



Our Children. Our Future.

Protecting Children by Strengthening Families



2014 LEVY BOOK



Protecting Children by Strengthening Families

OUR VISION

Safety, permanency and well-being for every child

Franklin County Children Services (FCCS) is the agency mandated by law to protect and care for the county's abused, neglected and dependent children, and troubled youth. The agency's role is defined in the Ohio Revised Code and regulations promulgated by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, which require Children Services to:

- investigate each report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect or known or suspected threat of child abuse or neglect that is referred to it, and determine the circumstances surrounding the injuries, abuse or neglect – or the threat of injury, abuse or neglect – and the person or persons responsible.
- provide a range of services on behalf of children in the county whom the agency considers to be in need of public care or protective services.
- accept into custody or protective services any child adjudicated by the Juvenile Court, Franklin County Court of Domestic Relations. Children, once placed in the custody of Children Services by the court, cannot be returned to their parents without court approval.

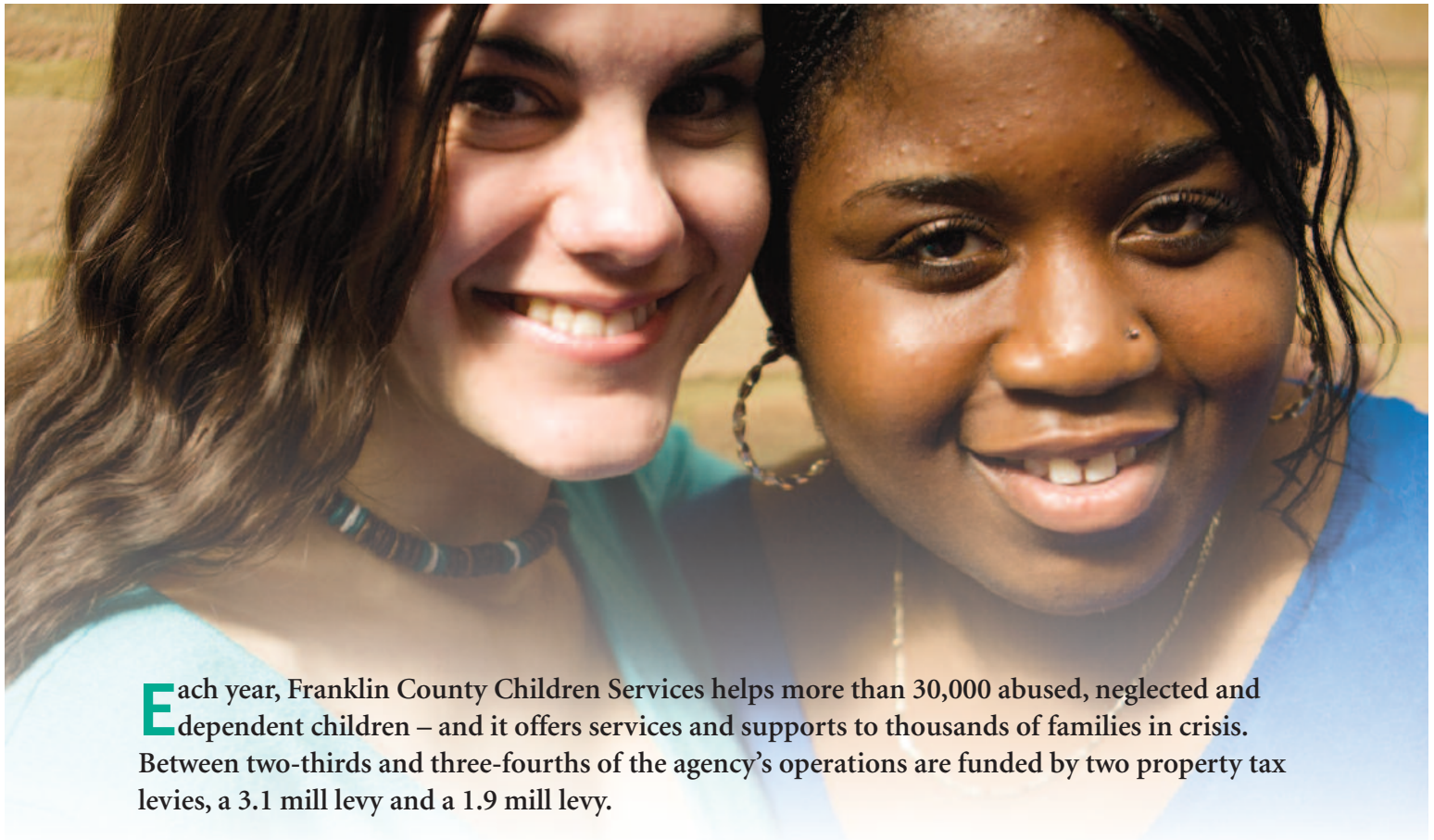
For more information contact:

Chip M. Spinning
Executive Director
614.275.2650
cmspinni@fccs.co.franklin.oh.us

Deborrha Armstrong
Communications Director
614.275.2521
daarmstr@fccs.co.franklin.oh.us

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Each year, Franklin County Children Services helps more than 30,000 abused, neglected and dependent children – and it offers services and supports to thousands of families in crisis. Between two-thirds and three-fourths 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 1.9 mill levy, approved by county voters in 2004, expires at the end of 2014. Without a renewal of this levy, which generated more than 25 percent of the FCCS budget in 2013, 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, 1.9 mill renewal with a 0.4 mill increase levy on the November 4, 2014 General Election ballot.

In planning for the 2014 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 28 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 20 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 34) 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 2014 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.

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.



Chip M. Spinning, Executive Director
Franklin County Children Services

Fortunately, when I became Executive Director of FCCS, there was already a solid mission statement and set of guiding principles in place. The guiding principles were clear: We Are Child Welfare Professionals; We Value Every Child; We Honor Families; and We Value Partnerships. What made this encouraging is that staff had embraced these principles and had incorporated them into their work with children and families. It was my role to keep the agency moving forward and develop a strategic plan. Therefore, by adding Council on Accreditation Standards and division and department goals, we began a plan for the agency's strategic direction for the next one to three years.

The process included an agency-wide survey – and internal and external focus groups, including staff, Board, foster and kinship parents, youth, former clients and community partners. This resulted in a Board-approved set of goals and outcome measures that will help us build a stronger future for FCCS.

Safety, Permanency and Well-Being for Every Child: *An Introduction to Children Services*

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

Every child needs a strong, stable family. And most children in Franklin County have families who love them and protect them from harm. Yet, this isn't the reality for many children.

Every day, Franklin County Children Services sees children whose lives are in jeopardy. The agency investigates thousands of allegations of child abuse and neglect; provides voluntary or court-ordered protective services to families whose children can remain safely in their own homes; helps parents resolve their family problems by referring them to community-based organizations with evidence-based programs; and places children in temporary foster care, with relatives or in permanent adoptive homes when necessary.

We carry out our mandate of protecting children by strengthening families through the dedication of more than 700 employees, 400 kinship families, 200 adoptive families, 500 volunteers and mentors and hundreds of community foster parents – and with more than 100 child-serving partner agencies.

And in partnership 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.

Our success as a public agency depends on the support of Franklin County taxpayers. Between two-thirds and three-fourths of the dollars that support our efforts each year come from two local property tax levies, one of which expires at the end of 2014. So Children Services is asking the Franklin County Commissioners, after review by the Franklin County Human Services Levy Review Committee, to put a 1.9 mill renewal with a 0.4 mill increase levy on the November 2014 ballot. This levy will be absolutely critical to our success in providing vital services to children and families because without its passage, the agency will lose nearly \$47 million – more than 25 percent of our operating budget.

On behalf of our dedicated, skilled child welfare professionals, our community foster parents and adoptive 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 2014 Franklin County Children Services levy book.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Chip M. Spinning'.

Chip M. Spinning

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 monthly. Board meetings are open to the public, and procedures are in place for citizens who want to address the Board.

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

2014 Franklin County Children Services Board

Shadya Yazback
Chair
Attorney-at-Law

Joy Soll
Vice Chair
Public Relations Professional

Maggie Lewis
Secretary
Educator/Consultant

Rev. Michael Bean
AME District Elder
South Ohio Conference

Charles Perotti
Charles E. Perotti Consultants

Ruth Cavin
Chase Bank

Babette Feibel
Community Advocate

Douglas C. Moore
American Federation of State,
County and Municipal Employees

Necol Russell-Washington
NRW Law Office

Tammy Wharton
Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland

Voters have given Children Services strong support

Franklin County voters have provided strong support for FCCS since the agency's first .5 mill property tax levy was passed in November 1958. For more than 40 years, Children Services has received revenue from either two or three separate levies at any one time, with 15 of its 16 ballot issues approved. Currently, there are two levies funding agency operations, and these 10-year levies expire at five-year intervals. One levy is a 3.1 mill levy that was first passed in 1989. This levy will expire at the end of 2019. The second is a 1.9 mill levy that was first passed in 1963. This levy expires at the end of 2014.

Agency accreditation

Franklin County Children Services proudly received reaccreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA) in August 2012. 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 23 children services agencies of Ohio's 88 agencies to be accredited by COA, a distinction the agency has earned for more than 30 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, 2016 by COA. However, 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.

By the numbers

- In 2013, the agency received 31,798 referrals to its child abuse hotline and completed 12,381 investigations.
- 255 FCCS foster children have completed high school and gone on to college in the last five years.
- Since 2009, 819 children and teens under the custody of Children Services have been placed in loving adoptive homes, where they have become a part of new, permanent family.



Children Services: *A Proven Record of Success*

During the past five years, Children Services has implemented many innovative initiatives to protect children, better engage families, enhance community partnerships, ensure permanency for children and improve the efficiency of the agency. Here are just a few of them:

- **Differential Response**

Research and experience show that there is a correlation between a family's financial stress and the incidence of child abuse and domestic violence. It is believed that these factors are influencing the increased demand for services. To address the varying dynamics that are bringing increasing numbers of children to the attention of the agency, Children Services has continued the expansion of the ***differential response program***, which creates two assessment tracks in the initial intake process: the traditional track for reports of severe abuse and neglect, and an alternative response for low-to-moderate risk cases. Launched in 2008, this program gives caseworkers flexibility in their approach to assessing families and providing increased front door services. The program has continued to expand with about 50 percent of the cases coming into Intake being routed to the alternative response pathway.

- **The Kinship Program**

Additional staff and material resources have been added to enhance the ***Kinship Program***, which provides support and services to those relatives who make the heartfelt sacrifice and commitment to provide care for their family member's child. Realizing the importance of children maintaining family connections when possible, FCCS significantly expanded its kinship program in 2012 to provide additional support to kinship caregivers. By re-deploying its caseworkers – from foster care to kinship care – Children Services is better maintaining connections between children and their families.

- **Dealing with Trauma**

Although the numbers of protective and placement cases have not grown as rapidly as intake cases, the cases are more complex and intense, often requiring more resources than was historically necessary. The agency is always looking for innovative approaches to best meet the ever changing needs of the children and families served. To help better address child well-being, FCCS is taking a closer look at how ***trauma and brain development*** affects outcomes for abused and neglected children. Through a federal grant, the agency will be able to work with other partners to improve access to trauma screening, trauma



assessments and linkage to behavioral health for children served by Children Services. The agency will not only be able to better understand the trauma experienced by these children and their parents in its system, but be able to better assess what services they need. This project could ultimately improve services to more than 11,000 children each year. Millions of children are impacted by trauma and violence each year and many are served through the child-protection system.

- **Youth impacted by violence**

It has been said that violence begets violence. Children Services is seeing the pattern of child victims becoming juvenile offenders. This problem crosses service systems, economic levels, ethnic groups, races and communities. The prevention of serious and violent juvenile offending is at the core of many national and local discussions. In December 2013, Director Spinning convened a

summit of service providers and community leaders from throughout Franklin County to explore more effective ways to serve this population – and to protect the community from youth violence. It is understood that a solution will require a unified effort to reach at-risk youth and to build new and stronger supports tailored to their individual needs. Children Services is committed to working with community partners and service providers to ensure that we are protecting both our children and the larger community.

- **Ed PASS**

The Partnership for Academic Student Success (Ed PASS) program is funded by Franklin County Children Services and implemented by the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio. Ed PASS provides support to more than 900 students throughout Franklin County, including those attending public schools, community/charter schools and treatment centers. Eligible students are middle school age and older, and in Children Services' custody. Now in its eighth year, Ed PASS continues to demonstrate its effectiveness. Recent outcome data indicate that nearly 90 percent of participating seniors graduated from high school, more than three-quarters of all grades earned for the final grading period were passing, and very few Ed PASS students had disciplinary incidents.

