

2019 LEVY BOOK

Safety, Permanency and Well-being for every child



Franklin County
**Children
Services**
Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

OUR VISION

*Safety, Permanency and
Well-being for every child*



Public children services agencies are statutorily obligated to assess allegations of abuse and neglect and assure the safety and well-being of children by partnering with their families to alleviate safety concerns. Ohio law further requires that Franklin County Children Services has the responsibility for serving the needs of Franklin County's children by providing treatment services, and alternative placement outside their home when such services and placement are necessary. The agency is also mandated to provide services to families to address any underlying concerns, promote stability and safely reunify children, whenever possible.

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OUR MISSION

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.

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INTRODUCTION

Each year, Franklin County Children Services helps more than 32,000 abused, neglected and dependent children – and it offers services and supports to thousands of troubled families throughout Franklin County. Approximately 67 percent of the agency’s operations are funded by two property tax levies, a 3.1 mill levy and a 1.9 mill levy.

One of the two, a 3.1 mill levy, approved by the county voters in 2009, expires at the end of 2019. Without a continuation of this levy, which generated more than 42 percent of the FCCS operating budget in 2018, Children Services will not be able to provide vitally needed services to abused and neglected children and their families. Therefore, the FCCS Board has approved a request asking the Franklin County Commissioners to place a 10-year, 3.1 mill replacement levy on the November 5, 2019 General Election ballot.

In planning for the 2019 levy, the FCCS Executive Director, Executive Council and Board considered key indicators to predict the level of services that will be needed by children and families over the next 10 years. These indicators (beginning on page 26 of this report) include the projected growth of the child population in Franklin County, as well as a look back at the service levels over the past 10 years, along with projections for the next 10 years. To determine an appropriate level of financial resources needed to meet these service needs, the levy millage request (beginning on page 30) is based on FCCS income assumptions, expenditure projections and a reasonable cash balance at the end of each year for the next 10 years. Being good stewards of tax dollars while making prudent financial choices is a principle taken most seriously by the FCCS Board and Executive Director.

This 2019 Levy Book is prepared for the Franklin County Commissioners, Franklin County Human Services Levy Review Committee and other community leaders. It tells the story of Franklin County Children Services’ efforts to protect and care for the county’s abused and neglected children, and youth with physical, mental and behavioral challenges.

An Open Letter to the Franklin County Commissioners and the Franklin County Human Services Levy Review Committee

Once again it is time for us to approach the community to support Franklin County Children Services' state and federally mandated mission to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of our community's youth. Ohio is ranked the lowest in the nation for children services funding which places our youth in a vulnerable position. As such, our success as a public agency depends on the support of Franklin County taxpayers and we have worked diligently to be good stewards of the dollars entrusted to our agency.

During the past five years, we have faced significant challenges to the well-being of our children, our families and our community. The opiate epidemic and the increased trauma experienced by our youth have manifested themselves in increasingly complicated cases and situations that require more services than we provided in previous years. In response, Children Services has implemented many innovative initiatives to protect children, better engage families, build community partnerships, ensure permanency and improve outcomes for children while improving the overall efficiency of the organization.

Despite these efforts, more families are coming to our front door with multiple issues that may be impacted not only by substance abuse, but poverty, homelessness, mental illness, domestic violence and other societal stressors. These cases often require more resources to reduce risk and stay open longer in our system, which strains caseworkers with already high workloads. Our agency has been involved in several initiatives and engaged in partnerships that moving forward will enhance our work with families struggling with these challenges.

Another major focus area has been ensuring family-like settings for all children, particularly our teens. We have older youth who come to the attention of our agency primarily because of behavioral issues, in addition to abuse and neglect. As a result, many of these youth have been removed from their homes, often at the caregiver's request, and placed in group (congregate) care. Research shows that these youth experience less stability and more negative outcomes than those placed in family settings, like kinship or foster care. To address this, we have been working diligently with community providers, the courts and other partners to enhance our prevention efforts and develop better options and resources for our teens.

In addition to our innumerable partners, FCCS is fortunate to have highly qualified professional and support staff that are committed to fulfilling our mandate. It's a difficult job. That is why we have been working to strengthen our workforce. These efforts have included increasing staff mobility via technology, improving retention and worker support programs and improving our orientation and training offerings. With the challenges facing us today and in the future, empowering FCCS staff to do their best work for Franklin County's children and families is imperative. More information about these and other initiatives will be presented in this levy book.

Through partnerships with the community FCCS will continue to explore areas of best practice in child protection. To help guide this work, we will be following our newly developed strategic plan that sets goals for the agency for the next five years. These goals help align our mission and guiding principles with our daily practice.

As you know, all of our efforts and success as an agency depend on continued community support. Approximately 67 percent of the dollars that support our efforts each year come from two local property tax levies, one of which expires at the end of 2019. Children Services is asking the Franklin County Commissioners, after review by the Franklin County Human Services Levy Review Committee, to put a 3.1 mill replacement levy on the November 2019 ballot. **This levy will be critical to our success in providing vital services to children and families because without its passage the agency will lose nearly \$84 million - more than 44 percent of our income.**

Therefore, on behalf of our dedicated child welfare professionals, our community foster parents, adoptive and kinship families, our volunteers and mentors, our child-serving partner agencies, and most importantly, the children and families we serve, I am pleased to present this 2019 Franklin County Children Services levy book.

Sincerely



Chip M. Spinning
Executive Director



THE FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD

Franklin County Children Services is an agency of county government, with an appointed Board and with funding sources outside of the county's general fund. However, the agency is responsible and responsive to the Franklin County Commissioners in a number of ways. The Commissioners approve the agency's operating budget each year, have the final authority on labor contracts and lease and building agreements, and set guidelines for county operations that the agency must follow. In addition, Franklin County Children Services authorizes spending and pays bills by following the requirements of the County Auditor's office, and consults with the County Prosecutor's office, when needed, which is the legal representative for the agency.

The Franklin County Children Services Board provides leadership, experience, commitment and expertise to assure that the agency is financially responsible and programmatically effective. The Board establishes policy, hires the executive director, who is responsible for agency operations, and approves contracts and agreements as required by law. The Board meets on the last Thursday of each month at noon in the board room at 855 W. Mound St. Board meetings are open to the public, and procedures are in place for citizens who want to address the Board.

The 11-member volunteer Board governs Franklin County Children Services. Ten members are appointed by the Franklin County Commissioners and one serves by statute as chair of the agency's Citizens Advisory Committee.

THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Citizens Advisory Committee is comprised of volunteers representing diverse backgrounds within our community. All members are reviewed by application and then appointed by the Children Services Board. They are a caring group devoted to giving children connected to Children Services additional enrichment, recreation and educational opportunities. A key focus is granting requests from children in agency care for special opportunities that may not be traditionally covered by agency funds. The FCCS Citizens Advisory Committee meets on the first Wednesday of each month.

2019 FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD

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AGENCY ACCREDITATION

Franklin County Children Services proudly received reaccreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA) in August 2016. FCCS received expedited reaccreditation with no out-of-compliance ratings in any fundamental practice standards. COA is an international, not-for-profit organization committed to maintaining the highest level of standards and quality improvement in human service organizations. COA identifies and collaborates with organizations to ensure high quality administrative and best practice standards for themselves and commitment to their constituents to deliver the highest quality services. FCCS is one of only 12 children services agencies of Ohio's 88 agencies to be accredited by COA, a distinction the agency has earned for more than 35 years.

COA reaccreditation is an objective and reliable verification that provides confidence and support to an organization's service recipients, board members, staff and community partners.

The reaccreditation process involves a rigorous self-study and COA's detailed review and analysis of the organization's administrative operations and service delivery practices. For reaccreditation, FCCS's administrative and service delivery practices were measured against national standards. COA's best practice standards emphasize services that are accessible, appropriate, culturally responsive, evidence-based and outcomes-oriented. The standards also confirm that the services are provided by a skilled and supported workforce and that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

FCCS has been reaccredited through August 31, 2020 by COA. Continuous quality and performance improvement remain the focus to ensure the highest quality standards for administration, practice and service delivery. FCCS is committed to maintaining these standards and has integrated the continuous quality improvement principles and processes into the agency's daily work.

AGENCY OVERVIEW

Children Services is the public agency mandated by federal and state law to ensure that our community's children are safe and well cared for. We provide protection, care and permanency for children who are abused, neglected or dependent. By being in partnership with more than 100 agencies and organizations, and with the help of over 800 employees, 500 kinship families, 200 adoptive families, 500 volunteers and mentors and hundreds of community foster parents, the agency is committed to making sure that every child has a safe and stable home. Children Services' social workers and support staff work to build stable and supportive living settings for young people, strengthen family life and assist parents in meeting their responsibilities to their children.

FCCS receives more than 32,000 referrals annually through our **24-Hour Child Abuse Hotline — (614) 229-7000**.

The Franklin County community has supported abused and neglected children since the late 1800s and the agency is grateful for the continuing support. County voters have passed property tax levies for Franklin County Children Services since 1958. The current levy support for the agency includes a 1.9 mill levy that was renewed by voters on November 4, 2014, and a 3.1 mill levy that expires at the end of 2019. More than half of Franklin County Children Services' funding comes from these two, 10-year property tax levies.

BY THE NUMBERS

In 2018, the agency received **33,273** referrals to its child abuse hotline and **13,770** were screened in for assessment and investigation.

Last year, FCCS placed **1,941** children with kinship caregivers, an increase of **74%** since 2014.

Since 2014, **800** children and teens in Children Services custody have been placed in loving adoptive homes.

On average, nearly **3 out of 4** youth who need to be removed from their home due to serious concerns, are safely reunited with their parents after agency involvement or placed with relatives they trust.



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Each year, Franklin County Children Services helps more than 32,000 children and their families through prevention, protection, placement and permanency programs. The agency protects and cares for children in cooperation with parents whenever possible, by providing services to alleviate the problems that led the family to the attention of Children Services.

Children Services believes in the importance of family and strives to keep the entire family involved in solving the problems that brought them to the agency.

- **How the agency responds to families –**

Intervention occurs only to ensure the safety of children or to help the family. The goal is to keep children safely in the home and provide services to families that may prevent the need for opening cases and out-of-home placement.

- **How FCCS makes decisions with the family –**

Families are best served when they are truly engaged in both the identification of the issues that are challenging them and in the development of the service plan to help them. Throughout the life of a case, families are encouraged to provide input and to be a part of the team decision-making process.

- **How the agency finds stability and permanency for children –**

The agency is committed to the safety, permanency and well-being of each child we serve. We strive to provide permanency with kinship, foster and adoptive families.

Additional services include:

- In-home counseling, community social and mental health services and day treatment
- Mentor and volunteer services
- Kinship – services to those taking in family members
- Foster Care – placement of children in temporary foster homes
- Adoption – When parents or relatives are unable to care for the children, permanent and loving adoptive families are found.
- Youth transition services and life skills training for youth who are about to age out of the child welfare system
- Culturally Responsive Services – FCCS works to provide a wide-range of services that are family focused, strengths-based, and lead to positive outcomes for all that come in contact with the agency.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Franklin County Children Services protects and cares for children and their families through many community partnerships.

- Family to Family is a partnership with local settlement houses to help families in the community.
- Local Resources – We contract with more than 100 organizations to help children and families.

- Speaking engagements and displays.
- Special events and campaigns, such as our Holiday Wish program, for which we rely on community support to help us collect holiday gifts for more than 6,000 children served by the agency each year.
- Community Hubs – Targeting zip-code areas to share agency and prevention resources.

WE ARE CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONALS

Franklin County Children Services' role is defined by both federal and state laws, which establish that the safety of children is paramount, that foster care is a temporary setting, that permanency efforts should begin immediately after the agency receives custody of a child, and that there are exceptions to the requirement of reasonable efforts to reunite child and parent (for example, when a parent has committed certain crimes against children).

THE CHILDREN WE SERVE

Abused children include those who are physically or emotionally harmed, sexually molested, or endangered by parents or other adults. A neglected child is one whose parents or guardians have abandoned him or her, or have refused to provide for the child's basic needs including food, clothing, housing, medical care or supervision. Dependent children are those whose parents are unable to care for them adequately – not necessarily through any fault of their own. Unruly children are status offenders, who are truant from home or school, or are out of their parents' control. Delinquent youth are those who have committed an offense that would be a crime if committed by an adult.

Regardless of a child's status, Franklin County Children Services provides appropriate services with the goal of keeping the child safely in the home, if possible, while resolving the problems that led to the agency's involvement. A child may only be removed from the parent's or guardian's care by

law enforcement personnel or pursuant to a court order. Children Services does not have the authority to unilaterally remove children from their home. When children are removed from their parents by the Juvenile Court, the court must approve the return of the children to the custody of the parents.

The agency serves children from all cultural and economic backgrounds and from the diverse neighborhoods and communities throughout Franklin County. But they all have something in common – the children deserve to grow up healthy, happy and secure. And their parents deserve every opportunity to receive the services and support they need to keep their family together. Much of this assistance comes through direct services by the agency's professional staff and by purchasing services from 100 provider agencies.

In 2018, the agency received 33,273 referrals from all over the county, screened in 13,770 referrals for investigation/assessment and provided ongoing and case management services to 9,449 children and 5,095 families.

At the end of 2018, 4,739 children were in agency custody. Adoptions were finalized for 158 children and 496 children were matched with volunteers.



PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Franklin County Children Services prides itself on hiring highly qualified professional and support staff to carry out its mission and embrace its guiding principles. Although child welfare professionals at public agencies are not required to be licensed, about one-third of the child welfare caseworkers, child welfare supervisors and agency managers who are eligible maintain a current license as licensed independent social workers, licensed social workers, licensed professional counselors, and licensed professional clinical counselors. Children Services employs approximately 800 staff at any time. All new employees participate in an initial introduction and orientation, and are required to take training and professional development tailored to their job needs, and cultural competency offerings to prepare them to work with the diverse populations served. Caseworkers take over one-hundred hours of training in their first year.

Children Services has a multifaceted training and development program that supports the mission of the agency and meets employees' identified needs.

Designed as a state/county, public/private collaboration, the OCWTP develops and provides an array of learning activities to promote mastery of the complex knowledge and skills needed to assure protection and permanence for Ohio's abused and neglected children. The OCWTP is a comprehensive, competency-based, in-service training system for child welfare staff, managers and foster/adoptive families in Ohio's 88 county public children services agencies and is the major source of training for staff. The OCWTP for the Central Ohio area is located at and managed by Franklin County Children Services.

BUILDING A STRONG SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

One of the agency's focus areas these past five years has been building a sustainable workforce and improving staff retention. The message articulated from FCCS staff has been the desire to have the needed time and resources to provide quality support and services for the families and children on their caseloads while maintaining a good work-life balance. Child welfare is a labor intensive field. A strong stable workforce is crucial to the agency's foundation of evidenced-based, sound practice. Research shows that it takes about two years for a child welfare caseworker to develop the skills required to be proficient at this work. Child welfare organizations often focus predominately on placement cost and supportive services which are child and family focused. While this is important, the agency also realizes that "Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being" also applies to staff.

