

2011

Report To The Community



*Athens County
Children Services*

2011 In Review

Referrals of Child Abuse

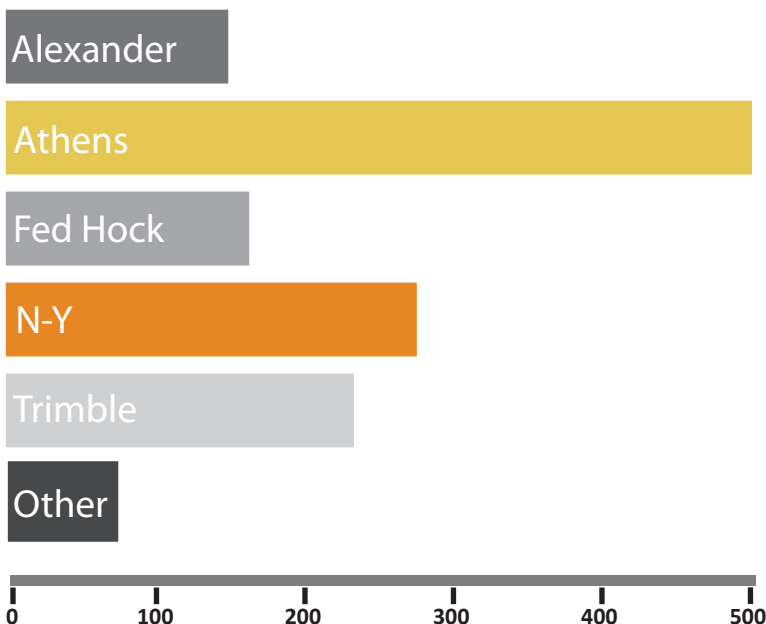
The Intake unit received 1375 referrals of abuse and neglect during 2011. A referral is an allegation of abuse and neglect of a child, and can be made by phone or in person.

Of these 1375 referrals, the total number assigned for investigation was 415. The number of referrals in 2011 represents a increase of 1% from 2010.

The agency responds to concerns about child abuse and neglect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Our Intake caseworkers work in partnership with an on-site Deputy Sheriff from Athens County Sheriff's Department and community partners like the Athens County Child Advocacy Center.

Referrals of Abuse and Neglect by School District



Services for Families

ACCS began the year with two Family Services units which provide ongoing services to ensure stability and safety for children. In 2011, these units worked with approximately 140 families.

Family Services works with families who are involved with Juvenile Court either through an order that requires the family to work with the agency while their children remain in their home or the court has determined it is unsafe for the children to remain home and have placed them in the custody of the agency. Family issues range from substance abuse and mental illness to homelessness and domestic violence. Reuniting families is the team's primary goal. Caseworkers help parents identify services that can address family problems, aid in establishing visitation so parents and children can stay connected and inform the court of progress or issues that remain unresolved. In 2011, 24 children were reunified with their parents and 11 were reunified with a non-parent relative.

At the end of 2011, the Family Services units were re-organized into two distinct units: Family Services and Alternative Response.

Alternative Response

ACCS began implementing Alternative Response (AR) in October 2010. With Alternative Response, families play a critical role in their children's safety and well-being. They are involved in the decision-making process from the beginning, including the initial determination of whether Alternative Response is right for them.

AR is built on the belief that child safety is a community responsibility. It connects families to community organizations and services providers to address and resolve concerns as they arise. Identifying concerns early on and working with families as equal partners can help alleviate the stresses that often lead to abuse and neglect. This approach can help keep families together and prevent foster care placements. It is intended to give families the supports and services they need to stay together. During 2011, an average of 41 families per month received Alternative Response services.



A family of two becomes a family of six in late 2011!

Finding a Permanent Family for Children

A child may be placed in the permanent custody of Athens County Children Services 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 2011, there were 26 children and youth in permanent custody. Adoption caseworkers continue to strive to find permanent families for these children.

During 2011, a total of 126 children were in agency custody, which is a decrease of 29% from the 178 children in agency custody in 2010. There were 65 custody terminations in 2010 (a 26% decrease from 2010).

In 2011, a total of 17 children were adopted. These 17 children included a sibling group of five and a sibling group of four. Additionally, 2011 saw the adoption of a youth at age 18 1/2 and another young woman who was just about to turn 18.



Families enjoying Kidfest. Photo by Jason Bash.

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 is a program of the Athens County Family & Children First Council and is operated by ACCS.

HMG Service Coordinators provide families with child developmental information, home visits, and support. In 2011, Help Me Grow worked with an average of 163 families per month. In 2011, HMG received 226 referrals (down 1% from 2010) to the Services Coordinators throughout the year.



A mother teaches her child to hula hoop at Athens County Fair Kid's Day. Photo by Sherri Oliver.

Foster Care and Beyond

The Placement unit handles child placement-related services, foster and adoption recruitment, Independent Living, and kinship services. At the close of 2011, there were 40 licensed foster care homes, including 6 newly-licensed foster homes. This year saw the closing or transition of 13 foster homes. Homes are needed for sibling groups, children and youth of all ages, and in all Athens County school districts.

