

Committed to Children & Families

Franklin County Children Services
Report to the Community | 2013



Committed to Children & Families

Franklin County Children Services
Report to the Community | 2013



Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

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



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



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.



Dear Community,

One of the first things that impressed me when I became the Executive Director of Franklin County Children Services was how committed this community is to children. While Children Services sees children who suffer from the affects of abuse and neglect every day, we also get to witness the often inspiring acts of those who help them recover. **That generosity of commitment and caring comes through our agency's professional caseworkers and support staff, foster and adoptive parents, kinship families, volunteers and all of our child-serving partner agencies.** Each demonstrates in their own unique way a special commitment to our community's most vulnerable children.

One example of commitment is a grandmother who relocated to Columbus to be closer to her three grandchildren who had been placed in foster care. This devoted grandmother found a new job, obtained an apartment and worked tirelessly with the children's caseworker to put resources in place to bring the family together. It was a great day when those three children, who had experienced so many disappointments and challenges, were finally able to move in with their loving grandmother.

Many of the commitments we see involve caring individuals who provide meaningful opportunities for children who might otherwise miss out, such as a 16-year-old who was struggling on his own without any family support. Fortunately, his best friend's parents decided to take him into their home. Here, this young man was able to experience—for the first time—some of life's greatest pleasures such as a traditional Thanksgiving meal and a festive birthday celebration.



These are just a few examples that demonstrate this community's commitment to children and families. We are fortunate here in Franklin County that most children have families who love them and protect them from harm. But when that doesn't happen and children's lives are in jeopardy, there are people, partner agencies and programs to help. Franklin County Children Services is proud to be a part of that supportive network.

Sincerely,

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

Chip M. Spinning
Executive Director
Franklin County Children Services



Intake: Franklin County Children Services' "Front Door"

It's late at night, and a Columbus Police cruiser pulls up to Franklin County Children Services' Intake building at 4071 E. Main St. in Whitehall. In the back of the cruiser are two young boys, frightened and hungry. These children, ages 5 and 8, were with their mother in a drug house on the near west side that was just raided by police. The boys, who saw their mother arrested, were found surrounded by drug paraphernalia and garbage.

In a crisis situation like this, the Intake team springs into action. An on-call nurse will evaluate the children's health, while a social service aide will get the boys cleaned and changed into fresh clothes, then give them a hot meal and maybe a toy or cozy blanket to comfort them. A caseworker will follow up, asking the boys questions about their well-being and living arrangements. This is called a safety assessment and one way a caseworker finds out with whom and where children are living, if their basic needs are being met, if they're attending school and doctor's appointments, and much more.

While this scenario sounds dramatic, it's typical for Intake, the "front door" of FCCS, which is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week to care for children in emergency situations such as these. FCCS is mandated by law to investigate all possible cases of child abuse, neglect and dependency. In 2013, Intake received 31,798 calls of suspected child abuse and of those, 13,282 were "screened in," which means that a caseworker conducted an official assessment to determine if a child was safe and if a family might be in need of FCCS's services.

The heart of Intake is the agency's 24-hour child abuse hotline—614-229-7000. These calls, which are always confidential, are answered by highly-trained screeners who ask precise questions about the circumstances surrounding a possible concern of abuse or neglect. A screening decision maker then assesses these facts to see if the situation meets official agency criteria for investigation or further assessment.

"When it comes to identifying and preventing child abuse, neglect and dependency here in Central Ohio, Franklin County Children Services' Intake department is the first line of defense,"

according to Lara LaRoche, the agency's director of Intake, Investigations and Assessment. "We do careful, thorough assessments that ultimately lead to the engagement of families and the safety of our community's children," she said.

Transforming One Child's Life at a Time: The Magic of Mentoring

Growing up in a single-parent home wasn't easy for Franklin County Children Services mentor Eric Jones. "My mom didn't always understand the changes that I was going through. Sometimes I wished I had a male to talk to," he said. This is why Jones became a mentor: "I wanted to give someone else what I didn't have as a kid." Jones, an assistant professor of communication at Otterbein University and a mentor through FCCS's Simba program, is currently matched with 13-year-old Dante.