The agency has implemented many initiatives to impact safety, permanency, and well-being for our workforce, including:

- Reduced worker supervisor ratio in Intake (agency front door) to allow for more support for each worker.
- Implementation of the "Be-Well" program that provides onsite counselling and support for workers.
- Adjusted pay range that better compensates caseworkers for their service and allows for a more competitive position when recruiting new staff.
- Mentors and floating staff for support and coverage.
- Modified training program that better integrates hands on experience and classroom learning.
- Technology that allows for increased mobility
- An array of supportive staff to lessen the load on case management staff.
- Peer Support Program
- Retention Supplement

These are just a few of the initiatives implemented by the agency. FCCS is beginning to experience positive results in staff stabilization through these efforts.



ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

There are hundreds of caseworkers at Franklin County Children Services who are busy looking out for our community's children and families. These individuals work tirelessly to ensure that children are safe and families are stable. Here's a look at three FCCS caseworkers who are busy creating positive outcomes for those experiencing difficult circumstances.



Emily Brentlinger

As part of Franklin County Children Services' intake, assessment and investigations department, Emily Brentlinger collaborates with families who are in crisis and develops a plan to ensure their children's safety. As a child welfare caseworker, Brentlinger is an advocate for the voiceless and most vulnerable. "Caseworkers help children to have a voice when they are sometimes fearful or too young to express negative things happening to them," she says. In addition to protecting children from abuse and neglect, Brentlinger supports families facing challenges such as mental health concerns, housing emergencies or unemployment. Brentlinger is always grateful when she can make a difference, such as when she recently helped an abused child reunite with her biological father and move into a safer, more stable home.

Kinship caseworker Tammy Grant helps families thrive. For her kinship caregivers, which are often grandparents, aunts or uncles caring for their relatives' children, Grant figures out what they need and makes it happen. One of Grant's most memorable experiences was working with Johnny, a single father who was struggling to provide for himself and his son. Grant linked him to community resources and he was able to find proper child care and safe housing. Grant says that Johnny still calls her occasionally to say, "I wanted to let you know we're doing okay. Thank you." For Grant, this is what it is all about: "These moments are why I keep doing this job," she says.



Tammy Grant



Rebecca Bright

Rebecca Bright is known for going above and beyond for the kids on her caseload. Bright, who has worked in the agency's East and West regions, is often seen by parents and youth as more of a caring friend than a social worker. This is certainly the case with a young woman whom Bright has worked with for more than seven years. While this youth has significant developmental delays, debilitating mental health issues, and related behavioral challenges, Bright has always been an unwavering support for this youth. As a child welfare professional, Bright never forgets how vital her role in a child's life can be, as is the case with this youth. "I'm the most stability that she's had," Bright says. "She knows I'm doing whatever I can to keep her safe."

WE VALUE EVERY CHILD

Children Services values every child in the community – and advocates for each child’s safety, permanency and well-being. Children who are on the agency caseload receive services and opportunities to help them grow and develop. But all children can benefit from some of the agency’s programs and events.



ASSESSING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Children Services has a 24-hour, seven-day a week Intake and Investigation operation that screens, assesses and investigates all reports of abuse and neglect within time frames set by law. Citizens are encouraged to report child maltreatment to the agency and professionals working with children are legally required to make such reports. The Ohio Revised Code provides immunity from civil or criminal liability for those who in good faith make reports of suspected abuse, and requires Children Services to protect the confidentiality of those making reports.

The process of taking a referral is the beginning step in FCCS’s involvement with a family. At the Intake level, information is taken, and if the referral rises to the level requiring action an assessment begins. The agency evaluates every referral to determine if it meets the criteria for further investigation by utilizing state screening guidelines. If the referral is screened in, state required assessment tools are utilized to determine the extent of risk and the safety concern for the children involved. The agency also assesses risk and safety concerns for children who may need protection because of unruliness or delinquent behaviors. At the conclusion of the investigation a decision is made on whether or not there is a need to open a case, refer the family for community-based support services, or close out the investigation without further action.

While federal law establishes that a child’s safety is paramount, FCCS must protect children in a manner that does not violate the constitutional rights of parents. Honoring families extends to ensuring that the agency is able to appropriately balance a child’s safety with a family’s right to be free from unreasonable governmental interference.

Every effort is made to work with families to resolve their issues while the children remain in the home. If this cannot be done, due to child safety issues, Children Services places children in out-of-home care, following a decision made by the Juvenile Court. When a child must be placed away from home, the agency seeks the least restrictive placement possible – with family members or other kin, or in foster homes within a reasonable distance for the parents to visit. When specialized placement services in treatment foster care or residential treatment facilities are necessary, FCCS finds the appropriate placement to meet the child’s individual needs. The goal for children in placement is for them to return home whenever safely possible. When the child cannot return to family, Children Services seeks an adoptive home or makes other permanent plans, such as the emancipation of older youth.

Children Services uses a comprehensive assessment and planning model (CAPMIS) for structured decision-making from the time a child or family is referred and throughout the life of the case. The model provides tools for assessing a child’s risk, developing safety plans and conducting family assessments. CAPMIS helps Children Services workers protect and care for children who are unsafe, and avoid interventions into the lives of families where parents are able to protect their children. And with CAPMIS, the agency has moved from broad-based community protection and prevention programs to evidence-based/evidence-informed programs that can provide services proven by research to effectively meet the needs of children and families.

FCCS SAFE TEAMS: ENSURING THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN

Short for Supported Assessment For Effective Team screening, SAFE Teams are a diverse group of Franklin County Children Services Intake staff that meets twice daily to review challenging, complex reports made to the agency's 24-hour child abuse prevention hotline.

During a typical session, team members review calls, discuss the facts and ensure that any reports that require further assessment and investigation are promptly screened in and the appropriate course of action is taken.

The SAFE Teams panel is comprised of half a dozen FCCS Intake staff and typically includes an administrator, several supervisors, caseworkers and a screener who answers the child abuse prevention hotline. Calls selected for SAFE Teams review fall into a few categories: they can be high-risk situations, complicated scenarios, questions of proper jurisdiction, or just cases where an FCCS supervisor or caseworker wants to get a second opinion from their colleagues before proceeding. With child safety as the utmost priority, SAFE Teams pay careful attention to the agency's most vulnerable population – very young children or infants. 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 take a closer look, to confirm that this was the right decision.

ONGOING SERVICES

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 with a case plan agreed to by the family and Children Services casework staff.

PERMANENCY WITH BIRTH PARENTS OR IN KINSHIP CARE

Permanency is a big word that can have a lot of different meanings, especially in the world of child welfare. It may be defined in terms of reunification, kinship care, adoption or independent living. But viewed through the eyes of a child, permanency is simply a forever home.

Common factors found in every good home are safety, love and well-being. That is the goal FCCS and its many partners strive to achieve for all of Franklin County's children.

REUNIFICATION

Investigating child abuse and neglect and protecting children from its effects are at the core of Children Services' mission. Helping parents cope with problems and change behaviors so they can provide a safe home for their children is equally important. And most of the time, parents have the capacity to protect and care for their children with the help of services and community support.

In recent years, the agency has renewed its commitment to focusing on family strengths yielding many positive outcomes for children and their families. Many successfully reunited families admit that their first encounter with Children Services is often very unsettling. But once they establish a rapport with the caseworker, things begin to come together. **On average, nearly 3 out of 4 youth who need to be removed due to serious concerns are safely returned to their parent after agency involvement, or placed with relatives they trust.**

KEEPING BABIES SAFE

Ohio ranks among the worst states in the nation for overall infant mortality. Here in Franklin County, approximately 150 babies die every year before their first birthday. Many of these tragic deaths are entirely preventable, which is why infant safe sleep education is a top priority for Franklin County Children Services.

In 2018, 11% of children for whom FCCS screened in a referral for investigation were under the age of one. FCCS direct service staff work closely with these families and their infants, ensuring that all babies have a safe sleep environment where they can sleep alone, on their backs, in a crib free of toys, excessive blankets and other potentially dangerous items.

FCCS caseworkers also actively educate parents and caregivers of infants about safe sleep practices. As part of ongoing community outreach efforts, FCCS also promotes infant safe sleep throughout the central Ohio area, distributing educational literature at community events and partnering with other like-minded organizations to raise awareness and share resources about this critically important issue.

The ABCs of infant safe sleep message tells caregivers why it's safest for baby to follow the ABCs of safe sleep – Alone. Back. Crib. Every baby, every sleep.



ZERO 2 THREE

Disproportionately at risk of maltreatment, babies and toddlers comprise 25 percent of the children who come into FCCS custody. A central part of the ZERO 2 THREE initiative is a thorough checklist for every FCCS caseworker to review with their client families. This in-depth checklist ensures that every infant and toddler receives a comprehensive assessment, looking for signs of healthy development as well as for possible indicators of abuse or neglect. Another key component of the initiative is training for caseworkers as well as for foster parents and other caregivers, to help them truly understand the unique developmental needs of infants and toddlers and the science underlying healthy brain development in babies.

KINSHIP

FCCS tries to keep families together whenever possible. But when children must be removed, the agency looks to relatives to help provide that much needed home, whether it's just for a little while, or permanently.

Kinship Care is when a relative or non-relative has taken over the full-time care, nurturing and protection of a child. The definition for kinship caregivers also goes beyond the scope of blood relatives and may include an adult who has a familiar relationship or bond with the child and/or family.

The loss of parents, home, school, friends, and possessions is traumatic for children. Research shows placing children with caregivers who are relatives (instead of foster care) is enormously emotionally beneficial as they deal with loss. The caregiver who is a relative (the grandparent or other close relative) provides an invaluable connection to family members, traditions, and culture that promote positive well-being in all areas for the child, including the child's academics. Kinship placements tend to provide a more secure and beneficial environment for youth than other foster settings.

Realizing the importance of children maintaining family connections when possible, FCCS significantly expanded its kinship program in 2014. The kinship department works in concert with intake and regional staff to secure kinship placements for children sooner and provide support to the identified caregivers.

The Kinship program is designed to provide a one-stop shop for support services to kinship families, while a case is open with FCCS. The goal is to ensure teamwork and communication between kinship families and the agency. Services include:

- Educational orientation about FCCS and support services
- Limited material assistance (to those who qualify)
- Assistance with transition of the youth into the home.

Some kinship families also receive help through Ohio's **Kinship Permanency Incentive Program (KPI)**. KPI is a state initiative that provides kinship families with cash payments over a set time frame. To provide additional help, Children Services also offers matching funds to eligible kinship caregivers to further assist those who apply for and receive state assistance. Strengthening community ties and connecting families to resources in their neighborhoods is a fundamental aspect of kinship care. FCCS actively partner's with community-based resources such as faith-based organizations, settlement houses, and other social service providers.

- **Kinship Aftercare Program** is a partnership with St. Stephen's Community House to help provide community assistance to kinship families who obtain legal guardianship of a youth formerly in foster care. Support may include material assistance and/or financial help to eligible caregivers from the time the case is closed with FCCS and up to 36 months as funds are available. Each family is assessed individually.
- **Kinship Child Care Program** is a state initiative that provides child care assistance to kinship families who meet eligibility requirements and received legal custody or guardianship of a kinship youth on or after July 1, 2005.



KINSHIP FAMILIES: HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE

Newlyweds Anna and Sam McDonald were busy planning a peaceful, sunny retirement down in Georgia when life took an unexpected turn. One day they received notification that Anna's three grandchildren were in the emergency care of Franklin County Children Services and needed a safe place to stay as soon as possible. In spite of their plans to relocate out of state, the couple didn't hesitate to step up and welcome the three siblings into their home. While they didn't intend to be raising three kids at this stage in their lives, the McDonalds are now a happy family of five, two grandparents busy providing their grandkids with a nurturing, stable home.

Franklin County Children Services counts on kinship caregivers like the McDonalds—aunts, uncles, grandparents or even close family friends—to be there for children who, for one reason or another, cannot safely stay with their parents or other immediate family. In some circumstances, it's a temporary placement in a time of crisis, while at other times it's a permanent arrangement.

For the McDonalds, raising Rashon, Don'Tess and Anjel isn't always easy and finances can be tight, but it somehow all works out. "We love and enjoy them," Sam says. "They really are a blessing." The three children are now flourishing under the loving care of Anna and Sam, whom they call "mom" and "dad." Anjel is on the honor roll, the once-shy Don'Tess has come out of his shell and is doing well in school, and the rambunctious Rashon is bright and talkative with a huge vocabulary for a preschooler. "We're so proud of how far they've come and how well they're doing," Anna says.

Anna and Sam with
Anjel, Don'Tess and
Rashon.

ADOPTION

When children are in danger because of very serious family problems, they are placed with a relative or a temporary foster family until the issues can be resolved. In situations where birth families do not recover, their children need adoptive homes. For children who cannot return to their birth families, adoption means new families and new beginnings. Currently, there are more than 100 children under the care of FCCS who want to be adopted, but continue to wait for families. The profile of adoptable children in central Ohio consists of African-American children over the age of 5, Caucasian children over the age of 10, sibling groups who want to remain together, children

with behavior challenges, and children with special needs. Children Services' ongoing child specific adoption recruitment efforts and collaborations with other community partners continue to increase the number of families coming forward to adopt. **In the past five years, FCCS has placed more than 800 children in permanent homes.**

The Children Services Adoptions Department collaborates with a variety of adoption agencies across Ohio and in many other states in order to find families for adoptable children.

One of these successful adoption collaborations has been Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK), a signature program of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. This child focused recruitment program is committed to finding homes for the 150,000 waiting children in foster care across the United States. Franklin County Children Services was one of the pilot sites for the program in 2004 and now has three WWK recruiters.



PERMANENCY: A PRIORITY FOR EVERY CHILD

No one is ever too old to find a forever family. Just ask 17-year-old Sariah, who was recently adopted by her foster mother Corena Brady. Sariah is now part of a bustling household that includes nine children, among whom are Brady's grandchildren, adopted children and foster children. Sariah has been part of the Brady household since 2015, finally finding permanency—a safe, stable place to always call home—after living with relatives and in residential facilities.

"This is the family that I was always looking for," says Sariah. This teen is happy to be part of a large family and she and her new mom have become close. "Sariah must like organized chaos...We're thick as thieves," says Brady. However, things weren't always so easy for this teen who had a traumatic childhood and has dealt with tremendous adversity. Sariah had to learn to trust her new foster mom and not be defensive when interacting with her. "If there is a problem or I do something wrong, we talk about it," she says. "I wasn't used to that when I came here."

