



*Athens County
Children Services*

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

Helping families **grow** strong.



2010 In Review

Referrals of Child Abuse

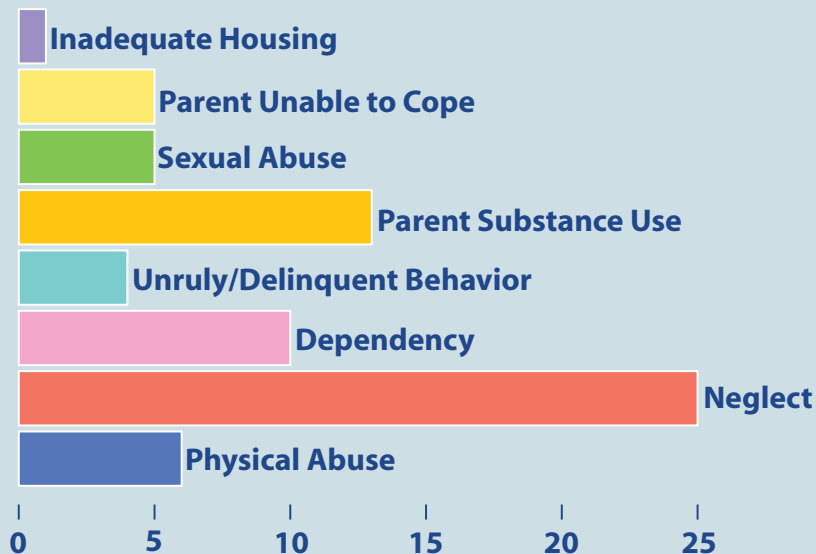
The Intake unit received 1360 referrals of abuse and neglect during 2010. A referral is an allegation of abuse and neglect of a child, and can be made by phone or in person. Of these 1360 referrals, the total number assigned for investigation was 446. The agency responds to concerns about child abuse and neglect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The number of referrals in 2010 represents a decrease of 6% from 2009. However, while the number of referrals declines both locally and statewide, we continue to see an uptick in the number of cases of serious abuse.

Our Intake caseworkers work in conjunction with a Deputy Sheriff from Athens County Sheriff's Department and community partners like the Athens County Child Advocacy Center.

Reasons for Custody

This chart depicts the primary reason for agency custody. Substance abuse was a major factor in 46% of these new custody cases.



Athens County Children Services is committed to providing quality services to protect children from abuse and neglect. With our community partners, we strive to ensure that there is a safety net to protect our most vulnerable population: our children.

Services for Families

ACCS has two Family Services units which provide ongoing services to ensure stability and safety for children.

In 2010, these two units worked with a total of approximately 134 families. The families served by these units may have children in their homes or have children in the temporary custody of the agency with a goal to safely reunify the children with their family.

In 2010, 42 children were reunified with their parents and 13 were reunified with a non-parent relative. An additional 44 children found a temporary home with non-parent relatives in kinship placements.

In order to assist families, Family Services caseworkers provide a large variety of services, including case management, transportation, information and referrals to community resources, parent education, emergency assistance, and family support.

Foster Care and Beyond

The Placement unit handles child placement-related services, including foster and adoption recruitment, and Independent Living.

At the close of 2010, there were 47 licensed foster care homes, including 10 newly-licensed foster homes.

Nineteen youth in the custody of ACCS received Independent Living Services, which prepares youth for adulthood. An additional 16 adults (ages 18-21) received Emancipated Independent Living Services. In 2010, we were able to add a Kinship Caseworker position to the Placement Unit.

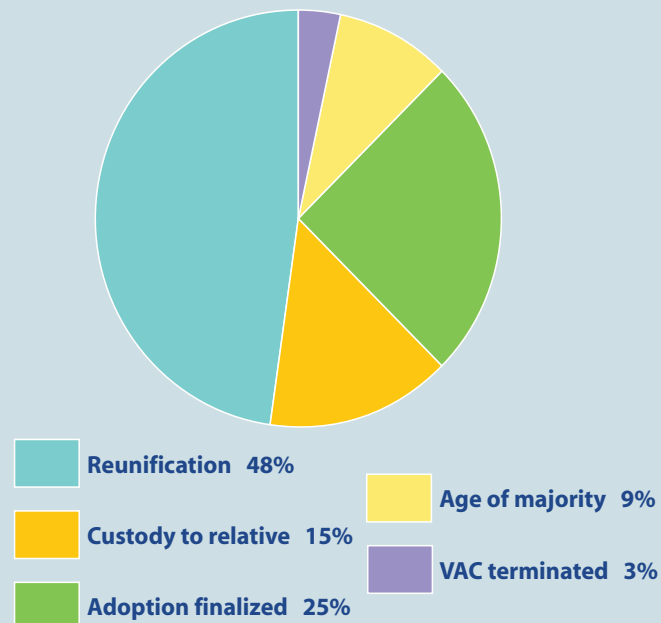


From a family of two to a family of seven: a couple finalizes adoption with five siblings in 2010.

