



Protecting Children by Strengthening Families



SHAPING THE FUTURE 2010

Franklin County Children Services **REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY**



THE FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES MISSION

Through collaboration with families and their communities, we advocate for the safety, permanency and well-being of each child we serve in a manner that honors family and culture.

Safety, Permanency and Well-Being for Every Child

We Are Child Welfare Professionals

- We constantly pursue excellence.
We recognize the importance of providing effective and timely services.
We value, support and respect each other.
We are proud that we improve the quality of life for families in our community.
We are fiscally responsible.
We aspire to be culturally competent.

We Honor Families

- We respect families' strengths.
We understand families are the experts of their own experience.
We recognize that children are best served within their family and community.
We separate what parents do from who they are.

We Value Every Child

- We respect the individuality of each child we serve.
We advocate for each child's safety, permanency and well-being.
We honor each child's family and culture.

We Value Partnerships

- Families have the right to be a part of the decision-making team.
Casework is the most important function of the agency team.
Families, communities and government share the responsibility to keep children safe.

Dear Community,

The theme of this year's annual report is appropriately called "Shaping the Future."

As social workers and child welfare professionals, we entered this field to make a difference. We desire to positively shape the future for children and families. This means we must be very careful in deciding what service delivery will look like and what outcomes we hope to achieve.

At Franklin County Children Services we are shaping the future for children by strengthening their families. We strongly believe that children should be served as part of a family, and families are part of the community. Our contracts with community-based organizations, our efforts to engage fathers and our emphasis on permanency all support this mission. We are also shaping the future of our children by paying attention to what they have to say through our Youth Advisory Council and by including them as active participants in our planning processes. We are also shaping the future of our children by ensuring that our services are flexible and responsive to their needs.

We are shaping the future for parents by respecting that they are indeed the parents and the experts of their own experiences. We are shaping the future of our parents by encouraging them to help guide their case plans with the help of supportive individuals whom they trust. We are shaping the future of our parents by tailoring our services specifically to their needs. Included in this annual report are examples of services, such as team decision making and intimate partner violence prevention efforts, designed to strengthen our parents.

In closing, I offer my respect and gratitude to our social workers who dedicate their lives to changing and shaping futures for our children and families.

As of the printing of this annual report, my future is also changing. I am retiring from the agency as its executive director. It has been an incredible journey—one rich with learning, growing and appreciating all that this field has to offer. As this agency moves forward, I would encourage those succeeding me to never lose sight of the families we serve and to continue to cultivate relationships with the communities that support and nourish our families.

Although I may be leaving a position in child welfare, child welfare and public service will remain in my heart and in my actions.

Until we meet again,

Eric D. Fenner

[Handwritten signature of Eric D. Fenner]





Permanency Round Tables Shape Brighter Futures

Experiencing lifelong connections to family and friends is a fundamental right for every child, and Franklin County Children Services is on the road to making that a reality. In partnership with Casey Family Programs, the agency's first wave of permanency round tables (PRTs) successfully concluded in late 2010 after carefully reviewing the cases of 110 children in permanent agency custody. Demonstrating that permanency can take many forms—whether it's reunification with a mom or dad, adoption by a devoted foster parent, or a permanent commitment from a grandparent—positive PRT results are emerging.

For 17-year-old TW, the PRTs helped his mom get the help she needed so the two could finally be reunified as a stable, healthy family. AC, a 15-year-old preparing to be adopted by his longtime foster father, is another success story. The PRTs made clear to AC that he could be adopted and still maintain a cherished connection to his birth mother.

TW and AC are just two of many bright futures resulting from the PRT process, which is designed to break down barriers to permanency and stimulate fresh, innovative thinking, according to Tina Rutherford, Franklin County Children Services' assistant director. By establishing a highly individualized permanency plan for each child, the PRTs "ensure stable connections for youth by creating a sense of urgency and momentum to keep the permanency process progressing," Rutherford said.

With the priority of permanence for all children moving to the forefront of Franklin County Children Services' daily practice, the PRTs mark an important paradigm shift at the agency. "We hope to see a reduction in the number of children under permanent custody at our agency, as well as an increased staff awareness of the importance of permanency for each and every child we serve," said Rutherford.



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Team Decision Making

"Nothing about them, without them," was the phrase often quoted by a Franklin County Children Services caseworker who was committed to involving parents in the decisions affecting their families.

These sentiments are also reflected in the agency's team decision-making strategy (TDM) that engages the family and community in making the best possible placement and permanency decisions for children. This is a unique process in child welfare that bases a child's placement on family strengths and community resources while focusing on safety and stability.

