



Athens County
Children Services

2025

Annual Report to the Community



Protecting Children,

Strengthening Families,

Securing Futures.



Athens County Children Services Board



Chair, Nancy Schell



**Co-Chair,
Susan Erlewine**



Jonathan Robe



Julie Lew



David Stretton



Gary Arnold



Lesli Johnson



Monna French

Not Pictured - Erin Bright

2,274

referrals of
abuse/neglect
in 2025

144

children in
custody
in 2025

2,089

family visits in our
visitation center
in 2025

Management Team



A Message From Our Executive Director



To our Athens Community,

I am pleased to present to you our 2025 Annual Report highlighting our agency's impact in the community and our commitment to protecting children, strengthening families, and securing futures.

I write this report with sincere gratitude towards the people of Athens County which have been instrumental in helping ACCS fulfill its mission. 2025 was a year of looking forward for ACCS as we demolished two of the existing converted residential buildings on our campus and broke ground on the 29,400 sq.ft. office building that will house agency operations and prepare us for expected growth as case numbers increase as does the complexity of those cases.

Also in 2025, ACCS continued our role as a leading child protection agency in our region of the state as we expanded the Treatment Foster Care program, serving five counties in Southeast Ohio. We started by hiring a licensed child therapist to recruit and train treatment foster caregivers to accept more challenging placements who would otherwise have to be placed in other communities in congregate care facilities. We are now aggressively promoting the program to recruit and train these new caregivers to allow us to place more of these children locally. This new program will not only keep children in their home communities, but will reduce the burden and cost of placing children at expensive facilities, an increasingly large share of ACCS's expenses.

We are also one of eight pilot counties in Ohio developing the Practice In Action Together (PACT) model. PACT is a new shared services model proposed by Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) and localized to each county and region as individualized models are developed at the grassroots level. This new way of working with families seeks to promote collaboration and understanding as they strive for reunification and will be a bottom-up approach to improving services provided to families.

Recognizing the impact of ballooning placement costs and its consumption of local dollars, ACCS has advocated to the state and served on working groups to address the issue of rising placement costs. In 2025, ACCS spent \$5.66 million on the safe placement of children, up from \$2.29 million in 2021. This is an increase of \$3.37 million in just four years. While we are not alone in experiencing this increase across Ohio, we have worked with state officials to determine what actions can be taken to stem the increase in costs that are being pushed on to local communities such as ours.

While 2025 was a year of big transitions for our agency, we are better positioned to meet coming challenges in child welfare, and we will continue to channel the public's support for our mission to improve the lives of children and families in our community.

Sincerely,

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read 'W. Crockron', written in a cursive style.

W. Otis Crockron Jr., MBA
Executive Director

Foster Caregiver Feature

Sam Reisig sat in her garage with the door open and her three children playing with bubbles in the garage and driveway. After picking the kids up from school every day, they have this play time before dinner, as a family. Talking with Sam about why she chose to become a foster and adoptive parent, she couldn't point to anything specific, but that she always saw the need for foster parents and wanted to be of help. A high school science teacher, she would see children figuring out life, some struggling with problems at home, and she wanted to help.

Sam became a foster parent during a very weird time – the COVID pandemic in 2020. Since taking her first respite and letting a child into her home during the pandemic, she has fostered ten children and adopted two, giving them stability and their forever home that every child deserves. During her fostering journey, Sam said that what she enjoys most is seeing the love and growth in each of the children she cares for.

Sam recognizes her support network is key for giving her balance in her life and providing additional help and love when caring for the children. Her mom, a friend who is like an aunt to the kids, and her stepmom all provide respite and other supports, when needed. Despite this help, she does recognize some troubles she has on her journey.

Sam said she always struggles when siblings are split up when entering care. While she understands it is sometimes necessary, it always hurts to see it happen. Additionally, she struggles when the birth parents are trying to work toward reunification, but are unable or unwilling to do what is required. Regardless of these struggles, she provides a loving home for those children who need it.

Sam's advice for those thinking of becoming foster caregivers is to ask questions, know more about where that child came from, and become connected to resources in the community. She says there are plenty of resources out there, you just need to look for and become connected with them. She said:



Sam Reisig

“Foster parents can encounter burnout just like everyone else, but the more people that help, the better.”

32

adoptions
finalized
in 2025

“We need more foster caregivers. The number of children entering care grows each year so more caregivers are needed. Foster parents can encounter burnout just like everyone else, but the more people that help, the better.”

38

licensed
foster homes
in 2025

Caseworker Profile



Joe Robinson

Joe's dedication to public service, social work, and helping others in his community has been consistent throughout his career in law enforcement and public safety. After serving many years in law enforcement, he wanted to use his skillset in a different way, while still helping those who are vulnerable and victimized. Since joining ACCS on our placement team about a year and a half ago, Joe has put his diverse skillset to use in serving the children and families we work with and helping them address the challenges they face.