Both Brady and Sariah strongly encourage others to become foster or adoptive parents, especially when it comes to helping teenagers. There are hundreds of older youth just like Sariah currently in the child welfare system, in need of a temporary or permanent home. "I'm hooked on teens," says Brady. "If people will give them a chance, they'll see the positives. A lot of times their trust in people has been broken and once you build a sense of trust with them, they turn around quickly."



Corena Brady and daughter Sariah

SERVICES FOR YOUTH IN TRANSITION

Choosing a destiny can be frightening and overwhelming for young people who are approaching adulthood. Children Services' **Youth Transition Services (YTS)** provides support for youth who are not able to rely on the guidance and resources of their families.

Transition services are available to youth ages 16 or older who are in agency custody. When these youth are about to age out of foster care, caseworkers help them learn to live independently and productively. They assess the needs of each youth and create individualized plans to help them establish their independence. Caseworkers identify skills and work with the youth to set goals such as attending college or pursuing employment. They then locate resources that will help the youth achieve their goals.

The program also assists foster care youth with housing needs when they leave agency custody. Many youth enter into a host home where a family agrees to take them in for a short period of time, as the youth continue to work on reaching their goals. A supervised transitional living program also is available for those ages 17½ and older who are attending school or studying for the GED and working. For those youth who maintain employment, YTS caseworkers also are able to assist them in locating an affordable apartment to rent in the community.

Support is available to youth who wish to pursue a college education. Caseworkers help them choose schools, prepare applications and arrange college visits. In addition, they assist youth in completing the FAFSA application to apply for financial aid and locating additional financial resources such as scholarships and grants. The YTS Program also offers financial assistance with application fees, dorm deposits and other miscellaneous fees. Any former foster youth who has aged out of agency custody can contact the YTS Program to link with these services at any time.

BRIDGES

Bridges is a voluntary program available to young adults who left foster care in Ohio at ages 18, 19 or 20 and who are in school, working, participating in an employment program, or have a medical condition that prevents them from going to school or working. The program provides guidance and support as they transition to adulthood.

The program is administered by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and is available to help bridge the gap from youth to adulthood by providing assistance with housing, medical coverage, life skills and employment training.

Bridges Is:

- Young adult-driven
- Promotes the permanent connections and social networks necessary for lifelong success
- Supports the development of an educational foundation and skill set that enables participants to gain and maintain employment that meets their financial needs
- Ensures that participants live in safe, stable and healthy housing
- Links participants to appropriate physical and behavioral health services
- Ensures that participants have the daily living skills essential for lifelong self-sufficiency
- Builds skills for self-advocacy



JOSHUA HATCH

Former FCCS youth and Jack Donahue Scholarship winner Joshua Hatch graduated from Wright State University in December 2018. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and African-American studies. Joshua shared this milestone with his FCCS support team. He is pictured with his adoption caseworker Deric Cobb (left), FCCS mentor Christina Wilson (right) and youth transition services caseworker Kelly Stroman (second right).

While at Wright State, Joshua was involved in numerous leadership opportunities including, being an Independent Scholars Network (INS) Peer Mentor. The INS program provides support to former foster youth to help them be successful in their studies, become a real part of life on campus and stay in school. He also became a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity and served as president of the Black Student Union.

He was also one of 25 youth who were selected to participate in the Foster Club All-Star Intern Program, a prestigious opportunity which allowed him to travel to Oregon to attend leadership and team building training, as well as participate in events throughout the country. These experiences gave him and fellow interns the opportunity to share their personal stories and insights with current and former foster youth, as well as youth advocates.

Always willing to give back, Joshua enjoys sharing his personal story and encouraging youth who are transitioning out of foster care. "I want them to know that they all have a place in life, regardless of their circumstances or history," he said. "They can reach their goals."

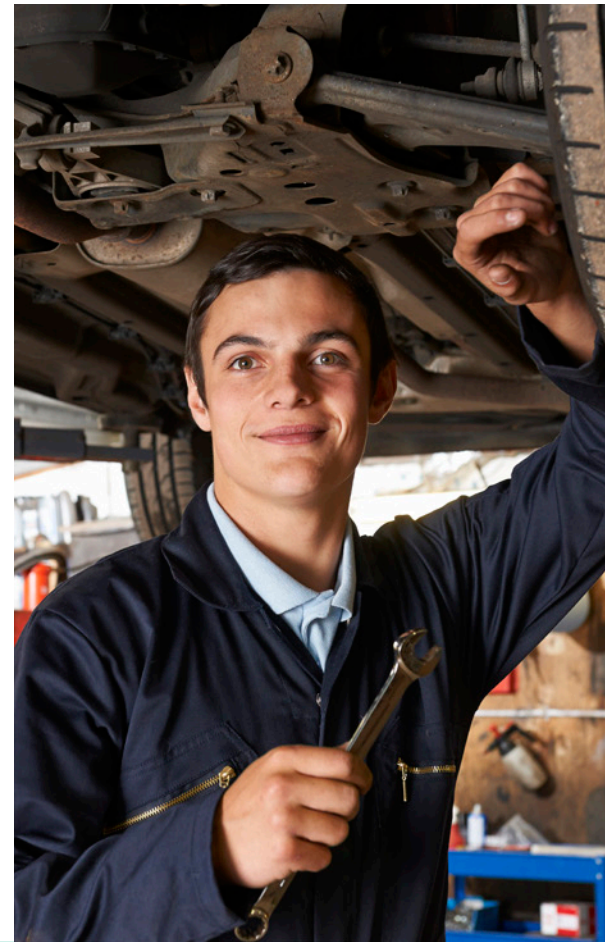
While exploring his future plans, which includes attending graduate school, Joshua continues to mentor and encourage other foster youth.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND SUMMER JOB PROGRAM

FCCS has been partnering with Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio and the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) provider, Impact Community Action Inc. for a summer job and ongoing development program with our youth in foster care.

This is a year-long case management model which follows the youth for an entire year before they exit out of the program. The 2018 summer program had 100 youth enrolled and 67 out of the 100 youth were placed at 32 different sites throughout Franklin County. The other 33 received case management services. FCCS and IMPACT provided transportation for youth to get to and from their work sites.

The CCMEP program focuses on paid work experiences, career-specific certification, work readiness training, computer literacy, financial literacy, life skills, educational support, access to post-secondary opportunities, and employment coaching for foster care youth. It also assists them in creating career tracks to employment, post-secondary education, vocational training, and military enlistment. One of the new sites added in 2018, was the PAST Foundation. The PAST Foundation allowed students to acquire hands-on skills in digital design, video, recording, robotics and engineering. The youth were able to build digital portfolios for workforce readiness and explore careers related to SMART Cities technologies to enhance mathematics and financial literacy through mathematical modeling and application.



PIECES OF MY LIFE

Artwork created by FCCS youth Cherish, age 11, was chosen to be featured in the Public Children Services Association of Ohio's (PCSAO) 2018 conference materials. Cherish created "Pieces of My Life" while participating in the agency's Therapeutic Arts Program (TAP), which uses the arts to enable youth to express themselves and work through trauma.



According to TAP Program Coordinator Cheri Johnson, "Pieces of My Life speaks about childhood trauma and its significant effects on a person's emotional well-being." The work shows a young girl struggling to arrange puzzle pieces which represent her feelings such as: hope, anger and fear, as well as family, loss and guilt, as she copes with the effects of trauma. It embodied the theme of the conference, which was "The Child Protection Puzzle: Putting all of the Pieces Together."

THERAPEUTIC ARTS PROGRAM (TAP)

Abuse and neglect can sometimes shatter lives. But thanks to the Therapeutic Arts Program of Franklin County Children Services, abused and neglected children are turning their trauma into triumph. Through the journey of non-traditional therapy, children in the TAP program learn to express their feelings and experiences through the use of dance, song and art.

Through one-on-one mentoring and group sessions, participants work to improve communication and relationships; increase ways of coping with anxiety, frustration, and stress; as well as address issues with child abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, abandonment, parent/child conflict, adoption and violence. TAP provides services to FCCS youth from the age of 13 up to their 21st birthday.

The community has the opportunity to share in the creativity and inspiration of children who are served by Franklin County Children Services through an annual art show and silent auction, which features work from youth who are involved with TAP or the FCCS Adoption Department.



YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

The Franklin County Children Services Youth Advisory Board (YAB) enables young people ages 14 to 23 to share their feelings about their experiences in foster care with other youth and to provide input to the agency about things that could be done to improve services to foster children. These Youth Council members plan fun and educational events for other children and youth, do community service projects, have an opportunity to mentor younger children coming into the system, and make suggestions to the administration of Children Services. Youth selected for YAB also have the opportunity to develop leadership skills, attend youth conferences, and travel.

OTHER INITIATIVES

- **Community Dialogues.** One component of the agency's strategic plan is to implement community dialogues around important issues related to child welfare in targeted areas around the county. In April 2018, FCCS staff, community partners and concerned citizens met at the Glenwood Recreation Center to discuss the impact of opiates on child welfare. FCCS staff spoke on training efforts underway to prepare caseworkers and support personnel to meet the needs of families. Six months later, FCCS again met with community stakeholders at the Douglas Recreation Center to discuss issues, share resources and open doors of understanding with our New American, Immigrant and Refugee population.
- **Graduation Celebration.** Each year, FCCS holds a party for young people involved with the agency who graduate from high school or receive their GED. For some, it is the only celebration they receive for this very special day in their lives. In addition to having fun, the youth receive gifts and photos to commemorate their achievements.
- **Child Abuse Prevention Month.** In April, FCCS along with The Center for Family Safety and Healing and the Ohio Children's Trust Fund (OCTF) conduct various events to educate the community and raise awareness about child abuse and neglect. To reinforce awareness about child abuse prevention, Children Services and its Citizens Advisory Committee have hosted the Child Abuse Prevention Breakfast for the past 25 years. This event brings together more than 300 participants each year to honor those who have promoted child abuse prevention and those who have overcome its effects. College scholarships are awarded to agency youth; an outstanding child protection social worker is honored; and youth and families are honored for making positive life changes.
- **Children's Day.** In the fall, FCCS conducts an annual event called Children's Day. This event is held at COSI, and enables families to bring their children for a free day of fun and learning. Corporate sponsors and support from the County Commissioners allow for free admission for the children, and an evening of family entertainment. Children Services believes that healthy activities enhance family life, and many children and parents who have never before visited COSI express their appreciation each year.
- **FamJam.** For the past eight years, FCCS has partnered with Columbus Mayor Ginther's Department of Neighborhoods to present the annual FamJam - A Family Enrichment Festival at the Columbus Commons Park. The event has drawn up to 7,000 participants downtown to participate in educational and interactive activities focused on keeping children safe and enriching families. Many community partners join this event to share helpful resources.
- **Franklin County Youth Council.** In 2015, youth representing high schools from throughout Franklin County came together to officially form the Franklin County Youth Council. These 45 teens have been working to give voice to the most pressing issues facing youth throughout the county and present them to various community leaders. Their goals include developing a county-wide portal and social media effort on teen issues and facilitating peer group dialogues. Providing guidance in these efforts is an advisory council comprised of representatives from various disciplines and FCYC Program Director Susie Shipley-Norwood. Partners also supporting the council are Franklin County Children Services; United Way of Central Ohio; Community For New Direction; Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services; National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI) of Franklin County and Rise Sister Rise Network.





WE HONOR FAMILIES

Children Services' most important job is to help families protect, promote and ensure the safety and well-being of their children. The agency recognizes that families – their situations, strengths and challenges – are unique, and that there is no one “right” solution for every family. So services need to be personalized and caseworkers must have sufficient flexibility in the use of a variety of tools and strategies – whatever is required to meet the individual needs of children and families.

DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE: PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES IN NEED

Differential Response describes Franklin County Children Services' system of responding to reports of abuse and neglect. These two pathways – Alternative Response (AR) and Traditional Response (TR) – allow more flexibility so that FCCS can tailor how to meet the immediate safety needs of children.

For some families, the traditional investigative child protective services response is best suited to determine if abuse or neglect has occurred and to ensure child safety and well-being. For many others, however, a more appropriate approach involves working with families to identify concerns, applying

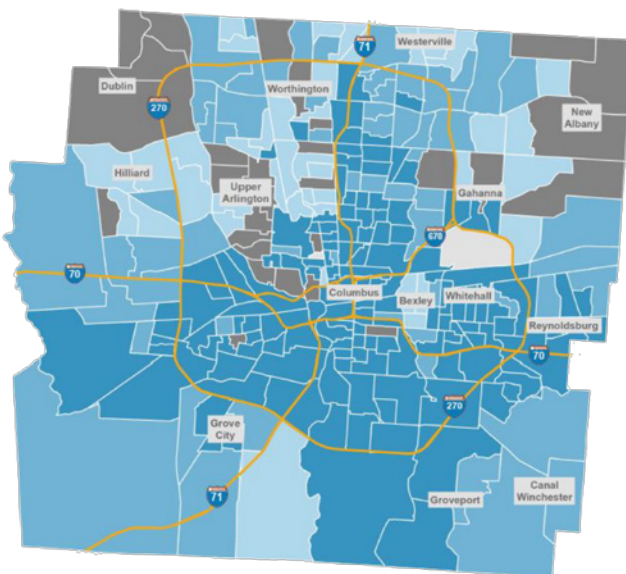
solutions that can help keep families together, and providing them with the services and supports they need to keep their children safe. **AR has now become the agency's preferred approach and every family that meets the criteria is served through this pathway. In 2018, 65 percent of all child abuse/neglect referrals were screened in to AR.**

In addition, Children Services has “strengthened the front door” by providing services to reduce the penetration of children and families into the child welfare system unnecessarily. By linking families immediately to community-based care, formal interventions are reserved for those families requiring that level of intervention.

Most importantly, Franklin County Children Services has not, and will never compromise on the safety of children that come to its attention. Safety of children remains the essence of the agency's existence. The agency believes that children are safest when the agency can build on the protective capacities that exist within families to protect their children. When successful, Children Services can protect the child by strengthening the family and reducing recidivism.

FCCS SERVES THE ENTIRE COUNTY

- Nearly every census tract in Franklin County had at least one child referral to FCCS.



Franklin County Children Services:
Referrals per 1,000 children under age 18 in 2017



Source: Thoughtwell, LLC



FAMILY SUPPORT

FCCS uses a **Centralized Referral and Coordination process (CRC)** that continues to be a resource for children and families as both a preventative measure and as support to families receiving ongoing services. FCCS staff work to identify the needs of children and families and initiate referrals to community resources, both contracted and non-contracted. Once a provider is linked with a family for service, there is the ability for the provider to continue to work with a family even after FCCS closes its case. Many referrals are made from our Intake Department, in lieu of a case opening. Through CRC, the agency continues to provide linkage to a continuum of protective and preventative services so families will not enter the child welfare system or in some cases avoid further penetration into the system.

