

#### FAMILY SUPPORT TEAMS (FST)

Family Support Teams are an outgrowth of the Comprehensive Children's Mental Health legislation and Missouri's involvement in the Federal SOC programs. In order to foster collaboration among state agencies serving children, FST meetings are held in lieu of individual agency planning meetings. A child need not be involved in a local System of Care to have a FST meeting called on their behalf. Agencies that support children are using FSTs to provide planning for all children the serve.

Membership on such local interagency teams usually includes representatives from the Children's Division, the Division of Comprehensive Psychiatric Services, the Juvenile Court, and the Division of DD. Depending on the individual child, other agencies such as the Division of Youth Services, the local school, or other local service providers may be invited to attend.

In the absence of such service coordination, agencies sometimes find themselves presenting conflicting clinical information or recommendations to court judges. Those judges are often then forced into the frustrating position of having to issue court orders about a child's welfare without benefit of consensus from the very agencies that should be providing that consensus.

By bring together state agency representatives (decision-makers) who can work creatively to share limited agency resources and develop a coordinated plan, the FST frequently offers the best and most feasible way to develop an effective child-specific and family-focused service strategy.