Finding a Permanent Family for Children

A child may be placed in the permanent custody of ACCS if a parent willingly surrenders the child, the child is abandoned, or the family has not adequately addressed safety factors in the home with the court awarding permanent custody to the agency. At the end of 2010, there were 41 children and youth in permanent custody. Adoption caseworkers continue to strive to find permanent families for these children.

During 2010, there were 178 children in agency custody. There were 88 custody terminations in 2010. The types of custody terminations in 2010 were:



Training Opportunities

One of eight sites of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program sponsored by the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, the Southeast Ohio Regional Training Center provides high-quality, family-centered training to staff and caregivers of public child welfare agencies.

In 2010, the Southeast Ohio Regional Training Center held 343 workshops attended by 3,727 participants for a total of 1,619 training hours.



Members of the Trimble Elementary School Girl Power group take part in the first annual Girl Power Leadership Conference. Girl Power members took part in workshops focusing on public speaking, self-esteem, positive role models, and more. The conference was made possible by a grant from Kiki Magazine.

Help Me Grow

Help Me Grow (HMG) is a child developmental program serving families with children age birth to 3 years as well as pregnant women.

HMG Service Coordinators provide families with child developmental information, home visits, and support. In 2010, HMG worked with an average of 160 families per month.

In 2010, Help Me Grow received 229 referrals (down 1% from 2009) to the Services Coordinators throughout the year.



This young girl enjoys the children's activities provided by ACCS at Boogie on the Bricks.

Family Support & Prevention Programming

The Family Support Unit is comprised of four sub-units. These are:

- the visitation center
- parent mentors
- school social workers
- Domestic Relations Clinic

In 2010, the School Social Workers served an average of 33 families a month in the Federal Hocking and Trimble school districts. Fall of 2010 saw the addition of a School Social Worker to Athens City Schools, serving Chauncey Elementary and The Plains Elementary Schools. This School Social Worker position is made possible by a federal grant from Project LAUNCH.

Parent mentors worked with an average of 16 families per month, providing them with intensive services to reduce issues that led to the family's involvement with the agency.

The visitation center workers monitored 1373 visits and completed 176 transports in 2010.

The Domestic Relations Clinic, in cooperation with the Athens County Domestic Relations Court, provided training to 156 adults served, representing 273 children.

Dedication to Our Community

ACCS sponsored a number of community events in 2010 including:

- Kidfest
- Lace Up For Kids
- Pinwheels for Prevention
- Santa Tree Project

The Santa Tree, in a large-scale partnership with the Athens community, provided Christmas gifts for over 1400 children in Athens County, the largest number of children helped by the project in its 23 year history.

ACCS staff and volunteers also participated in a number of community events, including Boogie on the Bricks, The Ohio University Homecoming Parade, The Ohio Pawpaw Festival, and more.

Through the collection of money on Casual Fridays by our Employer-Employee Relations Committee (EERC), ACCS employees donated over \$3100 to charities and causes in 2010. The money went to organizations like The Nelsonville Community Center and The American Red Cross, and also to families in Athens County who were experiencing special circumstances of need. ACCS employees also donated over \$700 to Athens United Appeal in 2010.

Choose Your Partner Carefully

ACCS joined a growing number of agencies and organizations around the state of Ohio by endorsing the "Choose Your Partner Carefully" campaign. The campaign, which encourages single parents to think twice about who they trust to care for their children, launched in May 2010.

This campaign recognizes the growing problem both across the state of Ohio and nationally of violence perpetrated onto children by the paramour of single parents, often the boyfriend of the mother. The full slogan of the Choose Your Partner Carefully campaign is "Choose your partner carefully.. your child's life may depend on it."



The Garden Project

A community effort involving Ohio State University Master Gardeners, Ohio University College of Medicine Community Health Programs, COM Corps and ACCS helped to bring our very first community garden into existence.

Designed to help families in our Visitation Center learn to interact in a positive manner while becoming educated about healthy eating habits, the community garden was one of our favorite projects of 2010!

Using the Visitation Center kitchen, ACCS staff and volunteers hope to teach simple cooking with fresh ingredients. A compost bin has been purchased, which will reduce waste and provide garden nutrients, helping us to be environmentally friendly.

The Garden Project also ushered in ACCS participation in Community Food Initiative's Donation Station program. Families working with ACCS were given access to donations of fresh fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis throughout the summer.

PB&J Project

Spearheaded by ACCS School Social Workers, the Peanut Butter & Jelly Project aims to bridge the hunger gap suffered by many local children each summer. The Trimble and Federal Hocking School Districts are among the poorest in the state. Over 60% of students in these districts qualify for free or reduced breakfast and lunch.

