

2020

Annual Report

Fayette County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Mission Statement

To offer programs and coordinate available services so that the people we serve may realize their dreams and actively contribute to their community.

Vision Statement

To empower people to be the best version of themselves.

Values

Teamwork,
Dedication, Respect
and Integrity



Fayette County Board of
Developmental Disabilities



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From the Desk of Superintendent Ms. Debra Buccilla



Welcome to the 2020 Annual Report.

We began last year with excitement and anticipation for the months to come. During our new year planning for 2020, we could not have predicted that in the upcoming month, we would begin a journey like none other. At end of February beginning of March, our entire team began to pivot and re-adjust priorities to begin dealing with the initial stages of the COVID Pandemic.

We quickly had to figure out how to provide services to all we serve, how to interface with our community partners, and how to create systems to support us in these efforts. I am so very proud of how quickly we were able to work together to move thru obstacles to assure continuation of quality service and supports.

During this period, our Technology Team was stellar. They created, coordinated, and implemented systems to support each department, all while assuring that our rapid expansion did not crash! Our staff jumped in by embracing these efforts and doing their part to learn and support these systems which enabled them to carry out their duties. I have been a part of many teams throughout my career and can honestly say that what this team has pulled off has been remarkable.

This annual report highlights the efforts of our Fayette County team, our partners and those we serve. I hope you enjoy the information and take note of just how much we accomplished despite the obstacles.

Thank you for being a part of our 2020 journey.

Deb Buccilla, Superintendent

SSAs use technology to connect with individuals, families and providers

Guidelines for social distancing and the stay at home orders required SSAs to develop new ways of holding team meetings, communicating with individuals, their families and providers and ways of reaching out to community resources for those we serve. To keep everyone as safe as possible, face to face meetings were limited.

Through the use of technology, virtual Individual Service Plan (ISP) and special team meetings were able to be conducted as scheduled. When a face to face meeting was important, SSAs ensured social distancing, use of masks for all parties in the meeting and use of sanitation practices to keep the environment safe. SSAs held regular staff meetings via Microsoft Teams or with social distancing at a local park or shelter when the weather permitted.



Service and Support Administration

The Service and Support Administration (SSA) Department provided eligibility determination and service coordination to around 132 people in 2020. We continued our commitment of ensuring that people receive services which enhances the quality of their lives while promoting person-centered choices. The work was accomplished through services provided including assessment, person-centered planning, referrals, payment authorization, linkage and monitoring.

Over the last year, SSA's continued to coordinate supports for community activities, employment, in-home and day programming services; utilizing funding from the county board, other agencies and community partners. With the pandemic, SSA's ensured that individuals received necessary supports, making adjustments as unforeseen situation came up. Weekly contact was made by the assigned SSA to all individuals and families on their case load. The SSA department worked with providers to ensure that all services were in place, adjusting the required hours to expand the at home care due to day programs and work sites being closed temporarily. In addition, SSAs delivered supplies to those providers and individuals that needed them.

While 2020 was a difficult year, the SSA department stepped up to ensure that quality services continued for individuals served, receiving needed supports and supervision, while adjusting to the challenges of doing business in a new way.

SSA Department expressed thanks to all Direct Support Professionals.

Direct Support Professionals (DSP) have gone above and beyond during the pandemic in providing quality services to those we serve. Due to closure of day programs and work sites, additional service was needed in individual homes. As always, DSPs fulfilled this need. The SSA Department expressed thanks to them with goody bags, special thanks on our social media platforms and frequent check-ins to ensure they had the supplies they needed to keep everyone safe. Thanks to all direct care professionals that stepped up during the difficult time.





