# PARTNERING FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES & THRIVING COMMUNITIES







## **OUR MISSION:**

SAFETY, PERMANENCY &

## 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

# Four cornerstones form the foundation of a strong network to advocate and care for our children—and all four start with genuine, compassionate services.

#### At Children Services, we care about families.

Protecting children by strengthening families lies at the heart of everything we do. Families like Jessica D. Jessica tragically lost a niece and nephew in a drowning accident. When she learned that their siblings had entered foster care, she made a commitment to keep her extended family together. With the support of her kinship care team, Jessica, like hundreds of kinship families, altered her life and realigned priorities so the family could stay together.

We know that children naturally feel safer and more comfortable with relatives or loved ones than they do in an unfamiliar environment. Ensuring children live with kin decreases the likelihood of additional moves to different homes and increases the child's sense of belonging and well-being. The enduring impact of kinship care on children's lives is immeasurable.

We care about children. We intentionally set out to reduce the number of children placed in residential facilities. It's great to share that our values are aligning with our results. Since 2017, residential placements have dropped significantly—more than 43%. Two best practices contributing to those results are our family team meeting process (see page 7) and our consistent focus on placing children in family-like settings whenever possible. This laser focus means that, over the last five years, more than 80% of the children requiring a transition were initially placed in family-like settings—with kin or in foster care.

National assessments consistently tell us that the pandemic took a toll on children's educational achievement and mental wellness. These issues represent a double threat to children in the foster care system. We convened more than 100 experts and child advocates for two mental health summits in December 2022 and we identified a number of practices we can use to address and promote mental wellness. We also plan to host a mental health summit for youth in 2023 to hear youth thoughts and recommendations.

We care about staff. COVID frayed work connectedness, but we are fortunate to have a resilient, highly dedicated team. Our success directly depends upon them. It's critical that we demonstrate our gratitude, respect, and support for our staff's willingness to go the extra mile for those we serve.

We care about community. Our connections and relationships with community leaders and family service providers empower us to holistically uplift our families. We willingly join arms with more than 100 partners who advance and enrich our services.

Thank you to everyone who is on this journey with us. This is hard but essential work. Together, we can help ensure that every child thrives in a healthy, stable home.

Sincerely,

Chip Spinning Executive Director

Franklin County Children Services



FCCS Executive Director Chip Spinning with FCCS Board Chair Tammy Wharton at the 2022 Volunteer Reception.

## 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

From annual events and community gatherings to festive celebrations for our children and families, here's a look at some of the year's best moments at Franklin County Children Services.





FCCS Career Day



Community Partner Mental Health Summit



Safety Fair



Team FCCS at the UNCF Columbus Walk for Education



#### **CASEWORKERS:**

## COMMITTED TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The child welfare professionals at Franklin County Children Services work tirelessly and selflessly to ensure the safety and stability of our community's children and families. Here's a look at how three of FCCS's most dedicated caseworkers demonstrate this commitment daily.

Diligent, friendly and caring. These are just a few words that describe Intake Screening Caseworker Erica Davis who has been at FCCS for 12 years. "People don't realize everything that screening does," Davis says, noting



that Intake screening caseworkers answer phone calls, do crisis management, handle their own placements on the weekends, and much more. Being at the intake level where those in need come into FCCS's "front door," Davis appreciates the chance to help families who might be in crisis. Being there and offering help is always rewarding, she says. "Seeing the impact we can have on people and their lives in general is motivating. Sometimes I answer a call and it is like a therapy session. They just needed someone to talk to."

As a caseworker in FCCS's Medically Involved Serious Harm unit, based at the Center for Family Safety and Healing, Carrie Miller faces each day with enthusiasm and purpose. Miller handles some of the



toughest situations that a caseworker can encounter: serious injuries, child fatalities and near fatalities, medical neglect and other complicated cases. For her professional expertise and dedication to keeping

children safe while giving families the support they need, Miller was honored with FCCS's 2022 Nancy Fitzgivens Child Protection Award. One of Miller's greatest strengths is meeting families where they are in a compassionate, nonjudgmental manner. "I make it very clear that I'm here to work with them and will do my best to benefit them, no matter what the situation is," she says. "It makes the families more responsive when they know you're there to help."

For West Region's Sharon Steele, building relationships and establishing trust with families is key to being a good ongoing caseworker. She recalls a case in which a single father physically abused his



teen daughter, and they were separated. Eventually, the father learned how to parent and the two were reunited. Now the teen, who once struggled in school, is pursuing a college education and remains close with Steele. "Her dad told me that I was going to be a part of their family for the rest of her life and I'm OK with that," she says.

