



REPORT TO THE
COMMUNITY | **2014**

**Connecting Safety,
Permanency & Well-Being**



Franklin County

**Children
Services**

Protecting Children by Strengthening Families



Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

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.



Connecting safety, permanency and well-being

Thanks to community support and strategic partnerships, Franklin County Children Services has made some significant strides in ensuring the safety, permanency and well-being of abused and neglected children and troubled youth. Many of those accomplishments were highlighted during our 2014 levy campaign. People appreciated learning about our efforts to safely keep families together, place more children with kin and help more foster youth graduate from high school. It was reaffirming when our 1.9 mill renewal levy won with overwhelming support from Franklin County voters, with a 70 percent approval. With that support, the agency will continue its efforts to make children's lives better while being good stewards of taxpayers' dollars.

Connecting Safety, Permanency and Well-Being is the theme of this year's annual report, which will highlight some of the innovative work being done to protect and serve all children from our youngest, most vulnerable population to our adolescents. You will read about our SAFE Teams review process conducted by our intake staff to provide another level of safety for children. We will also share ways we have worked to build successful avenues of permanency for children whether through reunification with their birth families, lasting kinship connections or through enriching relationships with mentors.

Of course, all of this work involves collaborations with our professional staff, our child-serving partner agencies, community organizations and the many caring individuals who become volunteers, foster and adoptive parents and kinship caregivers for our children. Some are featured in this report.



Moving forward, we also plan to continue our cutting edge examination of how trauma and adversity impacts the well-being of children. This will involve working with partners to improve screening procedures at intake and providing comprehensive trauma assessment services for children. These assessments will help improve access to services for behavioral and mental health conditions.

These are just a few of the initiatives we have begun and will continue as child protection continues to evolve. It's our hope that these efforts will help us keep children safe and move them toward success long after they leave our agency's care.

Franklin County Children Services relies upon and appreciates your continued support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chip M. Spinning". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Chip M. Spinning
Executive Director
Franklin County Children Services

Kinship Care: Family Comes First

It didn't take long for George and Marcia Haughn to bond with their grandson Titan. "We just fell in love from day one," George recalls. When Titan was born prematurely and drug exposed in 2013, the Haughns dropped everything to spend countless hours at the hospital with him, rarely leaving the newborn's side. Titan was finally able to come home with the Haughns when he was five weeks old.

The Haughns, who now have permanent custody of their grandson, are one of hundreds of Franklin County Children Services' kinship families. Often in a time of crisis, these families have stepped up to care for their relatives' children on a temporary or permanent basis. Kinship care provides a familiar, comforting place to go when a child can't safely remain with their mom or dad. Here at Franklin County Children Services, 1,599 children were placed with relatives in 2014.

Preserving a sense of identity as well as vital connections to culture and tradition, kinship care is often the least disruptive option for a child when their family is in crisis, according to Megan Stevens, kinship program director at Franklin County Children Services. To help make this transition an easier one for both the child and the relatives providing care, Franklin County Children Services offers a range of kinship support services.



Marcia and George Haughn with grandson Titan

"The goal is to help the family adjust to the new and challenging family dynamics and encourage stability and self-sufficiency,"

Stevens says.

For the Haughns, there was no question that they'd be there for their grandson when his mother wasn't able to care for him. A sweet-natured toddler with sparkling blue eyes and a mop of curly hair, Titan is currently thriving under his grandparents' watchful, compassionate guidance.

The Haughns, who are both retired, cherish the moments they get to spend with their grandson, a responsibility they say they would not have fully appreciated when they were younger. "We have the time to sit back and enjoy," Marcia says. Seeing Titan develop into an intelligent, inquisitive child is an absolute pleasure for this couple. "It's something new with him every day," George says.

For more information on how Franklin County Children Services supports kinship families like the Haughns, visit www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services



FCCS Mentors: Building Connections, Bettering Lives

For Diandra Gordon, mentoring is an opportunity to create, inspire and shape a young life in countless ways. “Mentors give a child a huge canvas on which to paint positive life experiences,” Gordon says. “That’s how I usually describe it when I talk to people about being a mentor.”

Gordon has been part of Franklin County Children Services’ Malaika program since 2013 and relishes the time she spends with her mentee, 13-year-old Kareiona. Established in 1995, this one-on-one mentoring program matches African-American girls with African-American women and has been an enriching experience for Gordon. She frequently encourages her friends to become mentors and show a young person the opportunities life has to offer.