For more than 25 years, the Simba program has matched African-American men with African-American boys, to offer friendship, support and guidance. The goal is for mentors to build a bond with their mentees and help them develop self-esteem, academic excellence, career goals and plans for the future.

Patient and kindhearted, Jones has worked hard to develop a strong relationship with Dante. "It was tough in the beginning," he said. "I didn't push. I just let Dante know that I could relate to what he was going through, as someone who was also raised by a single mom."

The hard work has paid off. "We've developed a rapport and Dante looks forward to the time we spend together," noted Jones, who says he usually sees his "very energetic" mentee twice a month to play basketball, go to sporting events or work out at the gym.

Jones feels the relationship has been successful in part because of the support and involvement of Dante's mother. "Mentoring is about building trust, not just with your mentee, but with everyone around them," he said. "I usually contact his mother before we meet to see if there's anything she wants me to talk to Dante about when we're together, like school or other issues."

Mentors can play a critically important role in the lives of children like Dante who are overcoming difficult circumstances.

"One positive relationship may make the difference between his doing well in life and falling prey to bad choices. These are great kids with a lot to offer and they deserve a chance," Jones said.

FCCS is currently seeking dedicated male volunteers like Eric Jones to mentor youth involved with the agency. For more information on the many volunteer opportunities at Franklin County Children Services, visit www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services or call 614-275-2690.



Simba mentor Eric Jones (left) and mentee Dante

Casework 101: How FCCS Protects Children, From Intake to the Regions

When she returns to her desk each day at Franklin County Children Services' office in Whitehall, Intake caseworker Danielle Stucke usually finds a new stack of papers referring her to possible reports of abuse, neglect or dependency that need immediate assessment. They are generated by the agency's 24-hour hotline, 614-229-7000, called by concerned family members, neighbors, or those legally mandated to report such potential concerns such as teachers, doctors and child-care providers.

Stucke's day usually begins with a review of any new reports that need further assessment, phone calls or family visits. Intake workers are required to serve families according to mandated timelines. Before the time lapses, cases are then transitioned to regional caseworkers.

Intake caseworkers move at a much faster pace: getting in and thoroughly assessing a situation as quickly as possible to ensure a child's safety.

"A lot of it involves a gut feeling," said Stucke, who says she has learned to rely on her instincts. She's in one of the agency's Alternative Response units, which handle lower- to moderate-risk cases in a collaborative fashion with families. In her daily work, Stucke tries to get to the root of the immediate problems faced by a family, whether it's helping them work out a transportation issue, get their electricity turned back on, or ensure there's enough food in the house.



Intake's Danielle Stucke



West Region's Craig Fitzgerald

Across town, Craig Fitzgerald, a child welfare casework supervisor who oversees a team of four caseworkers at FCCS's West Region office, says the cases that Stucke and her Intake counterparts generate mean his staff could have months or sometimes years of work with a single family to follow up and address concerns.

Effectively collaborating with families on the regional level involves frequent interaction and thorough documentation. These caseworkers build a solid, ongoing rapport with their families, figuring out how they can best help them get stabilized and self-sufficient. "I tell young caseworkers that the paperwork is necessary, but I also want to encourage them to engage with the families they serve," said Fitzgerald.

With regional casework, there is time to delve deeper into the causes of difficult home situations, such as domestic violence, drug addictions, or parental neglect. **The healing starts with a conversation – finding out exactly what a family needs.** Fitzgerald says his West Region workers focus on connecting children and families to needed resources, whether it's making a referral for parenting classes, mental health counseling, or employment assistance. "We are always working toward strengthening the family with resources and support," he said.

Empowerment Starts at Home: FCCS's Family-to-Family Program

For Columbus resident Susan O'Herron, nothing is more important than ensuring the safety and well-being of her six grandchildren. When these children unexpectedly came to live with her last summer, this devoted grandmother selflessly stepped up to the challenge of caring for them. Thankfully, she didn't have to do this alone.

Because of Franklin County Children Services' Family-to-Family program at St. Stephen's Community House East, O'Herron got the extra support and encouragement she needed while adjusting to the monumental challenge of caring for six extended family members.