- **Permanency Round Tables**

In partnership with the Casey Family Programs, the agency successfully implemented *Permanency Round Tables (PRTs)* in 2010. PRTs create a team approach for discussing and brainstorming ways to develop an individual permanency plan for a youth. This practice shift of PRTs has challenged staff, community providers and families to think of permanency from a new perspective with an increased emphasis on developing lifelong connections for youth. Outcomes thus far have been very promising with children who have had PRTs achieving permanency at twice the rate of those who have not. To help the agency continue its efforts to promote permanency for the children of Franklin County, new process tools and resources were developed for full PRT integration into daily practice.

• ZERO 2 THREE

Disproportionately at risk for maltreatment, babies and toddlers comprise 25 percent of the children who come into agency custody. The ***Zero 2 Three*** Initiative is helping provide tools and training for staff and caregivers to help better assess and keep this most vulnerable population safer. Understanding healthy brain development in infants also is an essential part of this program.

• Team Decision Making

This is the third year that the agency has utilized ***Team Decision Making (TDM)*** strategy to work with families and help ensure permanency for children. The TDM process engages families in both the identification of the issues that are challenging them, and in the development of the service plan to help resolve those issues. This is a unique child protection process that bases a child's placement on family strengths and community resources while focusing on child safety and stability. Included in the team are parents, relatives, youth, community resource partners and the Children Services caseworker and supervisor. They work together to develop a plan for the family by assessing the situation, identifying family strengths and concerns, and developing ideas to resolve any safety issues. Since starting in 2010, more than 1,071 youth have been served through TDMs with 70 percent able to remain in their own home or placed in kinship care and 30 percent in paid care.



Despite these and other successes, the demand for agency services continues to rise. In 2013, Children Services experienced a significant increase in alleged cases of abuse and neglect. Reports to its Child Abuse Hotline reached a record high of 31,798 – ***an increase of nearly 25 percent since 2010.***

Yet, as the upsurge in the number of abuse reports and investigations continues, ongoing protective and placement caseloads of children have remained relatively stable. Children Services has actually ***reduced the number of children in paid out-of-home care by 16 percent over the last five years.*** The agency has done this by providing high-quality front-door services that strengthen families and keep children safe in their own communities.



We are Child Welfare Professionals

Franklin County Children Services' role is defined by both federal and state law, 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.

Every day, Franklin County Children Services sees families who are experiencing severe stress. Every year, Children Services helps more than 30,000 abused and neglected children. These children come from all cultural and economic backgrounds and from the diverse neighborhoods and communities in 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.

In 2013, Children Services provided help for 30,264 children and their families through direct services by the agency's professional staff and by purchasing services from 100 provider agencies. The agency completed 12,381 investigations and provided protective services for 13,622 individual family members.

In 2013, 4,146 children were served in agency custody. Adoptions were finalized for 150 children, 350 children were matched with volunteers and mentors, and 350 older youth were helped through the transition from being cared for to being on their own as adults.

Who are these children and what are their families experiencing?

They include ...

- A young child who has been left alone in his home unsupervised all night
- The young girl who is brought to the hospital with no acceptable explanation for her injuries
- Parents who love their children, but are incapacitated by addictions and mental health issues, and who want to change so they can keep their family intact
- A child who dies at the hands of her mother's boyfriend whose abuse has gone unnoticed for months or was ignored by those who might have helped
- A toddler and her teen mother who have no home and no prospects

These are Franklin County's children. They come from all cultural and economic backgrounds – and from diverse neighborhoods and communities.

And they all have two things in common. First, their lives are at risk. And second, every one of them deserves to grow up healthy, happy and secure.

Child welfare professionals: *Preventing and Responding to Abuse and Neglect*

Franklin County Children Services prides itself on hiring and retaining 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 700 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.

Children Services has a multifaceted training and development program that supports the mission of the agency and meets employees' identified needs. Developmental, training and coaching opportunities consist of a combination of programs offered by the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP), agency-sponsored programs and events sponsored by other entities. FCCS has hosted national and international delegations of training professionals for the purpose of information-sharing, presentations of new learning initiatives and overviews of a competency-based training system. In recent years, national colleagues have included professionals from Virginia, Colorado and Tennessee. International guests have included colleagues from Russia and Finland. Designed as a state/county, public/private collaboration, the OCWTP develops



Arlene “Sam” Jones: Tells children “I believe in you”

Franklin County Children Services caseworker Arlene “Sam” Jones is especially qualified to help teens in crisis, because she was once a teen in crisis herself. A homeless teen mom at the age of 16, Jones knows what it means to deal with family conflict, in desperate need of empathy, encouragement and support. She uses this life experience every day to better the lives of the children and families on her FCCS caseload.



For Jones, who is from Dayton, her young life began to turn around once she got involved with a program for homeless youth. This is where she met her case manager Tom, whom Jones credits with inspiring her to go into social work and dedicate herself to helping others. Once Jones got her life back on track, which included being the first person in her family to graduate from college, Tom told her to “help one more person just like you.” Jones did just that and then “couldn’t stop.”

Today, Jones frequently helps teenagers navigate the challenges of adolescence. She even will write her phone number in permanent marker on the palm of a kid who’s about to run away. Jones wants kids to know they always have someone to call who cares about their well-being.

While Jones clearly cares for teens, she’s equally committed to helping FCCS’s ever-expanding roster of kinship care providers—because she’s one herself. In addition to raising sons Nick, 7, Junior, 10, and Emmanuel, 14, Jones and her husband Shawn have legal custody of her sister Shirlene, 15, and temporary custody of her nephew Josiah, 5. There was never any doubt that Jones would step up to care for her relatives if the need arose. She said she wasn’t about to let her nephew or sister go into foster care.

As a caseworker and an advocate for permanency, being able to safely reunify children with their parents is one of the most rewarding parts of her job. There is nothing better than “telling a mom that her kids are coming home, and hearing her scream with joy.”

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.

The agency has developed clear guidelines and training requirements for all staff that exceed the standards established by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Ohio Revised Code for public children service agencies.

- All new employees are required by agency policy to attend a four-day new employee orientation and to participate in workshops on universal precautions, sexual harassment, customer service, GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender) issues, racism and safety awareness, by the end of the first year of employment.
- Newly hired child welfare caseworkers participate in an extended caseworker program for another 20 days and complete the caseworker core curriculum that consists of eight modules, three learning labs, four pre-training assignments, and three post-training assignments. In addition, they complete coursework in defensive driving, car seat training, infant brain science and permanency roundtables. All new child welfare supervisors are required to complete a 72-hour supervisory core curriculum by the end of their first year in a supervisory position.
- All employees are required to attend a minimum of 12 hours of training annually after their first year of employment. Specialized requirements apply to certain types of job classifications. For instance, child welfare caseworkers are required to complete 36 hours of training annually and child welfare supervisors attend 30 hours of training annually after their first year of employment.

- Some agency employees, such as attorneys and nurses, who maintain licensure or certification as a condition of employment, are responsible for ensuring that the training requirements to maintain licensure or certification are met.

The agency supports personnel development and academic advancement and retains staff with strong educational credentials through several programs such as Tuition Reimbursement and Fee Waiver Programs and the College Loan Repayment Policy. Since 2009, 168 staff have participated in these programs. The agency has had a partnership with the OSU College of Social Work since 2004 for an on-site, part-time master of social work (MSW) program. Since the programs inception, 55 staff graduated with their MSW. Currently, there are 246 staff who have advanced degrees. The agency promotes excellence in the credentials and training of staff and consistently provides coaching and leadership development opportunities.



Walter Stewart: “I got good people around me to keep things straight.”

Walter Stewart is not only an FCCS foster youth success story. He is a medical success story and a model young man who has had a second and third chance at a happy childhood and football life as an adult.

His story is still being written and in 2013, he attempted to try out at the NFL Combine, the stepping stone from college football to the pros, after several doctors told him his football career was over from a spinal abnormality. No team selected him in the draft.

“They wouldn’t let me work out because of my medical report. I even went to Toronto for a tryout with the Argonauts (Canadian Football League),” Stewart said. “I received a couple of calls on draft day but nobody picked me up.”

Ironically, it was Stewart who drafted himself into the child welfare system at age 13 after multiple encounters with his mother. More transition came months later, when his foster family moved him from the West Side of Columbus to Ashville, Ohio. At Teays Valley High School, a mostly white suburban school, he began to thrive.

To their credit, the community, his coaches and his peers accepted him, nurtured him and launched him into being only the third athlete in the school history to attract a Division 1 scholarship – an offer from the University of Cincinnati. Because he was in foster care, Eric Fenner, then Executive Director of FCCS, proudly signed his letter of intent alongside his foster parents to make it official in 2008.

Stewart credits his foster family and FCCS workers for his success. “I learned a lot from them. I got good people around me to keep things straight,” Stewart said. “It was a big part of my life and I’m very thankful.”

Stewart played three seasons as an outside linebacker and defensive end for the Bearcats until a neck injury sidelined his career. Doctors later identified a birth defect in his spine and his playing days appeared to be over. But that didn’t stop Stewart from participating.

When there was a coaching change at UC, Stewart, a two-time captain, offered to be a sideline coach. UC went on to win a bowl game that year before Stewart earned his degree. His former coach, Butch Jones, had offered Stewart an assistant coaching job whenever he wanted it at the University of Tennessee.

After getting multiple medical opinions, Stewart decided to return to workouts and hired a sports agent to resurrect his career at a different level. The 6-foot-4, 250 pound defensive end wasn’t done yet, all the while keeping close ties to his foster family and former FCCS caseworkers.

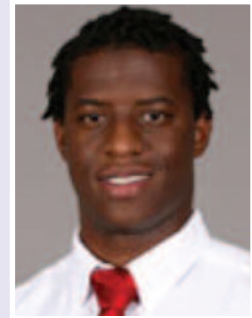
He was one of 333 athletes invited to the NFL Combine in Indianapolis. In an interview with NFL.com then, Stewart said he was taking life one day at a time without complaining.

Stewart trained at Ignition Athletic Performance Group in Cincinnati, where he was able to undergo a full training workload, uninhibited by the neck situation. Despite differing medical opinions, Stewart feels comfortable, given all of the information he has, about moving forward with his career.

“As a kid, I didn’t understand why stuff was happening in my childhood,” Stewart said. “But I never got down on myself like, ‘Why me?’ I just wanted to understand what I could do from where I was at. ‘What can I do now?’ That’s the stuff I thought about. I just kept moving.”

Stewart, now 23, is working on his Master’s degree in counseling at Tennessee and is living out one of his dreams by working as an assistant coach on the football team under his former mentor.

Information from www.NFL.com was used in this story.





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 ZERO 2 THREE initiative: A bright future for every baby

Keeping a keen eye out for clues that can ensure the safety of every baby and toddler, LaShawnia Belton is not just a caseworker at Franklin County Children Services. She’s like a skilled detective.

Thanks to the agency’s ZERO 2 THREE initiative, which aims to keep FCCS’s most vulnerable population safer, caseworkers such as Belton are able to more thoroughly assess the well being and safety of babies and toddlers. Whether it’s noticing a potential choking hazard, dangling window blind cords that could strangle a young child, or confirming whether or not a baby is eating enough and properly gaining weight, Belton said that the ZERO 2 THREE initiative has heightened her attention to detail. “I know exactly what I need to be looking for,” she said.

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.

ZERO 2 THREE’s ultimate goal is a simple one: to ensure that all caseworkers and caregivers know what a healthy baby looks like.



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, a traditional investigation or an alternative response will begin. 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 or alternative response, 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.

Children Services has been using CAPMIS since 2007. This model allows the agency to provide services that are tailored to the needs of specific children and families more quickly, preferably at the point of referral. Services address safety concerns and more frequently allow the child to remain with his/her family. As a result, CAPMIS has reduced the agency's placement numbers while providing the best services for children and families. 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

Thanks to the SAFE Teams review process, Franklin County Children Services is doing more than ever to ensure the safety and well-being of Central Ohio's children. Short for Supported Assessment For Effective Team screening, SAFE Teams is a diverse group of FCCS 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 – children who are three years old or younger. Any time a call comes in with an alleged child victim in this high-risk category that is not screened in for review, SAFE Teams automatically takes a closer look, to confirm that this was the right decision.

Permanency with birth families 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.

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.

Children Services supports kinship families

The Townsels are one big, happy family – with emphasis on the word big.

In addition to raising three birth children, Nolla, Selena and Dominic Jr., Carie and Dominic Townsel are busy caring for their nieces Summer and Selena, and nephews Tavaris and Julio. While it's not always easy providing for seven children ages 8-18, nothing matters more than family.

The Townsels are just one of FCCS's hundreds of families who have selflessly stepped up to care for their relatives' children. These kinship families are at the heart of FCCS's mission to keep children safe while maintaining their family connections.

A devoted aunt and uncle, the Townsels have always been there for these four children, whose mother had a long history of drug abuse. When their mother eventually died, and the kids needed a safe place to stay, the Townsels knew what they had to do. They eventually gained legal custody of the four children in early 2012, making them a permanent part of the family.

