

Shaping the
Future



Protecting
Children



Strengthening
Families



Supporting
Independence



Partnering
With the
Community



Achieving
Permanency



Enhancing
Well-being



Preventing
Abuse



Maintaining
Family Ties



Resolving
Conflict



Sandusky County Children Services Annual Report 2011

**Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services
Children Services Division**

2511 Countryside Drive
Fremont, Ohio 43420

Phone: 419-334-8708

Fax: 419-355-5329

Email: info@sanduskycountydjfs.org

Web: www.sanduskycountydjfs.org

Sandusky County Children Services



Our Mission: Sandusky County Children Services is committed to protecting abused, neglected or dependent children while also recognizing the importance of preserving the sanctity of the family. This is achieved by assisting families to become self-sufficient and able to provide a safe and stable environment for their children through the utilization of community resources.

Our Mandate: Sandusky County Children Services is mandated by the Ohio Revised Code to do all of the following:

- investigate allegations of child abuse, neglect and dependency
- make reasonable efforts to prevent the removal of children from their homes
- provide placement services to children who cannot remain in their own homes
- provide permanency for all children in our care
- ensure that the child's best interests are always our main consideration



In order to achieve our mission and fulfill our mandates, the Sandusky County Children Services Unit works very closely with members of the community, other social service agencies, schools, churches, law enforcement and the court system. Cooperation and coordination with all of these entities are essential in order to ensure we protect the children of Sandusky County. Furthermore, each individual can play a role in helping us to achieve this goal. Whether you report concerns regarding a child or offer assistance to a family in need, as a community we can all contribute to a safer future for our children.

Intake, Investigations and Assessments



The Intake is typically the initial point of contact at the agency. Intakes Services are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

In 2011, the agency received a total of 1,931 intake calls. Of this total, 453 were opened for investigation/assessment, 418 were information/referral calls and 1,060 were screened out as they did not contain

information that would warrant further Children Services involvement.

During the Investigation or Assessment Stage the assigned worker will conduct home visits and in-depth interviews to help determine the level of risk to the child and the need for any services. Most times, children can be safely maintained in their own homes. However, there are times that it is determined that a child is not safe in their own home and then that child must be removed and placed with relatives or in another setting such as a foster home, group home, or residential center.

In 2011, the agency opened 453 investigations/assessments which is an 8% increase over 2010. There were 949 children involved in these investigations/assessments.

Differential Response

On August 1, 2011, Children Services officially began implementing Differential or Alternative Response. Differential Response is a family-engagement approach to child protective services (CPS) designed to help protect children and ensure their safety and well-being by providing needed services that strengthen and support families. Differential Response builds collaborative connections among the child protection agency, community agencies and families so that families can identify concerns and meet their needs using available supports and services.

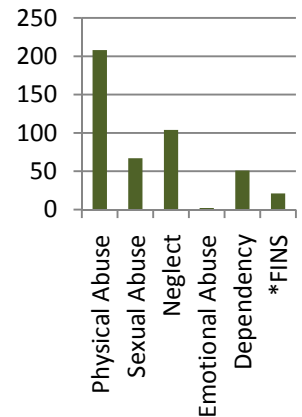
Differential Response does not replace the traditional CPS response. Instead, it is designed to augment it. The traditional investigative response will continue to be used to determine if abuse or neglect has occurred and if children must be removed from their homes and placed in foster care. Differential Response is for use with families who may need supports and services in order to keep their children safe. Differential Response helps connect these families to the community organizations and agencies that can provide the services they need.

From August 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011, the agency opened 55 Differential Response assessments. Of this total, 29% were classified as physical abuse and 71% were classified as neglect.

Investigations/Assessments by Allegation Type

Physical Abuse: 208
Sexual Abuse: 67
Neglect: 104
Emotional Abuse: 2
Dependency: 51
Family in Need of Service: 21

I/A By Type



*Family in Need of Service

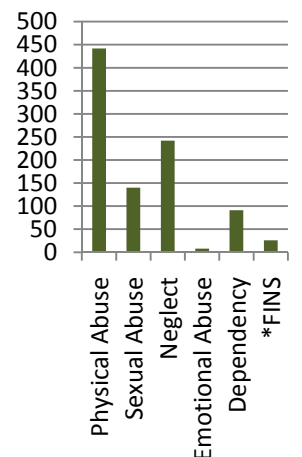
Investigations/Assessments by Priority Rating

