

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.

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Switchboard: **419.213.3200**

To report child abuse/neglect: **419.213.CARE**

Foster care/adoptions: **419.213.3336**

Fax: 419.327.3291

www.lucaskids.net



REPORT TO THE
Community
Lucas County
Children Services

2010





protecting children, promoting families

Dear Lucas County Resident:

You have many reasons to be proud of your community. But our greatest assets are not our buildings, companies or institutions. They are the families that live, work and grow here.

As your elected leaders, we appreciate the importance of stable and successful families in our community, and the work that our Children Services agency does to support them. With a focus on protecting children and promoting families, we are proud to have one of the most progressive agencies in the state, if not the nation.

We remain committed to working with families, service providers and community members to provide all of our children with a safe, stable and nurturing home. We pledge to continue working cooperatively and in partnership with the staff of Lucas County Children Services and its Board of Trustees to provide the very best services as cost effectively as possible.

Sincerely,

Board of County Commissioners
Lucas County, Ohio

Pete Gerken, President

Carol Contrada, Commissioner

Tina Skeldon-Wozniak, Commissioner



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 half of all referrals come from these “mandated reporters,” with the balance coming from private or anonymous sources.

A Kinder, Gentler Approach

In 2010, LCCS fully adopted the “Alternative Response” approach to working with families. This radically changed the way caseworkers handled most allegations of child abuse or neglect. Traditionally, LCCS would seek out a perpetrator and a victim regardless of the nature of the abuse or neglect allegation. With Alternative Response, all but the most serious cases are turned over to caseworkers who meet with families to discuss their problems, strengths and weaknesses. Working together, the family and caseworker develop family-based solutions to the risks that children may be facing. This “kinder, gentler” way of working with families has been well-received in the community and across the agency. It has, however, led to a substantial decline in the proportion of allegations that resulted in a substantiated victim as reported in “2010 at a Glance.” This should not be interpreted to be a reduction in the number of children impacted by abuse or neglect in our community.

In total, LCCS investigated 4,487 allegations of abuse and neglect in 2010, a three percent increase over 2009. These reports involved 6,581 children. We also provided 679 voluntary referrals for service to families whose issues did not meet the criteria for an abuse or neglect allegation.



Children Belong in Families

Lucas County Children Services believes that children belong with their families. One-third (33 percent) of the children found to be victims 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-two percent of the children we serve live with relatives or other kinship providers. Another 31 percent of the children in our care live in foster homes, including the 290 homes licensed by our agency. 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 2010, this agency finalized the adoption of 116 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 177 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-ninety-three employees provide a variety of support services to the casework staff. In total, the agency has 370 employees.

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 nine of the 17 measures in 2010, mostly in the area of achieving permanent custody, finding adoptive homes for children within expected timeframes, and stability of foster care placements. The agency also met the standard for preventing the recurrence of maltreatment. LCCS was within one percentage point of compliance with three other measures.

Special Initiatives and Programs

In addition to fulfilling its core mission of protecting children and promoting families, LCCS utilizes its resources to support a number of special initiatives.

- **Education** - Monitoring and supporting the academic progress of children in care.
- **Family-Centered, Neighborhood-Based Services** - Connecting families with supportive resources in their neighborhoods.
- **Fatherhood** - Encouraging fathers to reconnect with their children and become involved in their lives.
- **Family Visitation** - Developing strategies to optimize parent-child visits.

Revenue and Expenses

Agency expenses for 2010 were \$42,443,454, compared to revenues of \$41,388,266. We used \$1,055,188 of agency reserves to balance the budget, leaving LCCS with a fund balance of \$18.9 million at the end of the year. Two countywide levies totaling 2.4 mills generated 48.9 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.



2010 REVENUE

Levy	48.9%	\$20,250,264
Federal	43.0%	\$17,778,650
State	6.8%	\$2,803,784
Other	1.3%	\$555,568

TOTAL: **\$41,388,266**

2010 EXPENSES

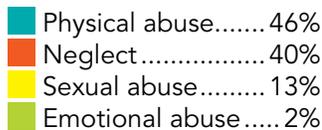
Salaries & Benefits	59.3%	\$25,183,097
Placement Costs	22.7%	\$9,619,905
Other Operating Costs	7.1%	\$3,014,711
Child Welfare Contracts	4.0%	\$1,705,371
Other Client Costs	3.1%	\$1,335,760
Day Care	3.1%	\$1,303,015
Other Contracts	0.7%	\$281,595

TOTAL: **\$42,443,454**

INVESTIGATIONS BY YEAR

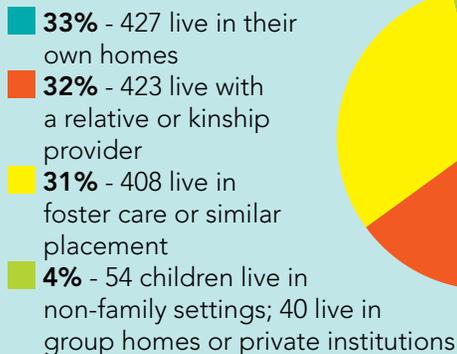


INVESTIGATIONS BY TYPE OF ABUSE*



*Many referrals have multiple types of abuse identified.

PLACEMENT SETTINGS FOR CHILDREN IN SERVICES



2010 AT A GLANCE

New Referrals	4,487
Alleged Child Victims	6,581
Substantiated Victims	743*
New Cases Opened	373
Average Number of Children on Caseload	1,312
Adoptions Finalized	116

*In Alternative Response cases, no perpetrator or victim is identified. Alternative Response accounted for 65% of cases in 2010.

Dear Lucas County Citizen:

It's sometimes considered a cliché when organizations say they've "reinvented themselves."

However, Lucas County Children Services can honestly say that in 2010, our caseworkers and staff have reinvented the way we work with children and families. It's a very positive change, and one that's taking hold in public child welfare agencies across the country.

In the "traditional" response to a report of child abuse, a caseworker investigates the allegation with the goal of identifying the people responsible for the abuse and eliminating the risks that the children have been facing.

Sometimes, the only way to achieve that is by temporarily moving the children into a foster home. While we have wonderful, caring foster families, for some children, the experience of living away from their birth family can be traumatic.

Today, nearly two-thirds of the families we see receive an "alternative" response. The agency caseworker meets with the family and discusses the concerns at hand. Together, they identify the family's strengths and weaknesses, and look for ways to eliminate the risks that the children are facing. LCCS connects the family with community resources that can provide needed support. The extended family is also encouraged to become involved so if the children do need to live away from their parents for some period of time, a "kinship," or relative placement can be their first option. Under alternative response, the agency helps families do a better job of caring for their kids, keeping the family as intact as possible. It's the true fulfillment of our mission: To protect children and promote families.

While the "traditional" response remains the most appropriate way to handle allegations of severe child abuse and neglect, it's more than is necessary for most cases. It's like having a toolbox containing only a hammer. It's the right tool for driving a nail, but it's useless if you're trying to tighten a screw.

Our new alternative response has had some other beneficial consequences. As more children have remained with their extended families, fewer of them entered foster care. This has helped us control the costs associated with children living in substitute care. By tightening our belts in other ways, we've also been able to maintain the level of critical services our children need without layoffs or debilitating cutbacks. LCCS will be asking voters to re-approve one of our two operating levies in November, and we feel confident that this ongoing fiscal responsibility will help us once again earn their approval.

We appreciate the ongoing support of our county commissioners, other county agencies and community service providers.

Sincerely,

Dean Sparks
Executive Director



REPORT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

Call
419-213-CARE
(2273), 24 hours,
7 days a week.