While their three-bedroom house can be a tight squeeze, the newly expanded family enjoys spending time together, watching movies, playing outside and gathering for meals. "Every single night, we eat dinner together no matter what," Carie said.

Providing stability, guidance and unconditional love for their nieces and nephews is what it's all about. Whether they're cheering 17-year-old Selena on at a softball game or just providing day-to-day support, "we all root each other on," said Dominic.



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 social worker, things begin to come together. ***Families whose children have been removed from their care are reunified nearly 90 percent of the time.***

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.

Realizing the importance of children maintaining family connections when possible, FCCS significantly expanded its kinship program in 2012 to provide additional support to kinship caregivers. Caseworkers were re-deployed from foster care to kinship care to provide support and standardized services to kinship families.

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 dispersed over a three-year period. To provide additional help, Children Services has expanded that program by offering matching funds to eligible kinship caregivers to further assist those who apply for and receive state assistance. Families may be eligible for Children Services' matching funds at redetermination for the state KPI program.



"All children deserve a forever family where they can feel safe, loved and cared for."

Chip M. Spinning
Executive Director

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 behavioral 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, a signature program of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. This unique program is committed to finding homes for the 100,000 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 of the 185 recruiters currently working throughout the United States and Canada.

These recruiters employ aggressive practices and proven tactics, focused on finding the best home for a child by reaching out to their communities and individuals who may have some connection with them. The program has helped more than 3,700 children.



Emancipation

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

Emancipation 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, emancipation 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 emancipated 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 youth who are attending school or studying for the G.E.D. and working. For those youth who maintain employment, emancipation 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 Emancipation Program also offers financial assistance with application fees, dorm deposits and other miscellaneous fees.

Any emancipated youth who has aged out of agency custody can contact the Emancipation Program to link with services.

Other initiatives

- **The TAP Program.** 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. Their destination is simple – healing.
- **Youth Council.** Youth for Change 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.
- **Pinwheels for Prevention.** Each year in April, FCCS participates in the Pinwheels for Prevention program. Thousands of pinwheels are planted at agency offices, the County Complex and other locations to draw attention to Child Abuse Prevention Month, and the importance of getting help for children and families where abuse is present. Each bright pinwheel represents one report of child abuse or neglect received by Children Services in the prior year. In 2013, 4,000 colorful pinwheels were displayed throughout the community to show that by reporting child abuse and neglect, children and families can receive the services needed to help them resolve problems.
- **Child Abuse Prevention Breakfast.** To reinforce awareness about child abuse prevention, Children Services and its Citizens Advisory Committee have hosted the Child Abuse Prevention Breakfast for the past 19 years. This event brings together about 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 afternoon of family entertainment, games and prizes. 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 five years, FCCS has partnered with Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman's Neighborhood Pride Program 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 about programs throughout Franklin County.



Sarah Gray: “My foster mother and FCCS have really been there for me”

These days, Sarah Gray, age 22, can often be found walking The Ohio State University campus in Newark or working on art projects with children at a local elementary school. Sarah couldn't have imagined her life the way it is now, when she first entered foster care at the age of 17. But with the help of Franklin County Children Services and its community partners, Sarah worked hard to build a new life for herself. Now she is studying Cultural Anthropology, and working as the program director of the Diversity through Art program, which is sponsored by OSU's Multi-Cultural Affairs Department.

While Sarah found many challenges in entering foster care and living in several different homes, her greatest struggle came when she realized that she would soon be on her own. “I was really scared,” she said. “But, I’m ridiculously into planning, so I worked with my foster mother to prepare and take advantage of the services that the agency offers.”

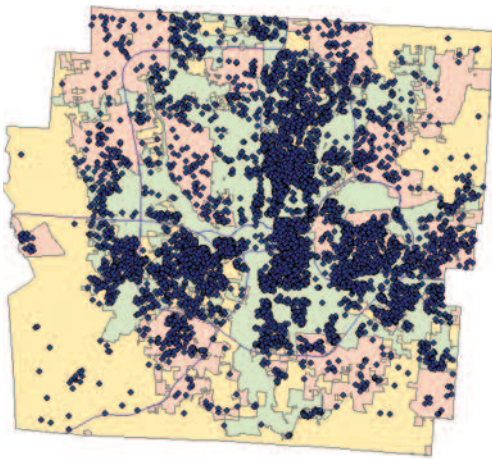
Sarah participated in life skills classes, received assistance with her first few months of rent, and got furniture from The Furniture Bank of Central Ohio. Sarah is also grateful for the help she received from The Center for Vocational Alternatives (COVA), an FCCS partner which provides transitional support services and living skills assessments to youth nearing emancipation. With the help of caseworkers, Sarah received a grant and a scholarship, as well as her current work-study position at OSU.

Now, Sarah manages her own household, studies and works hard. She’s also taking advantage of a chance to give back through her work with children. Sarah maintains a strong relationship with her foster mother and a great respect for FCCS. “They’ve really been there for me.”





We Honor Families



Franklin County

The children and families served live in all parts of the county.

Legend

- Families Served in 2012
- Columbus Metro Area
- Non Columbus Metro Area
- Unincorporated Franklin County

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.

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.

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 and Traditional Response – allow more flexibility so that FCCS can tailor how to meet the immediate safety needs of children.

Alternative Response Pathway (AR) was launched in 2008 at Children Services. Historically, when responding to possible cases of abuse or neglect, the child welfare system had only one approach, Traditional Response (TR), an investigation with an assessment. The rules developed for TR were based upon worst-case scenarios, such as shaken babies and sexual abuse. With the implementation and expansion of AR at FCCS over the past three years, however, the agency has embraced this new approach for responding to less severe types of allegations when appropriate.



AR is part of a larger reform within child welfare: an increased understanding that the system should be focused on a family's needs first and foremost. As a central part of this reform effort, AR allows FCCS to work with a family without having an investigation, and in turn, having to "label" a victim and a perpetrator. By being focused solely on the assessment rather than completing an investigation, AR reduces barriers to achieving in-depth family engagement. Families are disclosing more about the issues they're struggling with and offering solutions for how the agency may be able to help.

By respecting the idea that families are the experts of their own experience, AR is able to focus primarily on assessment rather than investigative fact-finding to arrive at a disposition. AR, as well as TR, operates under an understanding that families are defined by much more than the incident that first brought them into the child welfare system.

Family Support Services

Family Support Services (FSS) was established in 2009, and continues to be a resource for children, youth and families on cases both as a preventative measure, and as ongoing support on open cases. Children Services works to identify the needs of the children and families served, and Requests for Proposals (RFPs) are developed and sent out to the community. This past year, RFPs were sent out to address prevention, placement, and parenting services. Currently, FSS has contracts to address a wide variety of needs: psychological services, individual and family counseling, alcohol and other drugs, early childhood intervention, and parenting, to name a few.

Once a provider is linked with a family for services, there is the ability for the provider to continue to work with the family, even after FCCS closes its case. Many referrals are made from the Intake Department, in lieu of a case opening. Through FSS, the agency continues to provide linkage to a continuum of protective and preventative services so that families will either not enter the child welfare system, and/or prevent further penetration into the system. FSS, with assistance from its community providers/partners is addressing the goals of safety, permanency and well-being by matching the family with services to meet their needs.

While approximately 50 percent of FCCS's incoming abuse and neglect cases are currently handled by



Father's hard work pays off to get custody of daughter

Single father John Dunham has worked hard these last few years to prove that he could be a good and loving parent to his 4-year-old daughter Johnnie.

Dunham was in prison when his daughter was born, but he was determined that she would know she had a father who loved her. He wrote her letters that she was too young to read or understand, but he wrote them so that someday she would know that he cared about her. On the day of his release from prison in September 2011, Dunham took the bus to FCCS, met with his daughter's caseworker, and together they developed a plan for him to get to know her.

Johnnie had spent the first two years of her life in a foster home and had never met her father. During Johnnie's first supervised visits with her father, she didn't want anything to do with this stranger. But Dunham was patient. He never missed a visit with Johnnie, always brought snacks and toys, and never pressured her to interact with him. Then finally Johnnie decided he was okay and a parent/child bond was established.

But Dunham dreamed of more. He wanted to be a real family to Johnnie and he began working to get custody of her. He got a job, found an apartment and furnished it. With the help of his FCCS caseworker Erika Gunnell, his parent mentor Babette Feibel (who also is an FCCS board member), and many community resources, Dunham's dream came true in July of 2012 when he received permanent custody of Johnnie. In recognition of Dunham's efforts Gunnell nominated him for the 2013 FCCS Family Achievement Award and he won. Today, his favorite things to do are playing with Johnnie and hearing her laugh.



Intake's 10 AR units, it's important to note that AR is appropriate for primarily low-to moderate-risk cases, not for high-risk situations where children might be in imminent danger. The safety of children is and will always be the determining factor when FCCS decides how to respond to a screened-in report.

Culturally Appropriate Services

Cultural respect 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, and the culture of poverty. 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.

Parenting tips available to all families



Children Services believes that it has a responsibility to provide services to the broader community. One way the agency does this is by providing a series of parenting tips and public service announcements through its community education outreach. Topics on discipline, adoption, safe infant sleep, child abuse, dealing with teen behaviors, etc. are available by visiting the agency website and making a request.

Speakers also are available to groups who are interested in child protection topics.

Cultural diversity is reflected in employment practices. FCCS strives to maintain a diverse and competent staff. Of the 700 agency employees, 36 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 respect 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 competency 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 their own values and cultures and how to keep those beliefs from interfering with non-biased service delivery.

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.

Dealing with intimate partner violence

One of the recurring areas of concern that Children Services staff have found in their work with families is that many of them have experienced intimate partner violence. To help address some of these concerns, the agency added the Intimate Partners Violence (IPV) unit in 2010, which provides a new approach to how child welfare professionals address the frequently intertwined issues of child abuse and domestic violence.

Children Services’ IPV staff utilizes the principles and components of the nationally recognized Safe and Together model in their assessments and to help guide their decisions regarding safety and risk for children exposed to domestic violence. A key principle in the model is that the safety and well-being of children exposed to batterer behavior is ideally achieved through keeping them safely together with the non-offending parent/domestic violence survivor.



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:

- The ***Partnership for Academic Student Success (Ed PASS)*** program is funded by Children Services and implemented by the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio. Ed PASS provides support to over 900 students throughout Franklin County, including those attending public school, community/charter schools and treatment centers. Eligible students are middle school age and older, and in FCCS custody.

Each week, Ed PASS specialists meet with individual students to discuss their unique educational needs, review their progress and, when necessary, write improvement goals. The following are examples of recent student successes:

- An Ed PASS specialist at Maryhaven had 20 students with perfect school attendance.
- An Ed PASS student at Focus Academy, currently working two jobs, earned 2.5 credits and is on track to graduate early.
- A senior Ed PASS student at Whitehall Yearling High School, who was struggling academically last year, is now passing all classes except one. She also has reconnected with her college mentor, made a college visit and is preparing to take the ACT.
- An Ed PASS student at Marion Franklin High School is now an officer of the FCCS Youth Advisory Board and was able to attend a leadership conference at Cleveland State University.

Now in the eighth year, Ed PASS continues to demonstrate its effectiveness. Recent outcome data indicate that:

- Nearly 90 percent of participating seniors graduated from high school;
- 71 percent of all grades earned for the final grading period were passing; and
- Over 82 percent of Ed PASS students had no disciplinary incidents.

- An Ed PASS senior at Beechcroft High School graduated on time with help from his specialist who worked to make sure the student was completing the necessary work. He also kept the student's foster parents, teachers and counselors updated on his progress.
- 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 the ADAMH Board. 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.
- Children Services collaborates with the ***Franklin County Juvenile Court, the county prosecutor, local law enforcement agencies, the county humane society, 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 delineate the responsibilities of each organization with respect to its duties under the Ohio Revised Code.

FCCS and Nationwide Children's Hospital partner for kids *Child Assessment Center benefits victims of child abuse*

Abby's mother was in shock when a Children Services caseworker told her that her 7-year-old daughter said she had been sexually abused. The caseworker suggested that Abby (not her real name) be taken to the Child Assessment Center (CAC) at The Center for Family Safety and Healing at Nationwide Children's Hospital. Once there she was interviewed by a social worker and received an examination by a physician.



The CAC opened its doors nearly nine years ago and FCCS has been an integral part in helping the more than 6,300 sexually abused children since then. The CAC provides one place for victims to link with all needed services. Together FCCS, law enforcement, prosecutors, mental health experts, and physicians create a multidisciplinary team of child abuse experts. Having staff from each agency housed in the same building helps to avoid numerous appointments and interviews that would cause unnecessary trauma to the victims of sexual abuse.

Before Abby's interview, staff met with her mother to discuss the suspected abuse, and get information about Abby's family, behavior and life experiences. Then the interviewer and Abby met separately. The other members of the team sat in another room and observed Abby's interview on closed-circuit television. Once completed, a physician conducted an examination.