Gordon is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in human development at Ohio State University and plans on attending law school. But despite her busy schedule, she makes mentoring Kareiona a priority. “My mother was a hard working, busy woman, but she always made time to invest in other people,” Gordon notes. “That inspired me to share what I have to offer with others.”

When Gordon first met Kareiona, it was a challenge connecting with the teen. Through patience and learning to communicate on her mentee’s terms, Gordon was able to break through and the two have become close. “When we went to the annual Malaika retreat, we stayed up all night talking and really bonded,” Gordon says. “Now when we see each other on the weekends, we spend the whole day just hanging out, taking dance classes or running errands.”

Kareiona and Diandra

Gordon feels her relationship with Kareiona has been beneficial; she’s enjoyed seeing her grow into a confident young woman. **“She used to be standoffish, but now she’s funny, affectionate and much more willing to engage with people,”** Gordon says. The pair recently participated in an innovative rites of passage program for Malaika mentees, which provides support, guidance and nurturance to help youth transition into adulthood. This program has been a positive experience for Gordon’s mentee. “We talked about the girls’ common struggles and how they can overcome obstacles,” Gordon says. “Kareiona was listening and now knows she has support.”

Franklin County Children Services has countless youth waiting for a mentor like Diandra Gordon to make a difference in their lives. Learn more about Children Services’ many volunteer opportunities at www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services



Older Youth at FCCS: Easing Into Independence

Transitioning into adulthood can be difficult for any teen, especially for those involved with the child welfare system. To ease this often challenging process, Franklin County Children Services provides an array of services and programs to help these older youth obtain the life skills and resources needed to succeed as stable, self-sufficient adults.

FCCS primarily serves older youth through its emancipation department. Emancipation's eight caseworkers help teens ages 16 and older under the agency's care who are in the process of aging out of the child welfare system. Ready to assist with any possible need, these workers help older youth with such challenges as finding employment, learning needed life skills, setting up Medicaid or other health care coverage, furthering their education, and locating safe, affordable housing. Since none of this is easy, especially for former foster youth who have experienced significant trauma and adversity, the caseworkers are always prepared to provide wisdom, emotional support and friendly encouragement. **"We assist them with just about any challenge they would have,"** said Edward Mills, FCCS's director of emancipation. Individuals can receive these services until their 21st birthday as part of the agency's post-emancipated youth services program.



Emancipation caseworker Neshawn Coleman with agency youth Edward Martinez (right)

Enhancing the lives of older youth goes beyond the emancipation department at FCCS. Every May the agency's volunteer department throws a festive high school graduation party to celebrate the FCCS teens who have reached this milestone. For teens wanting to pursue higher education, the volunteer department offers a college-bound mentoring program, linking youth to committed mentors who offer assistance with the college application process as well as ongoing support once college has begun. Twice a year, the program also sends students care packages full of treats and dorm essentials. "We want to make sure our kids go [to college] not lacking anything any other kid from a traditional home would have," Mills said. Through these efforts and more, FCCS strives to prepare older youth for successful and fulfilling futures.

To learn more about how FCCS helps older youth move into adulthood, visit www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services



High school seniors celebrate at FCCS's annual graduation party

Supporting Families in Need

In a time of tremendous adversity, Franklin County Children Services was there for Tina Bishara. In just two years, Bishara went from battling mental health issues and legal problems to securing her own apartment, landing steady employment and regaining custody of her children. Bishara was even honored as “Family of the Year” at the Public Children Services Association of Ohio’s 2014 conference.

Assisting families like Bishara’s in a time of crisis is what Franklin County Children Services does. Every year, FCCS helps thousands of children and their families confront their challenges so they can achieve stability and self-sufficiency. Recognizing that families are the experts on their own experience is always the first step in this process. **“Families are best served when they are truly engaged in both the identification of their challenges and in the development of the plan to help them,”** said Tina Rutherford, deputy director at Franklin County Children Services.

For Tina Bishara, getting the proper supports in place was essential in learning how to help herself. “There were setbacks, but Tina overcame those and she began to utilize the people around her,” said her FCCS caseworker David Payton, whose support was a key factor in Bishara’s success. “She really began to understand what it means to have a mental health diagnosis.”