The goal of TDM is to keep children safe, stable and close to home by engaging the family as part of the decision-making team. Included in the team are parents, relatives, youth, community resource partners, and the FCCS caseworker and supervisor. The team works together to develop a plan for the family by assessing the situation, identifying family strengths and concerns, and developing ideas to resolve any safety issues. One parent stated after a TDM meeting, "It helped me understand a lot of things and I felt comfortable." A child who attended a TDM meeting had this to say, "We got together and came up with good ideas to keep me safe."

Team decision making has the potential to create good outcomes for children, families and FCCS, including family engagement, permanency planning for children, and fewer children removed from their homes. It also gives families and youth an opportunity to talk about their situation and offer ideas of what they need to be safe and stable.

FCCS will continue to ask families and youth for their thoughts about the TDM process. The goal is to continue receiving positive feedback like these comments from family members: "I think it went well and everyone listened to me," and "I was treated with respect."

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Partnering to Protect Families Affected by Domestic Violence



How can we help you? How can we work together to help you better protect your children?

These questions are at the heart of Franklin County Children Services' groundbreaking new strategy for dealing with domestic violence. An extension of its innovative alternative response approach, the agency's intimate partner violence (IPV) unit is transforming how Central Ohio's child welfare professionals address the often intertwined issues of child abuse and domestic violence. "It's a complete shift in thinking and practice," said Lisa Distelzweig, the unit's supervisor. Central to this approach is the notion that keeping children with their non-battering parent, whenever possible, is always preferable. Instead of blaming, judging or pressuring, the new strategy also validates and supports whatever measures survivors have taken to keep their kids safe. "It's about identifying each and every effort," Distelzweig said. "It's going with what they have and where they are."

This collaborative approach helps foster a better partnership between victims and Children Services by focusing on their individual strengths and circumstances. Developing a more detailed safety plan is another of the IPV unit's specialties. Caseworkers are listening closely to each family, taking into account what works and what doesn't. Perhaps the biggest shift in practice is how the IPV unit is paying closer attention to batterers, by holding them more accountable for their actions, documenting their precise patterns of control, and thoroughly engaging them in the process.

Distelzweig couldn't be happier with the unit's progress and is especially heartened at how effectively they've been able to engage both victims and batterers. In time, Distelzweig hopes that this collaborative approach to handling cases of domestic violence and child abuse will be commonplace. "We want this to be standard practice," she said.

Caseworkers are listening closely to each family, taking into account what works and what doesn't.



Engaging Fathers in Their Children's Lives

The number one indicator of childhood stability and future success is if a father is engaged in the child's life.

Children who grow up with fathers are twice as likely to graduate from school with higher academic achievements, have higher self-esteem and are more ambitious.

Conversely, the statistics for children growing up with absent fathers are sobering and alarming. According to recent studies, children living without their fathers are five times more likely to be poor, three times more likely to fail in school, and twice as likely to abuse drugs. A shocking 87% of youth in prison are from fatherless families, regardless of parent income or educational level.

Franklin County Children Services believes it's important in child welfare to include fathers and/or their families in the child's case plan. "By including fathers, more support is provided to meet the needs of the children and it may bring the benefit of extended paternal family members," said FCCS Executive Director Eric Fenner.

FCCS searches for absent fathers and family members when children must be removed from a mother's care. When the father or other family members are located, they are evaluated to see if they can care for the children or have more frequent visits.

Creating and maintaining a bond with the children often helps these previously uninvolved fathers become bonded to their children. The father may be alienated from the children for a variety of reasons, including imprisonment, drug addiction, and may never have created a bond with the mother or children.

According to the director of the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood, Tracy Robinson, the consistent love and involvement of a father can send positive messages to children and improve their overall well-being. "Kids spell love T-I-M-E. Spending time with your child creates an emotional bond that will have a lasting positive affect on their life."

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Social Workers Shape the Future

Social workers strive as a part of the community team to help protect children and strengthen families. They are responding to human needs such as homelessness, poverty, family break-up, mental illness, physical and mental disability, alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence and much more. They improve the fabric of society by being advocates for people who need help addressing serious life challenges and exploring their options.



“ One night we had some severely neglected children brought into Intake. They were just so thin and very malnourished. By the time we fed and bathed them, and dressed them in new pajamas, they were like new kids. ”
 – Robin Mara, Intake Caseworker



“ If you are really committed to this job, it is not an 8-to-5 career. You can get phone calls in the evening from a parent or youth needing your help or advice. When that happens, you need to respond right then. That’s just the commitment you have to have for this job. ”
 – Brandi Wade, West Region Caseworker

We chose social work
most important thing

because families are the
in our society.