Fayette Progressive Preschool

In 2020, our program held half day sessions with around 48 students, teachers, classroom aides, an administrative assistant and a preschool supervisor with oversight from the Education Director. The 2019-2020 school year ended with preschoolers learning through a distance learning program for the last two months of the school year. Several care packages were delivered to homes, educational videos developed by our staff were posted on Facebook, and connections using video technology were made. Care package items included; work sheets, resource lists, craft ideas, t-shirts, coloring books and crayons. Personal letters to students from their teachers were also delivered to make sure these little ones knew they were missed. Preschool graduation was different this year, but staff made it as special as possible distributing graduation signs and gifts to all graduates.

The beginning of the 2020-2021 school year started with many preparations and changes to follow the guidance provided by the Ohio Department of Education regarding safe practices for in person classroom activity. Classes began at half capacity. New procedures were implemented for pick up and drop off times to ensure social distancing and safety for students, staff and families. A special newsletter was sent to families prior to the beginning of the school year outlining the changes. On-going information was sent by the Education Director to keep families informed of the progress of the school year and any changes being made.

Students earn points to toward pizza party



For the 2020-2021 school year, each class implemented a point system and once they reached a certain amount of points (determined by the class), they earned a toy lizard (chameleons, the school mascot) to put in the tank in the lobby area. When there were ten lizards in the tank, they earned a school party. Due to their excellent work, students earned the first party by early October. They were rewarded with a pizza party for the school.



#MaskUpFayCo

Fayette Progressive Preschool joined local schools for an important public service announcement.

During the month of December, Fayette County local schools join forces to spread the importance of wearing a mask. The message included the following:

"Educators and school staff have shown resilience, persistence and passion in adapting to the challenges of a pandemic so that our kids can continue to learn and thrive. Thank an educator by slowing the spread of COVID-19."

Fayette Progressive School was pleased to be included in this important message.



F.A.C.T. Advocacy Group

Fayette Advocacy Change Together (F.A.C.T.) Advocacy Group stayed in touch throughout the year through text, phone calls and short socially distanced visits. This year was challenging to hold regular in person meetings with the group.

Some members were able to participate in the 2020 Developmental Advocacy and Awareness Day at the Ohio State House on March 4. Advocates were able to speak on topics such as living arrangements, work opportunities and transportation to go where they want and need to go.

F.A.C.T. has around 12 members.



Community First

The Community First division is comprised of services including Pre- Employment Transition Services, Special Olympics, FACT Advocacy Group and the Next Chapter Book Club.

New Program for High School Students

The Community First Department of the Fayette County Board of DD began offering a new program to high school students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in 2020. This program, through a partnership with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) offers five different services to assist in preparing youth (age 14 and above) in high school and beyond in learning the skills they will need to make a more successful and seamless transition into adulthood. Services offered include job exploration, work based learning, instruction in self-advocacy, counseling on postsecondary opportunities and workplace readiness training. Referrals for this program are made by local schools. The goal for this program is to grow in upcoming years to provide pre-employment services to all eligible and interested high school students.



Special Olympics

2020 was a challenging year for all athletes participating in Special Olympics. Due to the circumstances, all Special Olympics events, such as the spring and summer games were cancelled. Physical practice and local events were unable to be held. During this time, weekly activity calendars were posted on the Special Olympics Facebook page to encourage athletes to stay moving and active. Activity lists were in association with We Thrive virtual events and covered a variety of different activities in which to participate.

During the month of October, there was an on-line fundraiser to benefit the Fayette County Dragons. A virtual auction was shared on social media sites and was a success. Between donations and bidding, over \$3000 was raised during this event. The Modern Woodmen of America, Washington Court House Chapter matched those funds, with over \$6000 being raised for the Fayette County Special Olympics. A huge thanks to all those that have and continue to support our athletes. We look forward to 2021 and hope to be able to hold events again.

