

# Memorandum of Agreement

## South Carolina Joint Council on Children and Adolescents

*Whereas*, children and adolescents are influenced at the individual, peer, family, school, community, and societal levels, and their health and well-being are dependent on effective systems of care that are family-centered, strength-focused, culturally and linguistically competent, and driven by the needs of those served; and

*Whereas*, protective factors (i.e., positive attributes at the above levels) can increase a child or adolescent's ability to avoid risks or hazards, and to attain the social and emotional competence to thrive in all aspects of life, now and in the future; and

*Whereas*, risk factors, such as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) (i.e., traumatic events that occur during a child or adolescent's life), have been shown by research to be common, interrelated, intergenerational, and preventable, and if not addressed can have negative consequences, including the following:

- increased injuries and deaths to children, adolescents, and young adults due to motor vehicle crashes, violence, and suicide;
- increased morbidity among those with physical disabilities, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, maternal and neonatal conditions, and among those with mental and physical morbidities;
- increased levels of school truancy, failure, and drop-out, as well as delinquency;
- increased costs related to social services, health services, and the juvenile and adult justice systems; and
- decreased levels of productivity; and

*Whereas*, South Carolina state agencies and supporting community-based organizations choose to collaborate in order to ensure South Carolina's future by investing in our children, adolescents, and families today.

*Wherefore*, the undersigned commit themselves to participating in the South Carolina Joint Council on Children and Adolescents and their families through the following:

1. Attending regular meetings and recruiting new members to participate and collaborate on the identified priorities;
2. Continuing to identify and support evidence-based programs, principles, and practices to ensure high-quality service delivery for children, adolescents, and families;
3. Integrating effective principles of practice into agencies' programming, to include – but not limited to – trauma-informed care, cultural and linguistic competence, and family-driven and youth-guided care.

4. Collaborating to ensure an improved workforce through participation in the development and implementation of the online Learning Management System and face-to-face training;
5. Participating on and supporting a Financing Committee that will convene to review existing financial mapping data and determine best strategies for financing effective services for children, adolescents, and families;
6. Continuing to promote the connection of behavioral and primary health care in children's and adolescent services through a review of programs, policies, and systems-level changes that might be applicable to South Carolina;
7. Explore the use of research-based technology to reduce barriers to care and to enhance services to clients and their families such as tele-health, mobile health, and other tools to support the service experience;
8. Promoting the use of prevention services for children and families before more intensive services are needed; and
9. Committing themselves and their staffs to support this effort through the Joint Council on Children and Adolescents by:
  - a. Each agency director taking turns chairing the council;
  - b. Each agency assigning a Deputy Director or senior staff person to sit on the Council's Executive Steering Committee;
  - c. Each agency assigning appropriate staff to the committees of the Council;
  - d. Ensuring children, adolescents, and families are involved in accordance with the principles of family-driven, youth-guided planning and implementation: and
  - e. Encouraging the active involvement of support organizations, such as recovery groups, faith-based programs, and community-based organizations.