CRC, with assistance from community providers/partners, continues to address the goals of safety, permanency and well-being by matching families with the services to meet their needs. FCCS regularly issues Request for Proposals (RFP's) which enables the agency to contract for services to assist families. This includes prevention, placement, parenting services, psychological, home based therapies as well as early childhood interventions, to name a few.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SERVICES

Cultural responsiveness is reflected in the agency's mission: "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."

Cultural appreciation is reflected in agency training. Each employee at FCCS is required to take a minimum of six hours of cultural diversity training each year. The training content offered includes African-American culture, Somali culture, Latino culture, Appalachian culture, LGBTQI, the culture of poverty, and the culture of addiction. Each new employee is also required to participate in six hours of training specific to the concepts of racism, which encourages self-inventory by attendees.

To help increase understanding around other issues that impact child welfare the agency has instituted community dialogues on topics such as, the *Impact of Opiates on Child Welfare* and *Opening Doors of Understanding with our Immigrant, Refugee and New American populations*. Future dialogues will center on faith-based initiatives and disproportionality in child welfare. These have proven to be very successful in allowing a healthy exchange of ideas and the sharing of concerns between the agency, community providers, leaders and our diverse community.

Just as this community increasingly becomes more diverse, so does the agency's workforce. In an effort to increase support in this area FCCS has established affinity groups for African-American males, Emerging Leaders/Young Professionals and one on Gender Equity.

Cultural diversity is reflected in employment practices. FCCS strives to maintain a diverse and competent staff. Of the 800 agency employees, 48 percent represent minority staff. This is very important to the agency, as 55 percent of the children and families served are from the minority communities of Franklin County.

Cultural responsiveness and appreciation are reflected in how children and families are served. Children Services has many materials translated into different languages and frequently utilizes the services of interpreters. The agency also seeks "cultural guides" or representatives from various communities to help staff understand and work with its diverse clientele.

In spite of many successes, Children Services understands that cultural responsiveness is a constant journey. Each child and family must be treated individually and respectfully. Every effort must be made to understand and appreciate any social, emotional, cultural or religious dynamic that makes them who they are. Workers must also understand how they are influenced by their own values and cultures and how to navigate those beliefs while providing high quality services free from judgement and bias.

To help in the goal of constant cultural assessment and evaluation, Children Services has a Multicultural Development Team (MDT) charged with identifying cultural gaps and growth opportunities for staff, and for serving children and families. One of the areas that this team has been concentrating on is the disproportionate number of African-American children under the agency's care. Preliminary findings suggest that the problem originates with the disproportionate number of referrals to the agency from various reporters. However, initial reviews also reveal that once the referrals are received, the agency makes decisions about the cases on a proportional basis. MDT continues to keep track of trends in this area.

WE VALUE PARTNERSHIPS

One of Franklin County Children Services' guiding principles states, "We Value Partnerships," which simply means that the agency recognizes the importance of working collaboratively with community partners to serve children and families. It is the agency's belief that ensuring that children are safe requires the collective efforts of community-based provider agencies, community systems like schools and mental health boards and the citizenry. Children Services has formalized partnerships with many community service providers in an effort to establish an infrastructure that will accomplish this task. The following are examples:

- Children Services collaborates with the **Franklin County Juvenile Court, the county prosecutor, local law enforcement agencies, Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services and Nationwide Children's Hospital** on the investigation of child abuse and neglect. A memorandum of understanding has been executed by all parties that clearly delineates the responsibilities of each organization with respect to its duties under the Ohio Revised Code.
- In 2018, Children Services, the Ohio Supreme Court, the Franklin County Juvenile Court and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services hosted a consortium that brought together more than 80 stakeholders from across the system to tackle wide-ranging issues related to case management in the court system. As a result, the parties have established ongoing work groups to collaboratively address the issues that affect our most vulnerable population, our children.
- Children Services is a partner in the **Center for Family Safety and Healing** located at Nationwide Children's Hospital. This center provides a "one-stop" approach to service delivery for children who are victims of serious physical and sexual abuse. This partnership includes the County Prosecutor, law enforcement agencies, Choices and medical staff from Nationwide Children's Hospital. This collaboration reduces significantly the number of times a child must retell the story of abuse. A forensic interviewer gathers the information and the systems collaborate to ensure safety of the child and proper prosecution of the abuser when appropriate.
- Based on the principle that children do better in families surrounded by a caring community, FCCS has worked with local settlement houses since 2000 in a collaboration called the **Family-to-Family Program**. Family-to-Family contracts with the settlement houses to provide services such as job assistance, academic support, parenting classes, recreational activities, neighborhood events and more. By working with local organizations, Franklin County Children Services helps families resolve issues and strengthen ties within their communities.
- Children Services continues a very successful collaboration with The Center for Family Safety and Healing to provide comprehensive health-care services for youth in care through the **Fostering Connections Program**. Services provided include:
 - o Initial medical, developmental and behavioral evaluations upon placement into care
 - o Complete well-child and sick child visits
 - o Availability of a dedicated physician group practice 24/7
 - o Support to children in foster and kinship care and their families
 - o Services and support to youth aging out-of-care
- Since 2016, FCCS has partnered with **Jewish Family Services' MAX** program to help emancipated youth improve their level of work readiness, practice daily life skills and acquire strategic job search strategies. An individual plan is developed for each youth who works with an interpersonal coach to guide them through the process of obtaining and maintaining employment along with other needed support.

These are just a few of the many collaborations and partnerships in which FCCS has engaged to better serve children and families. The agency continues to focus on building community capacity for evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and services to better meet the needs of families locally and reduce the need for families to travel across town for services.

Through a new collaboration, **Franklin County Sheriff's Department K9 Officers Kit, Mattis and (trainee) Woody** will be regulars at the FCCS Intake Department. This unique partnership is designed to help the youth who may be involved with the agency. The therapy dogs regularly visit FCCS's Intake and Investigations office to interact with children during crisis situations. The friendly dogs have already had a positive impact on children coming through our doors and with the staff.



FCCS AS THOUGHT PARTNERS ON CULTURAL INITIATIVES

Often FCCS is asked to lend expertise on task forces or committees that relate to the agency's mission of safety, permanency and well-being. While the agency serves all of Franklin County, there is a disproportionate number of children of color in the system. Therefore opportunities to engage with other thought leaders regarding the needs of children of color will enhance the agency's assessment, planning and implementation of services.

One such opportunity is the partnership with the **Commission on Black Girls** who studies and assesses the quality of life of Black girls in central Ohio. Columbus City Councilmember Priscilla Tyson established the Commission in 2018 to develop and implement recommendations to ensure opportunities, successful futures, and the achievement of a high quality of life for Black girls in Columbus. Focusing on girls ages 11-22, the Commission's work has included fact-finding and education to learn more about the current quality of life for Black girls in Columbus. One of the Commissioners is FCCS Executive Director Chip Spinning, who has engaged our staff in sharing some of the agency's initiatives on behalf of Black girls. The Commission will exist until December 31, 2020, unless, prior to that date, City Council enacts legislation to make the Commission permanent.

SAFETY COMMISSION

In November 2017, City of Columbus Mayor Andrew J. Ginther announced the creation of the **Columbus Community Safety Advisory Commission**. This Commission is focused on areas such as de-escalation, crisis intervention, and implicit bias training; use of force policies; diversity recruitment and retention; and early intervention and officer wellness programs.

In each area, the Commission will assess what the City of Columbus needs to do to provide public safety services that are transparent, accountable, and responsive for every person in every neighborhood. Franklin County Children Services is proud to serve as a partner on this Commission as it contributes positively to the overall well-being and safety of our community.

MANDATED REPORTER TRAINING

In Ohio, certain professionals are required by law to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment to child protective agencies. The law also assigns civil and criminal liability to those professionals who do not comply with their mandated reporter responsibilities. The Mandated Reporter Law is located in the Ohio Revised Code under section 2151.421.

The Professional Development Department at Children Services began offering Mandated Reporter Training in 2007. This training provides the knowledge and skills to be able to:

- (1) effectively report child abuse or maltreatment of children to Franklin County Children Services;
- (2) evaluate situations to determine whether there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse; and
- (3) identify the physical and behavior indicators commonly associated with maltreatment of a child

Children Services has received an overwhelmingly positive response to the Mandated Reporter Training from community professionals. Since 2009, the agency has trained more than 4300 community partners, in both two and four-hour workshops. Included in the evaluation of the training, community professionals have continued to give the training high marks, and to state that they will be more confident in fulfilling their role in identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect as professionals working with children.



STRATEGIC PLANNING

In the work of child welfare, there is a growing recognition that embedding a lens for equity serves as a central component of any strategic development. The rise in inequality and inequity discussions have given way to an agreement that child welfare is lagging behind other “service-oriented” institutions in the implementation of outcome measurement and strategy alignment where equity is a core value across all contexts. This is particularly significant in ensuring the safety of the children we are mandated to serve. In 2017, a director of Strategy, Diversity, and Evaluation Services was hired to help align the agency’s mission and vision with its practice and work throughout the community.

The Strategic Plan, developed in October 2018 has been designed to set goals for the agency for the next five years that are aligned with the agency’s guiding principles.

AGENCY MISSION:

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.

Guiding Principles:

- We value every child
- We honor families
- We value partnerships
- We are child welfare professionals

AGENCY FOCUS:

- We have a strong, stable, and culturally responsive workforce to carry out our mission.
- We have the financial stability to properly fund our workforce and the services we provide.
- We effectively engage with community partners and the public at large to enhance child safety, permanency and well-being.
- We strive to serve youth in the least restrictive, most family-like placement possible.

STRATEGIC FOCUS:

1. Decrease the vacancy rate for intake and regional caseworkers.
2. Increase the percent of newly hired caseworkers who remain with the agency for at least 12 months.
3. Integrate racial and ethnic equity and inclusion into all division work.
4. Increase the number of teens initially placed in family like settings.
5. Increase the number of youth for whom permanency is maintained for at least one year.
6. Decrease the number of maltreatments while in care.
7. Increase the number of youth initially placed with kin.
8. Build a culture of equity throughout the agency which will foster positive outcomes for our children and relationships with our partners.



SOCIAL FACTORS THAT IMPACT OUR WORK

IMPACT OF OPIATES

The opiate epidemic touches countless lives in Ohio – the most vulnerable of those being children. And nowhere are the consequences of this epidemic clearer than at Franklin County Children Services and other child welfare agencies across Ohio.

In some Ohio counties, as many as 70 percent of the kids placed in foster homes are there because their parents struggle with drug addiction – opiates, mostly. It is the role of child welfare to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of the children who are the unseen victims of this epidemic. The cases are often complex, time consuming and emotional.

Since 2012, FCCS has experienced a significant increase in removals due to parents drug use.

Year	Total Removals (N) A	Removals Involving Parental Drug Use (N) B	Removals Specific to Opioids (N) C	Removals Involving Parental Drug Use (%) D = B/A	Removals Specific to Opioids (%) E = C/B
2012	2,010	780	243	39%	31%
2013	2,173	883	367	41%	42%
2014	2,099	861	398	41%	46%
2015	2,173	925	373	43%	40%
2016	2,360	1,082	469	46%	43%
2017	2,152	1,001	493	47%	49%
2018	2,132	1,042	468	49%	45%

The implications of this issue are far reaching and impact our entire system and the community at large. For example:

- Children raised in substance-abuse environments are vulnerable to the toxic stress common within families struggling with addiction – that is, depression, anxiety, PTSD and behavioral and learning difficulties, as well as significant attachment problems.
- Placement costs have increased due to more children in care and their needs being more intense.
- Agencies are struggling to find temporary foster homes or kinship placements for the children and provide them with the needed training and resources.
- Successfully reunifying children of parents with opiate-use disorder requires much more intensive casework than do other cases.

Since caseworkers are often on the frontline of working with the children impacted by the opiate crisis, they may also experience secondary trauma when exposed to certain situations such as helping children grieve the death of parents. The agency has resources in place for staff which includes training and support to help caseworkers manage these cases.

FCCS is also involved in several state and local efforts to support children and families impacted by this issue including the **Franklin County Opiate Action Plan** which was developed by ADAMH at the direction of Franklin County Board of Commissioners and Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther. The plan focuses on: prevention and community education; healthcare and risk reduction; treatment and support services; skill training of first responders and law enforcement; recovery options and community engagement. As part of this effort, Children Services developed a wallet size card that parents can use to identify their preference on who can step in and care for their child in the event of an overdose. FCCS and ADAMH are also collaborating in an effort to assist parents with opiate use disorder with expedited access to treatment services.

The agency also launched a special foster care recruitment campaign, to increase foster homes for Franklin County's children. Other efforts have included a community dialogue in April 2018, **The Impact of Opiates on Child Welfare** with the purpose of increasing understanding of how Children Services works with families dealing with this issue, and ways the community can support affected children and families.

OHIO START

In July 2018 FCCS began its pilot of the **Ohio START (Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma)** program, with the goal of achieving more stability and permanency for families dealing with substance abuse issues. Created through the Office of the Ohio Attorney General and administered by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO), Ohio START is an intensive voluntary program that involves expedited assessments and counseling, frequent family visits, trauma related counseling for children and participation in recovery services provided by Eden Counseling Centers. The caregiver must commit to having six months of sobriety and living in a healthy, sober environment. The case management team includes a specially trained FCCS caseworker and a certified peer mentor who has battled addiction and is on hand to provide support. Participating families will benefit from shared decision making with caseworkers, peer mentors and behavioral health specialists; improved relationships between children and families and more stability. The hope is that participating families will have less of a chance of relapse and continued involvement with child protection agencies in the future.

TRAUMA

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SCREENINGS AND ASSESSMENTS

Traumatic events and trauma exposure in children have gained extensive attention in the child welfare and behavioral health fields in the last 15 years, largely due to findings from the Adverse Childhood Experience Study (ACES). FCCS was one of nine recipients nationwide of a grant issued by the Children's Bureau (a division of Health and Human Services) to develop and implement a process for screening and assessing children for trauma and behavioral health needs in the child welfare system.

In 2018, FCCS completed work on its five year Gateway CALL federal grant. This project allowed the agency to work with other partners to learn more about the trauma associated with abuse and neglect and its impact on children's behavioral health. To enhance the work with children, parents, caregivers and community partners, Children Services utilized a set of screening instruments that examined traumatic events and behavioral health symptoms. These screens included the Child Trust Events Survey (CTES), the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) for children six years and older, and the Devereaux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) for children five and younger. Caregivers completed the Parenting Stress Index (PSI) as well.

Based on the findings of the national Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, the CTES was used to elicit information about abuse (physical, emotional and sexual) and caregiver characteristics (alcohol and drugs in the home, family member(s) in prison, caregiver mental illness, domestic violence and separation from the child). The number of reported events was tallied; greater numbers of events indicated greater exposure to trauma with lasting impact.

The findings from our evaluation indicated that many of the children we work with scored high in experiencing traumatic events such as being bullied, having an incarcerated parent, experiencing homelessness, seeing a family member hurt or killed or alcohol drug use in the home.