Operations and Transportation

Operations and Transportation staff played an increased role this year due to the COVID-19 safety precautions and cleaning regimen. While most staff worked remotely, the preschool and administration office required enhanced cleaning and safety protocol to remain safely open for business. Operations staff cleaned all areas daily and Transportation staff ensured the school buses were sanitized after each route. This effort made it possible to offer services in a safe environment for students and staff, while providing peace of mind for parents and families whom had students or staff attending. The increased demand for supplies affected the budget, but we were pleased to receive reimbursements of those costs through CARES Act dollars from the Fayette County Commissioners. We were very appreciative of this reimbursement.

Scanning and Shredding Project

In an effort to reduce storage space and to ensure that all required documents were stored securely, a scanning and shredding project was initiated during this past year. The records retention policy was revised and documents were identified by each department and placed in a staging area to begin the process. Documents that did not need to be kept were shredded. Documents which needed to be maintained were backedup onto a computer data storage server. While this is an ongoing project, significant progress was made towards the goal of having all documents well organized and stored properly. Staff working remotely were able to scan and shred from home as well as assisting with this project at the office.

During 2020, Fayette Progressive Preschool parking lot was sealed and relined and the flat roof on the building was replaced. A new cooling tower was replaced in early 2020. New electronic access controls were installed at the administration and school buildings to enhance security at both locations.



Fayette County Board Transportation participated in bus safety drills and all buses passed required safety checks completed by the Ohio State Highway Patrol.

Information Technology (IT) Department assisted with remote working and software enhancements.

With most staff working remotely in 2020, the IT Department ensured that all staff had the equipment and accessibility to produce quality work. A Sharepoint site was added to allow easier access to files and other information while working remotely. Microsoft Teams was introduced to provide a platform for multi attendance meetings. A bridge conference phone line was established and used for meetings when computer access was not possible. Additional server upgrades were made for backup of data and contingency plans.

Throughout the year, the IT department offered trainings for all staff on cybercrime, safety while on the computer and the new software products introduced.



Early Intervention

As with the rest of the world, Early Intervention looked significantly different than it did in previous years. The pandemic created a unique challenge for the Early Intervention professionals in how connection with families occurred and still providing the consistent service that they had grown to expect. The Early Intervention Team turned the challenge into an opportunity for growth. Work transitioned to the virtual realm, from intake paperwork to the actual visits themselves. The team was able to move all work to a remote working platform before the end of the first week away from the office.



EI Staff stayed hard at work connecting with families, completing the crucial EI paperwork to begin services, conducting standardized assessments, and connecting with local school districts to facilitate EI students who were turning three with a smooth transition into preschool. EI Staff stayed connected with community partners to provide information and support as part of our outreach, holding weekly EI team meetings and collaborating with others, including vision, hearing, mental health professionals, and community partners from Help Me Grow, Early Head Start, and parents interested in being a part of the team meetings. A Facebook page was created for the Early Intervention Group that routinely shared resources, upcoming events

(typically of the virtual nature!), developmental information, and bedtime stories from familiar faces. Perhaps most importantly, we were able to maintain all the scheduled visits with families throughout the time of remote working. Families were connecting on Microsoft Teams with their child's Primary Service Providers, who were able to hold visits, offer insight, make suggestions for things to practice, and encourage continued growth just the same as before.

The time frame from birth through three years is so incredibly crucial for a child's development, and our Early Intervention Team did not waste a moment in providing the same level of quality and connection for our families and the children being served. EI was able to serve over 90 children and families during 2020.



2020 Board Members

Larry Mayer, President

Janelle Mead, Vice President

Alice Craig, Secretary

Mark Heiny

Mitchell Kirby

Cody Kirkpatrick

David Sanders

2020 Administrative Staff

Debra Buccilla, Superintendent

Sherry Burns, Executive Administrative Assistant

Lori Moore, Business Director

Larry Gray, Operations Director

Renee Guess, Service and Support Director

Elizabeth Brennfleck, Human Resource Director

Betty Hodges, Community First Director

Suzie Janasov, Early Childhood Director

Renee Achtermann, Education Director

Jan Cobb, Nurse

Jennifer Goodwin, Investigative Agent



Fayette County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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