She fit everyone into her tiny apartment while hunting for more appropriate housing, and stretched her financial resources to provide enough food and clothing for all six kids. And when it became clear that the children needed to stay with her permanently, O'Herron was able to navigate a complex legal system to obtain custody of her grandchildren and guarantee their long-term well-being. As this was all happening, Family-to-Family was there every step of the way, helping O'Herron apply for benefits she might not have known she was eligible for, and ensuring that the children's educational and medical needs were met.

A grassroots community partnership established in 2000, Family-to-Family aims to help FCCS-referred families like O'Herron's right in their own neighborhoods, keeping them strong, stable and self-sufficient. In addition to St. Stephen's East, North and South locations, Family-to-Family partners with Central Community House on the near east side, and Gladden Community House on the city's near west side in Franklinton. Serving families in 13 zip codes throughout the greater Columbus area, the program recognizes that children and families are best served in their own communities.

Families are more likely to work through personal challenges when they can receive needed services and support right where they live, according to Megan Stevens, Franklin County Children Service's director of community development.

"The Family-to-Family program has demonstrated again and again that public agencies such as FCCS need community-based partnerships to achieve lasting, positive outcomes for children and their families," Stevens said.

For more about how Franklin County Children Services' Family-to-Family program is helping strengthen and empower families in their own communities, call **614-341-6161** or visit www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services/programs/family-to-family.cfm



Susan O'Herron and her six grandchildren



Children's Day at COSI



FamJam Family Enrichment Festival and the City of Columbus Neighborhood Pride



The Year in Review: Committed to Children & Families

For more than half a century, Franklin County Children Services has stayed true to its mandate of child protection. No other entity in central Ohio has our mission of ensuring safety, permanency and well-being for children. With our team of dedicated child welfare professionals, we protect our community's most vulnerable so they can grow up safely and have the healthy, happy childhoods they deserve. We also help children and their families weather challenging situations, emerging strong, stable and self-sufficient.

FCCS certainly can't do this monumental job alone: we rely on our community partners, provider agencies, dedicated volunteers, kinship families, foster parents, mandated reporters, area businesses, and countless additional individuals and groups who support our critically important work. We are all in this together and we thank you for helping FCCS maintain its unwavering commitment to children and families.



Holiday Visitation community volunteers



Citizens Advisory Committee's Girls Self-Esteem Workshops



Community partner Amethyst Inc.



National Adoption Day – Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and the National Center for Adoption Law and Policy at Capital University



Community partner Wal-Mart during Holiday Wish's 50th anniversary season



National Family Week and Family-to-Family



Community partner Julia Nielsen Greater Hilltop Area Shalom Zone



25-year FCCS volunteers Jim Ryan and Debbie Sartori



FCCS West Region caseworker Arlene "Sam" Jones



Simba mentor Mark Jackson at the Faith Mission on 8th Avenue homeless shelter



FCCS's annual Kinship Care Conference



First annual Graduation Party for FCCS Youth



Intake caseworker Emily Wampler



FCCS East Region caseworker Shannon Evans with a family



FCCS East Region child welfare casework supervisor Andrew Buss

Franklin County Children Services 2013 Report of Services

Franklin County Children Services provided help for **30,264** 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 his or her family.

- **153** adoptions were finalized
- **350** older youth received emancipation or independent living services to enable them to make a transition from being cared for to being on their own
- **38** 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.

- **350** children were mentored by more than **450** volunteers through the agency's Friendship, Malaika, Simba and College-Bound mentoring programs. Youth were also helped by **40** FCCS crisis center volunteers at the agency's Intake & Investigations office
- **5,312** children received gifts through the Holiday Wish program provided by **1,477** individuals and **369** groups, with the assistance of more than **95** Holiday Wish volunteers
- **309** children and youth received services through the Therapeutic Arts Program, in partnership with Transit Arts and Neighborhood House

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 2013:

- **31,798** intake referrals received
- **12,381** family investigations completed
- Ongoing services for **4,865** families
- Protective services for **13,622** individual family members
- Family services to **2,851** children through managed care partnerships
- **10,805** 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 2013:

