

Partnering to Protect Children and Families

Franklin County Children Services
Report to the Community | 2012



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Protecting Children by Strengthening Families



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855 W. Mound Street • Columbus, Ohio 43223
www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services



Franklin County Children Services Guiding Principles

We Are Child Welfare Professionals

- We constantly pursue excellence
- We recognize the importance of providing effective and timely services
- We value, respect and support 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

Our Mission: Safety, Permanency and Well-being for Every Child

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.



Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

Dear Community,

Thank you for the support you have given our agency over the years as we strive to fulfill our mandate of protecting children from abuse and neglect. Although Franklin County Children Services has a unique mission, we are fortunate to have the support of many community partners who are equally passionate about the safety and well-being of children. Just this past year, I have seen firsthand the outpouring of generosity from individuals and organizations throughout the community—some you will see featured in this year's report to the community.

I often say that our agency could not do this important work alone, which is why our 2012 report to the community theme is

“Partnering to Protect Children and Families.”

Each of you—whether a law enforcement officer, judge, foster or adoptive parent, volunteer, community-service provider, public official, social worker, teacher, parent or concerned citizen—plays a critical role in our efforts to protect children and strengthen families.

These partnerships are even more important as societal forces, like the recession and poverty, challenge us to reallocate our resources to best meet the needs of those we serve. Reports to our child abuse hotline have been at record highs for the last two years. And while we continue to see fewer children in paid placement and in agency custody, there is an increased need for intervention and family support services. To help meet this challenge, we have added staff at our intake level to help strengthen our front-door services, ensuring timely assessments and investigations. We have also expanded our kinship program to help increase kinship placements and support to kinship caregivers.

As our agency continues to evolve in how we meet the unique and diverse needs of Franklin County's most vulnerable children, we will look to our community partners to help us provide high quality, accessible services. As executive director, I am committed to leading an agency that is focused on its core mission of child protection; one that is fiscally responsible in providing services, and one that strives to achieve the best outcomes for children and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chip M. Spinning".

Chip M. Spinning
Executive Director
Franklin County
Children Services





Alternative Response: Partnering with Families in Need

A landmark shift in child welfare practice, alternative response (AR) is allowing Franklin County Children Services more freedom and innovation than ever when it comes to helping children and families.

Historically, when responding to possible cases of abuse or neglect, the child welfare system has had only one approach, traditional response (TR), an investigation with an assessment. Lara LaRoche, director of Intake, Assessment & Investigations at Franklin County Children Services noted that the rules developed for TR were based upon worst-case scenarios, such as shaken babies and sexual abuse. However, with the implementation and expansion of AR at FCCS over the past three years, the agency has embraced this new approach for responding to less severe types of allegations when appropriate.

AR is part of a larger reform within child welfare: an increased understanding that the system should be focused on a family's needs first and foremost. As a central part of this reform effort, AR allows FCCS to work with a family without having an investigation, and in turn, having to "label" a victim and a perpetrator. By setting a tone of collaboration rather than one of—seemingly—blame or judgment, AR reduces barriers to achieving in-depth family engagement, according to LaRoche. "Families are being more honest, and not feeling as defensive," LaRoche said. "They're disclosing more about the issues they're struggling with."

By respecting the idea that families are the experts of their own experience, AR is able to focus primarily on assessment rather than investigative fact-finding to arrive at a disposition. AR, as well as TR, operates under an understanding that families are defined by much more than the incident that first brought them into the child welfare system, according to LaRoche.

"All families have a story and both AR and TR service teams work diligently to understand the family's perspective,"
LaRoche said.

While approximately 50% of FCCS's incoming abuse and neglect cases are currently handled by Intake's 10 AR units, it's important to note that AR is only appropriate for primarily low- to moderate-risk cases, not for high-risk situations where children might be in imminent danger. The safety of children is and will always be the determining factor when FCCS decides how to respond to a screened-in report. "With the goal of achieving safety sooner for the children involved, we're able to partner more quickly with a family when we tailor the response appropriately," LaRoche said.

Kinship Care: All in the Family

To 10-year-old Destiny and her sister Jasmine, 8, Jim and Debbie McDowell are more than just grandparents: they are Mama and Pappy.

In the spring of 2012, it became clear that the girls' mother could no longer care for them, so the McDowells stepped in to help without a moment's hesitation.

"We knew it was going to be a struggle financially, but it's our family. It's what you do,"
said Ms. McDowell.

