staff is composed of four full-time employees (e.g., Executive Director, a Clinical Coordinator/Staff Counselor/Healthy Marriages Educator, an Administrative/ Financial Assistant, and an Administrative Assistant I; eleven part-time employees (e.g., Programs Supervisor, Family Advocate, Medications Assistance Advocate, In-home Therapist, Special Projects Coordinator, Nurturing Parent Group Facilitators and several Behavioral Aides).