FCCS has 15 child welfare caseworkers and three supervisors located at the CAC, where they investigate the suspected sexual abuse of children. Working in the same building with other members of the multidisciplinary team increases collaboration among police, prosecutors and Children Services staff. Decisions about safety and risk to children are not left up to one person, or even one agency. The team discusses the case immediately after learning key facts, determines the level of risk a child may face, and prepares an intervention if needed.

- Children Services has entered into a cooperative agreement with the **Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency** to assist in collecting child support for youth in agency custody, when appropriate. The agreement also enhances communication between the two agencies to ensure county resources are maximized.
- The agency has a cooperative agreement with **Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services** to help families involved with FCCS obtain essential services and assistance to maintain children with their families. This partnership maximizes the resources of both agencies to ensure that families served by both entities receive uninterrupted services and support.
- Franklin, Cuyahoga, Lucas, Montgomery and Summit counties are participating in **Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)** in Ohio. This initiative is helping jurisdictions make prudent use of secure detention, promote efficient use of resources and support public safety. Efforts will enhance options for youth taken into custody, and expected outcomes include reducing racial disparities, improving school completion rates, and lowering re-offense rates. FCCS is one member among many involved in this program led by the Franklin County Juvenile Court. Law enforcement, social service agencies, city officials and school officials make up some of the entities involved in this critical work.
- 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**. Originally developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Family-to-Family operates today with the following principals in mind:
 - A child's safety is paramount
 - Children belong in families
 - Families need strong communities
 - Public child welfare systems need community partners to achieve strong outcomes for children.

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. The program currently works with the following settlement houses:

- Central Community House – East
- Gladden Community House – West
- St. Stephen's – North
- St. Stephen's – East
- St. Stephen's – South



By working with local organizations, Franklin County Children Services helps families resolve issues and strengthen ties within their communities. Each year, Family-to-Family honors families that exemplify the success that can be achieved by availing themselves of the resources within their communities. Families who have overcome their struggles are recognized during National Family Week each November. In addition, each settlement house honors a community advocate for their exemplary work in serving their community.

- Since 2009, Children Services has been collaborating with The Center for Family Safety and Healing to provide comprehensive health-care services for youth in care through the **Fostering Connections Program**. The program provides:

- Initial medical, developmental and behavioral evaluations upon placement into care.
- Complete well-child and sick-child visits
- Availability of a dedicated physician group practice 24/7
- Access to behavioral health and developmental services
- Support to children in foster and kinship care and their families
- Services and support to youth aging out-of-care

These are just a few of the many collaborations and partnerships in which FCCS has engaged to better serve children and families. It has utilized provider forums to communicate agency needs to community-based providers and allow for the healthy exchange of ideas and the sharing of concerns. And Children Services has focused 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.

In addition, Children Services has “strengthened the front door” by providing alternative 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.

This approach continues to represent the future of child protective services.



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 2,584 community partners in a four-hour workshop. 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.



In recent years, Children Services' level of intake investigations has remained fairly constant (about 11,000 investigations per year). Yet, the agency has seen decreases in case openings, caseloads, children under custody and children in foster and other paid care settings. These changes were not predicted a decade ago when continuous increases over the prior ten years suggested that there would be more children on the agency's caseload and in paid care than ever before.

By 2009, when the current 3.1 mill levy was placed before voters, that was beginning to change. New management and an expanded set of front-line services in the years leading up to that levy had resulted in significant reductions in both case openings and associated service populations. These changes became most pronounced as the agency's service model shifted from protection through placement to protecting children by strengthening families.

Yet, in 2009, as the agency planned for its Children Services Levy, it was difficult to project the correct levels of need for services to children and families due to a significant shift in practice, continuing reductions in case openings and a large reduction in the number of children in placement away from home. The alternative response approach for cases coming to Intake, and the increase of more front-door services to help families with problems to maintain their children safely, had shown dramatic and positive results. But the dilemma for those projecting trends in service demands was whether or not these decreases could continue – would they level out or be reversed in the coming five years.

A much clearer picture is now possible and projecting service needs for the next 10 years is based on the following data, charts and tables.

Key Indicators of projected services levels

Over time, FCCS has learned to rely upon a set of key indicators that can be used to track service levels that reliably inform resource planning. These indicators are:

1. Child population within Franklin County
2. Number of child welfare investigations completed annually
3. Number of cases that are opened for ongoing services annually
4. Number of children on cases that are opened for ongoing services annually
5. Average monthly child caseload
6. Average monthly custody child caseload
7. Average monthly number of children in paid care
8. The proportion of paid care categories

The population of children in Franklin County has been growing at a 0.5 percent to 1 percent annual rate since 1994. The U.S. Census Bureau projects the population of children to continue to grow at an annual rate of 0.9 percent to 1.2 percent between 2013 through the year 2020, and slow somewhat to a 0.5 percent annual rate in the years 2021- 2025. (See Figure 1)

FCCS believes this general demographic trend will impact service levels in a predictable way. The basic assumption is that as the population of children grows within the county, the services needed to protect the vulnerable children within the county will grow in a parallel fashion.

Figure 1: Population of Children in Franklin County 0-19 Years, 1994-2025

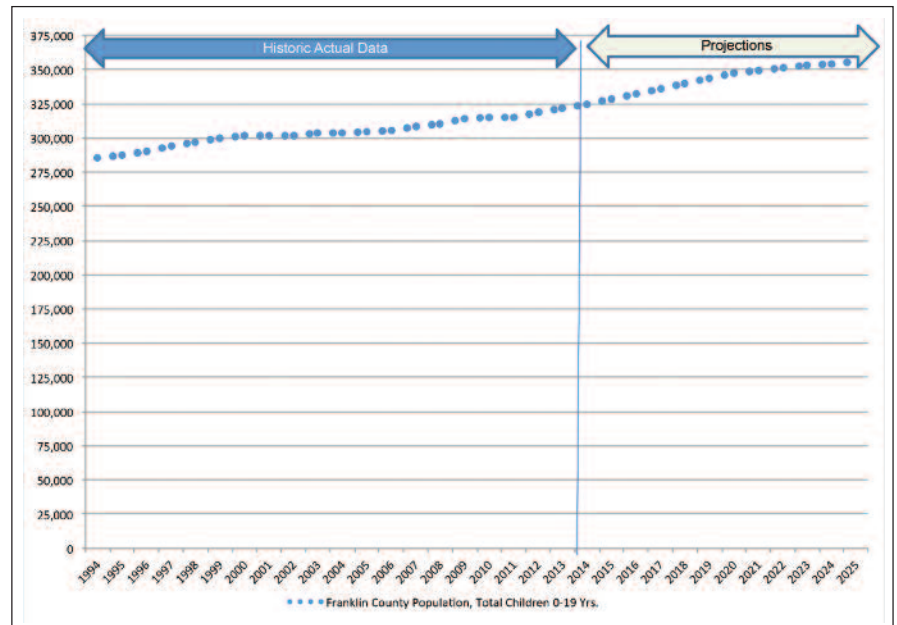
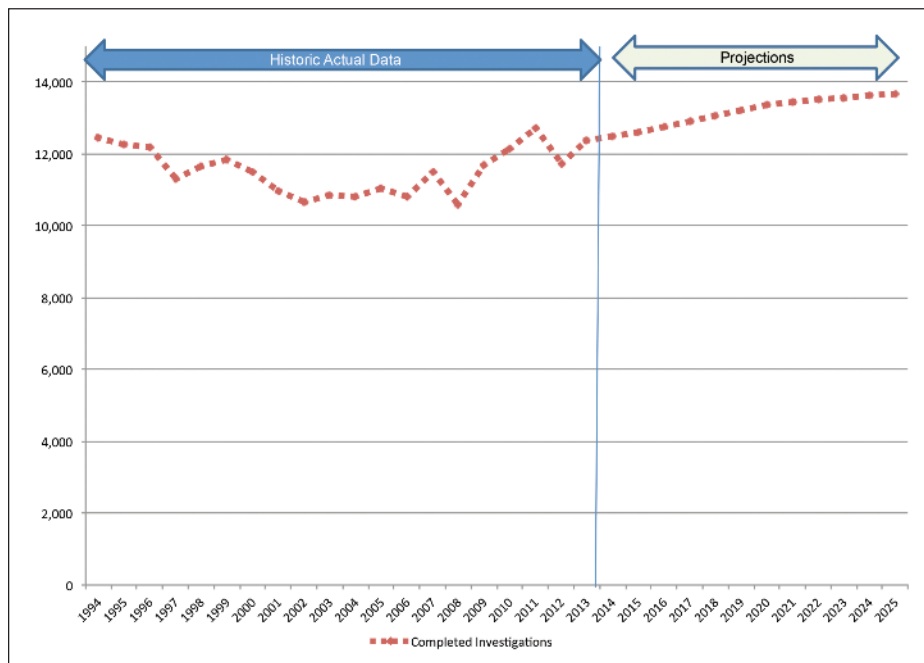
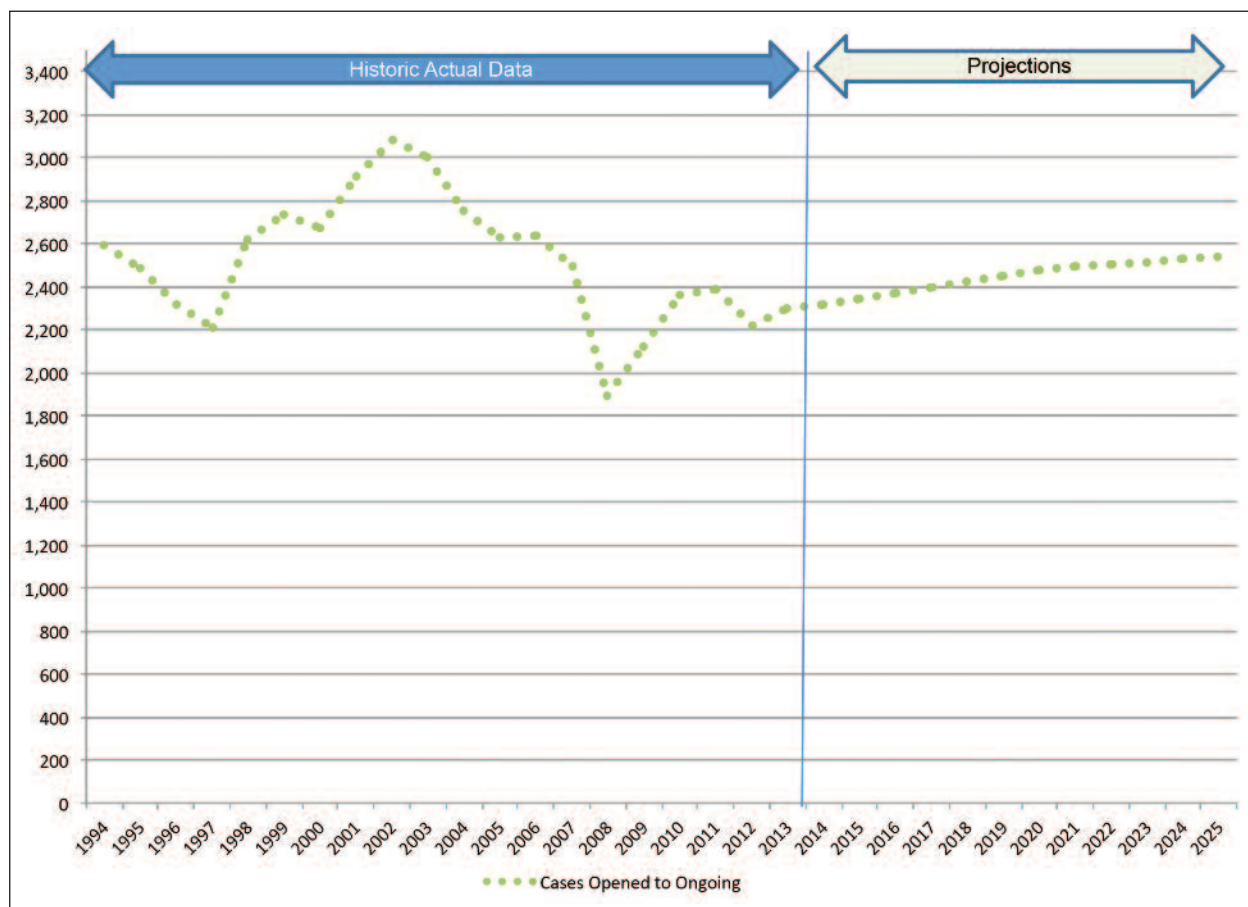