Non-Emergency: 448
Emergency: 5

Number of Children Involved in Investigations/Assessments by Allegation Type

Physical Abuse: 442
Sexual Abuse: 140
Neglect: 242
Emotional Abuse: 8
Dependency: 91
Family in Need of Service: 26

Number of Children By Type

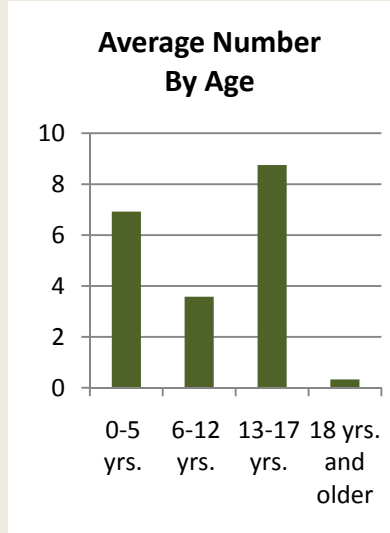


*Family in Need of Service

Ongoing Services

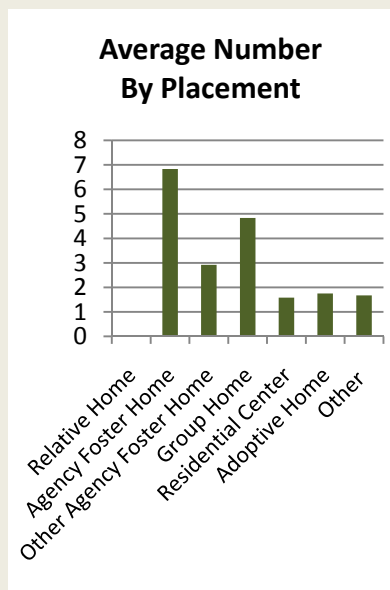
Average Number of Children in Custody per Month by Age

0-5: 6.92
 6-12: 3.58
 13-17: 8.75
 18 and older: 0.33



Average Number of Children in Custody by Placement Type

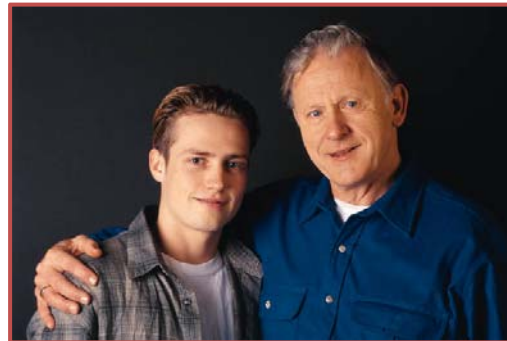
Relative Home: 0
 Agency Foster Home: 6.83
 Other Agency Foster Home: 2.92
 Group Home: 4.83
 Residential Center: 1.58
 Adoptive Home: 1.75
 Other: 1.67



The Ongoing Services that are offered to a family can occur in cases where a child is still in the home (protective supervision) or after the child has been removed (temporary custody). In both situations, the caseworker involved with the family will develop a Case Plan in order to build upon the family's strengths and help them overcome any identified weaknesses. Once the family has reduced the risk in their home to an acceptable level, the case will be closed (protective supervision), or in situations where the agency has custody, the child will be returned home. The agency will then monitor the home for a period of time before closing the case.



In 2011, there was an average of 49 ongoing cases open each month. The agency worked with 184 children on an ongoing basis. There were 35 children in the agency's custody during 2011. The placement costs for these children totaled \$624,683.48



Kinship Providers

The agency began using the Family Find Model in 2011 to assist workers in locating kinship providers who may be a support or placement for children with whom we are involved. The goal of the Family Find Model is to provide each child with life-long connections to kin. There is a core belief with this model that every child has a family and that every effort should be made to keep children within that family. These family connections help to promote a sense of belonging and also increase positive outcomes for children.

Foster Care and Adoption Services

Foster parents provide *temporary* care to children who are in the agency's custody. When a child is in the agency's temporary custody, reunification is almost always the goal. Foster parents have a responsibility to help the agency and the child achieve this goal. Some of the things that a foster parent can do to help with this objective are: transporting the child to visits with their family, offering support to the family by listening to their needs and offering them advice, helping to reestablish a bond between the child and the family by sharing information about the child with the family or allowing visits to occur in the foster home, involving the family in activities like birthday parties for the child, doctor appointments, athletic events, etc. Each case is different and therefore, the level of involvement with the family will vary. Foster parents are expected to provide more than just food, clothing and shelter for a child in their home. They need to allow that child to share in their experiences and become part of "their family" so that the child may succeed and grow during their placement. Each foster parent can make a significant difference in a child's life.