The kinship worker completed 25 kinship home-studies in 2011. The Placement unit is proud of the continued development of kinship support, including an increase in Kinship Permanency Incentive (KPI) recipients. A strong effort has been put forth to increase the number of children remaining in our own agency foster homes, as opposed to treatment foster homes.

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



Members of Girl Power at the 2011 Girl Power Lock-In, held at Trimble Elementary School. Photo by Meg Vogel.

In 2011, the School Social Workers served an average of 62 families a month in the Federal Hocking, Trimble, and Athens City school districts. The workers received 172 referrals during the year. The Athens City School Social Worker position is made possible by a federal grant from Project LAUNCH.

Parent mentors worked with an average of 17 families per month, providing them with parent education to reduce issues that led to the family's involvement with the agency.

Family support workers provide visitation and transportation services for families who are involved with ACCS and whose children are living in foster care or kinship care. These workers monitored 1110 visits and completed 330 transports in 2011.

The Domestic Relations Clinic, in cooperation with the Athens County Domestic Relations Court, provided training to 91 adults served, representing 137 children. These clinics address the challenges of divorce and separation on children.

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 (SEORTC) provides high-quality, family-centered training to staff and caregivers of public child welfare agencies.

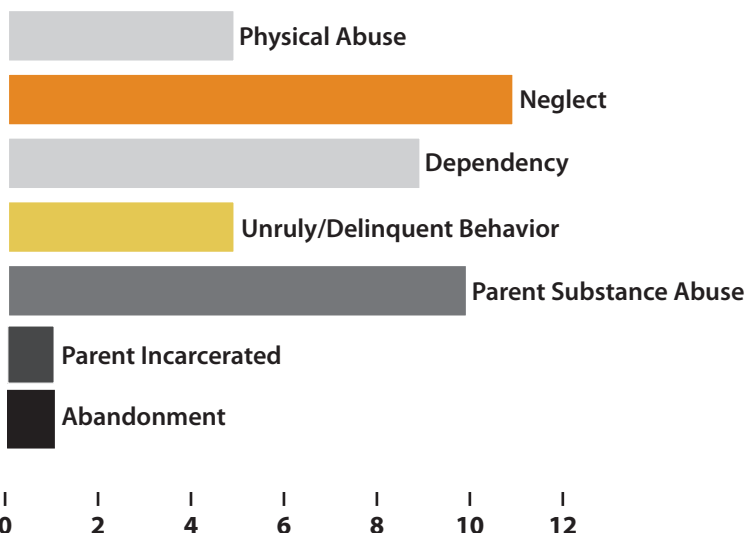
The SEORTC staff has been working hard on integrating E-Track, their new learning management system, into the state training program. In 2011, SEORTC held 128 workshops attended by 1257 child welfare worker participants for a total of 748 training hours. Additionally, the Southeast Ohio Regional Training Center held 195 workshops for 2413 foster parents, for a total of 651 training hours.

Ensuring Quality Services

The Quality Assurance (QA) unit is responsible for overseeing case reviews, and computer/data management. The QA unit reviews case files and notifies teams of areas where they are meeting standards and where they can improve. Additionally, the unit facilitates the training and mentoring of new staff and interns. The QA unit oversaw a total of 535 case reviews in 2011. These case reviews provide an opportunity for ACCS, parents, and partner agencies to come together and come up with a plan to keep the child safe.

Reasons for Custody

Substance abuse was a major factor in 46% of these new custody cases.



Dedication to Our Community

ACCS sponsored a number of community events in 2011 including Kidfest, Lace Up For Kids, Pinwheels for Prevention and the Santa Tree Project.

The Santa Tree, in a large-scale partnership with the Athens community and beyond, provided Christmas gifts for over 1200 children in Athens County.

ACCS teamed up with Wendy's and Power 105 to provide new sneakers to hundreds of local children as part of the annual Lace Up For Kids campaign.

ACCS staff and volunteers also participated in a number of community events, including Boogie on the Bricks, The Ohio University Homecoming Parade, Kids Day at the Athens County Fair, The Power 105 Chili Bowl Cook-Off, 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 2011. The money went to organizations like Goodworks, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Athens County Humane Society, and Habitat for Humanity. Funds raised by staff also went to families in Athens County who were experiencing special circumstances of need. ACCS employees also donated \$781 to Athens United Appeal in 2011.

Athens County Children Services would love to come speak with your community group about how to recognize and prevent child abuse. For more information, please call (740) 592-3061



ACCS staff and families volunteered to represent the agency in the 2011 Ohio University Homecoming Parade in October 2011.

The Garden Project

In its second year, the Garden of Eatin' continued to grow and become a favorite project for both staff and families. A total of 17 children and 7 adults helped in the garden throughout the year. They grew a variety of crops, including tomatoes, patty pan squash, broccoli, swiss chard, snow peas, herbs, and kale!