Protecting Children by Strengthening Families



“ As Franklin County Children Services social workers, we rely on community connections. Often they know the families and children better than we do. The school systems already have relationships with them, and frequently, the families are using the settlement houses and other services in their areas. ”
 – Jody Young, Intake Caseworker

“ My favorite part of the job is seeing kids reach their full potential. I enjoy seeing kids complete a grade, graduate from high school, or go to college. It’s rewarding to see teen moms doing well with their babies and teens who successfully emancipate. ”
 – Quatada Walker, Central Region Caseworker



“ To me, it has been so rewarding working with families and having them say, ‘Thank you for your efforts in helping me find a job and get my kids back.’ They really appreciate it when we advocate for them. ”
 – Rene Coats, West Region Supervisor



Report of Services

In 2010, Franklin County Children Services provided help for 28,645 children and their families through direct services by the agency's professional staff and by purchasing services from provider agencies.

Prevention

Children Services believes that its mission to protect children by strengthening families can best be carried out by offering a variety of support services to families at every stage of a case. Prevention services are designed to provide help to families and children to prevent case openings, to prevent placement of children, to prevent further maltreatment of children, and to prevent the recidivism of children who have returned home following placement.

Services are aligned with the Children Services mission and with meeting federal goals in four areas, including safety, placement, permanency and well-being.

Safety

Children Services Intake and Investigations staff provide protective services by investigating referrals of children who are alleged to be abused, neglected or dependent. These services are provided 24 hours a day. The agency also accepts referrals from the Franklin County Juvenile Court on youth who are unruly or delinquent.

When investigations indicate a need for ongoing services, a case is opened and sent to one of the agency's three regions or two managed care partner agencies. Children Services provides case management, protective and supportive services, and purchases services from community agencies within a case plan agreed to by the family and Children Services casework staff.

- 25,438 intake referrals received
- 12,152 family investigations completed
- ongoing services for 5,202 cases
- protective services for 14,565 individual family members
- family services to 2,549 children through managed care partnerships
- 11,136 children served on the active ongoing caseload

Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

Placement

Every effort is made by Children Services to keep children with their families whenever safely possible. When out-of-home placement is necessary, the agency's goal is to place children in the least restrictive environment, to provide opportunities for and to facilitate regular visitation, and to reunite families as soon as can be safely accomplished.

The numbers below represent the various categories of placements which the agency uses.

- 4,251 children in agency custody
- 3,205 children in paid care
- 676 children served in agency foster homes
- 1,895 children served in purchased foster care
- 1,244 children served in group or institutional care
- 817 children placed with relatives

Permanency

Children Services is committed to assuring a safe, permanent home for each child who cannot remain with or return to family.

- 166 adoptions were finalized
- 263 older youth received emancipation or independent living services to enable them to make a transition from being cared for to being on their own
- 110 agency youth graduated from high school

Well-being

Children Services provides special opportunities and services to children and youth to enhance their well-being.

- 614 children and youth received volunteer or mentoring services from 706 volunteers or mentors
- 4,834 children received gifts through the Holiday Wish program provided by 1,058 individuals and 649 groups
- 198 children and youth received services through the Therapeutic Arts Program

24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline
(614) 229-7000

Community Outreach, Adoption and Foster Care
(614) 341-6060

Volunteers and Mentors
(614) 275-2690

Communications
(614) 275-2523





INCOME

EXPENSES

Operating Fund Balance as of January 1, 2010 \$68,697,066

Income (Cash Basis):

Local & Miscellaneous Funds \$143,740,873

Property Taxes	\$142,633,892
Interfund Revenue	531,822
Board & Care from Parents	362,632
Miscellaneous	212,528

Federal Funds \$54,984,088

Title IV-E Placement (Administration)	\$8,495,705
Title IV-E ProtectOHIO Waiver	18,271,043
Title IV-E Administration	23,858,878
Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, VA Benefits	948,266
Title IV-B - ESSA (Emergency Services Supplemental Assistance)	1,062,937
Independent Living Program	1,176,966
Miscellaneous	1,170,293

State Revenue \$5,108,350

Regional Training	\$415,108
Child Protective & Feisel Allocation	4,079,614
Miscellaneous	613,627

Total 2010 Income \$203,833,310

Beginning Balance Plus 2010 Income \$272,530,377

Operating Expenditures (Cash Basis):