As part of the agency's Kinship Care program, Franklin County Children Services caseworker Tania Johnson works with the McDowells and for the past year has helped them navigate the system and link them with supportive services. "They are proud people and don't like to ask for help, but they'll do it if it will help the girls," said Johnson.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, more than 6 million children are being raised in U.S. households headed by grandparents or other relatives. Many, like the McDowells, welcome their relatives' children into their homes when the need arises. By placing children with family members whenever safely possible, this arrangement helps promote permanency and well-being, maintaining healthy connections to family, friends, community, culture, and tradition.

Without a doubt, Jasmine and Destiny are thriving in their grandparents' care. "They have changed so much in just a year," said Mr. McDowell. "When they first came to live with us, Jasmine was scared of other people. She would hide under a blanket. Look at her now. She's talking ALL of the time," he said, giving her an affectionate wink.

The McDowells say they definitely couldn't have made it through the past year without FCCS's support and encouragement. "When the girls came to us, they only had three well-worn outfits," Ms. McDowell said. "Thanks to FCCS, we were able to get the kids some new clothes and a coat each. It's like Tania is a mind-reader—just when things get tough, she pops in and helps us."

While Franklin County Children Services has always provided temporary assistance and linkage to community resources for kinship families such as the McDowells, the agency significantly expanded its Kinship Program in 2012 to provide additional support to kinship caregivers.

Learn more about our efforts here:
www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services/programs/kinship-care.cfm





The Zero 2 Three Initiative: A Bright Future for Every Baby

Keeping a keen eye out for clues that can ensure the safety of every baby and toddler, LaShawna Belton is not just a caseworker at Franklin County Children Services; she's like a skilled detective.

Thanks to the agency's new Zero 2 Three Initiative, which aims to keep FCCS's most vulnerable population safer, caseworkers such as Belton are able to more thoroughly assess the well-being and safety of babies and toddlers. Whether it's noticing a potential choking hazard, dangling window blind cords that could strangle a young child, or confirming whether or not a baby is eating enough and properly gaining weight, Belton said that the Zero 2 Three project has heightened her attention to detail. "I know exactly what I need to be looking for," she said.

Disproportionately at risk of maltreatment, babies and toddlers comprise 25% of the children who come into FCCS custody, so a proactive initiative such as Zero 2 Three provides tools to better assess and protect this vulnerable population, according to Katherine Schiraldi, associate director of Intake, Assessment and Investigations at Franklin County Children Services. "Babies and toddlers are our highest risk population and they can't tell us what's going on," she said.

A central part of the Zero 2 Three project is a thorough checklist for every FCCS caseworker to review with their client families. This in-depth checklist ensures that every infant and toddler receives a comprehensive assessment, looking for signs of healthy development as well as for possible indicators of abuse or neglect. Another key component of the initiative is newly developed training for caseworkers as well as for foster parents and other caregivers, to help them truly understand the unique developmental needs of infants and toddlers and the science underlying healthy brain development in babies.

Zero 2 Three's ultimate goal is a simple one: to ensure that all caseworkers and caregivers know what a healthy baby looks like, Schiraldi said.

"This initiative will set a positive course for our children."

Family-to-Family: Empowering Through Community-Based Support

When Columbus resident Mark Brown first became aware of Franklin County Children Services' Family-to-Family program, he was struggling with finances, unstable housing and a lack of long-term goals. Then his daughter nearly drowned in a swimming pool accident.

"This lady came to my house and told me, 'It looks like you've had a rough month,'" Brown, 45, remembered. "They said they were going to put me in a program (at Central Community House on the near East Side).

"They taught me how to be a better person."

Now, with the help of Family-to-Family, Brown is attending classes at Columbus State Community College, working toward his EMT certification, and he has learned better parenting skills and financial skills. Once unsure of his future, Brown is now working toward a degree and owning his own home.

"Mr. Brown did not have the best financial skills and was unsure of what his long-term goals should be, in order to ensure his family became stable and progressed," said Latisha Addo, director of family services at St. Stephen's Community House, which oversees the Family-to-Family program. "The Family-to-Family worker assisted Mr. Brown with his rent, and later with a furniture bank referral. He has attended many adult groups and brought his children to many family events."

Franklin County Children Services' Family-to-Family program supports individuals like Mark Brown, helping them find needed assistance in their own community.

Thanks to the resources, encouragement, and education provided through Family-to-Family, this father of seven and grandfather of one is making an impressive comeback. He's making monthly budgets, planning meals, and confidently accessing community resources, according to Addo.

