



# Always There for Families

2020 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Released April 2021



Franklin County  
**Children  
Services**

Protecting Children by Strengthening Families



**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.

# A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

## We are always there for families.

As advocates, partners and providers, Franklin County Children Services is always there. In a year like no other, our dedicated staff, in concert with our community partners, ensured that efforts to support families and children continued despite unprecedented circumstances and challenges. There was necessary focus and critical attention drawn to the important issues of the global pandemic, racial and social justice, economic challenges and educational access.

### A year of impact

Virtual engagement through digital resource management and creative scheduling allowed for staff to maintain connections to our community's most vulnerable populations. Program evaluation and enhanced delivery were required as we pivoted to provide continued services in an effective manner. Vital dialogues were initiated through our agency-wide Culture of Safety initiative as well as Town Hall sessions. These efforts created forums for honest discussion, information sharing and ongoing evaluation of practice and process. Our cultural lenses were sharpened toward enhancement in services relative to 2020's uniquely challenging circumstances.

### A year of change

Training experiences for staff were delivered virtually, ensuring that necessary practice information and skill development safely continued for new and for veteran staff. Remote work experiences created safe work environments for staff. Investigations continued while managing the operations of our intake office with heightened health safeguards and with mindful precautions when assessments were required in the communities we serve. Family visitation remained a priority with creative solutions to ensure safe opportunities for children and families to stay connected.

### A year of possibilities

Reflecting on the past year brings continued focus on our shared responses and collaborations. We recognize that our efforts must be intentional and that we have a charge to lead. The services, programs and resources that we provide must be racially and culturally responsive, equitable and accessible for all. They must reflect the needs of the families and children we serve.

We continue to assess our practice and our process for greater impact. We continue to partner to advocate for meaningful change. We continue to collaborate and reimagine the possibilities.

## We are always there for families.



**Chip Spinning**  
Executive Director



# BRIGHT SPOTS

2020 was clearly unprecedented. But even in the most challenging and unusual of times, there is always cause for hope and gratitude. (And in the case of our 66 high school graduates in 2020, cause for joyous celebration.) Here's a look at some of the good things that happened in 2020 thanks to our dedicated staff of child welfare professionals, committed stakeholders and devoted community partners.



Family Appreciation award honorees Melissa Hoyd and Leonel Tomas-Ramirez and their four children



Kinship Appreciation award honorees Leigha and Thomas Perkins with their nieces and nephews



National Adoption Day family Heather, Shawn and Leannah Jordan with caseworker Kelly Crawford



FCCS staff help distribute annual backpack donation from the Tom Fennessy/Mike Harden Back-to-School Project



CME Federal Credit Union annual donation for FCCS high school graduates



One Church mask donation

FCCS Simba mentors give back during the second annual Day of Service event at the Ronald McDonald House





### Congrats to the Class of 2020!

Here are a few of our 66 amazing high school graduates!





## Malaika Mentoring Program Uplifts African-American Girls

For a quarter of a century, Franklin County Children Services' **Malaika** mentoring program has been inspiring and empowering African-American girls involved with Franklin County Children Services, matching them one-on-one with dedicated African-American women mentors to provide friendship, guidance and encouragement.

Malaika, which means "angel" in Swahili, was established in 1995 by Sharon Burks, the program's first director. She saw a need for an Afrocentric, female-focused mentoring and rites of passage program that addressed the unique challenges faced by girls of color, particularly those involved in the child welfare system. Malaika mentors are matched with girls ages six to 18 years of age and help their mentees build self-esteem, develop resiliency, achieve academically and pursue future goals.

"It's all about creating a space where our African-American girls can realize and embrace their full potential," says Tonia Still, current director of the Malaika program. "Our mentors uplift and empower our black and brown girls, helping them rewrite their internal narrative and transition into strong, confident young women."

For more on the Malaika program—and to learn about becoming a mentor, visit [childrenservices.franklincountyohio.gov/programs/malaika-mentoring.cfm](http://childrenservices.franklincountyohio.gov/programs/malaika-mentoring.cfm)



## FCCS Kinship Care: Family Helping Family

Most expectant parents have at least nine months to prepare for their new arrival. For kinship caregivers Kevin and Fanness Neff, it was just a few hours. Baby Juan, now 2 years old, came into their lives quite unexpectedly. Fanness remembers getting a call from a concerned family member saying that her newborn niece, Juan, was about to be taken into foster care because of safety concerns. "I said 'No,'" she recalls. "We can't let that happen. Someone has to do something."