Whether she's responding to emails, making home visits, processing paperwork or attending court hearings, Steele doesn't take her responsibilities as a caseworker lightly. "It requires patience, dedication, flexibility and a willingness to work with families for an extended time," she says. "Once you step into these children's lives, they rely on you to see them through their situations for as long as it takes."

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#### FCCS:

## **ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING FAMILIES**

Franklin County Children Services is all about partnering with families. We create rapport with children and parents, offering encouragement and support when needed and cultivating lasting connections. Here are a few key ways in which we advocate for healthy families and build thriving communities.

An active collaboration between families and their service teams. Critical Event Family Team Meetings (CEFTMs) are a perfect example of how Franklin County Children Services helps children by strengthening families. These facilitated meetings have achieved excellent outcomes for youth in crisis while empowering their families to better help them. according to Joseph Humenay, associate director of performance review at FCCS. It's all about giving everyone a seat at the table while ensuring a child's safety, well-being and stability. With CETFMs, families value the chance to have a voice in their child's care and treatment plan. "Families appreciate being heard and our willingness to get engaged. They learn that we're there to help them and that we have a lot of different resources available," Humenay says.

Part of Franklin County Children Services' longstanding Family-to-Family program, **National Family Week** honors outstanding family achievements. A grassroots collaboration with Gladden Community



parent Tatianna Mack (center) at

National Family Week

House, Central Community House and St. Stephen's East, North and South locations, Family-to-Family assists and empowers parents and children in their own communities. National Family Week is a joyful annual celebration of those accomplishments.

Nathan and Traci Wurschmidt got into **foster care** because they wanted to advocate for kids. What this Galloway couple didn't know is that they would end up mending families in the process. Four years into fostering for Franklin County Children Services through the Buckeye Ranch, the Wurschmidts have

unexpectedly found their calling as parent mentors. "The relationships that we have built with these bio families have become so dear to our hearts," says Traci. One biological family in particular has not only reunified with their daughter



but they are sober, stable and doing well, thanks in large part to Traci and Nathan's unwavering support and unconditional love. This birth family has become dear friends and a permanent part of the Wurschmidt's extended family. "We are so proud of them and how

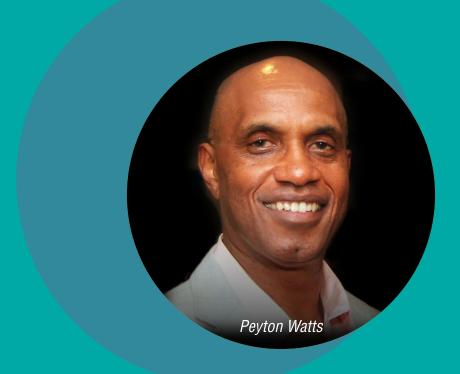
far they have come," Traci says.

"Wanted. Chosen.
Loved. Adopted."
Timmy, 12, wore a
shirt with these exact
words when he joined
his new family on
National Adoption Day
at Franklin County



Probate Court. Raising awareness about the more than 115,000 children waiting to be adopted from foster care in the United States, **National Adoption Day** is an annual event that celebrates permanency for children. Billie and Nancy Petitt-Fourman, Timmy's adoptive parents who live in Greenville, Ohio, were beyond excited to make him a permanent part of their big, bustling family in November 2022. "It means the world to me to know that he's safe and happy," Nancy says. "That's all that matters."

#### MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Tie a tie. Cut the grass. Balance a checkbook. These are the things that Simba mentor **Peyton Watts** is planning to teach his 14-year-old mentee Malik — things he feels a man should know how to do. Recently matched with Malik through Franklin County Children Services' Simba mentoring program, Watts is gladly taking on the responsibility of arming his mentee with these important life skills. Watts has been part of the longstanding Simba program for African American boys and men for almost a decade and mentored two other young men through high school. Now committed to making a difference in Malik's life, Watts plans to be there for him long term as well.

As a mentor, Watts, a retired lieutenant colonel with the Ohio State Highway Patrol, wants to be present for boys who lack role models. "We owe children the best that we can provide for them," he says, and he's committed to giving his mentees opportunities that they might not have otherwise. Watts enjoys taking his mentee on special outings, but says that just being together doing everyday things with Malik is equally important. "What I've found is that most of these boys just want to be in the company of a man, hanging out or watching a game."