Findings from the evaluation also reflect that traumatic events with the most lasting impact on children's lives are: (1) the incarceration of one or more parent; (2) separation from the child's caregiver; and (3) the unexpected death of a parent or caregiver.

The reality is that many of the community's children have experienced trauma before interaction with child welfare and other systems, and when they are removed from their home, it adds additional trauma. Information like this reinforces the necessity to collaborate with other child caring professionals and community partners to ensure the physical and behavioral healthcare needs of children are being addressed.

Recently, an Oklahoma foster child wrote a wish list, asking for things that most children take for granted. This child's voice deserves to be heard.

THINGS I WANT IN MY FAMILY

I want food and water.

Don't hit on me.

A house with
running water
and lights.

I want love.

Mom and Dad
don't fight.

I want no drugs.

Don't kill my pets.

Help with school.

Nice clean clothes.

No lice. No bug in the
house.

Clean house.

Clean bed with covers.

Don't sell my toys.

Treated fair.



THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS

In recent years, Franklin County Children Services has seen an increase in trauma and trauma-related behaviors in the children and youth the agency serves. Researchers believe that as many as 75 percent of foster care youth, because of their past experiences, may find it difficult to form healthy attachments. So as they move from childhood to adolescence, these youth may seek and respond positively to support and guidance from caring mentors who can provide a “corrective experience” for those who have been abused and neglected.

Children and youth thrive best in supportive and nurturing environments surrounded by healthy relationships with caring individuals. Children Services is realizing more than ever before how critically the community is needed to help ensure the well-being of its own children.

Recognizing that young people need adults who are willing to develop relationships with them and help them build the confidence to set and reach their goals in life, Children Services relies upon volunteers who are willing to serve as mentors for agency youth in the Simba, Malaika, College-Bound and Friendship programs.

For over 50 years, Franklin County Children Services has been home to one of the few mentoring programs housed within a child welfare agency in the nation. As such, the agency is able to vet and support mentoring relationships collectively with over 120 years of staff experience. Though all healthy relationships have the potential to have a positive impact, outcomes are greater for youth in a strong mentoring relationship that lasts more than a year. When surveyed, 53 percent of responding mentors reported seeing their youth twice a month, while 15 percent reported seeing their youth three or more times a month and several reported seeing their mentee weekly. Over 98 percent reported having components of a strong relationship with their mentee, such as enjoying their time together and feeling like they were well matched. When looking at the longevity of agency matches, 96.3 percent lasted for at least six months and 80.5 percent lasted for at least one year. One mentor put it best when they said that the greatest benefit has been “building a life-time relationship with my mentee and his family”.



Former foster youth Carma Lacy with mentor Dr. Iris Cooper

MENTORING MATTERS

Former foster youth Carma Lacy knows firsthand how transformative an adult role model can be. Lacy's time with Franklin County Children Services connected her to her lifelong mentor Dr. Iris Cooper, whom she met through the agency's Malaika mentoring program back when she was just 17. A source of confidence and encouragement, Iris has been an unwavering support in Lacy's life for more than 20 years now and is “like a mom, best friend or girlfriend,” depending upon the situation, Lacy says.

Youth involved in the child welfare system have a critical need for committed mentors, says Lacy, who serves as program administrator at the Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio. According to Lacy, both her mom and dad were in foster care as children and eventually became teen parents without any guidance or support. A mentor might have altered their trajectory and broken the child welfare cycle in her family, Lacy says. For a kid in foster care who has faced serious adversity, having a devoted mentor to count on can make all the difference in creating a better outcome. “If you change the life of this kid, you change the life of future generations,” Lacy says.

In her role at the Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio, one of FCCS's community partners, Lacy finds tremendous purpose in nurturing youth who have “all kinds of barriers.” Whether the youth are homeless, in foster care, or have dropped out of school, “I get to be part of the solution,” Lacy says.

Lacy's firsthand experience in foster care helps her connect to children who have lived through extreme poverty, difficult family circumstances and other challenges. “The kids trust me,” she says. “I know exactly who these children are and their stories.”

A mentor to many, Lacy frequently gives her contact information to youth she meets in case they find themselves needing support. “I tell them to ‘call me and we'll figure it out,’” Lacy says. She was recently there for a 17-year-old girl for whom she provided a little tough love and positive direction. “I need her to know why she matters,” Lacy says.



FOCUS ON FAMILY SETTINGS FOR YOUTH

While FCCS and its partners share the value and belief that children are best served within their family and community, over the years, non-family settings or group care have become the most utilized option for teens coming into care. The research clearly shows that children placed in group placements experienced less stability and worse outcomes than children placed in family settings. To address this concern, in 2014, the agency partnered with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to explore ways to reduce reliance on group care and increase family settings for youth. Several work groups were developed as the agency explored ways to bring its practice in line with its beliefs. As a result, for the last five years FCCS has been collaborating with partner agencies, Juvenile Court and others to develop better options, resources and customized plans to meet the needs of children, particularly teens. The following is a brief synopsis of some of those initiatives:

- 1. Working with the courts to link families to appropriate services sooner, along with other efforts to reduce the number of youth ages 13 and older from entering FCCS care**
- 2. Increasing kinship placements by dedicating more staff to identify kin while continuing to offer them needed support and resources**
- 3. Building a high-quality continuum of services that addresses the changing needs of children and youth served by the agency**
- 4. Working with provider agencies to increase the number of teen foster homes**

The agency realizes there are times when intensive intervention is needed to stabilize a youth, or to ensure that a family is ready for her or him to return home. But when children are unnecessarily institutionalized, far from helping them deal with the challenges and traumas they have experienced, these actions actually may impair their emotional, physical and social development.

Families are the best medicine to help children heal. For this reason, FCCS will continue efforts to reduce the number of children and youth placed in congregate care, transitioning them into family settings.

CASEWORKER ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH IN CRISIS

If you're an unruly, delinquent or at-risk youth in Franklin County, meeting Van Frasher could change the course of your life. A Franklin County Children Services child welfare caseworker with 20 years of experience, Frasher is currently stationed at Franklin County Juvenile Court where he specializes as a diversion liaison. On behalf of FCCS, he collaborates with the court to identify at-risk youth and families who might benefit from at-home services and linkage to community resources. The goal is to strengthen families and address the underlying issues delinquent youth face, which are often related to trauma, substance abuse or a lack of parental guidance. Ultimately, the objective is to help all parties avoid involvement with both the legal and child welfare systems. "It's all about working for the betterment of a child," Frasher says.

A West Virginia native who has both a bachelor's and a master's degree in criminal justice, Frasher intended to go into federal law enforcement but somehow ended up as an advocate for youth instead. "I just kind of dropped into this field," he says. Frasher appreciates his daily opportunities to alter the trajectory of troubled youth in need of intervention. "I'm here because I want to help," he says.

A sixth-degree black belt who runs his own karate school in Gahanna, Frasher's extensive martial arts background has been useful throughout his career in child welfare, especially when it comes to reading body language. Being a martial arts practitioner is all about "staying mentally and emotionally activated," Frasher says. Being carefully tuned into how a frustrated or angry youth might be feeling can help him build the necessary rapport to have a constructive interaction, he notes. "A lot of times, it's not what you say, it's how you say it," he says.



Van Frasher

EXPANDING ROLE OF CHILD WELFARE

There is another emerging issue impacting child protection – that is, the challenge faced by agencies whose missions are being changed – not by the agencies themselves, but by states and communities that are asking public children service agencies to be a safety net for other strained child and family-serving systems.

At the heart of this issue is a simple fact: established for the protection and care of abused, neglected and dependent children, Franklin County Children Services and other public child welfare agencies across Ohio are serving a growing number of children, more than 63 percent of whom are in the custody of these agencies, **for reasons other than abuse and neglect.**

Protecting abused and neglected children is a challenging job, made more difficult today by child protection agencies' growing responsibility for a much broader population, including:

- School truants
- Children who are educationally neglected
- Homeless children
- Juvenile delinquents
- Children with mental health and behavioral issues
- Children with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities
- Children affected by the opiate epidemic

Compounding this challenge is responding to the evolving needs of children as they wrestle with their own identities in an ever complex environment.

This change has had serious consequences for Franklin County Children Services' operations and for those of other public children service agencies across Ohio. It has also changed the reasons why children are being removed from their homes and placed in agency custody and it has redefined the services child protection agencies must provide to children in need.

For example, FCCS accepts into custody or protective services any child adjudicated by the county's Juvenile Court. Locally, this has prompted the agency to partner with the court on a joint vision and practice to better manage delinquency, truancy and educational neglect cases and direct families to needed services while minimizing FCCS involvement.

This shift in agency mission has necessitated the creation of new partnerships and competency-building initiatives with other organizations. As mentioned earlier, FCCS is engaged with the Juvenile Court on a range of collaborative efforts and has committed staff and resources to community initiatives focused on homelessness, infant mortality, poverty and more.

FCCS will continue to seek opportunities for collaboration to address the complexity of issues impacting Franklin County's children and families.

UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

In 2017, FCCS entered into partnership with several Franklin County agencies – Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board (ADAMH), Board of Developmental Disabilities (FCBDD) and the Family and Children First Council (FCFC) to support youth with autism spectrum disorder who cannot be maintained in their family home. This residential program provides support to families dealing with the challenges of youth with autism spectrum disorders. It allows the parent to maintain custody of their child even during placement outside of the home. While long term support of these youth is anticipated, a goal will be to return the youth to their home whenever possible. Four FCCS youth initially placed in the program have had custody granted back to their parents. One youth successfully moved to adult care in 2018.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The 2019 operating year will be a transition year for Franklin County Children Services as the agency prepares for legislative changes that will impact its practice as child welfare professionals. Some of the initiatives that impacted this work early on will now be changed.

For example, in 1994, the Department of Health and Human Services accepted and approved various "IV-E Waiver" programs. The goal was to test innovative approaches to delivering and financing child welfare services. Ohio received a waiver for several counties in 1998. Franklin was one of those counties that became a part of Ohio's Waiver - Protect Ohio. But in 2019, this waiver will expire.

In February 2018 Congress passed the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). This act represents the most substantial change in child welfare funding in decades. This law allows for Title-IV-E funds to be used for prevention and limits the use of residential facilities as placement for children. Ohio does not have the infrastructure in place to implement this law therefore the anticipated costs will likely shift to the counties.

Both these changes will significantly affect the agency's federal Title IV-E dollars.

SERVING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN A FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE WAY



Since planning for its last levy five years ago, the number of referrals screened in for assessment and investigation by Franklin County Children Services (FCCS) has grown seven percent — the same growth rate as the county child population. During the same time period, cases opened for ongoing services increased by 17 percent and the number of days children required placement outside of the home grew by 26 percent. These statistics reveal a reality lived by our direct service workers on a daily basis — cases are becoming more complex and the needs of children and families more pronounced.

As the number of children in Franklin County continues to grow, the services needed to protect the vulnerable children within the county will grow in a parallel fashion. Therefore, FCCS must plan for an increased demand for its services.

It's important to note that the agency's efforts to place more children with family have shown positive results over the past five years after remaining flat the previous decade. These changes underscore a focused effort to serve more children in family-like settings and with family (kin) whenever possible. While the news of increasing kinship placements is positive, there is more work to be done to ensure that the trauma related to placement is minimized for all youth, especially our teens.

Protecting children by strengthening families remains the priority of Franklin County Children Services and the data demonstrates that the agency's efforts are making a difference. This is in spite of the increased complexity and influence of significant community factors impacting families. In the coming years, FCCS will continue to tailor services to meet the ever-changing needs of children and families.

KEY INDICATORS FOR PROJECTING AGENCY SERVICES

As part of the agency's Strategic Plan, FCCS has learned to rely upon key performance indicators (KPIs) that can be used to track outcomes and service levels, as well as reliably inform resource planning. These annual indicators are:

1. Child population within Franklin County
2. Number of child welfare referrals screened in
3. Number of cases that are opened for ongoing services
4. Number of ongoing service days by type of case
5. Number of days children are placed out of the home
6. Number of days children are placed out of the home by placement type
7. Disaggregated placement days by age in kinship homes



Figure 1: Franklin County Child Population

In 2009, the population of youth age 0-19 in Franklin County was estimated to be 318,521. In the span of 10 years, it has grown nine percent to 347,624. Over the next 12 years, it is projected to grow another 10 percent to 391,530. **1**

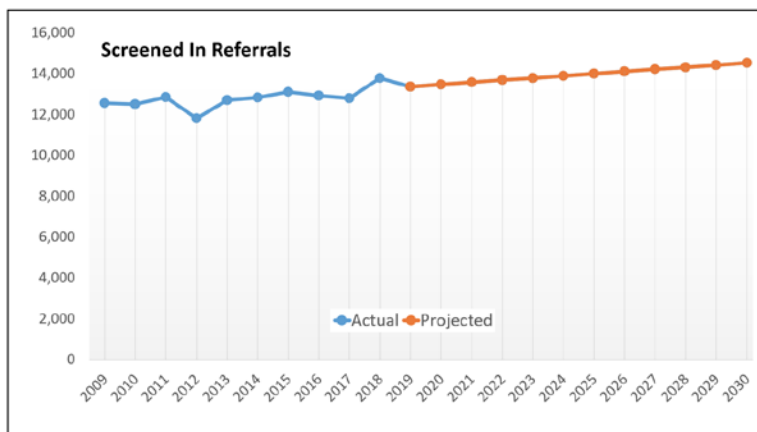
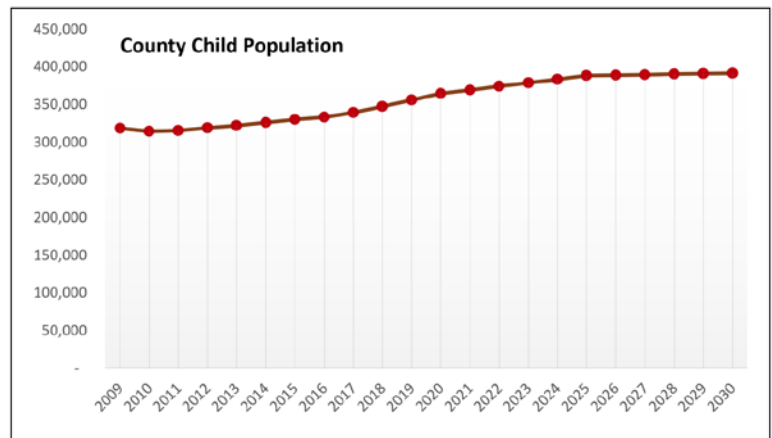


Figure 2: Screened-in Referrals

Referrals from the community that are screened in for assessment and investigation have been climbing steadily from 12,553 in 2009 to 13,770 in 2018. **2**

We project screened in referrals to continue to increase as the county child population grows. **3**

Figure 3: Cases Opened to Ongoing Protective Services

Some cases that are screened in for assessment and investigation need to be referred for ongoing services and monitoring. These cases are referred to as “ongoing” cases and are assigned to one of FCCS’s two regional offices or to one of its managed care providers. In the past 10 years, cases opened for ongoing services have increased 24 percent. This increase is likely due to two main factors:

1. An increase in the overall child population of the county, and
2. An increase in the overall severity of issues impacting families.