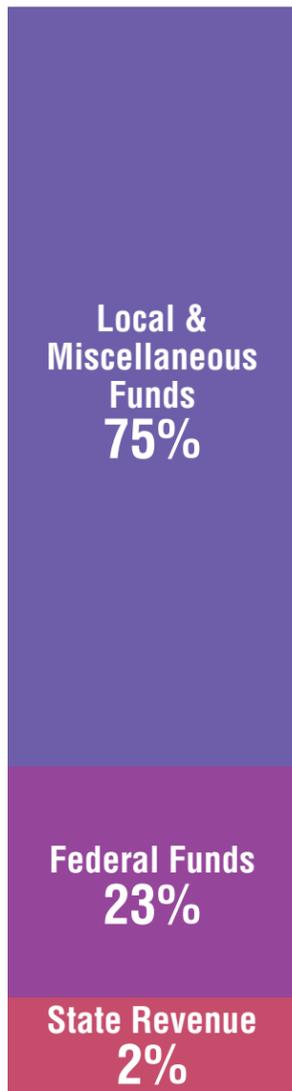
- **4,146** children in agency custody
- **3,106** children in paid care
- **2,278** children served in purchased foster care
- **1,199** children served in group or institutional care
- **1,450** children placed with relatives





Franklin County Children Services 2013 Income Statistics

Operating Fund Balance as of January 1, 2013	\$136,024,488
Income (Cash Basis):	
Local & Miscellaneous Funds	\$129,519,626
Property Taxes	\$128,082,559
Interfund Revenue	695,689
Board & Care from Parents	3,362
Miscellaneous	738,016
Federal Funds	\$39,305,736
Title IV-E Placement (Administration)	\$3,847,956
Title IV-E ProtectOHIO Waiver	19,026,224
Title IV-E Administration	11,270,719
Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, VA Benefits	804,436
Title IV-B - ESSA (Emergency Services Supplemental Assistance)	437,885
CHAFFEE Independent Living Program	741,499
Gateway CALL	400,000
Miscellaneous	2,777,017
State Revenue	\$4,791,283
Regional Training	\$770,085
Child Protective & Feisel Allocation	3,231,324
Miscellaneous	789,874
Total 2013 Income	\$173,616,645
Beginning Balance plus 2013 Income	\$309,641,133

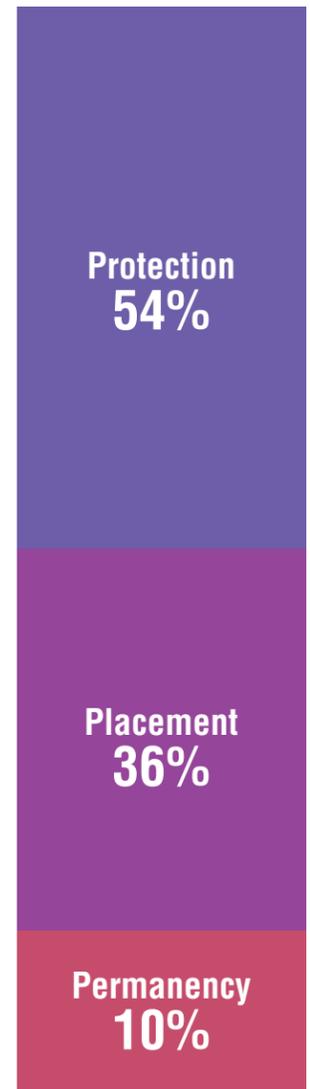


Franklin County Children Services 2013 Expense Statistics

Operating Expenditures

(Cash Basis):

Protection Program	\$93,347,083
Intake & Investigations	\$24,703,135
Casework Protective Services	37,984,283
Care Partnerships	22,039,800
Family Support Services	8,619,864
Placement Program	\$61,647,550
Family Care Services	\$4,546,078
Foster Home Care	21,676,407
Group Home Care	8,172,974
Kinship Care	11,027
Institutional Care	27,241,063
Permanency Program	\$15,700,092
Adoption Services	\$11,635,746
Child Enrichment Services	2,867,610
Emancipation Services	1,196,735
Building Expenses (Fund 2021)	626,358
Total 2013 Operating Expenditures	\$171,321,082
Building Expenses (Fund 4051)	\$14,519,624
Total 2013 Operating & Capital Expenditures	\$185,840,707
Operating Fund Balance as of December 31, 2013	\$123,800,427
Ending Balance plus 2013 Expenses	\$309,641,133