Brown's family could not be prouder of his accomplishments. "He's a good dad," Brown's mother Marcia Kent said. "I think he's one of the only males they have in this program. I appreciate the staff they have down there. They adore him."

In keeping with FCCS's belief that children and their families are best served within their own communities, Family-to-Family links families involved with FCCS with direct support services right in their own neighborhoods. Serving more than a dozen zip codes throughout Columbus, the program operates in partnership with St. Stephen's North, South and East locations, as well as with Gladden Community House and Central Community House. The ultimate goal is to empower families, helping them stay healthy and self-sufficient.

For more information about the Family-to-Family program, contact **614-275-2514** or visit www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services/programs/family-to-family.cfm

Mark Brown with his two of his children, Nikki, 10, and Mark Jr., 13.



It Takes a Village...

To meet the diverse needs of children and families, FCCS partners with many smaller agencies like these to provide family support services:

- Africentric Personal Development Shop
- Agora Christian Services
- Aminatas Daycare
- Columbus Behavioral Center
- Counseling and Recovery Services
- Creative Childcare
- Dayspring Childcare
- Directions for Youth & Families
- Dublin Counseling
- For Kids Daycare Center
- Forest Park Christian School
- Good Shepherd Wesleyan Church
- HSD Academy
- La Petite Academy
- Learning Tree Preschool
- Leo Yassenoff Jewish Center
- Lighthouse Christian Daycare
- Lilley & Associates
- Little Center
- Little Gems Learning Center
- Little Miracles Early Developmental Center
- Kids Academy
- Kindercare Learning Center
- Kingdom Kids
- Knowledge Learning Center
- Merry Moppet Learning Center
- Noble Learning Communities
- Northland Church of Christ Childcare
- Our Kidz Enrichment & Child Center
- Play to Learn Daycare
- Purple Door Christian Daycare
- Roman Apostolic Church
- Sunshine House
- Teach & Learn Daycare
- Total Homecare Solutions

FCCS in the Community:

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption



Family-to-Family Program/ National Family Week



FCCS East & the City of Whitehall



FamJam Family Enrichment Festival & the City of Columbus Neighborhood Pride



The Center for Family Safety and Healing at Nationwide Children's Hospital



Children's Day at COSI Columbus



Holiday Wish



Franklin County Children Services 2012 Report of Services

Franklin County Children Services provided help for **28,863** children and their families through direct services from 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 out-of-home 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 three areas: permanency, well-being and safety.

Permanency

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

- **142** adoptions were finalized
- **388** older youth received emancipation or independent living services to enable them to make a transition from being cared for to being on their own
- **43** emancipated youth graduated from high school and went on to college

Well-being

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

- **368** children and youth received volunteer or mentoring services from **489** volunteers or mentors
- **4,954** children received gifts through the Holiday Wish program provided by **1,311** individuals and **439** groups
- **294** children and youth received services through the Therapeutic Arts Program, in partnership with Transit Arts and Neighborhood House



24-hour Child Abuse Hotline:
614-229-7000

Adoption:
614-341-6060

Volunteers & Mentors:
614-275-2690

Communications:
614-275-2523

Safety

Children Services Intake and Investigations staff provides 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 regions or two managed care partner agencies. Children Services provides case management, protective and supportive services, as well as purchased services from community agencies within a case plan agreed to by the family and Children Services casework staff.

- **30,285** intake referrals received
- **11,742** family investigations completed
- Ongoing services for **4,878** families
- Protective services for **13,658** individual family members
- Family services to **2,705** children through managed care partnerships
- **10,709** children served on the active ongoing caseload

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 this can be safely accomplished.

The numbers below represent the various categories of placements which the agency used in 2012:

- **5,167** children in agency custody
- **3,067** children in paid care
- **421** children served in agency foster homes
- **2,134** children served in purchased foster care
- **1,163** children served in group or institutional care
- **1,191** children placed with relatives





Franklin County Children Services 2012 Income Statistics

Operating Fund Balance as of January 1, 2012	\$127,720,910
Income	(Cash Basis):
Local & Miscellaneous Funds	\$148,174,087
Property Taxes	\$129,861,488
Interfund Revenue	730,168
Board & Care from Parents	290,466
Miscellaneous	17,291,965
Federal Funds	\$41,611,916
Title IV-E Placement (Administration)	\$4,498,059
Title IV-E ProtectOHIO Waiver	19,401,130
Title IV-E Administration	13,431,033
Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, VA Benefits	874,259
Title IV-B - ESSA (Emergency Services Supplemental Assistance)	775,056
Independent Living Program	741,499
Miscellaneous	1,890,880
State Revenue	\$4,408,694
Regional Training	\$638,750
Child Protective & Feisel Allocation	3,424,207
Miscellaneous	345,736
Total 2012 Income	\$194,194,697
Beginning Balance plus 2012 Income	\$321,915,606