During the summer months, these children lose this much-needed subsidy. The Peanut Butter and Jelly Project aimed to provide 1200 children in the Trimble and Federal Hocking school districts with PB&J during the summer of 2010.



Members of the Kiwanis Club and Athens Public Library staff prepare a donation of books for ACCS.

A Message From the Executive Director

Dear Community Member:

It is wonderful to again have the opportunity to share information about Athens County Children Services to the community in our 2010 Annual Report.

First and foremost, THANK YOU ATHENS COUNTY COMMUNITY!! On November 2, 2010, the county overwhelmingly approved the renewal of our two-mill renewal levy. The levy was approved in 68 of the 70 precincts of the county with a 69% approval rate. Thank you! These local levy funds allow this agency to maintain quality child protection services as well as provide family centered child abuse prevention activities throughout the county.

Our mission of protecting children, strengthening families and securing futures simply reflects the values of the staff and board of this agency. We believe that all children should be safe from harm but we also recognize the importance of families providing this safe environment. This agency remains focused on ensuring the safety of children through the provision of services and supports that strengthen families. We recognize the family as a child's parents as well extended family that can be a critical support to parents.

In October, 2010, ACCS joined other Ohio counties in implementing a new method of practice known as Differential Response. This new method allows the agency to investigate allegations of child abuse and neglect through two tracks, traditional response or through the Differential Response model. Differential Response still assesses child safety but is presented more as a partnership between the parents and the agency. This partnership can better focus on conditions in the home which impact child safety.

In 2010, the ACCS staff and Board participated in a 2 year strategic planning session which is focused on: Enhancing services to family through Differential Response; strengthening our engagement with extended family; expanding volunteer opportunities; and strengthening our community partnerships.

The current economic climate puts additional stresses on families as well as on the agencies that serve them. We will continue to be diligent in managing our funds ensure the delivery of high quality, effective services to children and families.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Reik". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Andrea Reik
Executive Director

Athens County Children Services Board

Nancy Schell, Chair	Chris Innis
Mary Mitchell	Lacy Russell
Rita Irwin	Barry Oches
Paula Carpenter	Missy Bond

Athens County Commissioners

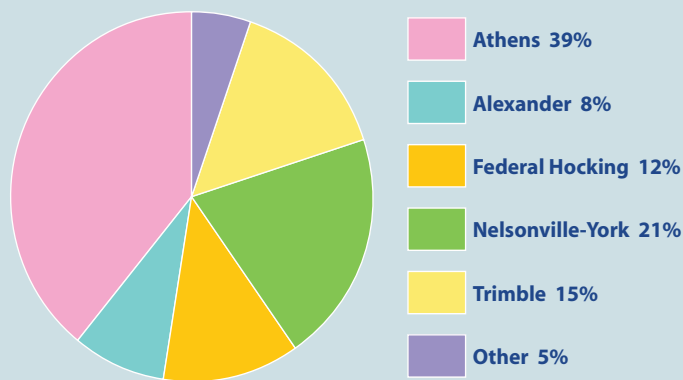
Larry Payne
Lenny Eliason
Mark Sullivan

The agency is administered and operated by a nine person citizen board appointed by the Athens County Commissioners for a four year term. The responsibilities of the ACCS board include upholding the agency's mission with a clear vision for its future; fiscal oversight and approval; the hiring and evaluation of the Executive Director; setting policies that effectively guide the agency operations as well as enhancing the agency's public standing.

The Year in Numbers

- 42** children reunified with their parents
- 446** responses to reports of abuse and neglect
- 22** adoptions finalized
- 19** children in kinship placements on average
- 10** new foster homes licensed
- 3** school districts served by School Social Workers
- 33** youth in the POSITRACT Diversion Program
- 1430** local children received Santa Tree gifts
- 5** youth in care graduated from high school
- 36** girls attending monthly Girl Power meetings

Referrals of Abuse and Neglect by School District



A referral is an allegation of maltreatment of a child and can be made orally or in writing. All referrals are classified even if they are not screened in for assessment.

(photo right) The Athens Rotary Club generously donates 30 Thanksgiving food boxes to families served by our school social workers each fall. Thanks, Athens Rotary, for all you do for children and families!

2010 Expenses

Operations	\$ 811,986	13%
Personnel	2,996,167	50%
Children/Families	2,200,413	37%
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TOTAL	\$6,008,413	100%

2010 Revenues

Federal	\$2,376,685	35%
State	327,135	5%
Local	126,453	2%
Levy	3,880,050	58%
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TOTAL	\$6,710,323	100%

ACCS appreciates the support of the Athens community. The primary funding source for Athens County Children Services is a 3 mill ten-year property tax levy approved by the voters in 2005 and a 2 mill ten-year property tax levy approved by the voters in 2010. These funds allow ACCS to be responsive to the needs of the children and families of Athens County.





PROTECTING CHILDREN STRENGTHENING FAMILIES SECURING FUTURES



**Athens County
Children Services**

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photo credits:
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