Adoptive parents provide a "forever family" for children in the agency's permanent custody. Just like foster parents, adoptive parents need to work hard to incorporate the child into their family so that they may be successful not only in the placement, but in life. Once the child's adoption is finalized, the adoptive parents take on full responsibility for that child's health, education, and overall well being.

Applicants can choose to be licensed as a Foster Home, approved as an Adoptive Home or opt for Dual Licensure/Approval which allows them to accept both foster and adoptive placements.

Average Number of Homes Licensed/Approved Each Month	
Foster Homes	– 16.66
Adoptive Homes	– 12.08
Dual Approved Homes	– 12.08
Number of Inquiries in 2011	
Foster Care Only	– 12
Adoption Only	– 7
Both Foster Care and Adoption	– 12
Number of New Homes in 2011	
Foster Care Only	– 0
Adoption Only	– 0
Dual Approved	- 1

Independent Living Services



Independent Living Services are provided to children in the agency's custody starting at the age of 15 years. The children learn skills in a variety of areas in order to prepare them to live on their own. Topics covered in this program include: budgeting, job hunting, finding and maintaining an apartment, general hygiene and health issues, self-esteem building, community resources and educational opportunities just to name a few. Each child is assessed at the beginning of the service to determine what skills they have and what areas need further improvement.



Post-Emancipation Services

The services available through the Post-Emancipation Program are the same as through the Independent Living Program, but are offered to children age 18-21 years who have already emancipated from the foster care system. These services are completely voluntary, but often essential to insure the success of youth after leaving care.



Total Number of Youth Receiving Independent Living Services
13
Total Number of Youth Receiving Emancipation Services
1



Family Team Decision Making



Family team decision making (FTDM) was instituted into every day practice in Children Services in 2011. FTDM is a process which invites members of the family, members of the family's informal network, and community groups to the table when critical decisions about a child need to be made. An independent coordinator convenes the group and is responsible for creating an environment of transparency, honesty and respect. The family is seen as a key decision making partner and preference to the family's plan is given whenever possible. This process helps to create a better working relationship between the agency and the families we serve.

Choose Your Partner Carefully

In 2011, Children Services began the Choose Your Partner Carefully Campaign. The purpose of the campaign is to raise awareness and educate the community on the importance of choosing safe caregivers for children. Far too often a child is neglected, abused, or even killed when left in the care of a parent's partner. A 2005 study indicated children who live with adults who are not biologically related to them are nearly 50 times more likely to die at the adults' hands than children who live with two biological parents. Children younger than five years old are the most frequent victims because they are dependent, small in size, and unable to defend themselves. While the program targets single parents, the program brings attention to all parents reminding them of the importance of protecting their children. This campaign is focusing on a very specific and often deadly form of child abuse. In 2009, Sandusky County statistics show 16% of child abuse and neglect cases involved the parent's partner as the alleged perpetrator. The agency received donations and grants to help support this campaign from many local partners including the Sandusky County Communities Foundation.



...your child's life depends on it.

Adult Protective Services



Our Mission: Sandusky County Adult Protective Services is committed to protecting adults at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation while recognizing the importance of their right to live independently. This is achieved through the provision of appropriate supportive services and referral to community resources.

Our Mandate: Sandusky County Adult Protective Services is mandated by the Ohio Revised Code to investigate allegations of abuse, neglect (including self-neglect) and exploitation on adults age 60 and over. Ongoing protective services will be offered if determined necessary by the Department. Furthermore, the agency also offers voluntary services to adults who are 45-59 years old.

In order to achieve our mission and fulfill our mandates, Sandusky County Adult Protective Services works very closely with members of the community, other social service and health care agencies, churches, law enforcement and the court system. Furthermore, each individual can play a role in helping us to protect the elderly members of our community. Whether you report concerns regarding an adult or offer assistance to an elderly person in need, as a community we can all assist in ensuring that their latter years are truly "golden."

In 2011, the agency received a total of 112 intake calls in the APS Unit. Twelve calls were opened for further investigation. There was 1 case opened for Ongoing Adult Protective Services.