Children today are faced with constant bombardment through social media as they just try to find their place in life. Many times, the children that Joe is finding placements for have never had a chance to be heard or receive encouragement, and so they are just trying to find their voice and place in life. For him, it's about reaching the children, developing a rapport with them, and helping them heal wounds and mend relationships in their life. As a placement caseworker, Joe is always trying to match the needs of the child with available placements to provide the best possible outcome for that child.

For Joe, the most rewarding part of his job is when he is either able to help a family toward reunification or when a family is found to adopt that child. Either way, his goal is to help that child achieve permanency and stability in their life so they can focus on healing and growing. One of the toughest parts of his job is when there is a lack of ideal available placements for a child and they must be placed outside of Athens County, without their siblings, or in a facility that caters to their needs, but is not in a home environment. "I wish I had several hundred more foster parents in our network," Joe mentioned.

Despite this, Joe celebrates the successes in his work saying that "adoption day is big!" Finding that permanency for children is the success and what makes it all worth it. When asked what advice Joe would have for a new ACCS caseworker, he said:

"Take the time to search your heart and make sure you are okay with the fact that you will be involved in some moments that are the best of life and some that are the worst. You will see beautiful things happen and also be front and center when really bad things happen to kids. Have a healthy way of processing stuff when it happens."

Assessment



Assessment Team

The Assessment team assesses and investigates reports of child abuse, neglect, or dependency. Child safety and family needs are assessed during the investigation process. The goal of the assessment is to engage families in a problem-solving process to mitigate risk factors. Court intervention may be needed to mitigate safety and risk factors. During the assessment, families are often provided with referrals to community partners as well as provided education in areas related to child abuse and neglect.

In 2025, ACCS had **2,274** referrals of suspected abuse or neglect, of which:

806 were screened in for assessment

1,179 children were involved

63 included drug-impacted infants

Screening

The Screening team is responsible for processing all referrals of child abuse and neglect made to ACCS. The Screening Supervisor also provides mandated reporter training to individuals and groups in the community who are mandated reporters by law.



Screening Team

ACCS is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to receive and respond to referrals. An answering service is utilized on weekends, holidays, and after hours for emergency referrals with caseworkers and supervisors assigned to respond.

If you are interested in mandated reporter training, please call Mindy VanBibber at (740) 592-3061.

Family Support

The Family Support team provides supervision and monitoring of in-person and virtual parent and child visitations. Family Support staff are dedicated and trained to provide parenting guidance and services that assist with protecting children, strengthening families, and securing futures.



Family Support Team

In 2025, Family Support:

Supervised/monitored **2,089** visits

Provided **1,081** transports to families & children

Completed **239** virtual contacts with families

Family Services



Family Services Team A



Family Services Team B

Our Family Services teams provide ongoing services when a family needs more support and intervention to address the outstanding safety threats or risk contributors. The families served by this team have complex needs and are often 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 the children in the temporary custody of the agency. Helping to strengthen and reunite families is Family Services' primary goal.

In 2025, Family Services worked with **165** families, including **315** children

Permanency Services

The ACCS Permanency Services team encompasses the four areas of foster care, kinship care, independent living, and adoption. Permanency is a sense of stability, support, and connection most of us take for granted. It is a vital component for lifelong wellbeing. Our primary goal is to restore and reunify children with their birth families whenever possible. A child may be placed in the permanent custody of ACCS by the juvenile court if a parent willingly surrenders, abandons a child, or is unable to adequately address safety factors in the home.



Placement Team

The ACCS Permanency Services team manages all child placement-related services. This includes recruiting, training, licensing, and supporting a dedicated group of foster, kinship, and adoptive homes caring for children in agency custody. In an effort to minimize the trauma to children coming into the agency's custody, ACCS Placement staff strive to place children in the most family-like setting. Ideally, this is with relative or non-related kinship caregivers. However, if a child is unable to be placed with kinship caregivers, then the agency has a network of foster families available to provide a safe home environment for children in the agency's custody.

Foster Care

In 2025, ACCS had custody of **199** children throughout the year, supported by:

38 licensed foster homes

31 kinship homes that provided care for **41** children

The agency continuously recruits new foster parents needed for sibling groups, children and youth of all ages in Athens and the surrounding counties.

If you are considering becoming a foster caregiver, please scan the QR code to access our inquiry form to find out more.



1,147
local children
received Santa
Tree gifts
in 2025

41
children in
kinship care
in 2025

Kinship Care

For children placed with relatives who are in the custody of Athens County Children Services, the agency offers ongoing support and case management services to those families and children. These services are provided by our Kinship Care workers.