Local &
Miscellaneous
Funds
76%

Federal Funds
23%

State Revenue
1%

Franklin County Children Services 2012 Expense Statistics

Operating Expenditures

(Cash Basis):

Protection Program	\$87,889,578
Intake & Investigations	\$23,335,972
Casework Protective Services	34,699,465
Care Partnerships	21,428,800
Family Support Services	8,425,342
Placement Program	\$64,363,090
Family Care Services	\$9,179,816
Foster Home Care	22,222,042
Group Home Care	7,871,071
Institutional Care	25,090,160
Permanency Program	\$15,913,449
Adoption Services	\$11,664,545
Child Enrichment Services	1,395,834
Emancipation Services	2,853,071
Total 2012 Operating Expenditures	\$168,166,118
Building Expenses (Fund 4051)	\$17,725,000
Total 2012 Operating & Capital Expenditures	\$185,891,118
Operating Fund Balance as of December 31, 2012	\$136,024,488
Ending Balance plus 2012 Expenses	\$321,915,606

Protection
53%

Placement
38%

Permanency
9%



Franklin County Children Services 2012 Purchased Services

A New Leaf Inc.	\$ 1,152,792	Huckleberry House Inc.	\$ 49,842
Adriel School Inc.	1,576,163	Jireh Services Inc.	301,202
Alliance Human Services Inc.	392,981	Keith Hughes PhD	32,692
Applewood Centers Inc.	128,131	Keystone Richland Center LLC	951,227
Bair Foundation	2,140,117	Life Start Inc.	461,545
Berea Children's Home	851,178	Maryhaven Inc.	1,677,463
BHC Belmont Pines Hospital	246,706	Meridell Achievement Center	59,375
BHC Fox Run Hospital	1,098,484	National Youth Advocate Program	4,551,601
Big Brothers Big Sisters Association	142,604	National Youth Advocate Program (Care Management)	10,121,000
Buckeye Ranch Inc.	8,107,742	Nationwide Children's Hospital	76,864
Buckeye Ranch (Care Management)	11,307,800	Neighborhood House Inc.	26,000
Caregivers Helper Inc.	183,980	New Horizon Youth Center LLC	232,888
Center of Vocational Alternatives	514,278	New Horizons Ranch and Center	52,200
Center for Family Safety & Healing	62,100	New Life Group Homes	490,202
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center	581,340	Oasis Therapeutic Foster Care, Inc.	327,224
Columbus City Treasurer	160,806	Oconomowoc Residential Programs, Inc.	612,247
Community Refugee & Immigration Services	140,035	Oesterlen Services for Youth	387,054
Compdrug Inc.	75,621	Pomegranate Health Systems of Central Ohio	6,394,479
Consumer Support Services Inc.	4,142,967	Rosemont Center Inc.	646,253
Cornell Abraxas	201,882	Social Security Administration	30,506
Cornell Companies Group Inc.	607,864	Specialized Alternatives for Youth	1,480,420
Devereux Foundation	75,348	St. Stephen's Community Services Inc.	1,452,172
DOY Services Inc.	875,718	St. Vincent Family Centers	1,302,244
Dungarvin Ohio LLC	252,716	Starr Commonwealth	3,080,301
Eastway Corporation	977,419	Syntaxis Youth Homes Inc.	150,827
Educational Service Center of Ohio	1,768,585	UMCH Family Services	1,350,618
Franklin County ADAMH Board	1,080,000	Viaquest Behavioral Health Ohio	1,104,460
Franklin County CSEA	60,000	Village Network	5,163,654
George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania	538,408	White Deer Run Inc.	69,440
Greater Hilltop Area Shalom Zone CDC	64,500	Woodridge of Missouri LLC	218,820
Gregory C. Keck PhD	32,331	Woods Services Inc.	462,706
House of New Hope	646,428	Youth Advocate Services	936,677

Subtotal **\$84,441,225**

**Payment to Children Services
Foster & Adoptive Homes** **\$6,610,311**

Other Purchased Social Services **\$1,407,195**

Total Purchased Social Services **\$92,458,731**

2012 Commissioners, Boards & Committees

Franklin County Commissioners

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