Families were encouraged to take home as many vegetables as they wanted, and recipes were included for some of the more "exotic" veggies. Some parents even took produce home from their early week visit and would bring back a prepared meal to share with their children during their second visit of the week.



Colorful flags in the Garden of Eatin'. Photo by Sherri Oliver.

2011 in Numbers

- 24** children reunified with their parents
- 415** responses to reports of abuse and neglect
- 17** adoptions finalized
- 186** families received AR services
- 3** school districts served by School Social Workers
- 25** kinship homestudies completed
- 1260** local children received Santa Tree gifts
- 152** Girl Power meetings held

A Message From the Executive Director

Dear Community Member,

I have the pleasure of sharing our 2011 Annual Athens County Children Services report with you. This was a year of innovation and change at Athens County Children Services. The agency implemented into practice Alternative Response (AR), a strengthened base assessment process which addresses issues of child safety within the home. Alternative Response allows the agency to interact in low risk situations in a manner of partnership and respect with families. The agency joined twenty other Ohio counties in implementing this model. Ohio is moving toward all 88 counties delivering the Alternative Response model.

In December 2011, ACCS became fully accredited by the Council of Accreditation. This process took several years to complete as the agency improved operations, became more efficient, and met certain practice standards. We proudly join only twenty-four other public child welfare agencies in Ohio who have achieved accreditation.

As you may know, the challenges facing families in Athens County are great. Our agency has seen an increase in incidents of drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, chronic incidents of domestic violence, and a growing number of families struggling in poverty. These issues impact the parents' ability to protect and nurture their children, putting the children at increased risk of abuse and neglect. For children, the impact of abuse and neglect can negatively affect their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. Without intervention, this can alter a child's basic wellbeing and their potential to be a strong, caring, confident and productive adult. With your support, ACCS has been able to offer programs and activities which promote child safety and foster family connections. Our protective services are developed and delivered to intervene with families to prevent abuse and neglect of children and to empower families to develop the necessary skills and supports to provide safe, nurturing homes for their children.

As I write this final introduction, I am planning my retirement from Athens County Children Services. This period has allowed me to reflect on the agency from the mid 1970's to the present. Our array of services has grown but the challenges for children have not diminished. I have been proud and honored to be a part of this agency. This agency has and always will be focused on the safety and wellbeing of children in our community.



Andrea Reik

Andrea Reik
Executive Director

Athens County Children Services Staff



Accreditation

Athens County Children Services is proud to announce that the agency has been granted national accreditation by COA, the Council on Accreditation. ACCS joins 24 other Ohio counties which have received accreditation.

“Accreditation confirms what our board and the community already knows-that we have a dedicated, professional and compassionate staff that provides multiple support systems for families and children in Athens County,” stated Children Services board chair Nancy Schell. “The Board is proud of ACCS staff and administration for achieving accreditation, the highest professional attainment possible.”

Beginning in 2010 and continuing through 2011, Athens County Children Services conducted a rigorous process of self-examination and prepared a self-evaluation report for COA. All program materials were sent for review to nationally recognized subject specialists chosen by COA and a team of national evaluators then traveled to Athens to conduct an on-site review that included financial audits, client services and review of all procedures. Based on this entire process and the team’s report to COA, Athens County Children Services was granted national accreditation.



“We are thrilled to have received our national accreditation. This process confirms the quality of services provided to children and families in our community,” stated ACCS Executive Director Andrea Reik.

“Our dedicated staff and Board continue working toward our agency mission: protecting children, strengthening families and securing futures.”

Founded in 1977, COA is an independent not-for-profit international accreditor of the full continuum of community-based behavioral health care and human service organizations. Today, over 1800 organizations-public and private-are either COA accredited or are in the process of seeking accreditation. These organizations serve over 7 million of our most vulnerable individuals each year!

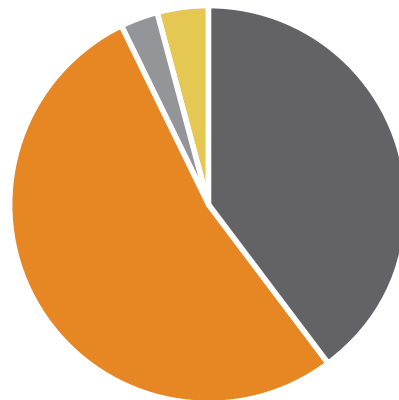
2011 Expenses

● Operations	\$1,865,857	27%
● Personnel	3,223,727	46%
● Children/Families	1,877,431	27%
TOTAL	\$6,967,015	100%



2011 Revenues

● Federal	\$2,828,115	40%
● State	291,962	4%
● Local	201,596	3%
● Levy	3,777,603	53%
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.



**Athens County
Children Services**

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Protecting Children, Strengthening Families, Securing Futures

Athens County Children Services

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www.athenschilchildrenservices.com

To report child abuse or neglect:

M-F, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

Please call 740.592.3061

After-hours, emergencies or weekends:

Please call 1.800.477.0772

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Photos by Sherri Oliver, Jason Bash, and Meg Vogel