

LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES
REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

2009

protecting children, promoting families

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Lucas County Citizen:

Lucas County Children Services began 2009 with some notable achievements. We received official notice that the agency achieved reaccreditation from the Council on Accreditation. This announcement followed a year-long effort to ensure that our agency met or exceeded important performance benchmarks. Then, in the spring, the agency received a perfect score on a Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) audit from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Ohio Civil Rights Commission. This review confirmed that our foster care and adoption practices do not discriminate based upon race, color or national origin. We are very proud of this achievement.

For most of 2009, LCCS participated in the Alternative Response pilot program sponsored by the American Humane Association, Casey Family Programs, the Supreme Court of Ohio, the Ohio Children's Trust Fund and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. We were one of ten Ohio counties selected for this project. The goal was to test a more "family-friendly" way of helping families keep their children safe. We assisted 271 families by empowering them to make decisions that protected their children from abuse or neglect. The early results are very positive, and LCCS will be adopting Alternative Response as a standard way to work with families in 2010.

In 2009, our caseworkers saw modest increases over 2008 in the number of new referrals (+11 percent), new cases opened (+9 percent) and alleged child victims (+9 percent). However, the number of substantiated victims declined 6 percent. While we are glad that fewer children were substantiated victims of abuse or neglect, the overall increases in service levels are consistent with those of other children services agencies across Ohio.

From a financial standpoint, 2009 kept us on our toes. The number of tax delinquencies and the decline in property values unquestionably affected us and other county agencies, but the total impact is difficult to measure. We also received less money from the state, although that was somewhat offset by unexpected federal stimulus dollars. Fortunately, we had anticipated some changes, and by doing some careful belt-tightening, the agency kept spending in line without affecting our services to families. We left some positions unfilled and distributed job duties among remaining staff. Fewer children needed care by agency or network foster homes, resulting in a decline in our out-of-home placement costs. The bottom line is that we reduced overall agency spending by six percent and essentially broke even for the year without using much of our fund balance.

Looking ahead to 2010, LCCS will continue to be fiscally responsible. Our primary mission is to protect children, and we will continue to do that in the most cost-effective way possible.

*Dean Sparks
Executive Director*

▶ OUR MISSION

To lead the community in the protection of children at risk of abuse and neglect. This is accomplished by working with families, service providers and community members to assess risk and coordinate community-based services resulting in safe, stable and permanent families for children.

▶ 2009 AT A GLANCE

New Referrals	4,362
Alleged Child Victims	6,280
Substantiated Victims	1,335
New Cases Opened	409
Average Number of Children on Caseload	2,227
Adoptions Finalized	120

**REPORT CHILD
ABUSE AND
NEGLECT.**

**CALL 419-213-CARE,
24 HOURS, 7 DAYS A
WEEK.**

LCCS REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



PROTECTING CHILDREN, PROMOTING FAMILIES

Lucas County Children Services (LCCS) investigates allegations of child abuse and neglect, and offers protective and other support services to children and their families. We work closely with families to help them address the factors contributing to abuse or neglect and help them care for their children. Our partnerships with other community organizations provide critical support in areas such as substance abuse treatment, managing stress, health care and housing.

We rely on members of the community to report suspected incidences of child abuse or neglect. A selected group of individuals—those who regularly work with children—are required by law to do so. More than 60 percent of all referrals come from these “mandated reporters,” with the balance coming from private or anonymous sources.

AN INCREASING NEED FOR SERVICES

LCCS investigated nearly 4,400 allegations of abuse and neglect in 2009, an 11 percent increase over 2008, a year in which we saw the lowest service levels in nearly a decade. The increases seen in 2009 are consistent with those in other children services agencies across Ohio.

CHILDREN BELONG IN FAMILIES

Lucas County Children Services believes that children belong with their families. Thirty-six percent of the children receive services while they remain in the care of their parents. When children cannot live safely with their parents and it becomes necessary to place them outside the home, we first look for relatives to step in. Thirty percent of the children we serve live with relatives or other kinship providers. Another 31 percent of the children in our care live in one of our 350 foster homes. Very few live in group homes, institutions or other situations.

When problems in the home are too severe for the children to be reunited with their parents, we develop a permanent plan for them. That plan may include living with a relative, adoption, or a long-term foster placement until the child reaches adulthood. In 2009, this agency finalized the adoption of 120 children.

OUR STAFF

The agency’s ability to provide quality, continuous services to its clients would not be possible without a well-trained, capable staff. Our 190 caseworkers have an average of nine to ten years of experience with the agency. All have a B.A. or B.S. degree in a human services-related field and receive 90 hours of core training during their first year of service, as well as a minimum of 36 additional hours of training annually.

One hundred-eighty-nine employees provide a variety of support services to the casework staff. In total, the agency has 379 employees.

ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE

From July 2008 through September 2009, LCCS participated in a pilot project called “Alternative Response.” The program provided the agency with tools to work cooperatively with families in cases of child maltreatment that did not involve sexual abuse or serious physical abuse or neglect. LCCS served more than 423 families through the pilot project. Based on the pilot program’s success, late in the year the agency began the process of incorporating Alternative Response into its regular practices and procedures.

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

LCCS measures its performance using Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) standards issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. LCCS met the performance expectation in ten of the 17 measures in 2009, mostly in the area of achieving permanent custody, finding adoptive homes for children within expected timeframes, and stability of foster care placements. The agency was within one percent of meeting the standard for preventing the recurrence of maltreatment.

REVENUE AND EXPENSES

Employee compensation and the cost of placing children remain the agency's two largest expenses; child protection is very labor intensive and requires close contact between caseworkers and families to ensure the safety of children. Our expenses for 2009 were \$43,155,732, compared to revenues of \$43,104,688. We used \$51,044 of agency reserves to balance the budget. Two countywide levies totaling 2.4 mills generated 48.3 percent of our revenue. The 1.4 mill levy will expire at the end of 2011 and the 1.0 mill levy will expire at the end of 2013.

Other revenue sources include the federal government, the State of Ohio and other local sources.

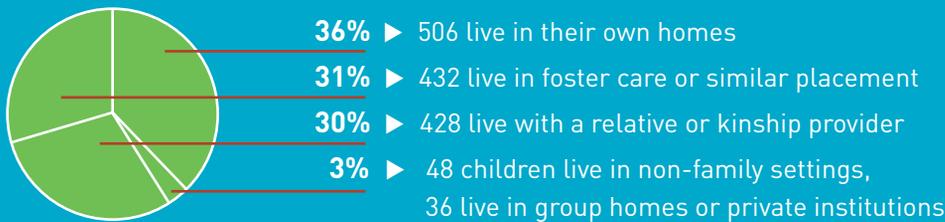
2009 REVENUE

	\$	%
Levy	20,831,304	48.3
Federal	18,924,495	43.9
State	2,730,882	6.4
Other	618,007	1.4
TOTAL	43,104,688	100.0

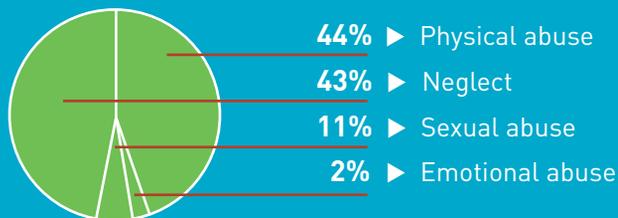
2009 EXPENSES

	\$	%
Salaries & Benefits	25,533,722	59.2
Placement Costs	9,622,085	22.3
Other Operating Costs	2,901,442	6.7
Child Welfare Contracts	1,894,881	4.4
Other Client Costs	1,631,260	3.8
Day Care	1,260,617	2.9
Other Contracts	311,725	0.7
TOTAL	43,155,732	100.0

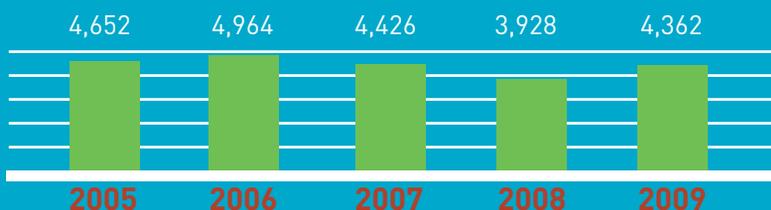
PLACEMENT SETTINGS FOR CHILDREN IN SERVICES



INVESTIGATIONS BY TYPE OF ABUSE



INVESTIGATIONS BY YEAR



FROM THE COMMISSIONERS



Dear Lucas County Resident:

The Lucas County Board of Commissioners considers the protection and well-being of children in our community to be one of our most critical responsibilities. By ensuring the success of Lucas County families, we ensure our community's future.

Lucas County is fortunate to have one of the most progressive Children Services agencies in the state. The Lucas County Children Services staff has developed unique programs to protect children from abuse and neglect, help families access neighborhood-based services, build family stability, and recruit and train an outstanding network of foster and adoptive families.

We remain committed to working with families, service providers and community members to provide Lucas County children with safe, stable and nurturing homes. We pledge to continue the cooperative relationship we have built with LCCS and its Board of Trustees to help them provide high quality, cost effective services to county residents.

Sincerely,

Pete Gerken,
President

Tina Skeldon-Wozniak,
Commissioner

Ben Konop,
Commissioner

Board of County Commissioners
Lucas County, Ohio

Executive Director

Dean M. Sparks, MSW, LISW

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Pete Gerken,
President

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705 Adams Street
Toledo, OH 43604

To report child abuse/neglect:

419.213.CARE

Foster care/adoption:

419.213.3336

Fax: 419.327.3291

www.lucaskids.net



CREDIBILITY • INTEGRITY • ACHIEVEMENT