Independent Living

Our Life Skills and Permanency Caseworkers are assigned to foster youth ages 14 and older to ensure youth are prepared for adulthood by providing training, education, and support on necessary life skills.

Adoption



Adoption Team

In 2025, ACCS was awarded permanent custody of **21** children. The Adoption team managed:

32 children adopted

39 children available for adoption at the end of 2025

ACCS has an Adoptive Family Caseworker that provides post adoption services to families in Athens County that have finalized adoptions (public, private, kinship, or international).

This is a voluntary program in which the worker can provide support in areas such as crisis management, behavioral management, and referral to services.

Case Review Coordination

In 2025, as a part of overall case planning service delivery and programming, our case review coordinators assisted in the facilitation of:

598 case reviews

Quality Assurance

To assure the best possible outcomes for children and families, the Quality Assurance Officer is responsible for monitoring compliance and ACCS's internal measures. The agency promotes excellence and continuous improvement through addressing data related to federal indicators, risk management, and stakeholder feedback.



ACCS QA Officer

Regional Training Center

The Southeast Ohio Regional Training Center (SEORTC) is hosted by ACCS and is one of eight sites of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program sponsored by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth. The SEORTC provides high-quality, family-centered, competency-based training to staff and caregivers of public child welfare agencies in thirteen surrounding counties.



SEORTC Team

In 2025, SEORTC:

Hosted **139** child welfare workshops attended by **1,000** child protective service professionals for a total of **671.25** training hours

Hosted **101** foster parent trainings attended by **719** foster parents for a total of **272.16** training hours

ACCS Facility Construction Begins

In 2025, ACCS began construction on a new 28,800 sq. ft. facility. This initiative will move ACCS offices from converted residential buildings built in 1972 to a new facility, which will provide a contemporary visitation center, more room to grow, and support toward the agency's continued success. We are excited to move into the new building in the winter of 2026 when construction is complete.

Ohio START



Ohio START (Sobriety, Treatment, and Reducing Trauma) is a children-services-led initiative that has been shown, when implemented with fidelity, to improve outcomes for both parents and children affected by child maltreatment and parental substance use disorders.

The model is specifically designed to transform the system of care within and between child welfare agencies and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment providers and other family serving systems and agencies. START uses a family centered approach and services that help the child, parents, and the entire family. START recognizes that SUD/addiction is a family disease, recovery occurs in the context of families, and adult recovery should have a parent-child component.



OhioSTART Team

In 2025, substance abuse was a factor in:

321 (14%) of total referrals received

106 (64%) of all 165 total ongoing cases

246 reports involving drug-impacted cases

Ohio START clients are screened for substance abuse using the UNCOPE tool and CTAC checklist. The START dyad composed of the START Caseworker and the Family Peer Mentor from ISBH partner with the family to provide wrap around services.

In 2025, START accepted **10** referrals to the program.



Community Engagement

In 2025, ACCS volunteers helped with events like Kidfest, Community Baby Showers, Paw Paw Festival, OU Homecoming, PB&J Distribution, the Reindeer Games Family Fun Day, and the making and planting of Pinwheels, among other events. They also provided tutoring for children and childcare for parent teacher conferences and the Adoptive Family Support Group.

In 2025, our agency supervised:

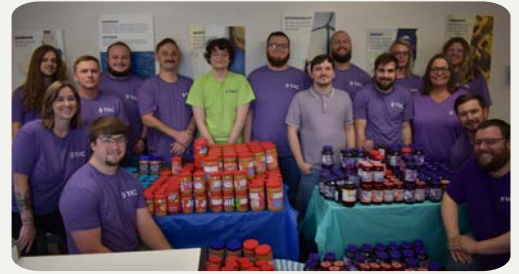
22 interns from **5** different majors placed in **7** of our units



Children watch closely as COSI puts on a captivating presentation at Kidfest 2025.



An ACCS volunteer paints faces at the Athens County Fair.



ACCS worked closely with businesses like TRC to collect peanut butter and jelly donations.



The ACCS School Outreach team hosts a panel during their School Outreach Conference.



The Southern Ohio Copperheads help distribute PB&J over the summer.

4,566

children given PB&J,
bread, canned goods,
and fresh produce

in 2025



ACCS volunteers run a big parachute activity during Kidfest 2025.