Figure 2: Annual Child Welfare Investigations, 1994-2025



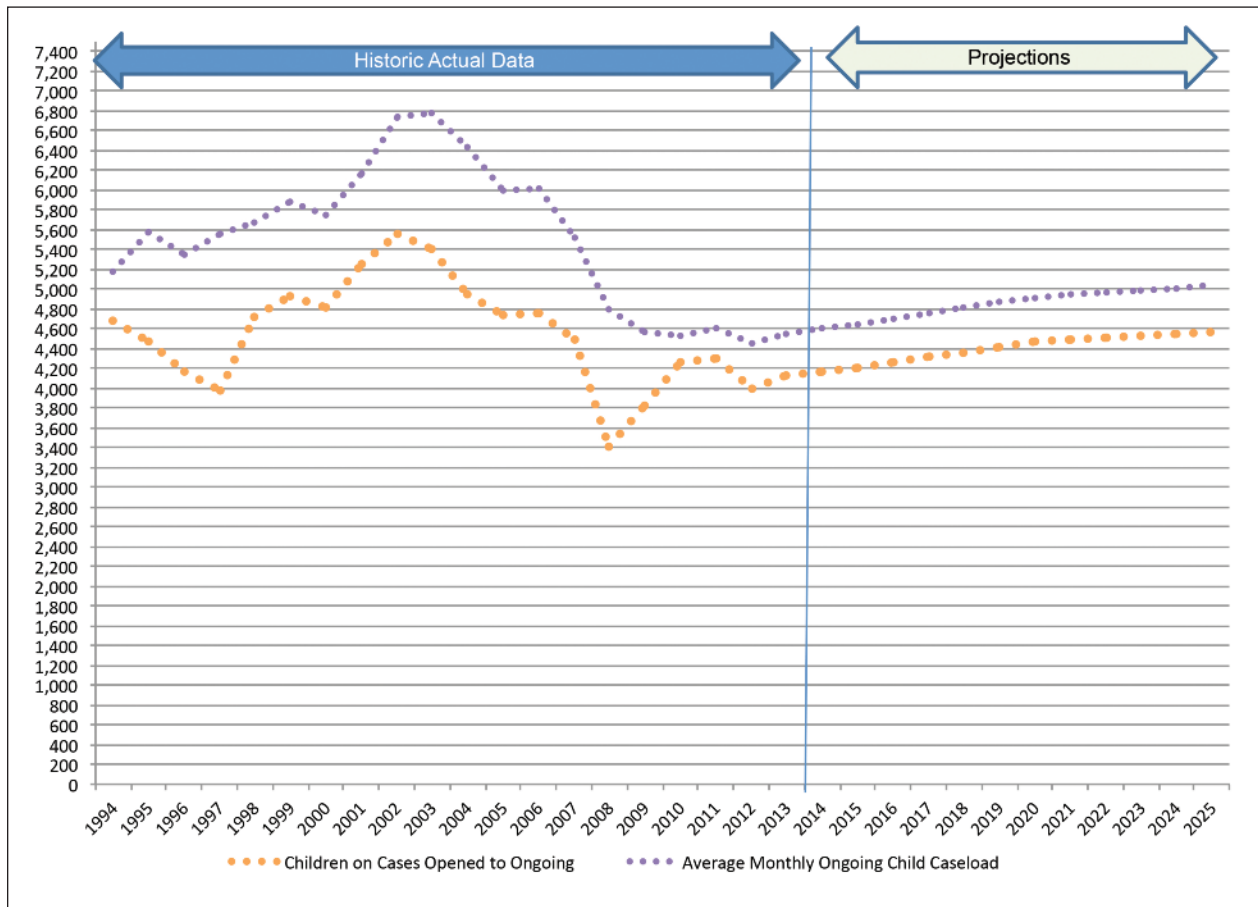
As Figure 2 shows, historical averages for the incidence rate of investigations per 1000 children show a fairly consistent level of about **38 completed investigations per 1000 children annually**.

There is no evidence that indicates this rate will change in the near future. Therefore, the rates of annual child welfare investigations will closely follow those of the predicted growth in the child population.

Figure 3: Annual Cases Opened to Ongoing Protective Services, 1994-2025

The child welfare investigation often is considered an entry-point into the system. One significant service event that can occur after a child welfare investigation is that the family is referred for ongoing protective services. Historically, over the past 19 years, about 22 percent of all child welfare investigations resulted in an opening to ongoing services. With practice changes and the provision of more preventive services in the past five years, that rate has decreased to about 19-20 percent. An estimated rate of 18 percent is used to support the projections shown above in Figure 3.

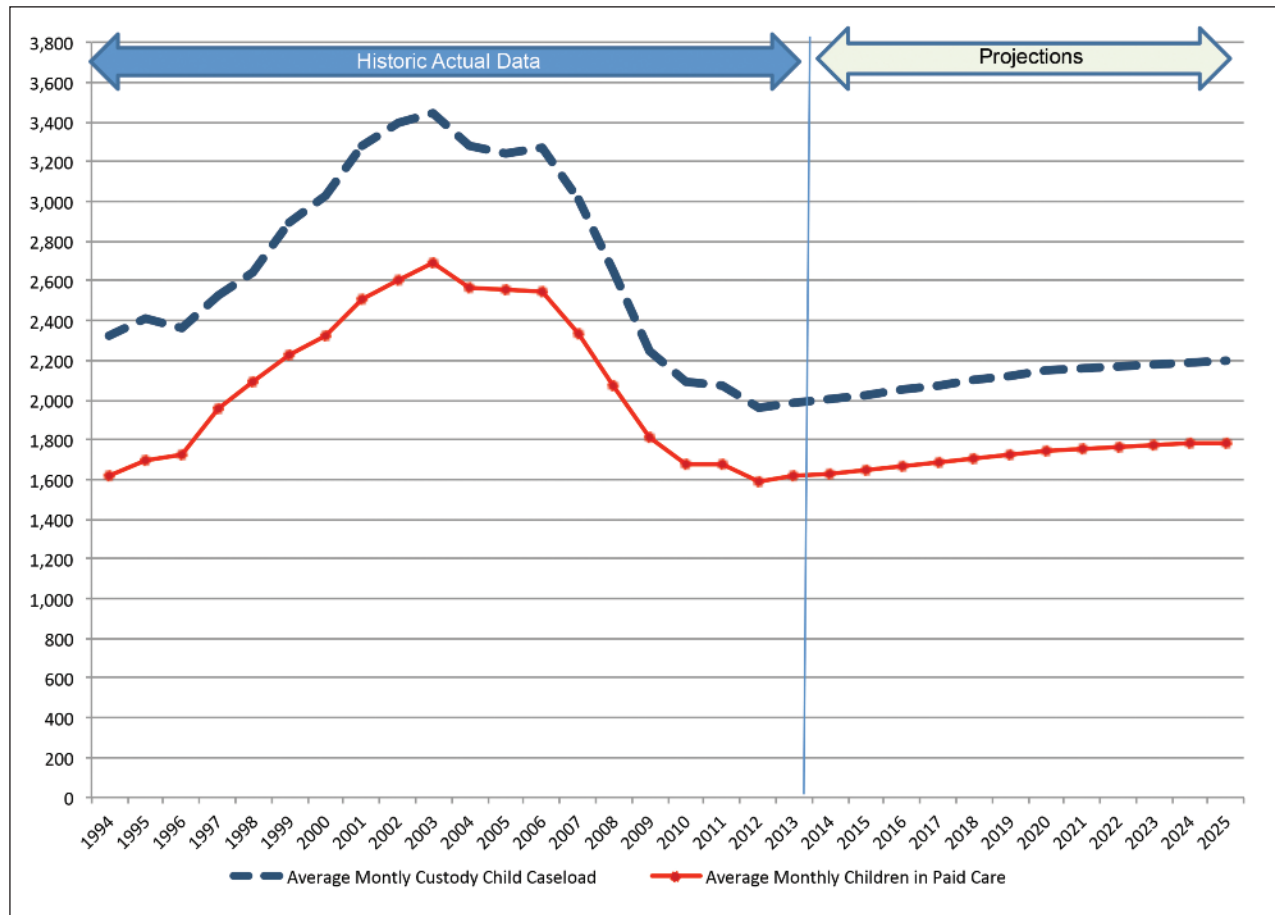
Historically, there are about 1.8 children associated with each new case opened for protective services. There is about one child on the average monthly protective service caseload for every 0.88 new protective children annually. These two case dynamic functions are used to provide projections for the ongoing child population. (See Figure 4)

Figure 4: Children on Cases & Ongoing Protective Average Monthly Caseload, 1994-2025

The average monthly ongoing caseload has a strong relationship to the average number of children under agency custody. Over 19 years, the ratio of monthly average children under custody to the average monthly ongoing child caseload is 49 percent. In the past three years, this ratio has decreased to 44 percent, in large part as a result of practice changes at the agency and the increase in the provision of front-door preventive services. The current ratio of 45 percent is used to project the average monthly caseload of children under custody as shown in Figure 5.

The majority of children under FCCS custody require a paid placement with extensive levels of treatment and service. These paid placements are large budget drivers at FCCS, representing nearly one-third of all agency expenditures. Over 19 years, the ratio of children in paid care to all children in FCCS custody has averaged about 77 percent. In the past five years, this average has been about 81 percent. This recent ratio of 81 percent is used to project the average monthly paid placement caseload as shown in Figure 5.

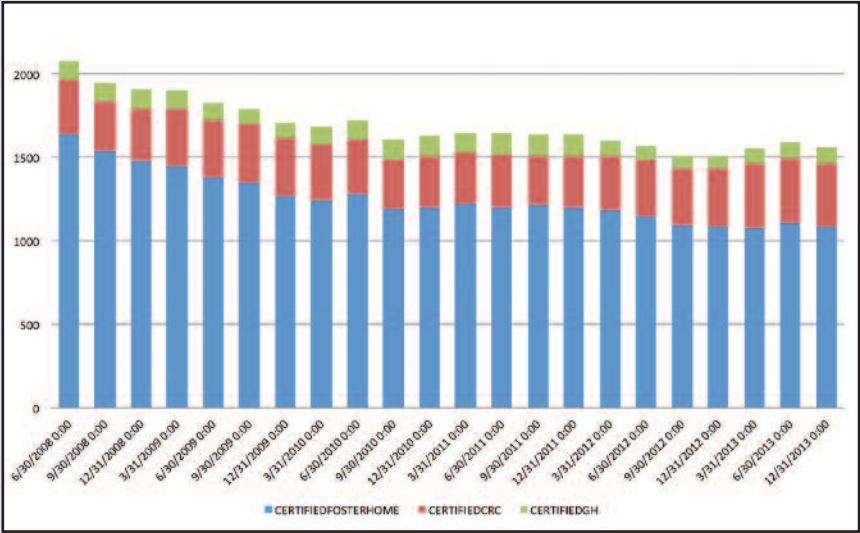
Figure 5: Average Monthly Custody and Paid Placement Caseload, 1994-2025



Finally, more recent data (2008-2013 YTD) on the types and mix of placement services (shown in Figures 6 and 7) has been reviewed to capture a shift in the paid care caseload. In 2008, about 80 percent of all children in paid care were in foster homes (which is the least expensive type of paid care). In 2013, about 70 percent of all children in paid care were in foster homes. This means that a larger percentage of children have been in more expensive types of care in recent years, as a total share of placement expenditures.

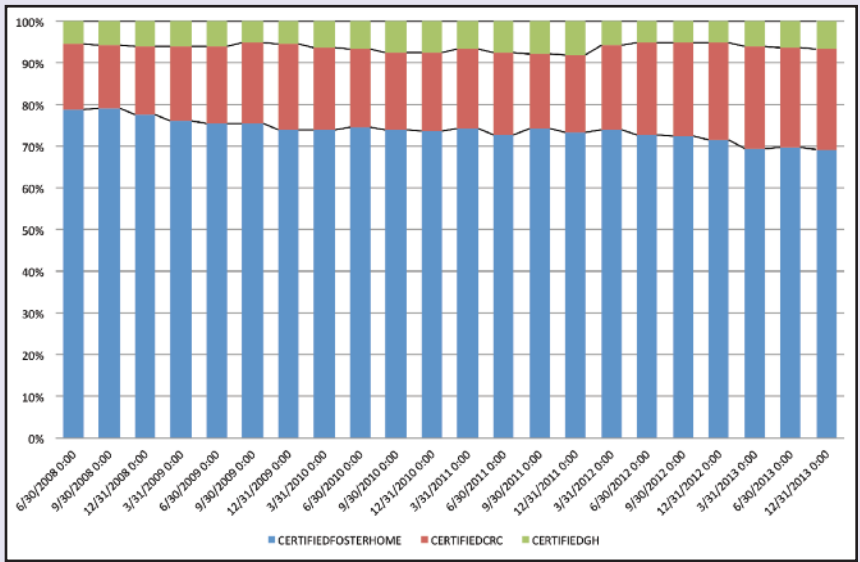
This is important because if all else stays equal, and the child population in Franklin County grows as predicted, it is likely that this recent trend in the mix of paid care caseload will reflect this larger percentage of placement dollars required in the FCCS budget.