A member of the Simba Advisory Board, Watts often encourages others to become Simba mentors. "Many of our African American boys are in crisis due in part to the absence of a father in their lives," says Watts. "Simba provides an opportunity for African American men to fill that void by spending time, sharing their knowledge and life experiences to help shape and make a positive difference." Watts knows he's benefited from the experience as well. "This is one of the most rewarding things I've ever done," he says.

To learn more about Simba and how all of FCCS's mentoring opportunities are enriching children's lives, call 614-275-2690 or visit https://fccs.us/volunteers-and-mentors

## FAMILY SUPPORTING FAMILY:

## KINSHIP CAREGIVERS

Life took an unexpected turn for Elizabeth Welin when her nephew Jonah was born and his parents were unable to care for him. This amazing aunt, along with her parents Peter and Jane, immediately stepped in to ensure that Jonah had extended family ready to meet his every need the moment he was discharged from the hospital. "We knew it was going to be a complicated situation," Welin says, noting Jonah's parents' longstanding history of substance use and mental health concerns.

When they initially found out Jonah's parents were expecting, Elizabeth and her parents proactively contacted Franklin County Children Services and the hospital to let everyone know that "we're here and ready to help if needed," Welin adds. "We were totally looking out for Jonah's best interests."

or permanent basis, kinship

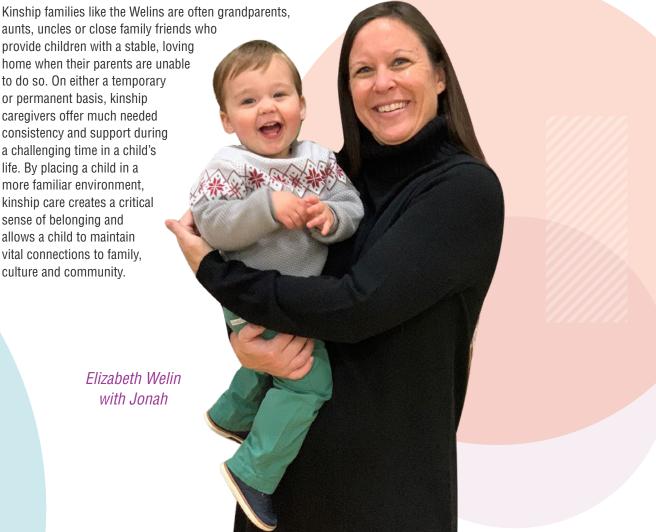
life. By placing a child in a more familiar environment,

sense of belonging and allows a child to maintain vital connections to family. culture and community.

Welin, who lives in Cincinnati and works in the clinical research field, formally adopted Jonah in December 2022. "Watching him grow, develop and thrive" has been the best part of caring for her 21-month-old nephew, Welin says. Jonah is a chatty, happy guy who loves to eat and adores his Golden Retriever sister Izzy. His first words were the dog's name, Welin says.

While life with Jonah is a joy, the overall situation can be bittersweet since her brother. Jonah's father. is unable to be involved in his son's life. "It's hard," Welin concludes. "You want to do what you can to help them."

To learn more about how kinship care helps children like Jonah in times of crisis, visit fccs.us/kinship-1



Elizabeth Welin with Jonah

## 2022 REPORT OF SERVICES

In 2022, Franklin County Children Services helped **28,393** children and their families via direct collaboration with the agency's professional staff and through partnership with 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 every child.

#### In 2022:

- 127 adoptions were legalized
- Through FCCS's youth transition services department, 146 older youth under agency care were referred to resources focused on achieving independence and self-sufficiency
- 22 youth headed off to college or other higher-learning opportunities while 152 youth transitioned out of the child welfare system

#### Well-being

Our Volunteer Department is just one of many services our agency provides to ensure the well-being of children. Through our Volunteer Department, Children Services provides special opportunities and services to youth in order to enhance their well-being.

#### In 2022:

- 4,636 children received gifts through the Holiday Wish program provided by 1,171 individuals and 106 businesses and organizations. This annual campaign raised \$211,000 for the FCCS Children's Fund.
- FCCS's Volunteer and Organizational Health departments have 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 assist children coming into the center by creating a safe, comfortable and caring environment.

Length and strength of relationships are critical to the success of our one-on-one mentoring partnerships and we strive to cultivate both. Our mentors are a nurturing, stabilizing influence in the lives of our youth and we do everything we can to support and encourage these often transformative relationships.