Between 2009 and 2014, cases opened for ongoing services at a rate of between 22 percent and 24 percent depending on the year. That percentage rose to 26 percent between 2016 and 2018 and went as high as 28 percent in 2017.

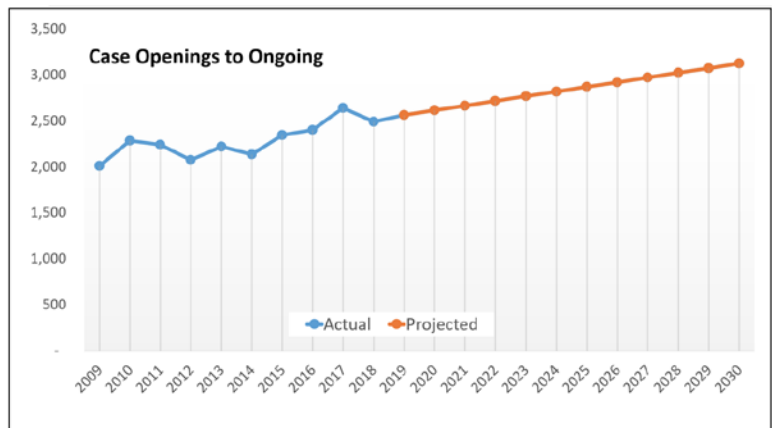
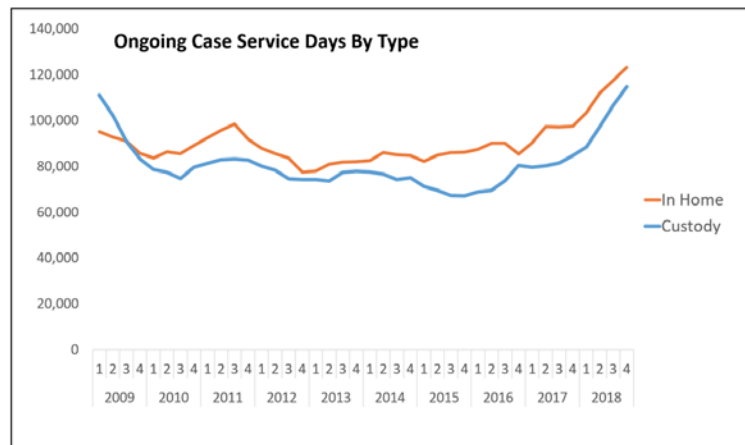


Figure 4: Types of Ongoing Services

FCCS services two main types of ongoing cases:

1. Those in which one or more youth are in agency custody and placed outside of the home for safety or treatment needs (**Custody** cases), and
2. Those in which one or more youth continue to reside in their home voluntarily or under court orders to cooperate with the agency (**In Home** cases).



This chart illustrates the total number of days in a given quarter that cases receive ongoing services by FCCS staff broken out by case type. While custody case service days declined between 2009 and 2015, they have been on the rise since 2016. In Home case service days have been more up and down over time, but like custody case service days, have risen steeply in recent years. Overall, regardless of type, case service days increased 15% over the last 10 years.

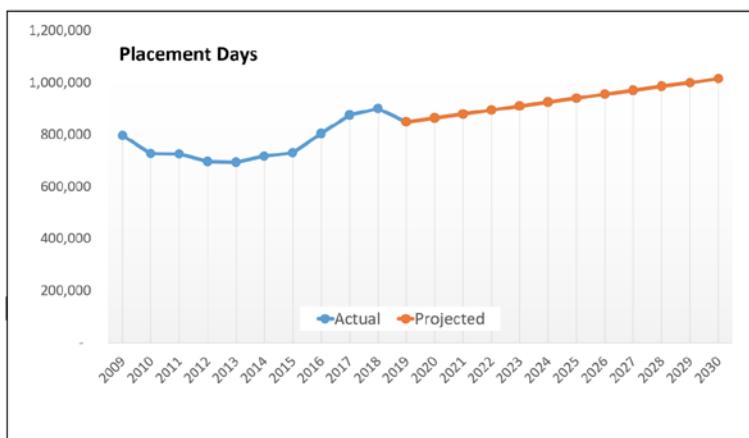


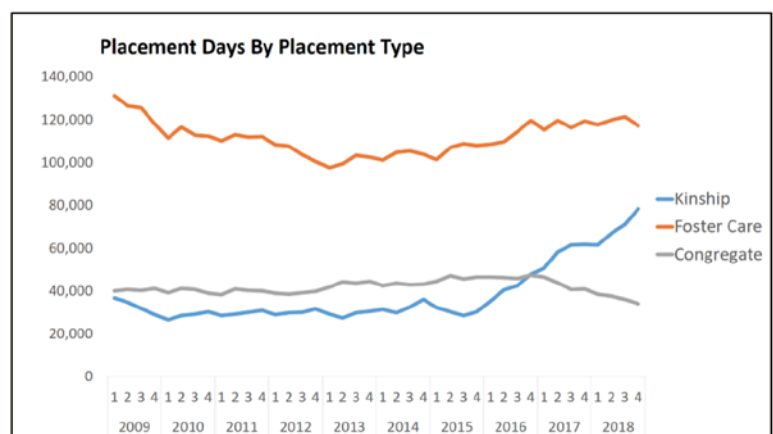
Figure 5: Placement Days

The rise in custody case service days is tied to the placement of children outside of the home. This chart shows the total number of days each youth is in placement (for all youth in placement) by year over the last 10 years and projects this trend into the future. While declining from 2009-2013, placement days have since been rising - from 693,344 in 2013 to 899,291 in 2018, an increase of 30 percent. FCCS projects placement days to continue this upward trend as the opiate epidemic continues to unfold and as the county child population continues to increase. By 2030, FCCS estimates that placement days will total 1,014,723 days, a 13% increase over 2018 levels.

Figure 6: Placement Types

While the previous chart showed placement days in the aggregate, **this chart shows important trends where youth are placed.** In general, youth removed from their home for safety or treatment needs have better outcomes in family (kinship) or family-like (foster care) settings than youth placed in congregate care (a group home or residential treatment facility).

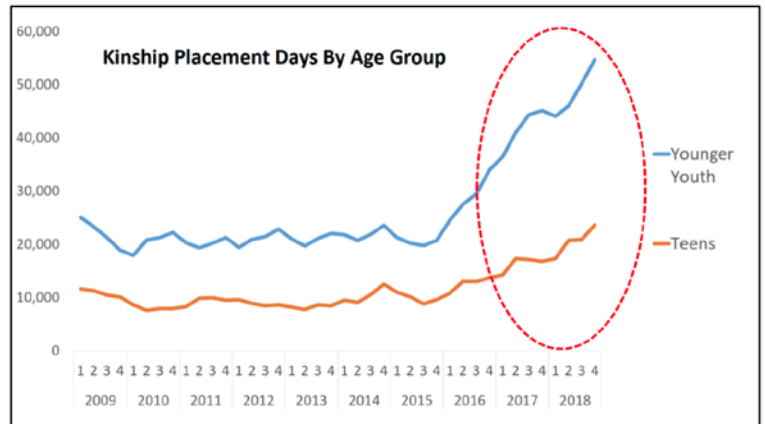
Due to a comprehensive effort on the part of the agency to remove barriers to family and family-like placements, more youth are being placed with kin and fewer are being placed in congregate care settings. **In 2015, 17 percent of placement days were spent in a kin home. In 2018, that percentage rose to 30 percent.**



This trend towards family and family-like placements is beneficial not only to youth and their families, it also helps the agency prepare for changes in federal funding which will limit reimbursement for congregate care placements. Remaining connected to family and community enhances the overall well-being of children.

Figure 7: Kinship Placements

Placement with family members has helped to minimize the trauma associated with removing youth from their home. But there is still more work to do, especially with teens (defined in the chart above as youth ages 11-18). While both younger youth and teens have experienced an increase in kin-based placement days over time, the increase for teens has not been as steep.



Notes

1

County Population Data Source Notes:

All data source files (excluding projections) are from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Year 2009 is from CC-EST2010-ALLDATA (Vintage 2010 population estimates) for 0-19 year olds.

Year 2010 is from decennial census counts for 0-19 year olds.

Years 2011 to 2017 are from CC-EST2017-ALLDATA (Vintage 2017 population estimates) for 0-19 year olds.

Years 2020, 2025 and 2030 are from the 2018 series projections (Office of Research, Ohio Development Services Agency) for 0-19 year olds.

Years 2021-2024 is based on linear trend from 2020 and 2025 for 0-19 year olds.

Years 2026-2029 is based on linear trend from 2025 and 2030 for 0-19 year olds.

Prepared by the Ohio Development Services Agency, Office of Research (12/4/2018).

2

For the purpose of this analysis, screened in referrals are limited to Child Abuse, Neglect, Dependency, Unruly Delinquent and Preventative Services referrals that are screened in regardless of pathway assignment.

3

All projections in this analysis are based off the 10 year trend experienced between 2009-2018.



FINANCES



The major challenge facing Franklin County Children Services – like all child welfare agencies – is to serve without delay every child who needs protection or care, and yet maintain a high degree of accountability and fiscal discipline. The approval of a property tax levy brings a great responsibility and FCCS continues to honor the trust given by the community for more than 50 years. The knowledge of this responsibility serves as a foundation to the financial management of the organization. Decisions are made with a balanced focus on child protection and fiscal accountability.

In developing the current levy request the agency considered historical performance, current indicators and anticipated future needs. A comprehensive look at the past, present and future is necessary to allow the agency to benefit from the knowledge gained over this past decade and determine the level of services needed to meet the increasingly complex needs of children and families.

CHALLENGES IMPACTING AGENCY FINANCES

Child welfare is ever evolving and becoming increasingly complex. The field has shifted from caring for “orphans” to involvement as a result of a parent’s behavior (child abuse and neglect), to involvement as a result of a child’s behavior (delinquency), to involvement as a result of the service needs of the family. This expansion of purpose and focus has resulted in a more holistic approach to supporting families toward better outcomes for children. Even our understanding of “protection” has evolved from an emphasis on moving a child from harm’s way to creating safety for children within their own families.

Franklin County Children Services and other public children service organizations have now evolved into complex agencies that investigate reports of known or suspected child abuse or neglect, provide a range of services on behalf of children the agencies consider in need of public care or protective services, and accept into custody children referred by a Juvenile Court. Impacting this work is also a better understanding of how separation and trauma affect the overall well-being of the child. Children Services has been continuously working to ensure that agency interventions are trauma informed and holistic.

The Children’s Bureau has an impressive interactive historical timeline at the following website: <https://cb100.acf.hhs.gov/childrens-bureau-timeline>. The site provides a visual journey through changes in child welfare over the years.



YEAR OF CHANGES

The 2019 operating year will be a “transition” period for Franklin County Children Services, Ohio, and this nation – a time to prepare for change. In 1935 the federal government authorized the first federal grants for child welfare services. In 1961 The Flemming Rule was established as an amendment to the Social Security Act. This rule created a foster care component of the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) funding source. This created federal matching funds for children who were removed from unsuitable homes. In 1980 the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act created Title IV-E and transferred the foster care ADC dollars to the IV-E program. This change included several program responsibilities:

- Established the first federal procedural rules governing child welfare case management, permanency planning, and foster care placement reviews;
- Required states to develop a state plan detailing how child welfare services will be delivered;
- Required states to make “reasonable efforts” to keep families together, by providing both prevention and family reunification services;
- Created an adoption assistance program (Title IV-E Adoption Assistance); and
- Created the first significant role for the court system, by requiring courts to review child welfare cases on a regular basis.

Title IV-E now represents the major share of our federal funding. In 1994, the federal government accepted and approved various “IV-E Waiver” programs. The goal was to test innovative approaches to delivering and financing child welfare services. Ohio received a waiver for several counties in 1998. Franklin was one of those counties that became a part of Ohio’s Waiver - Protect Ohio.

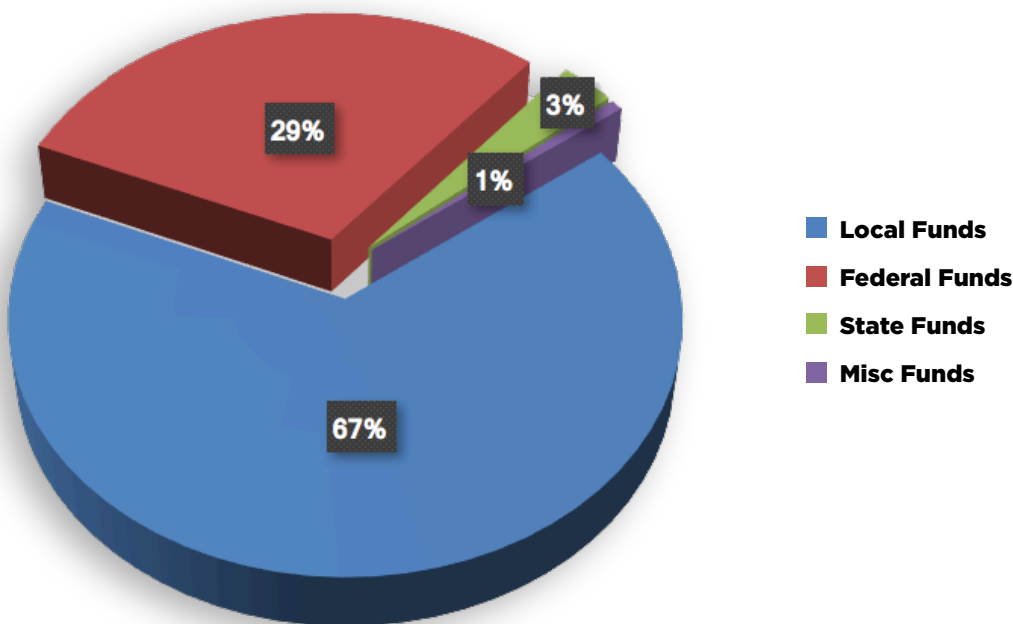
In 2018, Congress passed the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). This act represents a major change to federal child welfare funding.

In September of 2019, the Protect Ohio waiver program is scheduled to expire. The Family First Prevention Services Act will be implemented, and both will affect agency Federal IV-E dollars. Also, the current labor contract will be in the midst of negotiations for a January 2020 contract end date. All of these items were considered in the levy projection process.

INCOME

The majority of agency funding comes from levies and the federal government. These sources account for approximately 96 percent of the agency’s income. The remaining 4 percent comes from state funds and other local funds such as child support.