School Outreach



School Outreach Team

In 2025, School Outreach:

Served **4,566** children during the **19th** annual PB&J project

Hosted **182** group support sessions

Received **3,017** requests for family financial assistance

Addressed **457** attendance and tardy concerns

Provided **522** child abuse/neglect prevention consultations

School Outreach seeks to strengthen families and promote positive school relationships to enhance student school success. We partner with local school districts to have a school outreach worker in the following schools:

Alexander Elementary

Amesville Elementary

East Elementary

Morrison-Gordon Elementary

Nelsonville-York Elementary

Trimble Elementary

School Outreach provided **44,216** direct units of service in six schools in Athens County. These services are directly or indirectly provided to, on behalf of or in collaboration with, a student, family, service provider, school, or other entity.

Athens County Children Services Support Staff



Office Management



Business Operations



Human Resources



Community Events



Maintenance



Family and Children First Council

2025 Financial Summary

Executive Director

Otis Crockron, MBA

Deputy Director

Wendy Shields, MPA

2025 Athens County

Commissioners

Charlie Adkins

Chris Chmiel

Lenny Eliason

2025 Board Members

Nancy Schell, Chair

Susan Erlewine, Co-Chair

Julie Lew, Secretary

Reggie Robinson/Jonathan Robe

Keith Adams/Erin Bright

David Stretton

Lesli Johnson

Gary Arnold

Monna French

3,017

requests for family
financial assistance
through the School
Outreach Team.

in 2025

598

case reviews

in 2025

Beginning Balance

\$3,718,112

2025 Revenues

● Local Operating Levy	\$6,324,446
● Federal Funds	\$5,243,671
● State Funds	\$2,522,422
● Other Local Funds	\$1,271,630

Total Revenue

\$15,362,169

2025 Expenditures

● Employee Salaries	\$5,551,156
● Employee Healthcare and Benefits	\$2,399,873
● Placement Care	\$5,655,907
● Clothing, Food, and Transportation	\$207,555
● Health-Related Expenses for Children	\$413,010
● Building, Supplies, & Contracted Services	\$554,030
● Community Education & Staff Training	\$77,873
● Other Expenditures	\$1,784,288

+Total Expenditures

\$16,643,693

Ending Balance

\$2,436,588

In 2024, Athens County voters approved a 3 mill, ten-year renewal property tax levy. Athens County Children Services staff and board greatly appreciate the continued support of the Athens community. The primary funding source for ACCS is that and a 2.5 mill ten-year property tax levy approved by the voters in 2019. These operating funds are vital for ACCS to be responsive to the ever-changing needs of the children and families of Athens County.

PACT & TFC Network Feature

Practice in Action Together (PACT)

Practice in Action Together (PACT) is Ohio's children services practice model developed for (and by) public children services agencies. The Athens PACT local Advisory Group functions as an advisory workgroup of Athens County Children Services, with support from PCSAO, and in partnership with the other seven Cohort 1 counties.

PACT's local Advisory Group's purpose is to drive model implementation by measuring the strength of working relationships among families and staff; identifying areas for behavioral change to align with the four model values; cultivating an environment of ongoing learning and growth throughout the agency; and developing tools and approaches that support behavioral practice change. The local Advisory Group is a multidisciplinary team that includes caseworkers, supervisors, birth parents, young adults with foster care experience, foster/adoptive parents, and kinship caregivers.



**Elevate Healing.
Build Relationships.**

WE BELIEVE

Families define "family," and they are experts on their culture, beliefs, and experiences.

WE BELIEVE

Families have diverse needs, and by partnering with them, we can work together to address those needs.

WE BELIEVE

Families develop trust when we are honest and inclusive in the decision-making process.

WE BELIEVE

Families can recover, heal, and grow.



ATHENS COUNTY
CHILDREN SERVICES

Southeast Ohio Treatment Foster Care (TFC) Network



Scan for more info

In 2025, ACCS was the lead agency for the Southeastern Ohio region's participation in the Ohio DCY Treatment Foster Home pilot program. As one of 10 regional partnerships across the state, the Southeastern Ohio Treatment Foster Care Program is working to recruit and train foster caregivers in Athens, Gallia, Meigs, Jackson, and Perry counties. The goal is to build a strong network of specialized foster families who can care for children with higher needs while keeping them in the communities where they already have connections and support.

Caregivers are trained in the Pressley Ridge model, an evidence-based approach designed to support children with behavioral health challenges. Each child receives a personalized treatment plan, and a neuro-sequential brain map is completed to help the child's team better understand the child's experiences and guide their healing process. Remaining close to their communities, familiar schools, routines, and relationships gives children the strongest foundation to recover and grow.

Protecting Children, Strengthening Families, Securing Futures

Athens County Children Services

18 Stonybrook Drive

P.O. Box 1046

Athens, OH 45701

Phone: 740.592.3061

Fax: 740.593.3880

athenschilchildrenservices.com



To report child abuse or neglect:

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

Please call 740.592.3061

After-hours or emergencies:

Please call 740.400.7059

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Athens County Children Services