24-hour Child Abuse Hotline:

614-229-7000

614-341-6161

Kinship:

**General Information:** 

**Volunteers & Mentors:** 

614-275-2690

Adoption:

614-341-6060

614-229-7100

**Communications:** 614-275-2523

**Foster Home Recruitment:** 

614-275-2711

Website: FCCS.US



#### 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 delinguent.

When investigations indicate a need for ongoing services, a case is opened and sent to one of the agency's two regional offices or three 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.

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 2022, Franklin County Children Services had:

- 3,090 children in agency custody
- 2,210 children in paid care
- 1,557 children placed in purchased foster care
- 523 children placed in group or institutional care
- 1,316 children placed with relatives

#### In 2022, there were:

- 27,745 intake referrals received
- 12,516 referrals screened in for investigation/assessment
- Ongoing services for 3,778 cases
- 8,988 children and 11,973 adults served as part of the agency's active ongoing caseload
- Family services for **4,555** children through managed care partnerships



Operating Fund Balance as of January 1, 2022

CHAFFEE Independent Living Program

Miscellaneous

## 2022 INCOME STATISTICS

\$155,667,175

1,639,269

4,534,098

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Income	(Cash Basis):
Local & Miscellaneous Funds	\$143,425,643
Property Taxes	\$140,743,036
Interfund Revenue	1,617,295
Board & Care from Parents	194,318
Miscellaneous	870,995
deral Funds	\$42,358,955
Title IV-E Placement (Administration)	\$17,653,388
Title IV-E ProtectOHIO Waiver	0
Title IV-E Administration	16,792,460
Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, VA Benefits	1,008,394
Title IV-B - ESSA (Emergency Services Supplemental Assistance)	731,346

State Revenue\$12,522,015Regional Training\$708,554Child Protective & Feisel Allocation7,818,941Miscellaneous3,994,520

Total 2022 Income \$198,306,614

Beginning Balance plus 2022 Income \$353,973,788

Local & Miscellaneous Funds

Federal Funds 22%

State Revenue 6%







#### FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

## 2022 EXPENSE STATISTICS

Operating Expenditures	(Cash Basis):	
Protection Program	\$123,185,808	
Intake & Investigations	\$36,140,523	
Casework Protective Services	38,706,560	
Care Partnerships	42,019,322	
Family Support Services	6,319,402	Protection
		63%
Placement Program	\$57,103,402	00 /0
Family Care Services	\$12,323,921	
Foster Home Care	23,664,770	
Group Home Care	10,049,981	
Kinship Care	2,631,556	
Institutional Care	8,433,175	
Permanency Program	\$16,612,478	
Adoption Services	\$9,988,720	
Child Enrichment Services	4,114,424	Placement
Youth Transition Services	2,509,334	29%
Total 2022 Operating Expenditures	\$196,901,688	
Operating Fund Balance as of December 31, 2022	\$157,072,100	
Ending Balance plus 2022 Expenses	\$353,973,788	