Without a second thought, Neff and her husband Kevin headed over that day to Franklin County Children Services' intake office and made all the arrangements to become Juan's emergency caregivers. By midnight, the Columbus couple was back home with their new baby and their lives officially on a brand new course.

When the baby first arrived, Fanness remembers being in awe of how small Juan was, who was born drug exposed and spent the first 10 days of her life in the newborn intensive care unit (NICU). "It was amazing holding this tiny little baby," she says, adding that the biggest challenge at first was getting her to sleep since she would only do so if she was being held.

The Neffs received permanent custody of Juan in August 2020, which was a joyous occasion, according to Fanness. She and Kevin are enjoying every moment with their beloved Munchkin, as she is more commonly known. A sweet, spirited toddler who loves to eat, Juan is a goofy, energetic girl. "Every day is an adventure," Fanness says, adding that she loves Juan's giggle. "Her laugh is everything."

While unexpectedly becoming parents to a newborn has been an adjustment, Fanness would do it all again "in a heartbeat," she says. "Every moment has been more than worth it. She is the absolute best."

To learn more about Franklin County Children Services' kinship program, visit [childrenservices.franklincountyohio.gov/programs/kinship.cfm](http://childrenservices.franklincountyohio.gov/programs/kinship.cfm)



# Franklin County Children Services Honors Remarkable Youth

Each year during Child Abuse Prevention Month, FCCS recognizes a selection of especially remarkable, resilient youth who have weathered adversity and overcome tremendous challenges. Here are six impressive and inspiring young adults whom FCCS had the privilege of honoring in 2020.

**Marquai** was awarded the Jack Donahue four-year scholarship. She plans on pursuing degrees in political science and psychology with the ultimate goal of earning a law degree. Her ambition is to work at a district attorney's office and advocate for survivors of violence.

The Jack Donahue two-year scholarship was given to **Karimah**, who wants to become a social worker. She graduated on time despite having had nine placements during her involvement with FCCS.

The Alvin Hadley United Negro College Fund scholarship was presented to **Ingrid** who wants to help working mothers and immigrants in her community. She intends to pursue degrees in business and criminal justice.

**Taja** received the first annual CME Federal Credit Union scholarship. She wants to further the education in cyber security that she received as a student at Eastland-Fairfield Career Center.

**Ciaira** was recognized with the "Rising Up and Moving On" award from both FCCS and the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO). She faced much adversity as a child, entering foster care at a young age and experiencing homelessness. This highly motivated young woman now has her own apartment, works full time and is earning a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Ohio University Zanesville.

**Mark** was also honored with the "Rising Up and Moving On" award from both FCCS and PCSAO. A bright student and gifted sneaker designer, he graduated with an impressive 4.1 G.P.A. in 2020. Despite a difficult childhood, Mark has always stayed focused on the positive, with unwavering support from his foster mother and his FCCS Simba mentor. He has advice for foster youth facing challenging circumstances: "Believe in yourself, want to be great for yourself, and don't worry about what other people have to say about you," he says.





Emily Kirkpatrick

Tania Johnson-Person

Antoinette Benson

## FCCS Caseworkers: On the Front Lines of Child Welfare

Here's a look at three of Franklin County Children Services' very own front-line workers: caseworkers who are on the job, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, even in a pandemic. These child welfare professionals work tirelessly—and often selflessly—to ensure the safety and well-being of our community's children and families.

**Emily Kirkpatrick**, who has worked in FCCS's East Region since 2017, is devoted to the kids on her caseload, always worrying how they're doing and wondering how she can better help them. She notes a recent turning point with a bright 9-year-old girl who once told her that "my family's bad and I'm bad because they're bad." This preteen, who has engaged in delinquent behavior, has gradually realized that "she can do her own thing," and doesn't have to follow the negative patterns that she's learned from her family, says Kirkpatrick. For years now, Kirkpatrick has been a dependable, trustworthy adult in this youth's life, checking in once a month without fail. That caring consistency has made a profound difference. "She's never had that before," Kirkpatrick says.

Going above and beyond is standard procedure for FCCS kinship caseworker **Tania Johnson-Person**. A seasoned child welfare veteran of 15 years, Johnson-Person is passionate about her job and understands how critically important it is to protect and preserve family connections whenever safely possible. Johnson-Person recently worked with a grandmother caring for seven children. She ensured that this caregiver felt

supported and empowered and that the children in her home had a nurturing, stable environment. An unwavering advocate for kinship families, Johnson-Person carefully listens to each family's distinct needs and concerns and always offers compassion and understanding when circumstances are difficult.