Figure 6: Change in Mix of Paid Care Caseload, Quarterly Snapshots Mid-2008 to 2013, by Number of Children



The top chart shows that the total number of children in paid care has dropped, but the share of children in paid care has shifted from 80 percent in foster homes to 70 percent in the past five years, as shown in the bottom chart.

Figure 7: Change in Mix of Paid Care Caseload, Quarterly Snapshots Mid-2008 to 2013, by Percent of Total





Finances

Franklin County Children Services greatly appreciates the generous support shown by the Franklin County taxpayers who have voted for Children Services levies for more than 50 years. The approval of a property tax levy brings a great responsibility and FCCS honors the trust given by the community. The knowledge of this responsibility serves as a foundation to the financial management of the organization. The agency strives to utilize its resources efficiently and effectively. Decisions are made with a balanced focus on child protection and fiscal accountability. Being good stewards of tax dollars while making prudent financial choices is a principle taken most seriously by the FCCS Board and Executive Director.

In developing the current levy request the agency considered historical performance, current indicators, and future needs. This comprehensive look at past, present and future is necessary to allow the agency to benefit from knowledge gained. This understanding enhanced the agency's ability to predict the impact of economic indicators and future needs of the children and families served.

Historically, the agency has limited the growth of expenses through efforts in prevention, the use of flexible funding, and collaborations with other community organizations. This has enabled the agency to reduce the number of children in paid care and to provide services to keep children safely at home with their families. These efforts have allowed the agency to leverage experience and resources, resulting in optimum outcomes for families and children while minimizing the growth of overall expenses.

The agency has been proactive in implementing best practice initiatives such as differential response, group decision-making and safe teams. The emphasis placed on preventative services, family stability efforts, and kinship support has directly impacted placement numbers. Even with an increase in the cost of services provided, this has resulted in a net decrease in overall placement costs.

In their November 2013 report, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' Office of Workforce Development and Bureau of Labor Market Information assessed the Columbus market as:

The Columbus metropolitan area's leading indicator index remained steady at 105.5, suggesting only weak employment growth or declines in the upcoming months. Initial claims for unemployment insurance rose from 4,718 claims to 5,102, an increase of 8.1 percent. The valuation of housing permits decreased seasonally 48.7 percent from last month, \$133,520 million to \$68,441 million. The number of new housing permits fell seasonally 60.0 percent to 412 from last month, nearly half the number of permits from a year ago.

As resources become scarce due to budget cuts or increased demand, those served by this agency have less community supports to establish or maintain the stability required to sufficiently protect their children without agency intervention.

FCCS will continue to serve the community by tailoring services to meet the ever changing needs of children and families. The agency is committed to implementing best practice standards, distinguishing itself as a nationally accredited organization.

Challenges Impacting Agency Finances

Child welfare is ever evolving to meet the increasingly complex needs of children and families. FCCS has been diligent in incorporating new knowledge into its practice of addressing the safety, permanency and well-being of each child the agency serves. Since the 1.9 mill levy was approved in 2004, the agency has incorporated or plans to incorporate many changes. Many of the changes have fiscal implications. Many challenges to financial stability were included in the discussion.

Children Services responds to the Human Services Levy Review Committee

In its report to the County Commissioners regarding a millage for the 2009 FCCS levy, the ***Human Services Levy Review Committee*** made four recommendations for Children Services. The agency has taken those recommendations seriously and Children Services' response to each is detailed below.

Issue 1 – A 90-day cash reserve is recommended for Children Services

Response – The FCCS Board has recommended a 1.9 mill renewal with a 0.4 mill increase for the 2014 Children Services Levy, which allows the agency to adhere to the 90-day cash reserve recommendation.

Issue 2 – Alternative Response enrollment updates on a quarterly basis

Response – Children Services keeps track of this data on a monthly basis and reports on a quarterly basis to the Franklin County Office of Management and Budget through the Budgeting for Policy Results and Outcomes (BPRO) procedure. In the planning for the 2009 FCCS Levy, it was projected that the agency would screen in up to 65 percent of child abuse and neglect referrals to the Alternative Response pathway within five years. Actual experience has shown that a more prudent level appears to be 50 percent.

Issue 3 – Properly account for vacancy credit by recognizing the nature for which funds are used

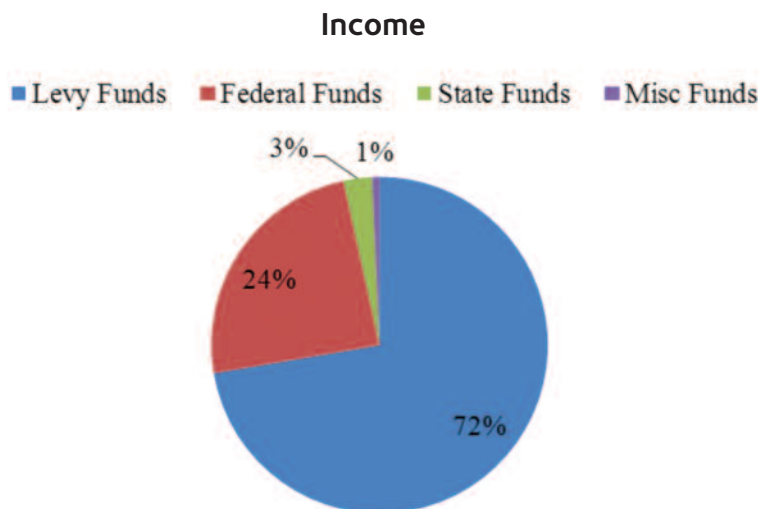
Response – Levy scenarios are based on actual expenses rather than the budget. The actual vacancy rate is considered in the projected figures.

Issue 4 – Continue the pursuit of a Title IV-E Court

Response – Title IV-E is a federal program that subsidizes the cost of care for eligible youth placed in foster care. The decision to move forward with this initiative rests solely with the Franklin County Juvenile Court. Franklin County Children Services would provide necessary support should the court pursue this option.

Income

The agency is funded through four major funding sources: Federal, State, Miscellaneous and Levy Funds. The chart below shows the breakdown between funding areas:



The agency has two levies: a 3.1 mill levy most recently approved in 2009; and a 1.9 mill levy set to expire at the end of 2014. The 1.9 mill levy was passed in 2004 and currently has an effective residential rate of 1.75 mills. The combined millage of the two levies is 5 mills. They are currently being collected at 4.85 mills.

The expiring levy accounts for 26 percent of the agency's annual income. Without these funds FCCS's ability to meet its legal mandates and the needs of the community would be greatly compromised.

While it is acknowledged that the community is beginning efforts to recover from the economic challenges of the last few years, decreasing property values, limited new construction and lower tax collection rates have minimized the adjustments associated with a straight replacement of a tax levy. While a replacement levy generally results in about a 20 percent increase in related receipts, if the 1.9 is replaced it is only expected to increase related receipts by six percent.

Changes to the rollback reimbursement and added cost to taxpayers also influenced FCCS's levy request.

2014 – 2024 Income Assumptions

Local Tax Levies (72 percent of income)

- A levy will be passed in 2014, collected in 2015.
- New construction in the county will grow slowly and influence collections by approximately one-half percent each year.
- The State will continue to replace tangible personal property tax dollars at an annual amount of \$2 million. This amount will not grow.
- The 3.1 mill levy will be replaced in 2019, collected in 2020.
- The above assumptions will generate 1.491 billion over the 2015 – 2024 period. Included in this estimate are the replacement dollars for the Tangible Personal Property Taxes.

Federal Funds (24 percent of income)

- The bulk of the federal funds are entitlement dollars under Title IV-E Program. These dollars are projected to grow at a rate of 2 percent per year.
- The agency has a five-year federal grant set to end in 2017.
- All other federal funds remain level in the projections.

State Funds (3 percent of income)

- FCCS is a host agency for the Central Ohio Regional Training Program. The income projections related to this program consider a 4 percent increase every other year.
- 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)

- Annual adjustments have been projected in the child support line. A collaboration with the Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency is hoped to improve child support collections.
- All other miscellaneous funds remain level in the projections

Franklin County Children Services Estimated Revenues, 2011-2024

Year	Levy Funds	Federal Funds	State Funds	Miscellaneous Funds	Total
2011	137,378,658.83	43,868,243.09	5,809,391.92	1,542,175.05	188,598,469
2012	129,861,487.78	41,611,916.22	4,408,693.62	1,187,552.47	177,069,650
2013	128,082,559.38	39,305,735.72	4,791,282.93	1,437,067.10	173,616,645
2014	129,305,403.33	43,027,683.60	4,836,901.25	1,285,000.00	178,454,988
2015	138,937,918.28	43,864,781.58	4,779,413.00	1,285,000.00	188,867,113
2016	139,622,178.47	44,616,621.53	4,808,495.08	1,285,000.00	190,332,295
2017	140,309,859.95	45,383,498.27	4,904,265.91	1,310,000.00	191,907,624
2018	141,000,979.85	46,165,712.54	4,934,511.27	1,335,000.00	193,436,204
2019	141,695,555.34	46,338,571.11	4,934,511.27	1,360,000.00	194,328,638
2023	158,739,442.64	49,692,800.54	5,198,927.05	1,460,000.00	215,091,170
2024	159,522,710.45	50,573,700.87	5,232,948.97	1,485,000.00	216,814,360

Expenses

Agency expenses are divided into five major categories: Staff Costs, Placement and Managed Care Costs, Supportive Services Costs, Administrative Costs and Capital Expenses. Division between these categories is as follows:

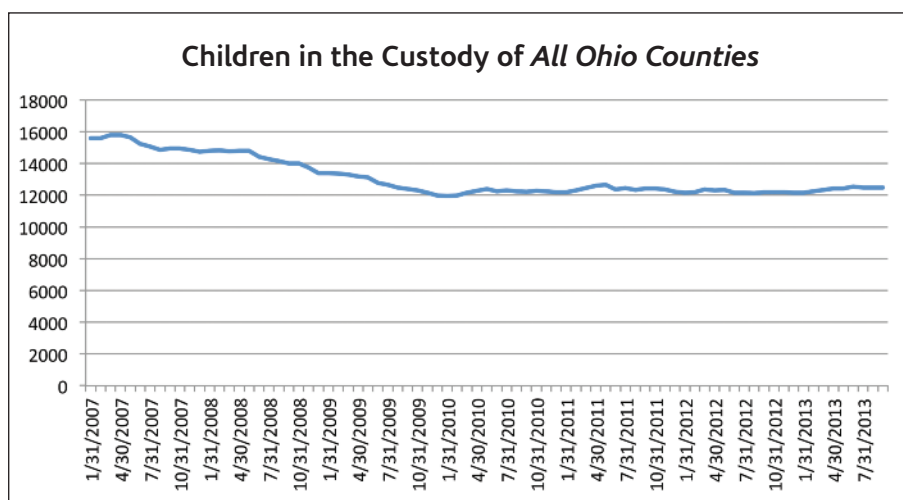
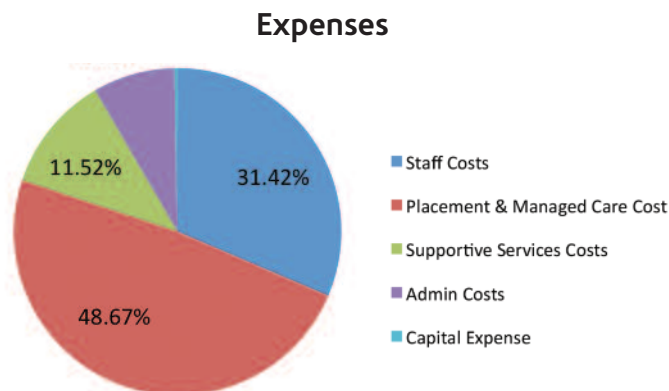
Approximately half of the agency's expenses cover placement and managed care services. The other half covers all other expenses (staff, supportive services, administrative cost and capital expenses).

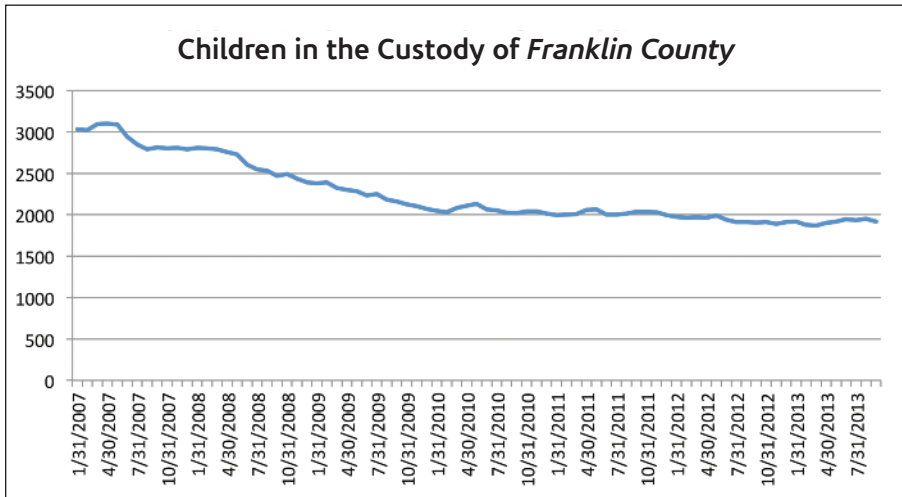
Placement and Managed Care

Placement costs include per diems and subsidies for children. Specifically, they include cost for foster homes, residential centers, group homes, adoption subsidies, independent living settings, kinship care and emancipated youth supports.