Bishara’s own family also played a central role in helping her: her brother and sister-in-law stepped up to care for her children for more than a year while she worked out her issues. This respite gave Bishara valuable time to assess her medical needs, find employment and focus on her health and well-being.

Today, Bishara’s children Samuel and Jasmine are back home with her and she couldn’t be happier.

“I couldn’t have done it without all the support from Children Services as well as my other caseworkers,” Bishara said. **“Things are in place the way they were meant to be.”**

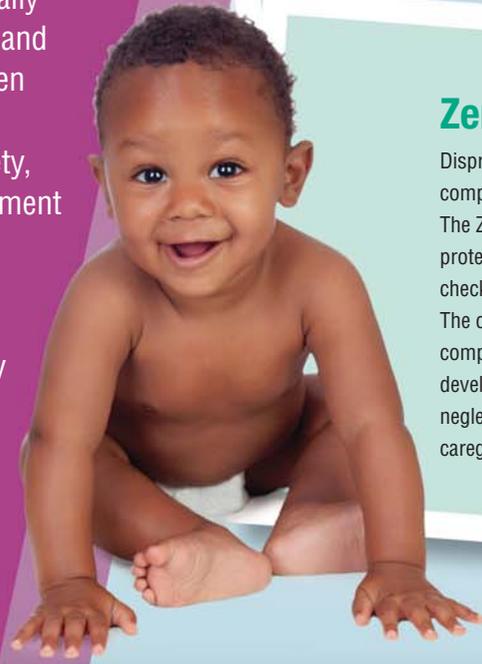
For more on how FCCS helps strengthen families like Tina Bishara’s, visit www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services

Tina Bishara with her children Samuel and Jasmine and FCCS caseworker David Payton



Building Brighter Futures

Infants and toddlers are especially at risk when it comes to abuse and neglect. Franklin County Children Services recognizes this and is committed to ensuring the safety, well-being and healthy development of this especially vulnerable population. Here's an overview of the many proactive and progressive ways FCCS actively protects our very youngest, through ongoing agency-wide initiatives, events and strategic community partnerships.



Franklin County Family and Children First's Building Better Lives Initiative

Based on the groundbreaking work of childhood trauma expert Dr. Bruce Perry, Building Better Lives encourages a clearer understanding of the complex consequences of childhood trauma and its impact on brain development. This community-wide initiative is training thousands of individuals throughout Franklin County, including Franklin County Children Services staff, its partner agencies and adoptive, foster and kinship families.

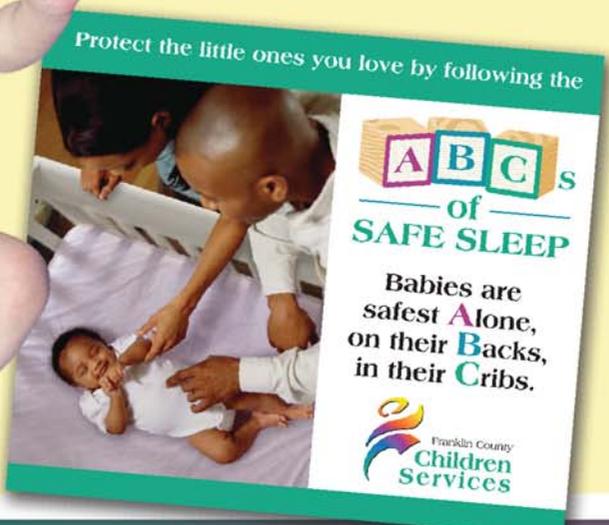
Zero 2 Three Initiative

Disproportionately at risk of maltreatment, babies and toddlers comprise 25% of the children who come into FCCS custody. The Zero 2 Three initiative provides tools to better assess and protect this population. A central part of the project is a thorough checklist that FCCS caseworkers review with their client families. The 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. Zero 2 Three's goal is to ensure that all caseworkers and caregivers know what a healthy baby looks like.



Infant Safe Sleep Campaign

Educating parents and caregivers about safe sleep practices for babies, this ongoing FCCS campaign is as simple as ABC: Babies are always safest Alone, on their Backs, in their Cribs. As part of the initiative, FCCS client families with infants receive custom-made onesies printed with this potentially life-saving message.