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Permanency 8%

## 2022 PURCHASED SOCIAL SERVICES

1 Trust Group Home	\$451,775	Indiana Developmental Training Center	\$550,493
A Better Life 2 Embrace	\$75,205	Individual Couple and Family Therapy	\$12,084
A Life's Purpose Inc.	\$40,600	Jaystarr Homes 2 Inc.	\$296,555
A New Leaf Inc.	\$1,252,486	Jewish Family Services	\$3,200
A Place of Hope	\$72,736	Journey Home Foster Care	\$1,810
Ability BB LLC	\$31,033	Katie Phillips LLC	\$3,750
Ability Matters	\$152,208	Keystone Continuum	\$134,520
Action For Children	\$90,044	Keystone Richland Center	\$167,659
ADAMH	\$92,220	Kids Count Too Inc.	\$109,905
Adelphoi Village Inc.	\$31,391	Krown Solutions LLC	\$416,600
Adriel School Inc.	\$562,181	Laboratory Corporation Of America	\$2,340
Advantage Family Outreach And Foster Care	\$8,520	Legacy Residential Homes	\$795,059
Against All Odds	\$173,990	LifeStart Inc.	\$311,058
All That (Teens Hopeful About Tomorrow)	\$54,585	Life's Right Direction	\$11,000
Applewood Centers		Lighthouse Youth Services	\$95,861
	\$47,708		
Avertest LLC	\$241,407	Lutheran Homes Society	\$544,017
Axis Behavioral Health	\$1,663	Marie's House of Hope	\$146,734
Bair Foundation	\$1,568,336	Maryhaven Inc.	\$11,234
Bellefaire JCB	\$79,671	MBH of Elgin LLC	\$33,426
Benchmark Behavioral	\$226,420	Natasha's House LLC	\$2,795
Better Beginnings for a Brighter Future	\$4,800	National Youth Advocate Program	\$6,256,532
BHC Belmont Pines Hospital	\$231,517	Nationwide Children's Hospital	\$531,916
BHC Fox Run Hospital	\$440,977	Necco LLC	\$304,253
Big Brothers Big Sisters	\$184,238	Netcare Corporation	\$99,619
Boundless Health Inc.	\$157,680	New Beginnings Group Home	\$94,200
Brighter Future For Youth	\$316,400	New Life Group Homes	\$729,107
Buckeye Ranch Inc.	\$4,103,307	NM Sansait MD LLC	\$16,132
Cadence Care Network	\$17,111	Nuhop Center For Experiential Learning	\$2,250
Caregivers Helper	\$218,648	Oasis Therapeutic Foster Care	\$207,897
Caring For Kids Inc.	\$478,336	Oesterlen Services For Youth	\$381,083
Carrington Youth Academy	\$335,908	OhioGuidestone	\$301,887
CDK & Associates LLC	\$1,753	Ohio Mentor Inc.	\$1,134,195
Children's Hospital Medical Center	\$377,997	Our Children Our Future LLC	\$104,450
Children's Hunger Alliance	\$25,000	Pickerington Local	\$1,942
City of Refuge	\$96,768	Preventative Aftercare	\$362,478
Cleveland Christian Home Inc.	\$83,545	Quiver Full Adoptions	\$2,150
Community Refugee & Immigration Services	\$163,861	RAD Homes	\$241,615
Community Shelter Board	\$158,790	Reflections Group Home	\$221,920
Connected by Love Adoptions	\$1,950	Rite of Passage Inc.	\$329,283
Conway Behavioral Health Hospital	\$63,616	Robin's House	\$52,246
Cornell Companies	\$778,222	Safehouse Ministries	\$179,448
Cotillion Home	\$15,376	Safely Home Inc.	\$35,770
Dee's Place LLC	\$20,460	Second Chance Dayton	\$86,896
Devereux Foundation	\$46,730	Self-Reliance Riverview South	\$801,892
		SJO Kids Inc.	
Directions For Youth And Families	\$86,670		\$53,788
Dungarvin Ohio LLC	\$509,172	Social Security Administration	\$273,548
Eastway Corporation	\$539,171	Sojourners Care Network	\$30,715
Eden Counseling Centers	\$9,707	Southeast Inc.	\$115,344
Educational Service Center of Central Ohio	\$2,205,304	Specialized Alternatives for Families & Youth of Ohio	\$2,028,824
ENA Inc.	\$422,582	Spirit of Faith Adoptions	\$1,000
Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services	\$93,333	St. Stephen's Community Services	\$1,357,511
Foundation of Love	\$446,115	St. Vincent Family Services	\$1,378,479
Freedom Youth Program	\$12,107	The Nutter Center For Empowering Women	\$25,000
FuturePromise		Twelve Of Ohio Inc.	\$33,120
	\$135,481		
Gateway to Success	\$262,070	Unified Dwelling LLC	\$485,450
George Junior Republic	\$205,862	United Methodist Behavorial Health System	\$3,557
Grace Hearts	\$240,525	United Methodist Children's Home Family Services	\$1,300,002
Gracehaven Inc.	\$19,350	Unk's Place Inc.	\$705,793
Guiding Path For Girls	\$446,750	Utopia Beginnings	\$225,848
Gulf Coast Treatment	\$178,750	Victory House LLC	\$80,835
Halt Violence	\$25,000	Village Network	\$3,978,107
Healing Pathways Transitional Homes	\$186,043	White Deer Run Inc.	\$4,563
Health Recovery	\$10,750	Willow Branches Of Healing	\$715,960
Hittle House LLC	\$118,800	Young Men's Christian Association of Akron OH	\$1,340
House of New Hope	\$192,816 \$162,670	Youth Advocate Services	\$1,781,178
Huckleberry House	\$163,679	Youth Intensive Services	\$79,350
HYS Hands Inc.	\$88,228	Youth Villages Inc.	\$1,896,267
I Am Boundless Inc.	\$446,839		

Subtotal	\$53,307,114
Payment to Children Services Adoptive Homes	\$4,068,131
Other Purchased Social Services	\$153,335
Total Purchased Social Services	\$57,679,784

## 2022 COMMISSIONERS, **BOARD & COMMITTEES**

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# PARTNERING FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES

Children Services Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

THRIVING COMMUNITIES

2022 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Released April 2023