Franklin County Children Services 2013 Purchased Services

A New Leaf	\$ 1,458,990	House of New Hope	\$ 695,685
Adriel School	1,710,186	Huckleberry House Inc.	148,309
Alliance Human Services Inc.	668,393	Julia Paige Family Center LLC	210,229
Applewood Centers Inc.	213,104	Keith G. Hughes PhD	26,475
Bair Foundation	2,204,920	Keystone Richland Center LLC	799,171
Beech Brook	252,278	LHS Family and Youth Services Inc.	92,336
Bellefaire JCB	52,784	Life Start Inc.	274,259
BHC Belmont Pines Hospital	706,869	Maryhaven Inc.	1,392,439
BHC Fox Run Hospital Inc.	1,761,367	National Youth Advocate Program Inc.	5,113,739
Big Brothers Big Sisters Association	107,355	National Youth Advocate Program (Care Management)	9,636,000
Buckeye Ranch Inc.	9,220,490	Netcare Corporation	161,600
Buckeye Ranch (Care Management)	12,364,800	New Horizon Youth Center LLC	379,861
Caregivers Helper Inc.	125,519	New Horizons Ranch and Center Inc.	146,611
Carrington Youth Academy	187,388	New Life Group Homes LLC	757,637
Center of Vocational Alternatives	465,839	New Story of Ohio LLC	1,402,185
Center for Family Safety & Healing	63,550	Oasis Therapeutic Foster Care Inc.	395,605
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center	582,313	Oconomowoc Residential Programs Inc.	717,037
Columbus City Treasurer	183,406	Oesterlen Services for Youth	646,501
Community Refugee & Immigration Services	153,124	Ohio Guidestone	1,347,807
Consumer Support Services Inc.	5,112,933	Pomegranate Health Systems	6,133,590
Cornell Abraxas	132,349	Social Security Administration	42,900
Cornell Companies Group Inc.	540,182	Specialized Alternatives for Youth	1,391,943
Devereux Foundation	107,468	Spectrum Juvenile Justice Services	108,675
DOY Services Inc.	618,360	St. Joseph Orphanage	29,621
Dungarvin Ohio LLC	237,816	St. Stephen's Community Services Inc.	1,016,052
Eastway Corporation	700,729	St. Vincent Family Centers	1,166,225
Educational Service Center of Central Ohio	1,950,366	Starr Commonwealth	1,431,953
ENA Inc.	390,595	Tri-State Youth Authority Inc.	473,225
Franklin County ADAMH	713,750	UMCH Family Services	1,460,982
Fairfield Academy LTD	514,508	Village Network	5,400,110
Fairfield Information Services & Associates	299,189	White Deer Run Inc.	227,360
George Junior Republic in Pennsylvania	501,470	Woodridge of Missouri LLC	528,843
Greater Hilltop Area Shalom Zone CDC	27,014	Woods Services Inc.	583,428
Gregory C. Keck PhD	28,949	Youth Advocate Services	1,204,287
Hittle House LLC	95,584		

Subtotal **\$89,996,616**

**Payment to Children Services
Foster & Adoptive Homes** **\$4,736,805**

Other Purchased Social Services **\$632,542**

Total Purchased Social Services **\$95,365,963**

2013 Commissioners, Boards & Committees

Franklin County Commissioners

John O'Grady, President
Paula Brooks
Marilyn Brown

Franklin County Children Services Board

Joseph Mas, Chair
Shadya Yazback, Vice Chair
Maggie Lewis, Secretary
Rev. Michael Bean
Ruth Cavin
Babette Feibel
Douglas Moore
Charles Perotti
Necol Russell-Washington
Joy Soll
Tammy Wharton

Citizens Advisory Committee

Ruth Cavin, Chair
Phylicia Pegram, Vice Chair
Erica Allen
Mark Bobo
Pecola Brown
Joyce Dennis
Beth Heyer
Mary Koon
Kimberley Lloyd-Mason
Emma Thomas
Sinuon Todd
Valancia Turner
Christina Wilson

Volunteer Services Advisory Committee

Cheryl Harger, Chair
Heather Popio, Vice Chair
Debbie Sartori, Secretary
Elizabeth Escue
Afrika Gupton
John Henson
Beth Heyer
Lyn Kidd-Freeman
Michael Myers
Nancy Page
James Ryan
Brandee Trout