2019 PROJECTED INCOME



LEVIES

The agency has two 10 year levies that account for approximately 67 percent of the agency's annual income. The first is a 3.1 mill levy last replaced in 2009, expires at the end of 2019. The second is a 1.9 mill levy last renewed in 2014, set to expire in 2024.

The current effective rate for the 3.1 mill levy is 2.757087 and the effective rate for the 1.9 mill levy is 1.563510.

This document supports the continuation of the 3.1 mill levy.

FEDERAL FUNDS (29 PERCENT OF INCOME)

These funds contribute to costs for administration, foster care, adoption assistance, and independent living readiness and supports. The agency has diligently pursued federal funding and in the last five years receipts have increased 49 percent, from \$39 million in 2013 to \$58 million in 2017.

The agency has invested the federal funds to assist in stabilizing our workforce and providing services for families. The maximization of federal funds to the agency has allowed FCCS to avoid the drastic reduction of cash reserve as projected in the 2014 levy projections.

The implementation of FFPSA and the elimination of the Protect Ohio Waiver will greatly impact this funding source. Nevertheless, the agency will continue to position itself to successfully maneuver in the new funding environment. Specifically, the agency must have a strong stable workforce and reduce its reliance on congregate care to be successful.

STATE AND MISCELLANEOUS FUNDS (4 PERCENT OF INCOME)

State funds are flexible dollars and can be used to meet federal match requirements. Miscellaneous funds include child support, cross system collaborations, donations, refunds, and other similar items. It's important to note that Ohio still ranks at 50 for state contributions to their child welfare system.

2019 - 2029 INCOME ASSUMPTIONS

Local Tax Levy (67 percent of income)

The 3.1 mill levy will be replaced in 2019, collected in 2020.

New construction in the county will influence collections by approximately 1 percent each year.

The 1.9 mill levy may need to be increased in 2024.

Federal Funds (29 percent of income)

The bulk of the federal dollars come from the Title IV-E Program. The FFPSA may initially have a negative impact on these dollars, but over time, the agency will stabilize under the new funding methodology. Since reimbursement for congregate care requires program adjustments by the service providers, the agency's control of the adjustments are secondary. These dollars will decrease in 2022 and recover by 2024.

With the exception of years 2022 and 2023, the agency should see about at 2 percent growth in federal funds annually.

State Funds (3 percent of income)

The State Child Protection Allocation flows from a dedicated line in the state budget. The income projections consider a 3 percent increase every third year.

All other state funds remain level in the projections.

Miscellaneous Funds (less than 1 percent of income)

These dollars include such items as child support and collaborations with other county agencies. Miscellaneous funds projections include an annual 1 percent growth.

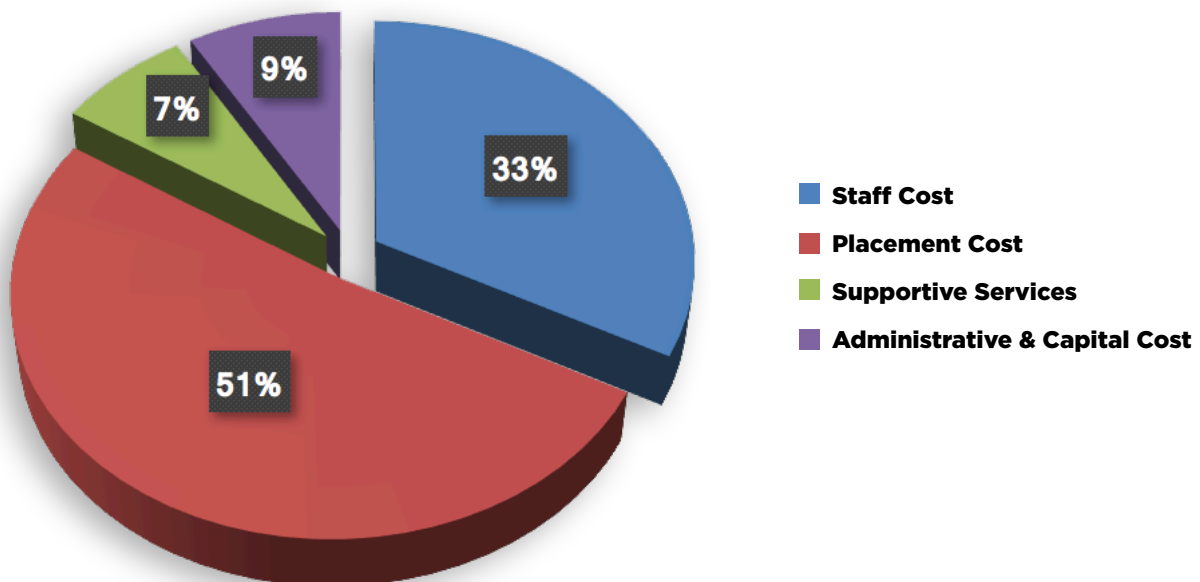
FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES ESTIMATED REVENUES , 2016 - 2029
(3.1 Mill replacement levy in 2020, 1.9 Mill may need to be increased in 2025)

	Levy Funds	Federal Funds	State Funds	Miscellaneous Funds	Total
2016	129,090,010	51,929,769	4,791,285	1,942,142	187,753,206
2017	131,570,137	58,962,228	4,871,244	1,320,849	196,724,458
2018	133,720,678	56,267,106	5,220,393	1,062,645	196,270,822
2019	134,179,725	59,450,000	5,927,052	1,463,700	201,020,477
2020	145,084,887	60,639,000	4,942,052	1,478,337	212,144,276
2021	146,535,736	61,851,780	5,090,314	1,493,120	214,970,950
2022	148,001,093	58,759,191	5,090,314	1,508,052	213,358,650
2023	149,481,104	55,821,231	5,090,314	1,523,132	211,915,781
2024	150,975,915	58,612,293	5,243,023	1,538,363	216,369,595
2025	161,486,249	60,370,662	5,243,023	1,553,747	228,653,680
2026	163,101,111	62,181,782	5,243,023	1,569,285	232,095,200
2027	164,732,122	64,047,235	5,400,314	1,584,977	235,764,648
2028	166,379,443	65,968,652	5,400,314	1,600,827	239,349,236
2029	168,043,238	67,947,712	5,400,314	1,616,835	243,008,099

AGENCY EXPENSES

The agency invests its resources to meet current and future needs and objectives. Agency expenses fall into four major categories: staff costs, placement costs, supportive services, administrative services and capital items.

2019 PROJECTED EXPENSES



STAFF COST

Child welfare is a labor intensive field. A strong stable workforce is imperative for the agency to meet legal mandates, function at the level of a nationally accredited organization and honor the public trust. In recent years, FCCS has implemented numerous initiatives to maintain an experienced workforce, especially at its front door (Intake). It takes about two years for a child welfare caseworker to develop the skills required to be proficient at this work. Child welfare organizations often focus predominately on placement costs and supportive services which are child and family focused. While this is important, consideration must also be given to the safety, permanency and well-being of the workforce. For example:

- **Safety at work.** Much of the work of a child welfare caseworker takes place in the community. Caseworkers visit the families and children in their homes or in other placement resources. They are also often on-site with service providers. Caseworkers often have extensive one on one contact with individuals in crisis. It's imperative that staff believe they are safe while providing services and meeting legal mandates.
- **Permanency** in this instance refers to retention or stability. When the agency is experiencing high turnover, the workers who remain must carry a heavier load. This often results in more experienced workers becoming overwhelmed and leaving the agency. A loss of workers means a loss of expertise. A loss of expertise results in a reduced capacity for specialized case management and the agency's ability to efficiently meet the needs of families.

A target of 12 to 14 cases seems to be an optimal level for good family interaction and creative case management. Also, when caseloads increase and the mix between experienced and inexperienced workers starts to be skewed, the dollars needed for placement and supportive services often increase due to a more conservative approach to child protection.

- **Well-being** of the workforce. There has been a lot of research on secondary trauma and the child welfare worker. The Children's Bureau states, "Secondary traumatic stress is the stress or trauma symptoms that a professional may experience as a result of working with children and families who themselves have been traumatized. It is also referred to as secondary trauma or vicarious trauma. Secondary traumatic stress can impact the quality of services caseworkers or agencies provide to the children, youth, and families they serve." The Children's Bureau also has "Secondary Traumatic Stress" podcasts that may be found at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/child-welfare-podcast-secondary-traumatic-stress>.

To help ensure workers remain mentally and emotionally whole, they must be afforded the opportunity for a solid work-life balance. They need to consistently have a workload that can reasonably be managed during a normal work week.

Targeted recruitment, worker support programs and special initiatives have been put in place to ensure that workers are able to function effectively in an environment conducive to their safety, permanency and well-being.



The agency has also been taking a closer look at FTEs (full time equivalent). Traditionally, the FTE count was determined once a year at budget time. The count was simplistic in nature – I have “X” number of cases, so I will need “X” number of workers. However, experience shows that every worker does not have the same capacity or expertise and every case is not the same. Over the last year, the agency has explored increasing the number of case carrying workers based on experience rather than quantity. For example, last June, 1,724 family cases were open in East and West regions (this excludes intake, managed care and adoption cases). At that time the agency had 127.5 case carrying workers with the following amount of experience:

Experience	# of Workers
0-2 months	1
3-5 months	11
6 to 8 months	13.1
9 to 11 months	8.5
12 to 17 months	20.9
18 to 23 months	18
24 or more months	55
	127.5

Using a target of 13 cases would indicate the need for approximately 133 caseworkers (1,724 divided by 13 cases per worker equals 133 caseworkers). However that number does not consider that new child welfare caseworkers must complete 189 hours of training their first year. They must also participate in shadowing and other learning experiences to enhance their engagement skills with families.

Therefore a new caseworker does not carry a full caseload until approximately one year with the agency.

This scenario shows that 26 percent of the workers (33.6) did not have full capacity and 43 percent (55) were in the generally accepted “proficient” range (at least two years of child welfare experience).

Case complexity also influences the number of cases that can be assigned to a worker. One case may have one child while another could also have five (please note it is a “family” case). Presenting issues are also factors. Some families require more intervention, support and encouragement than others. Some placements are out of state and still require visits by the worker. Some families have multiple extended family members on the case plan. While this is good, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) requires that all children and adults are seen monthly, thus the volume of work may increase.

Through experience, the agency has learned that a stagnant FTE count determined mid-year in the previous year is not realistic when the goal is to be responsive to the “current” needs and factors of an organization. **In 2018, the agency increased over-hiring staff and found that turnover was greatly reduced (from 20 to 30 caseworker vacancies to 5 to 10 vacancies at any given time).** Also, the added staff cost was often neutralized by a limited growth in placement costs and supportive services. The bottom line of the budget remained intact since dollars were shifted between budget categories and outcomes for families and children showed improvement.

In June 2018 the regions had 1,724 open cases compared to 1,633 in June 2017. The duration of a case and the amount of supports dedicated to a case is directly impacted by the amount of time a worker has to dedicate to the case and the experience level of that worker.

In the end, the agency gained a better understanding of the importance of increasing and decreasing FTEs based on current need as opposed to maintaining a number that does not allow for flexibility and responsiveness to an ever-changing environment. This flexibility should be a part of the basic operations of a child welfare agency.

PLACEMENT COSTS AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Public children services agencies are statutorily obligated to assess allegations of abuse and neglect and ensure safety, permanency, and well-being by partnering with families to alleviate safety concerns. Ohio law further requires that the child welfare agency have the responsibility for serving the needs of children by providing treatment services, and alternative placement outside their home when such services and placement are necessary. The agency is also mandated to provide services to families to address any underlying concerns, promote stability and safely reunify children, whenever possible.

Placement costs represent approximately 51 percent of the agency budget and supportive services account for approximately 7 percent. During the past 20 years, the federal government has shared in these costs through the Protect Ohio IV-E Waiver Program. The hypothesis of the waiver was that more children could be served at home if the local child welfare agency had flexible funding to provide supportive services as opposed to receiving federal support after a child was removed from his/her home. Recognizing that children are best served within their family and community, the agency prefers providing services over placements when safely possible. As a waiver county, FCCS gained expertise utilizing flexible dollars to wrap services and supports around the family unit allowing a child to safely remain in their home. Flexible staffing can be credited for a portion of the reduced rate in custody numbers as well as increasing intensive in-home services. When children do have to come into agency custody more resources can be utilized to find extended family or appropriate friends so the child can remain in a familiar environment, thus reducing the trauma of separation. Placement costs include:

- **Private child-serving agencies** – These include foster homes, group homes, and residential centers.
- **Managed Care** – The agency contracts with two private entities to manage ongoing caseloads. They function as a third region (the agency has two regions – East and West).
- **Kinship** – The Kinship Permanency Incentive (KPI) program was created to support children in the homes of family or friends who have committed to caring for them when birth parents cannot. KPI provides time-limited financial assistance to families caring for their kin. Eligible kinship caregivers receive an initial payment to defray costs of initial placement and may receive subsequent payments at six-month intervals to support the stability of the child's placement in the home. The maximum incentive amount may not exceed eight payments and will not be provided for longer than forty-eight consecutive months. KPI payments are in addition to Ohio Works First (OWF) cash assistance received for the child. The agency administers the state program and mirrors the program for families involved with the agency. Payments for the state program are mailed directly to the recipient from the state. The agency issues the supplemental payment for families that have been involved with FCCS.
- **Youth in Transition (Emancipation)** – This line item generally covers the cost of the “My Place” Program. This placement setting is a secured apartment building with staff present 24/7. The program builds skills needed for living independently when the youth transitions out of agency care.
- **Adoption Subsidies** – The Adoption Assistance Program is a federal program that provides matching funds to facilitate a timely permanent placement for children whose special needs or circumstances would otherwise make it difficult to place them with an adoptive family. It is believed that financial challenges should not be a barrier to adoption. The federal government shares approximately 62 percent of the cost for these subsidies. The agency sends out checks for the local share to approximately 1100 families each month.
- **Respite** – Respite care provides parents and other caregivers with short-term child care services that offer temporary relief, improve family stability, and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect.

As the Protect Ohio IV-E Waiver comes to an end in September, 2019 and the agency prepares to operate under the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) of 2018, the lessons learned through the benefit of flexible funding will continue to be implemented.

Some of the innovative initiatives implemented by the agency have included:

- Creating a teen rate for foster parents to encourage them to accept older youth and offset some of the added cost of having a teenager in the home.
- Expanding the hours of the kinship department to give more support to finding viable relatives after hours and on weekends.
- Establishing a “Rapid Response Program” at Juvenile Court to help put supports in place to redirect potential delinquent behavior which might result in a placement.
- Putting intensive services in the homes to prevent removal or promote reunification.
- Hosting the training program for foster and kinship parents from a 13 county area.
- Continuing to use supportive services to protect children and stabilize families.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES & CAPITAL

These generic operating costs include expenditures such as the phone system, information and technology system, building security, facility maintenance, utilities, supplies, community awareness and education efforts, and other services that support the organization across program and support areas.