Community Partner Help Me Grow

The Ohio Department of Health's Help Me Grow program evaluates children for possible developmental issues and links them to needed services via a coordinated network of early childhood professionals. At Franklin County Children Services, children age zero to three are frequently referred to this program, so parents can better understand what their child's needs are and learn how to meet them.



Choose Your Partner Carefully Campaign

This Franklin County Children Services initiative encourages parents to be cautious when it comes to who they let into their life, and in turn, their child's. When it comes to protecting the most vulnerable—babies and toddlers—choosing a partner carefully could mean the difference between life and death for a child at risk.



FCCS Intake
Baby & Toddler Specialist
Caseworker
Erin Chaffin



FCCS Intake
Baby & Toddler Specialist
Caseworker
Emily Brentlinger



Children's Day at COSI



SAFE Teams

Short for Supported Assessment for Effective Team Screening, this review process at FCCS's intake office provides an extra layer of evaluation when assessing especially challenging reports made to the agency's 24-hour child abuse prevention hotline. With safety its utmost priority, the SAFE Teams panel pays careful attention to at-risk children who are 2 years old or younger. Any time a call comes in with an alleged child victim in this high-risk category that is not screened in for review, SAFE Teams automatically takes a closer look, to confirm that the appropriate course of action is taken.

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program

A partnership between FCCS, Nationwide Children's and the Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board of Franklin County, this early intervention program helps young children ages zero to six and their families who are presently involved with Children Services. The program has 10 FCCS-based clinicians who conduct at-home consultations with families. They work closely with the caregivers of young children to address emotional or social developmental concerns. The project has helped more than 1,000 families since it began in 2011.

Franklin County Children Services 2014 Report of Services

Franklin County Children Services provided help for **31,271** children and their families via direct services from the agency's professional staff and through purchased 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.

In 2014:

- **152** adoptions were legalized
- For older youth under Children Services' care, **243** emancipation cases were referred to services & resources focused on achieving independence and self-sufficiency
- **29** 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.

- **454** children were mentored by more than **497** volunteers through the agency's Friendship, Malaika, Simba and College-Bound mentoring programs. Youth were also helped by **75** FCCS crisis center volunteers at the agency's intake & investigations office.
- **5,621** children received gifts through the Holiday Wish program provided by **1,181** individuals and **257** groups, with the assistance of more than **199** Holiday Wish volunteers
- **206** children and youth received services through the Therapeutic Arts Program, in partnership with Neighborhood House and the Ohio Arts Council

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

General Information:
614-275-2571

Adoption:
614-341-6060

Kinship:
614-341-6161

Volunteers & Mentors:
614-275-2690

Communications:
614-275-2523



Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

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 two 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.

In 2014, there were:

- **31,683** intake referrals received
- **12,444** family investigations completed
- Ongoing services for **4,870** cases
- Protective services for **13,636** individual family members
- Family services to **3,026** children through managed care partnerships
- **10,948** 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.

In 2014, Franklin County Children Services had:

- **4,210** children in agency custody
- **3,146** children in paid care
- **2,261** children placed in purchased foster care
- **1,227** children placed in group or institutional care
- **1,599** children placed with relatives



Franklin County Children Services 2014 Income Statistics

Local &
Miscellaneous
Funds
71%

Federal Funds
26%

State Revenue **3%**

Operating Fund Balance as of January 1, 2014 **\$123,800,427**

Income **(Cash Basis):**

Local & Miscellaneous Funds **\$128,776,481**

Property Taxes	\$127,567,905
Interfund Revenue	728,546
Board & Care from Parents	2,644
Miscellaneous	477,386

Federal Funds **\$47,080,035**

Title IV-E Placement (Administration)	\$6,036,274
Title IV-E ProtectOHIO Waiver	22,908,879
Title IV-E Administration	12,454,971
Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, VA Benefits	644,845
Title IV-B - ESSA (Emergency Services Supplemental Assistance)	564,714
CHAFFEE Independent Living Program	1,172,477
Gateway CALL	362,926
Miscellaneous	2,934,950

State Revenue **\$4,686,628**

Regional Training	\$635,748
Child Protective & Feisel Allocation	3,521,754
Miscellaneous	529,126

Total 2014 Income **\$180,543,145**

Beginning Balance plus 2014 Income **\$304,343,572**



Franklin County Children Services 2014 Expense Statistics

Operating Expenditures

(Cash Basis):