An off-shift screening caseworker at FCCS's intake and investigations office, **Antoinette Benson** knows her job is an important one. "Every day when I go into work, I know I'm dealing with someone's life," she says. Empathetic and patient, Benson excels at helping families in crisis, taking time to understand what the underlying trauma or barriers are. After almost a decade as a social worker, Benson knows that the problems most families struggle with are rarely simple or easily resolved. Benson recently assisted a mother whose children came to the attention of FCCS after she overdosed. This mom, a recovering addict who had relapsed, had witnessed the murder of a beloved family member and turned to drugs as a coping mechanism. Knowing this background allowed Benson to more effectively help this family in their time of need. Ultimately, when Benson first meets a parent in crisis who might be afraid to talk to a caseworker, she likes to reference FCCS's mission statement. "We protect children and strengthen families," she often tells her clients. "Let me know how we can strengthen yours."

# 2020 REPORT OF SERVICES

In 2020, Franklin County Children Services provided help for **29,307** 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 ensuring a safe, permanent home for every child who cannot remain with or return to family.

### In 2020:

- **130** adoptions were legalized
- Through FCCS's youth transition services department, **330** older youth under agency care were referred to resources focused on achieving independence and self-sufficiency.

## Well-being

Through our Volunteer Department, Children Services provides special opportunities and services to youth in order to enhance their well-being.

### In 2020:

- **4,720** children received gifts through the Holiday Wish program provided by **2,050** individuals and **65** groups.
- FCCS's Volunteer Department has hundreds of dedicated mentors matched with agency youth via our longstanding Friendship, Malaika, Simba and College-Bound mentoring programs. We have a committed team of Crisis Center volunteers at our intake, assessment and investigations office, ready to help and comfort children coming into the center and provide a safe and caring environment for them when we are able to safely return to the office.
- Length and strength of relationships are critical to the success of our one-on-one mentoring partnerships and we strive to cultivate both, especially during the recent pandemic. As our volunteer program increasingly focuses on matching higher risk youth, ensuring continuous engagement in supportive and dedicated mentoring relationships is key in promoting positive lifelong outcomes.
- FCCS mentors are a nurturing, stabilizing influence in the lives of our youth, even in a pandemic. In a 2020 survey, **100%** of responding mentees reported that they felt that their mentor cared about them, that they tried to follow their mentor's advice, and **95%** said that they trusted their mentor.



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

**General Information:**  
614-229-7100

**Adoption:**  
614-341-6060

**Kinship:**  
614-341-6161

**Volunteers & Mentors:**  
614-275-2690

**Communications:**  
614-275-2523

**Foster Home Recruitment:**  
614-275-2711



## 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. FCCS 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 2020, there were:

- **27,052** intake referrals received
- **12,827** referrals screened in for investigation/assessment
- Ongoing services for **4,374** cases
- **10,148** children and **13,250** adults served as part of the agency's active ongoing caseload
- Family services for **4,258** children through managed care partnerships

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 2020, Franklin County Children Services had:

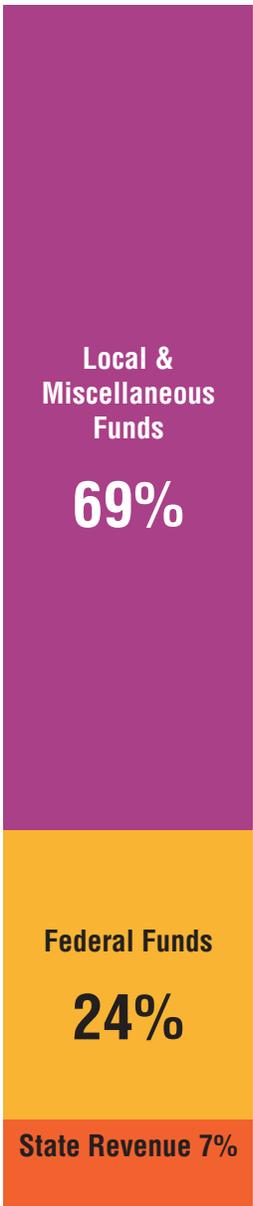
- **3,943** children in agency custody
- **2,819** children in paid care
- **1,959** children placed in purchased foster care
- **674** children placed in group or institutional care
- **1,662** children placed with relatives or in other kinship arrangement



# FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

## 2020 INCOME STATISTICS

<b>Operating Fund Balance as of January 1, 2020</b>	<b>\$127,509,079</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>(Cash Basis):</b>
<b>Local &amp; Miscellaneous Funds</b>	<b>\$138,209,858</b>
Property Taxes	\$135,856,539
Interfund Revenue	1,608,644
Board & Care from Parents	315,409
Miscellaneous	429,266
<b>Federal Funds</b>	<b>\$47,676,607</b>
Title IV-E Placement (Administration)	\$23,309,826
Title IV-E ProtectOHIO Waiver	505,922
Title IV-E Administration	16,820,037
Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, VA Benefits	960,943
Title IV-B - ESSA (Emergency Services Supplemental Assistance)	679,874
CHAFFEE Independent Living Program	1,345,496
Miscellaneous	4,054,509
<b>State Revenue</b>	<b>\$14,765,017</b>
Regional Training	\$1,073,036
Child Protective & Feisel Allocation	7,590,587
Miscellaneous	6,101,394
<b>Total 2020 Income</b>	<b>\$200,651,482</b>
<b>Beginning Balance plus 2020 Income</b>	<b>\$328,160,561</b>



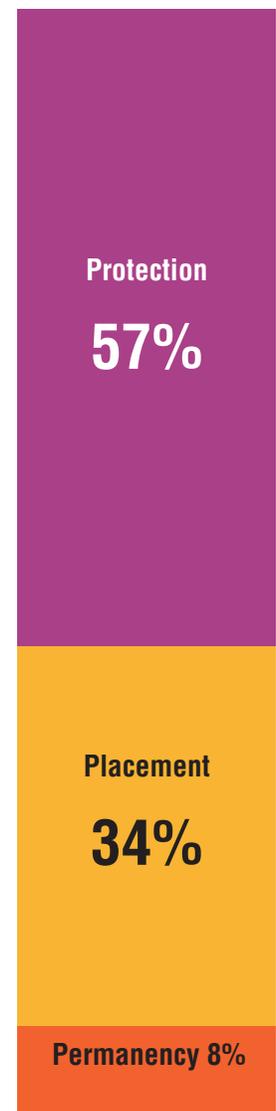
# FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

## 2020 EXPENSE STATISTICS

### Operating Expenditures

(Cash Basis):

Program	Amount
<b>Protection Program</b>	<b>\$113,196,869</b>
Intake & Investigations	\$35,694,143
Casework Protective Services	38,354,615
Care Partnerships	32,460,664
Family Support Services	6,687,447
<b>Placement Program</b>	<b>\$67,628,441</b>
Family Care Services	\$11,647,137
Foster Home Care	30,519,921
Group Home Care	6,657,192
Kinship Care	2,920,976
Institutional Care	15,883,215
<b>Permanency Program</b>	<b>\$16,300,281</b>
Adoption Services	\$9,490,131
Child Enrichment Services	4,220,226
Emancipation Services	2,589,924
<b>Total 2020 Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>\$197,125,591</b>
<b>Operating Fund Balance as of December 31, 2020</b>	<b>\$131,034,970</b>
<b>Ending Balance plus 2020 Expenses</b>	<b>\$328,160,561</b>



## FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

# 2020 PURCHASED SERVICES

A New Leaf, Inc.	\$1,668,055	Jewish Family Services	\$61,600
Action For Children	\$33,747	Journey Home Foster Care Of Ohio	\$24,250
Adriel School	\$782,240	Julia Paige Family Center	\$266,116
Agape For Youth	\$44,340	Kids Count Too	\$107,945
All That (Teens Hopeful About Tomorrow)	\$25,000	Kids Learn & Care	\$10,682
Applewood Centers	\$334,073	Lakeside For Children	\$46,603
Bair Foundation	\$2,067,445	LHS Family & Youth Services	\$666,650
Bellefaire JCB	\$358,916	LifeStart	\$536,333
Belmont Pines Hospital	\$1,091,012	Lighthouse Youth Services	\$15,776
Big Brothers Big Sisters	\$126,330	Maryhaven, Inc.	\$1,423,626
Boundless Behavioral Health	\$35,000	McCallum Group LLC	\$108,150
Buckeye Ranch	\$7,503,658	Mustard Seed Foundation	\$78,625
Caregivers Helper, Inc.	\$219,766	National Youth Advocate Program	\$8,558,856
Caring For Kids, Inc.	\$598,381	Nationwide Children's Hospital (ECMH)	\$47,867
Carrington Youth Academy	\$131,415	Necco LLC	\$152,442
Center For Family Safety & Healing (Fostering Connections)	\$10,198	Netcare Access (Psychological Assessments)	\$172,210
Children Have Options In Caring Environments Inc.	\$7,037	New Beginnings Residential Treatment Center	\$40,359
Children's Hospital Medical Center	\$425,031	New Life Group Homes	\$1,395,224
Children's Hunger Alliance	\$25,000	New Story Of Ohio	\$131,955
Christian Children's Home	\$22,800	Oasis Therapeutic Foster Care Network	\$388,653
City Of Columbus	\$78,209	Oesterlen Services For Youth	\$591,164
Community Refugee & Immigration Services (Parenting)	\$147,309	OhioGuidestone	\$154,184
Community Shelter Board	\$111,060	Ohio Mentor	\$1,139,138
Consumer Support Services	\$830,715	One Way Services For Youth	\$42,840
Cornell Abraxas Group	\$406,479	Piney Ridge Center Inc. (Woodridge Of Missouri)	\$137,250
Detroit Behavioral Health	\$462,825	Pressley Ridge	\$37,918
Devereux Foundation	\$202,678	Resolute Acquisition Corporation	\$144,108
Directions For Youth	\$80,000	Rite Of Passage-Hillcrest Academy	\$170,172
Dungarvin Ohio, Inc.	\$916,919	Rolling Hills	\$51,360
Eastway Corporation	\$1,438,557	RTC Resource Acquisition Corp	\$290,700
Eden Counseling Centers	\$30,607	Safehouse Ministries	\$283,563
Educational Service Center Of Central Ohio	\$1,248,452	Sequel Pomegranate Health Systems	\$6,205,611
ENA/Necco	\$1,161,867	Sojourners Care Network	\$14,961
Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services	\$54,167	Southeast Inc.	\$262,660
Fairfield Information Services (Drug Screens)	\$579,355	Specialized Alternatives For Youth	\$2,948,390
Foundations For Living (Keystone Richland Center)	\$447,755	St. Stephen's Community Services	\$1,308,075
Fox Run Center For Children & Adolescents	\$1,757,927	St. Vincent Family Center	\$1,392,816
George Junior Republic	\$1,811,973	Start 2 Finish	\$4,495
Gracehaven Inc.	\$251,995	UMCH Family Services	\$2,201,535
Greater Hilltop Shalom Zone (After-School Activities)	\$39,375	Unk's Place Inc.	\$130,090
High Hopes Enrichment Center	\$5,330	Village Network	\$5,409,310
Hittle House	\$130,116	White Deer Run	\$201,670
Hope Haven For Girls	\$127,305	Willow Branches Of Healing	\$139,850
House Of New Hope	\$434,276	Woodridge Of Missouri	\$392,215
Huckleberry House	\$331,018	Youth Advocate Services	\$2,258,798
Indiana Developmental Training Center	\$499,411	Youth Villages	\$3,219,650

<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$72,461,568</b>
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<b>Payment to Children Services Adoptive Homes</b>	<b>\$4,194,280</b>
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<b>Other Purchased Social Services</b>	<b>\$394,720</b>
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<b>Total Purchased Social Services</b>	<b>\$77,050,568</b>
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# FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES 2020 COMMISSIONERS, BOARD & COMMITTEES

## Franklin County Commissioners

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Kevin Boyce  
Marilyn Brown

## Franklin County Children Services Board

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Joy Soll, Vice Chair  
Maggie Lewis, Secretary  
Rev. Dr. Michael Bean  
Tiffany Hunt  
Elizabeth Martinez  
Douglas Moore  
Elon Simms  
Tammy Wharton

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Mary Bynum  
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Tobi Furman  
Kelly Kildow  
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Patti Aronhalt  
Haley Brickman, Ph.D.  
Rev. Norman Brown, Ph.D.  
Greg Carlucci  
Terrence S. McTier Jr., Ph.D.  
James Ryan  
Carla Williams  
Lee Wooding





# Always There for Families

Franklin County Children Services | Report to the Community

855 W. Mound Street | Columbus, Ohio 43223 | 614-275-2571

[childrenservices.franklincountyohio.gov](http://childrenservices.franklincountyohio.gov)



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