Protection Program \$77,760,737

Intake & Investigations	\$17,768,596
Casework Protective Services	32,530,832
Care Partnerships	21,344,086
Family Support Services	6,117,223

Placement Program \$68,772,181

Family Care Services	\$10,616,240
Foster Home Care	24,602,639
Group Home Care	9,422,422
Institutional Care	24,130,880

Permanency Program \$19,199,434

Adoption Services	\$11,136,489
Child Enrichment Services	1,584,344
Emancipation Services	6,478,602

Total 2010 Operating Expenditures \$165,732,352

Operating Fund Balance (as of December 31, 2010) \$106,798,025

Ending Balance Plus 2010 Expenses \$272,530,377

(Slight variances possible due to rounding.)

Local & Miscellaneous Funds (71%)

Federal Funds (27%)

State Revenue (2%)

Protection (47%)

Placement (41%)

Permanency (12%)

Purchased Services 2010

Adriel School Inc.	\$ 572,903	Gladden Community House	\$ 65,780
Advantage Adoption and Foster Care	1,150,732	House of New Hope	872,508
Agape for Youth Inc.	42,986	Huckleberry House	53,150
Alliance Human Services, Inc.	456,109	Jireh Services, Inc.	1,182,208
Alps Ohio Treatment Alliance	131,140	Keystone Richland Center LLC	1,257,066
Applewood Centers Inc.	536,571	Legal Aid Society of Columbus	58,131
Bair Foundation	1,798,779	Life Start Inc.	339,516
Beech Brook	95,683	Maryhaven, Inc.	1,542,489
Bellefaire JCB	469,899	National Youth Advocate	3,329,267
Berea Children's Home	421,102	National Youth Advocate Program (Care Management)	11,330,722
BHC Belmont Pines Hospital	301,533	Nationwide Children's Hospital	107,427
BHC Fox Run Hospital	637,013	Neighborhood House Inc.	112,090
Big Brothers Big Sisters Association	113,326	NetCare Corporation	83,307
Buckeye Ranch Inc.	7,081,346	New Horizon Youth Center LLC	229,981
Buckeye Ranch (Care Management)	10,013,364	New Leaf Inc.	839,940
Caregivers Helper, Inc.	333,048	New Life Group Homes LLC	72,250
Center for Child and Family Development	27,118	North Central Mental Health Services Inc.	137,229
Center of Vocational Alternatives	377,393	Oasis Therapeutic Foster Care Inc.	343,562
Central Community House	50,180	Oconomowoc Residential Programs Inc.	1,258,397
Children's Hospital Ctr Child & Family Advocacy	62,592	Oesterlen Home for Children	697,672
Children's Hospital Medical Center	1,076,029	Parenthesis Family Advocate	837,412
Christian Children's Home of Ohio	49,280	Pomegranate Health Systems of Central Ohio	5,417,989
Columbus Public Health Department	99,317	Preventative Aftercare Inc.	37,675
Community Refugee & Immigration Services	136,982	Rosemont Center Inc.	1,066,940
Community Youth Services	72,711	South Side Settlement House	57,530
Compdrug Inc.	165,057	Southeast Inc.	35,670
Consumer Support Services Inc.	5,973,722	Specialized Alternatives for Families & Youth	1,299,355
Cornell Abraxas Group Inc.	103,455	St. Stephen's Community Services Inc.	395,925
Cornell Companies Group Inc.	379,469	St. Vincent Family Centers	1,011,116
Devereux Foundation	232,192	Starr Commonwealth	2,313,218
Devereux Texas Treatment Network	90,906	Syntaxis Youth Homes Inc.	1,231,369
DOY Services Inc.	2,306,014	United Methodist Children's Home	3,456,176
Dungarvin Ohio LLC	329,906	Viaquest Behavioral Health Ohio	3,761,245
Eastway Corporation	758,729	Village Network	3,426,804
Franklin County ADAMH Board	195,178	White Deer Run Inc.	239,010
Franklin County Educational Services	931,017	Youth Advocate Services	1,355,892
George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania	486,859		

Subtotal	\$87,915,656
Payment to Children Services Foster & Adoptive Homes	\$7,896,163
Other Purchased Social Services	\$711,270
Total Purchased Social Services	\$96,523,088

Boards & Committees 2010

Franklin County Commissioners

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Paula Brooks
Marilyn Brown

Franklin County Children Services Board

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Greg Oberlander, President
Christy Robison, Vice President
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SHAPING THE FUTURE



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Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