Managed care costs include all cost associated with the management of the cases assigned to two private child caring agencies. The agency contracts with these entities to provide both in home and placement services to approximately one-third of the open ongoing cases.

Placement and Managed Care costs represent almost 50 percent of the agency budget. It is critical to adequately anticipate changes in these areas. Placement costs are influenced by the number of children placed, the placement rate, and the level of care required. FCCS and the State of Ohio have experienced a significant decrease in the number of children in care over the last decade. The rate of decline has leveled off within the last few years and future projections support a modest increase to the number of children entering agency custody. The next two charts show the actual number of children in custody between 2007 and 2013 in Ohio and Franklin County. The Ohio SACWIS (Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System) is the source of the information.

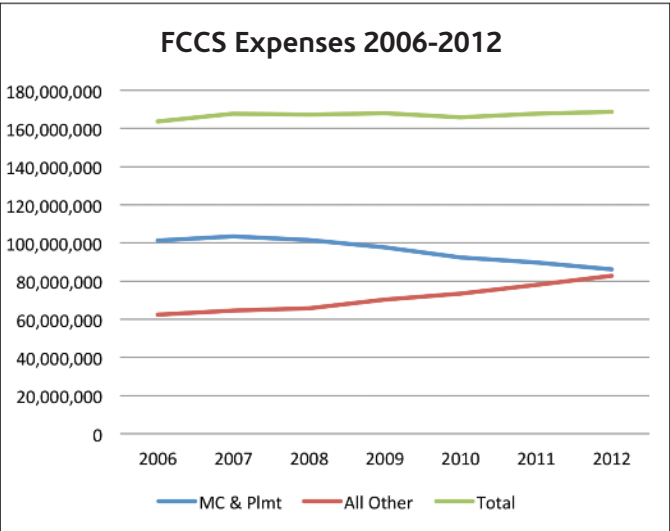




The recent decline in the number of children in agency custody has limited the growth in overall agency expenses. The green line on the chart below shows very little growth in total expenses. As the blue line decreases (placement and managed care costs) and the red line increases (all other agency expenses) they seem to neutralize each other. The net effect of the two is a level budget (green line). It is important to note that this has kept the FCCS expenditures at a very low rate of growth, which will be difficult to sustain.

As illustrated, the inverse relationship that has developed between the two sides of the agency’s budget (placements and managed care compared to all other expenses) resulted in a period of financial stability and minimum growth.

Closer examination shows that while placement and managed care costs were decreasing at an average rate of 2.63 percent per year, other costs increased at an average rate of 4.82 percent per year. However, the net affect was an average overall increase of just 0.53 percent per year from 2006 to 2012. Note that in 2006, placement and managed care cost consumed 62 percent of the budget.



The drivers of placement cost include: the number of children in paid placements, the daily rate, and the level of care required.

- **Daily Rate** – Between 2006 and 2012, the rate paid for a day of placement increased an average of 5 percent per year.
- **Level of Care** – The increase in the average daily rate is a result of shifts in the case mix. A higher number of children are requiring more complex care including group home and residential services.
- **Number of Children in Placement** – During the same period, the number of placement days purchased declined by an average of 7 percent per year.

The net effect of increased rates, but lower numbers led to the reduction in the overall cost of placement services.

Managed care experienced similar changes. The number of cases assigned to the managed care entities decreased by an annual average of 7.76 percent, while case rates increased by an annual average of 1.52 percent. The net effect was an average reduction in cost of 5.74 percent.

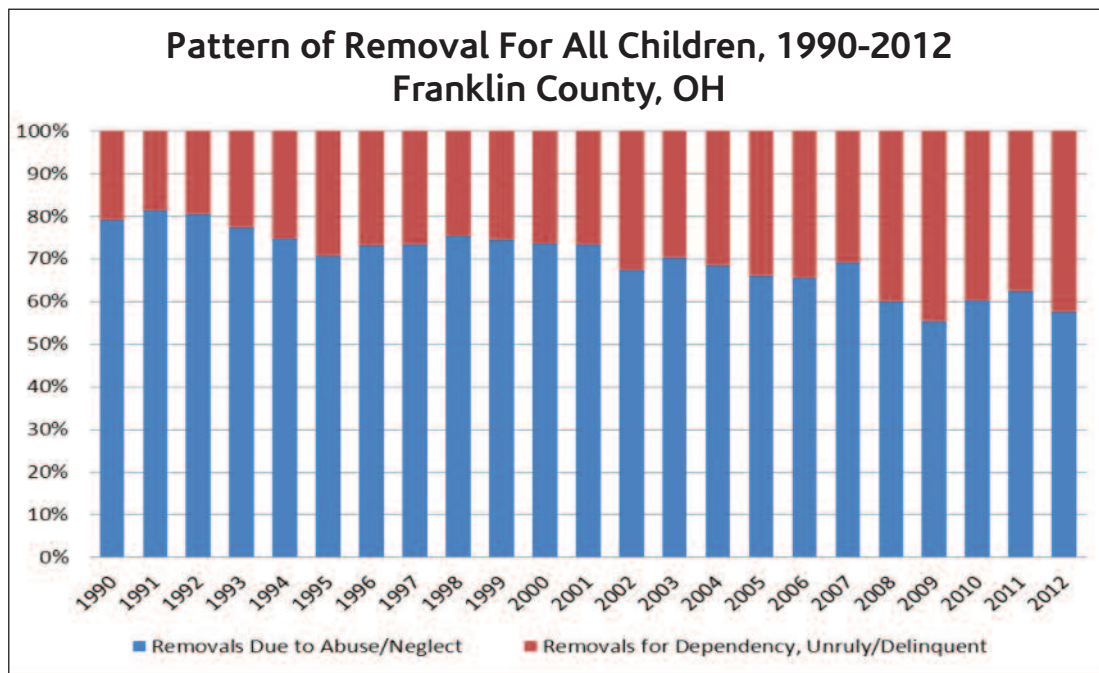
An emerging trend that may manifest itself more fully through this next levy period is an increasing number of calls from parents. The agency has worked hard to dispel the “child snatching” stigma that often is associated with public child welfare agencies. FCCS has successfully presented itself as a community resource that strives to support and strengthen families. This has resulted in more families seeking assistance in addressing the needs of their children. In the last five years calls from parents have increased at the following rates:

Year	Calls From Parents	Annual Growth	Growth From 2009 to 2013
2009	2382		
2010	2362	-0.84%	
2011	2671	13.08%	
2012	3325	24.49%	
2013	3607	8.48%	51.43%

These calls often fall into the dependency category of our mandate (abused, neglected and dependent children). Most often, behavioral, mental health, or developmental issues are at the root of the calls. Many times the children enter care because their needs are too challenging for the parent to manage. Frequently, these children require an elevated level of care which is often expensive.

Another dependency category involves youth transferred from the juvenile justice system. With the reduction of locked placements in detention or with the Department of Youth Services (DYS), child welfare is experiencing an increase of youth with elevated placement needs.

In looking at the mix of the children in care as a result of child abuse and neglect versus dependency, there is a very distinctive shift. The next chart illustrates this shift toward serving more dependency/unruly and delinquent youth.



There are also indications that future, placement expenses may need to be adjusted. There has been much discussion about the plight of youth aging out of foster care at age 18. Lawmakers have been asked to consider the feasibility of extending foster care services to age 21. In a July 28, 2013 article, Gary Stangler, executive director for Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, refers to a May 2013 study by his organization. The study “shows that, on average, for every young person who ages out of foster care, taxpayers and communities pay \$300,000 in social costs like public assistance, incarceration, and lost wages to a community over that person’s lifetime.” It further states the problem has a conservative price tag of \$8 billion in social costs to the United States every year. In Franklin County, approximately two to three hundred youth age out of care each year. A shift in practice allowing these youth to remain in care will result in a significant financial consequence.

In projecting expenses through the life of the new levy, the organization will have diminishing benefits as the decline in placements level out. Even without growth in the number of children in care, the natural increase in rates will affect the bottom line of the budget. The full impact of parental attitudes toward that agency’s support and the influx of juvenile justice youth will become more evident with time. However, these factors needed to be considered in our projections. Thus, projections into the future must consider a budget with a greater rate of growth than the agency has experienced in the past.



Other Expenses

Labor costs include all salary and benefits for staff hired or contracted. A stable workforce is imperative to meet legal mandates, function at the level of a nationally accredited organization and honor the public trust. FCCS often struggles to maintain an experienced workforce, especially at its front door (Intake). As its community changes, FCCS works diligently to have a workforce that is culturally competent, reflecting the community it serves. Targeted recruitment, worker support programs and special incentives have been put in place to ensure that workers are able to function at a level consistent with the agency's guiding principles. The agency continuously assesses initiatives and enhances efforts to maintain a strong workforce dedicated to its mission.

Labor or staff cost represent the largest portion of the remaining half of the agency expenses. The agency currently has 740 approved FTEs, down from 754 in 2003. Agency staff can be divided into two groups, those who work directly with our children and families (63 percent of total staff) and those in administrative and supportive roles (37 percent of total staff).

A large percentage of agency staff (approximately 69 percent) is represented by the Federation of Franklin County Children Services Employee labor union. Contracts are negotiated every three years. The agency and union have embraced an interest-based bargaining model, which allows for a collaborative approach to contract negotiation with an emphasis on satisfying mutual interests through consensus as opposed to one-sided or an opposite-corners approach.

A significant challenge the agency faces is in the large turnover rate of case carrying workers. This is especially true in the Intake Department. While the agency retains 93.5 percent of staff from year to year, it is only able to maintain 78 percent of its Intake staff. The inability to retain experienced case carrying staff greatly impacts the agency's ability to efficiently meet the needs of families. It is generally accepted that it takes two years for a caseworker to build the skill-set required to efficiently perform the duties of a child welfare caseworker. Median tenure of a FCCS Intake caseworker is only 10 months. To compound the problem, new workers in their first year are only able to manage 51 percent of a full caseload. The high turnover and lack of experience result in a heavier caseload burden on the more experienced workers in the area. This added burden often results in experienced workers becoming overwhelmed and leaving Intake. The agency is currently working on incentives for staff to stay in or transfer to Intake. To help address this challenge, FCCS has refined training and is working to increase support and staffing so that turnover issues do not continue to overload existing staff.

Family Support Services include efforts to assist families in a manner that prevents placement, expedites reunification, maintains child safety, and addresses identified concerns to strengthen the family. Child welfare professionals believe that outcomes for the family and children can be greatly improved by wrapping services around the family unit to address concerns, build skills, and improve support systems. Children Services has embraced this approach and has added an emphasis on preventive services as well. FCCS partners with providers in the community to improve access to community-based services that allow families to build support systems independent of the agency's direct involvement. These services improve the duration and stability of progress made through agency intervention, allowing the family to transition to self-sufficiency.

Supportive Services also include program development. Currently the agency is developing resources that deal with trauma and brain development. The agency has expanded its philosophy based on the work of Dr. Bruce Perry. The Child Trauma Academy writes the following regarding Dr. Perry, "his clinical research and practice has focused on high-risk children. This work has examined the cognitive, behavioral, emotional,

social, and physiological effects of neglect and trauma in children, adolescents and adults. This work has been instrumental in describing how childhood experiences, including neglect and traumatic stress, changes the biology of the brain and, thereby, the health of the child”. This new approach integrates emerging principles of developmental neuroscience into clinical practice. It is hoped it will result in better outcomes for children, and a better alignment of interventions. The agency will partner with local providers to develop resources options.

The agency will also develop program options that better meet the needs of youth that have been redirected from the juvenile justice system into the child welfare system. Youth with criminal inclinations require supportive services that differ from the general population of abused and neglected children receiving services from the agency. It will be important to develop services and skill sets to meet the unique needs of this population not traditionally served by child protection agencies.

The plight of emancipating youth has also received significant attention. Agencies and the state and federal government are working to improve outcomes for this population. FCCS will also enhance services in an attempt to allow for a stable transition to independence.

Administrative costs include non-capital facility expenses, supplies, technology enhancements, auditor and treasurer fees (such as a portion of the centralized cost for shared county services) and other general fees.

The agency continues its efforts to incorporate technology in a manner that supports staff and improves its ability to analyze and evaluate performance which allows for enhanced outcomes. Maintaining strong IT staff and contracts that support the mission and goals of the agency is a standard component of our strategic direction.