Protection Program	\$84,019,176
Intake & Investigations	\$26,416,440
Casework Protective Services	34,339,514
Care Partnerships	22,988,600
Family Support Services	274,622
Placement Program	\$68,582,720
Family Care Services	\$8,623,198
Foster Home Care	21,693,814
Group Home Care	9,301,870
Kinship Care	1,469,664
Institutional Care	27,494,174
Permanency Program	\$20,646,595
Adoption Services	\$12,974,289
Child Enrichment Services	2,844,509
Emancipation Services	4,827,797
Capital Expenditures (Fund 2021)	\$40,896
Total 2014 Operating Expenditures	\$173,289,387
Operating Fund Balance as of December 31, 2014	\$131,054,185
Ending Balance plus 2014 Expenses	\$304,343,572



Franklin County Children Services

2014 Purchased Services

A New Leaf Inc.	\$ 1,497,147	House of New Hope	\$ 855,118
ADAMH FCCS CALL	64,928	Huckleberry House Inc.	183,743
ADAMH FCCS MST	279,638	Jessica Wallace	32,366
Adriel School Inc.	1,242,459	Julia Paige Family Center LLC	363,808
Alliance Human Services Inc.	649,247	Keystone Richland Center LLC	239,034
Applewood Centers Inc.	154,587	LHS Family and Youth Services Inc.	952,812
Bair Foundation	1,779,158	Life Start Inc.	312,511
Beech Brook	531,393	Marsh Foundation	30,600
Bellefaire JCB	188,797	Maryhaven Inc.	1,463,614
BHC Belmont Pines Hospital	771,742	Mustard Seed Foundation	67,480
BHC Fox Run Hospital Inc.	1,286,413	National Youth Advocate Program Inc.	15,303,204
Big Brothers Big Sisters Association	160,824	Netcare Corporation	227,424
Bob Jones	31,680	New Hope Carolinas Inc.	138,150
Buckeye Ranch Inc.	20,384,228	New Horizon Youth Center LLC	160,546
Caregivers Helper Inc.	76,418	New Horizons Ranch and Center Inc.	146,635
Carie Ehrenborg	65,000	New Life Group Homes LLC	662,445
Carrington Youth Academy	529,437	New Story of Ohio LLC	2,496,202
Center for Family Safety and Healing	65,000	Oasis Therapeutic Foster Care Inc.	519,068
Center of Vocational Alternatives	592,592	Oconomowoc Residential Programs Inc.	773,766
Children's Hunger Alliance	75,750	Oesterlen Services for Youth	755,788
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center	413,261	Ohio Guidestone	1,370,711
Columbus City Treasurer	223,165	Parents Anonymous Inc.	124,838
Community Refugee & Immigration Services	133,316	Pomegranate Health Systems	4,202,136
Consumer Support Services Inc.	2,705,516	Safehouse Ministries Inc.	114,295
Cornell Abraxas	121,279	Social Security Administration	56,519
Cornell Companies Group Inc.	196,968	Southeast Inc.	195,621
Damar Services	51,278	Specialized Alternatives for Youth	1,311,907
DOY Services Inc.	610,756	Spectrum Juvenile Justice Services	105,210
Dungarvin Ohio LLC	296,496	St. Stephen's Community Services Inc.	1,238,132
Eastway Corporation	692,881	St. Vincent Family Centers	1,580,756
Educational Service Center of Central OH	1,738,915	Toledo Center for Eating Disorders	52,160
ENA Inc.	793,358	Tri-state Youth Authority Inc.	2,059,925
Fairfield Academy Ltd	345,647	UMCH Family Services	1,612,179
Fairfield Information Services & Associates LLC	331,024	Village Network	4,810,879
Family Based Services	33,210	White Deer Run Inc.	257,320
George Junior Republic In Pennsylvania	200,653	Woodbourne Center	61,655
Greater Hilltop Area Shalom Zone CDC	60,057	Woodridge of Missouri LLC	311,984
Gregory C. Keck PhD	32,197	Woods Services Inc.	200,509
Hittle House LLC	158,688	Youth Advocate Services	1,242,658

Subtotal **\$ 86,158,805**

**Payment to Children Services
Foster & Adoptive Homes** **\$ 4,873,988**

Other Purchased Social Services **\$ 76,848**

Total Purchased Social Services **\$ 91,109,641**



2014 Commissioners, Board & Committees

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CWLA MEMBER AGENCY CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA



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