2019 - 2029 EXPENSE ASSUMPTIONS

The 2019 operating budget approved by the county commissioners in December 2018 is the basis for all expense projections.

STAFF, LABOR & BENEFITS

Staff costs are projected to grow in a pattern of 2 percent annually for two years, and then 3 percent in the third year.

PLACEMENT & MANAGED CARE COSTS

Placement costs are projected to grow 2.75 percent annually. The agency is working diligently to implement initiatives that will lessen our reliance on group care settings. This is consistent with the direction of the FFPSA.

SUPPORTIVE AND PREVENTION SERVICES

The projections for supportive and preventive services grow at 2 percent.

ADMINISTRATIVE COST

Administrative costs are projected to grow at 1.5 percent.

CAPITAL EXPENSES

Capital expenses have been projected to remain level.

OVERALL

The average annual growth rate for expenses during the levy period is projected to be 2.45 percent. The low growth rate will be a challenge and require success in our practice related initiatives.

FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES ESTIMATED EXPENSES 2016 - 2029

	Staff Costs	Placement and Managed Care	Supportive Services	Administrative Costs	Capital Costs	Totals
2016	59,025,153	97,731,327	16,814,596	12,861,337	971,599	187,404,012
2017	63,480,206	104,011,656	12,245,982	12,409,042	1,016,398	193,163,283
2018	68,000,000	103,000,000	13,000,000	13,100,000	610,000	197,710,000
2019	69,555,760	109,301,739	15,106,395	16,973,978	401,125	211,338,997
2020	70,946,875	112,307,537	15,408,523	17,228,588	400,000	216,291,523
2021	72,365,813	115,395,994	15,716,693	17,487,016	400,000	221,365,517
2022	74,536,787	118,569,384	16,031,027	17,749,322	400,000	227,286,520
2023	76,027,523	121,830,042	16,351,648	18,015,562	400,000	232,624,774
2024	77,548,073	125,180,368	16,678,681	18,285,795	400,000	238,092,917
2025	79,874,515	128,622,828	17,012,254	18,560,082	400,000	244,469,680
2026	81,472,006	132,159,956	17,352,499	18,838,483	400,000	250,222,944
2027	83,101,446	135,794,355	17,699,549	19,121,060	400,000	256,116,411
2028	85,594,489	139,528,700	18,053,540	19,407,876	400,000	262,984,606
2029	87,306,379	143,365,739	18,414,611	19,698,994	400,000	269,185,724

HISTORICAL GROWTH RATES FOR INCOME AND EXPENSES

Historical records are often beneficial in creating context in evaluating projected growth patterns. They can be used to compare the past with the future. The next chart illustrates the annual growth pattern of both expenses and income from 1983 through the life of the proposed 2019 levy. Of greater interest are the last two columns of the chart which show how much growth is experienced in a five-year period (For example, comparing actual expenses and income between 1983 and 1988 shows that income was 70.64 percent more and expenses were 84.58 percent higher). Each line in the last two columns compares the current year with that point five years before.

INCOME & EXPENSE GROWTH RATES

	Income	Annual Income Growth Rate	Expense	Annual Expense Growth Rate	5 Year Income Growth Rate	5 Year Expense Growth Rate
1983	23,735,106		23,233,823			
1984	23,971,733	1.00%	25,676,428	10.51%		
1985	25,309,226	5.58%	28,195,538	9.81%		
1986	35,963,145	42.10%	33,527,690	18.91%		
1987	39,401,821	9.56%	39,575,075	18.04%		
1988	40,501,533	2.79%	42,885,306	8.36%	70.64%	84.58%
1989	41,243,917	1.83%	44,521,337	3.81%	72.05%	73.39%
1990	55,502,179	34.57%	48,218,111	8.30%	119.30%	71.01%
1991	59,774,571	7.70%	53,803,950	11.58%	66.21%	60.48%
1992	64,792,128	8.39%	61,907,872	15.06%	64.44%	56.43%
1993	66,616,371	2.82%	68,206,239	10.17%	64.48%	59.04%
1994	73,248,741	9.96%	72,066,346	5.66%	77.60%	61.87%
1995	76,855,022	4.92%	79,590,410	10.44%	38.47%	65.06%
1996	79,221,884	3.08%	80,188,345	0.75%	32.53%	49.04%
1997	100,919,804	27.39%	88,711,417	10.63%	55.76%	43.30%
1998	109,870,347	8.87%	95,470,290	7.62%	64.93%	39.97%
1999	112,644,916	2.53%	112,385,363	17.72%	53.78%	55.95%
2000	132,801,928	17.89%	120,565,402	7.28%	72.80%	51.48%
2001	135,445,989	1.99%	132,191,131	9.64%	70.97%	64.85%
2002	140,426,075	3.68%	148,614,070	12.42%	39.15%	67.53%
2003	146,224,027	4.13%	162,028,499	9.03%	33.09%	69.72%
2004	145,641,809	-0.40%	157,764,160	-2.63%	29.29%	40.38%
2005	173,985,600	19.46%	158,229,100	0.29%	31.01%	31.24%
2006	174,595,163	0.35%	163,589,159	3.39%	28.90%	23.75%
2007	178,152,319	2.04%	167,780,258	2.56%	26.87%	12.90%
2008	173,392,942	-2.67%	167,236,437	-0.32%	18.58%	3.21%
2009	174,855,683	0.84%	167,947,341	0.43%	20.06%	6.45%
2010	203,833,310	16.57%	165,732,352	-1.32%	17.16%	4.74%
2011	188,598,469	-7.47%	167,675,584	1.17%	8.02%	2.50%
2012	177,069,650	-6.11%	168,766,118	0.65%	-0.61%	0.59%
2013	173,616,645	-1.95%	185,840,708	10.12%	0.13%	11.12%
2014	180,543,145	3.99%	173,289,387	-6.75%	3.25%	3.18%
2015	181,521,953	0.54%	180,825,145	4.35%	-10.95%	9.11%
2016	187,753,206	3.43%	187,404,012	3.64%	-0.45%	11.77%
2017	196,724,458	4.78%	193,163,283	3.07%	11.10%	14.46%
2018	196,270,822	-0.23%	197,710,000	2.35%	13.05%	6.39%
2019	201,020,477	2.42%	211,338,997	6.89%	11.34%	21.96%
2020	212,144,276	5.53%	216,291,523	2.34%	16.87%	19.61%
2021	214,970,950	1.33%	221,365,517	2.35%	14.50%	18.12%
2022	213,358,650	-0.75%	227,286,520	2.67%	8.46%	17.67%
2023	211,915,781	-0.68%	232,624,774	2.35%	7.97%	17.66%
2024	216,369,595	2.10%	238,092,917	2.35%	7.64%	12.66%
2025	228,653,680	5.68%	244,469,680	2.68%	7.78%	13.03%
2026	232,095,200	1.51%	250,222,944	2.35%	7.97%	13.04%
2027	235,764,648	1.58%	256,116,411	2.36%	10.50%	12.68%
2028	239,349,236	1.52%	262,984,606	2.68%	12.95%	13.05%
2029	243,008,099	1.53%	269,185,724	2.36%	12.31%	13.06%
Avg	1983 - 1987	14.56%		14.32%		
Avg	1988 - 1992	11.06%		9.43%	78.53%	69.18%
Avg	1993 - 1997	9.63%		7.53%	53.77%	55.66%
Avg	1998 - 2002	6.99%		10.94%	60.33%	55.96%
Avg	2003 - 2007	5.12%		2.53%	29.83%	35.60%
Avg	2008 - 2012	0.23%		0.12%	12.64%	3.50%
Avg	2013 - 2017	2.16%		2.88%	0.62%	9.93%
Avg	2018 - 2022	1.66%		3.32%	12.84%	16.75%
Avg	2023 - 2027	2.04%		2.42%	8.37%	13.81%
Avg	2028 - 2029	1.52%		2.52%	12.63%	13.06%

LEVY SCENARIOS

The agency considered the expense projections under several levy scenarios: renewal levy, replacement levy, and replacement levies with various increases of .25, .4, and .5 mills. All revenue and expense assumptions remained the same in each scenario; only the amount of levy receipts changed. The objective was to determine the level of support required to ensure a cash reserve adequate to cover 90 days of operating expenses throughout the duration of the levy (2020 – 2029).

The following charts show the financial stability under each levy scenario. As stated, the agency has two levies: the first “levy A” was voted on in 2014 and the second “levy B” is set to expire at the end of 2019. Years 2019, 2020, 2025, and 2029 (the year before and the year after a levy continuation) are shown below. The 2019 approved budget is the basis for each levy scenario.

3.1 Mill Renewal in 2020, 1.9 Mill Replacement in 2025

	2019	2020	2025	2029
Beginning Cash	134,222,134	123,903,614	6,657,281	-149,937,816
Income	201,020,477	202,274,783	209,280,170	222,847,946
Expenses	211,338,997	216,291,523	244,469,680	269,185,724
Ending Cash	123,903,614	109,886,874	-28,532,229	-196,275,594
Months of Carryover	7.04	6.10	-1.40	-8.75

3.1 Mill Replacement Levy In 2020, 1.9 Mill Replacement in 2025

	2019	2020	2025	2029
Beginning Cash	134,222,134	123,903,614	57,001,615	-20,929,259
Income	201,020,477	212,144,276	228,653,680	243,008,099
Expenses	211,338,997	216,291,523	244,469,680	269,185,724
Ending Cash	123,903,614	119,756,367	41,185,616	-47,106,884
Months of Carryover	7.04	6.64	2.02	-2.10

3.1 Mill Replacement Levy In 2020, .25 Mill Additional, 1.9 Mill Replacement in 2025

	2019	2020	2025	2029
Beginning Cash	134,222,134	123,903,614	96,212,962	51,086,465
Income	201,020,477	219,831,261	236,732,778	251,415,240
Expenses	211,338,997	216,291,523	244,469,680	269,185,724
Ending Cash	123,903,614	127,443,352	88,476,060	33,315,982
Months of Carryover	7.04	7.07	4.34	1.49

3.1 Mill Replacement Levy In 2020, .4 Mill Additional, 1.9 Mill Replacement in 2025

	2019	2020	2025	2029
Beginning Cash	134,222,134	123,903,614	119,739,770	94,295,899
Income	201,020,477	224,443,451	241,580,237	256,459,526
Expenses	211,338,997	216,291,523	244,469,680	269,185,724
Ending Cash	123,903,614	132,055,543	116,850,327	81,569,701
Months of Carryover	7.04	7.33	5.74	3.64

3.1 Mill Replacement Levy In 2020, .5 Mill Additional, 1.9 Mill Replacement in 2025

	2019	2020	2025	2029
Beginning Cash	134,222,134	123,903,614	135,424,308	123,102,189
Income	201,020,477	227,518,245	244,811,876	259,822,382
Expenses	211,338,997	216,291,523	244,469,680	269,185,724
Ending Cash	123,903,614	135,130,337	135,766,505	113,738,848
Months of Carryover	7.04	7.50	6.66	5.07

LEVY REQUEST

After a thorough review of each scenario and much consideration, the FCCS Board and Executive Director formally request that the Franklin County Commissioners approve and place a 10-year, 3.1 mill replacement levy on the November 5, 2019 general election ballot, to be collected beginning in January 2020.

It is important to state that the Franklin County Children Services Board and Executive Director realize that this levy request may not fully meet all of the agency's needs. However, they are committed to making reasonable adjustments to operate within the income generated from this levy, to efficiently manage the agency and to provide effective, high-quality services to families and children until the 1.9 mill levy expires at the end of 2024.

The levy with the assumptions listed above would result in the following cash balances:

FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES OPERATING CASH ON HAND

	Beginning Cash	Income	Expense	End	Months of Carry Over
2012	127,720,909	177,069,650	168,766,118	136,024,441	9.67
2013	136,024,441	173,616,645	185,840,708	123,800,378	7.99
2014	123,800,378	180,543,144	173,289,387	131,054,135	9.08
2015	131,054,135	181,521,953	180,825,145	131,750,943	8.74
2016	131,750,943	187,753,206	187,404,012	132,100,137	8.46
2017	132,100,137	196,724,458	193,163,283	135,661,312	8.43
2018	135,661,312	196,270,822	197,710,000	134,222,134	8.15
2019	134,222,134	201,020,477	211,338,997	123,903,614	7.04
2020	123,903,614	212,144,276	216,291,523	119,756,367	6.64
2021	119,756,367	214,970,950	221,365,517	113,361,801	6.15
2022	113,361,801	213,358,650	227,286,520	99,433,930	5.25
2023	99,433,930	211,915,781	232,624,774	78,724,938	4.06
2024	78,724,938	216,369,595	238,092,917	57,001,615	2.87
2025	57,001,615	228,653,680	244,469,680	41,185,616	2.02
2026	41,185,616	232,095,200	250,222,944	23,057,872	1.11
2027	23,057,872	235,764,648	256,116,411	2,706,110	0.13
2028	2,706,110	239,349,236	262,984,606	-20,929,259	-0.96
2029	-20,929,259	243,008,099	269,185,724	-47,106,884	-2.10

CHRONOLOGY OF FRANKLIN COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES LEVIES

Year	Millage	Comments	Expiration Date	% of Yes Vote
1958	.5	Passed new child welfare levy on November after combined welfare levy failed in primary	1963	58.6%
1963	1.5	Passed new levy in November	1968	62.7%
1968	1.5	Renewal of 1963 levy in November	1973	50.9%
1970	.5	Passed new levy in November	1975	53.3%
<i>State law changed in 1973 to allow 10-year levies, millage limit removed</i>				
1973	1.5	Renewal of 1968 renewal in November	1983	67.5%
1975	.5	Renewal of 1970 levy in November	1985	66.4%
<i>Reduction factor applied in 1976 (1.1 and .4 mills effective levy rate)</i>				
<i>Levy considered in 1978, but not placed on ballot</i>				
1980	0.85	New levy defeated in November		46.1%
1981	1.6	Passed new levy in November	1991	59%
1983	1.1	Renewal of 1973 renewal in November	1993	79%
1985	1.0	New levy passed (instead of 1975 renewal) in November	1991	66.5%
1989	3.15	New levy passed (two levies to expire in 1991 discontinued) in November	1999	61.3%
1993	0.8	Replacement with reduction passed in November	1996	53%
1996	1.1	Replacement with increase passed in November	2004	60.8%
1999	3.15	Replacement passed in November	2009	58%
2004	1.9	Replacement of 1.1 mill + .8 mill new passed in March	2014	51%
2009	3.1	Replacement with a reduction passed in November	2019	61.67%
2014	1.9	Renewal passed in November	2024	70.09%



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