Over the next levy period the agency hopes to implement mobile technology options for staff that spend much of their time in the field. There are also plans to utilize technology to automate the many manual systems at the agency such as time and attendance, inventory control, and internal accounts management.

Capital costs are projected at a minimum level to allow for major repairs to facilities and technological enhancements. No new buildings or major renovations are anticipated.

2014 – 2024 Expense Assumptions

The 2013 actual expenses are the basis for all expense projections.

Staff, Labor and Benefits

Staff costs are projected to grow at 3 percent annually. The actual yearly growth rate in this area from 2006 through 2012 was 3.09 percent. Increasing health care cost and expanded benefits to domestic partners contributed to the growth in this category.

Placement and Managed Care Costs

Placement costs are projected to grow at an annual rate that combines consumer price index (CPI) and projected growth in placement numbers. While the agency has experienced a decade of decreased expenses (an average annual decline of -2.63 percent since 2006), current trends at the agency and across the state indicate a growth in expenses as a result of increased numbers of youth in care and more intense service levels needed to meet their treatment needs. In 2013, the total increase in this area was 2.6 percent. The agency will issue three RFPs for placement services and three RFPs for managed care services during the levy period.

Supportive and Prevention Services

The projections for supportive and preventive services grow at 2.72 percent. While costs have grown an average of 8.92 percent annually since 2006, it is now believed that the growth will slow at this new level. The expansion of these services helped reduce the number of children in placement.

Administrative Cost

Administrative costs are projected to grow at 1.5 percent. It should be noted that approximately 41 percent of these costs are fees and expenses returned to the county. Growth in this area is projected to be less than the last five years. Expenses have been reduced through the consolidation of facilities.

Capital Expenses

Capital expenses have been projected with a minimum growth rate of 0.85 percent.

Overall

The average annual growth rate for expenses from 2015 to 2024 is projected to be 2.94 percent. The growth rate is greater than our recent experience. However, as discussed, statistics and projections indicate that placements will not continue to decline. As placements level off, the neutralizing effect to cost will be eliminated.

Franklin County Children Services Estimated Expenses, 2012-2024

Year	Staff Costs	Placement and Managed Care	Supportive Services	Administrative Costs	Capital Costs	Totals
2011	53,158,587	89,781,075	12,739,497	11,739,763	256,663	167,675,584
2012	53,147,965	86,051,959	14,746,930	11,869,189	2,950,076	168,766,118
2013	53,110,275	88,247,739	15,116,255	14,516,532	14,849,907	185,840,708
2014	54,703,583	90,427,458	15,527,417	14,734,280	580,000	175,972,739
2015	56,344,691	93,565,291	15,949,763	14,955,294	584,930	181,399,969
2016	58,035,031	97,064,633	16,383,596	15,179,624	589,902	187,252,786
2017	59,776,082	100,694,850	16,829,230	15,407,318	594,916	193,302,397
2018	61,569,365	104,350,073	17,286,985	15,638,428	599,973	199,444,824
2019	63,416,446	107,981,456	17,757,191	15,873,004	605,073	205,633,170
2020	65,318,939	111,588,036	18,240,187	16,111,099	610,216	211,868,477
2021	67,278,507	114,522,802	18,736,320	16,352,766	615,403	217,505,797
2022	69,296,863	117,466,038	19,245,948	16,598,057	620,634	223,227,539
2023	71,375,768	120,449,675	19,769,438	16,847,028	625,909	229,067,818
2024	73,517,042	123,485,007	20,307,166	17,099,733	631,229	235,040,177

Historical Growth Rates for Income and Expenses

In evaluating projected growth patterns, historical records are often beneficial in creating context. It allows for contrasting the future with the past. The next chart illustrates the annual growth pattern of both expenses and income from 1983 through the life of the proposed levy, 2024. Of greater interest are the last two columns of the chart. Those columns show how much growth is experienced in a five-year period. For example, in comparing actual expenses and income between 1983 and 1988 we see that income was 70.64 percent more and expenses were 84.58 percent higher in 1988.

The chart shows lower growth rates during the period of time that placement numbers were decreasing.

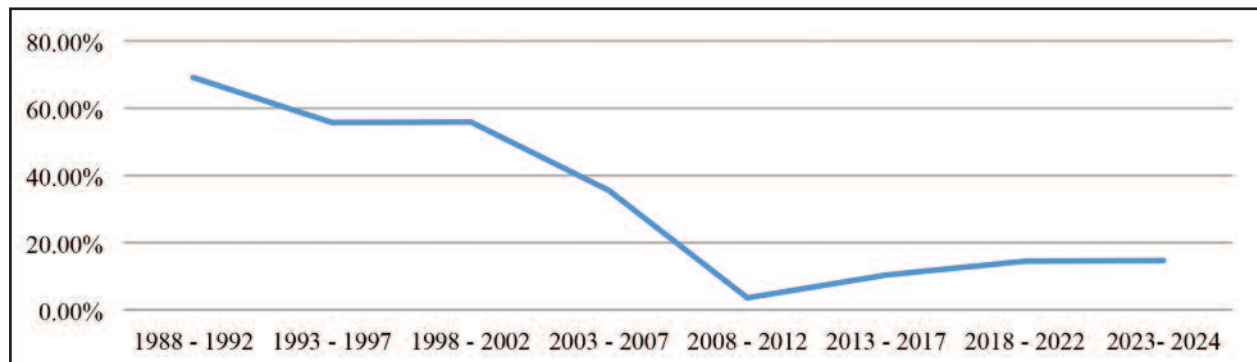
Income & Expense Growth Rates

	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	178,454,988	2.79%	175,972,739	-5.31%	2.06%	4.78%	
2015	188,867,113	5.83%	181,399,969	3.08%	-7.34%	9.45%	
2016	190,332,295	0.78%	187,252,786	3.23%	0.92%	11.68%	
2017	191,907,624	0.83%	193,302,397	3.23%	8.38%	14.54%	
2018	193,436,204	0.80%	199,444,824	3.18%	11.42%	7.32%	
2019	194,328,638	0.46%	205,633,170	3.10%	8.90%	16.86%	
2020	210,014,940	8.07%	211,868,477	3.03%	11.20%	16.80%	
2021	211,641,667	0.77%	217,505,797	2.66%	11.20%	16.16%	
2022	213,321,568	0.79%	223,227,539	2.63%	11.16%	15.48%	
2023	215,091,170	0.83%	229,067,818	2.62%	11.19%	14.85%	
2024	216,814,360	0.80%	235,040,177	2.61%	11.57%	14.30%	
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	1.65%		2.87%	0.83%	10.31%	
Avg	2018 - 2022	2.18%		2.92%	10.77%	14.52%	
Avg	2023- 2024	0.82%		2.61%	11.38%	14.58%	

* Declining Placements

** Less Building Purchase

Five Year Average Expense Growth Rate



Levy Scenarios

The agency considered the expense projections under several levy scenarios: renewal levy, renewal levies with various increases – 0.3, 0.4, 0.5, and 0.6 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 (2015 – 2024).

The charts below show the financial stability under each levy scenario. As stated, the agency has two levies: the first “levy A” was voted on in 2009 and the second “levy B” is set to expire at the end of 2014. Years 2014, 2015, 2019, 2020 and 2024 (year before and the year after a levy continuation) are shown below. The 2013 actual expenses are the basis for each levy scenario. The 2015 budget considers the new configuration of “levy B”. The 2020 budget year reflects a replacement of “levy A”. The 2024 budget signifies the end of “levy B”.



Scenario 1: Renewal Levy in 2015, Replacement in 2020

	2014	2015	2019	2020	2024
Beginning Cash	123,800,378	126,282,628	87,707,492	65,842,665	-8,529,458
Income	178,454,988	178,515,411	183,768,344	199,401,844	205,987,405
Expenses	175,972,739	181,399,969	205,633,170	211,868,477	235,040,177
Ending Cash	126,282,628	123,398,070	65,842,665	53,376,032	-37,582,230
Months of carryover	8.61	8.16	3.84	3.02	-1.92

Scenario 2: 1.9 Mill Renewal, 0.3 Mill Increase - Total Levy 2.2 Mills in 2015, Replacement in 2020

	2014	2015	2019	2020	2024
Beginning Cash	123,800,378	126,282,628	118,996,289	105,051,683	62,758,438
Income	178,454,988	186,279,187	191,688,564	207,361,666	214,107,622
Expenses	175,972,739	181,399,969	205,633,170	211,868,477	235,040,177
Ending Cash	126,282,628	131,161,846	105,051,683	100,544,872	41,825,882
Months of carryover	8.61	8.68	6.13	5.69	2.14

Scenario 3: 1.9 Mill Renewal, 0.4 Mill Increase - Total Levy 2.3 Mills in 2015, Replacement in 2020

	2014	2015	2019	2020	2024
Beginning Cash	123,800,378	126,282,628	129,425,888	118,121,356	86,521,070
Income	178,454,988	188,867,113	194,328,638	210,014,940	216,814,360
Expenses	175,972,739	181,399,969	205,633,170	211,868,477	235,040,177
Ending Cash	126,282,628	133,749,772	118,121,356	116,267,819	68,295,253
Months of carryover	8.61	8.85	6.89	6.59	3.49

Scenario 4: 1.9 Mill Renewal, 0.5 Mill Increase - Total Levy 2.4 Mills in 2015, Replacement in 2020

	2014	2015	2019	2020	2024
Beginning Cash	123,800,378	126,282,628	139,855,487	131,191,029	110,283,703
Income	178,454,988	191,455,038	196,968,711	212,668,214	219,521,099
Expenses	175,972,739	181,399,969	205,633,170	211,868,477	235,040,177
Ending Cash	126,282,628	136,337,698	131,191,029	131,990,765	94,764,624
Months of carryover	8.61	9.02	7.66	7.48	4.84

Scenario 5: 1.9 Mill Renewal, 0.6 Mill Increase - Total Levy 2.5 Mills in 2015, Replacement in 2020

	2014	2015	2019	2020	2024
Beginning Cash	123,800,378	126,282,628	150,285,086	144,260,701	134,046,335
Income	178,454,988	194,042,964	199,608,785	215,321,488	222,227,838
Expenses	175,972,739	181,399,969	205,633,170	211,868,477	235,040,177
Ending Cash	126,282,628	138,925,623	144,260,701	147,713,712	121,233,995
Months of carryover	8.61	9.19	8.42	8.37	6.19

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, 1.9 mill renewal with a 0.4 mill increase property tax on the November 4, 2014 general election ballot, to be collected beginning in January 2015.

The configuration of renewal and increase allows homeowners to retain their current rollback benefits on the 1.9 mill portion of the levy. The increase of 0.4 mills will cost the homeowner an additional \$14 per year for each \$100,000 of property value for a total cost of \$67.65 annually for the 2.3 mill levy.

While a 2.5 mill replacement levy was projected in planning for the 2009 levy, the agency believes this projection can be reduced due to successful efforts to minimize the growth of expenses.

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, FCCS is committed to make any adjustments that are required to live within the income that will be generated from this levy, to efficiently manage the agency and to provide effective, high-quality services to families and children without coming back to voters until the 3.1 mill levy expires at the end of 2019.

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

Franklin County Children Services Operating Cash on Hand

Year	Beginning Cash	Income	Expenses	Ending Cash	Months of Carryover
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	178,454,988	175,972,739	126,282,628	8.61
2015	126,282,628	188,867,113	181,399,969	133,749,772	8.85
2016	133,749,772	190,332,295	187,252,786	136,829,281	8.77
2017	136,829,281	191,907,624	193,302,397	135,434,508	8.41
2018	135,434,508	193,436,204	199,444,824	129,425,888	7.7
2019	129,425,888	194,328,638	205,633,170	118,121,356	6.89
2020	118,121,356	210,014,940	211,868,477	116,267,819	6.59
2021	116,267,819	211,641,667	217,505,797	110,403,689	6.09
2022	110,403,689	213,321,568	223,227,539	100,497,718	5.40
2023	100,497,718	215,091,170	229,067,818	86,521,070	4.53
2024	86,521,070	216,814,360	235,040,177	68,295,253	3.49

Children Services' Guiding Principles

We Are Child Welfare Professionals

- We constantly pursue excellence
- We recognize the importance of providing effective and timely services
- We value, respect and support each other
- We are proud that we improve the quality of life for families in our community
- We are fiscally responsible
- We aspire to be culturally competent

We Value Every Child

- We respect the individuality of each child we serve
- We advocate for each child's safety, permanency and well-being
- We honor each child's family and culture

We Honor Families

- We respect families' strengths
- We understand families are the experts of their own experience
- We recognize that children are best served within their families and community
- We separate what parents do from who they are

We Value Partnerships

- Families have the right to be a part of the decision-making team
- Casework is the most important function of the agency team
- Families, communities and government share the responsibility to keep children safe



855 West Mound Street
Columbus, Ohio 43223
614.275.2571

www.franklincountyohio.gov/children_services