

What is Lucas County Children Services?

LCCS is the agency mandated by state law to investigate reports that children are being abused or neglected. We assess the risk that the children face, try to help families reduce that risk and provide protective services, when necessary. Our primary role is to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of all children in our county.

Why are children abused and neglected?

Children are mistreated for a number of reasons: substance abuse, stress, difficulty in controlling anger, and a lack of basic parenting skills. Regardless of the cause of child abuse or neglect, we need to remember: when children are mistreated, we shouldn't assume that their parents don't love them. Most parents really do love their children, but need help from time to time.

What is child abuse or neglect?

It can be any act—or failure to act—by a parent or caretaker that could result in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation of a child.

- Physical abuse is causing injury to a child by beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking or other action. Sometimes, even when a parent does not intend to hurt a child, a child's injuries could be considered abuse.
- Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs—physical, educational, medical or emotional. Inadequate supervision can be considered neglect.
- Sexual abuse includes any kind of sexual activity or sexual contact with a child.

What should I do if I suspect a neighbor, relative, friend or anyone else is abusing or neglecting a child?

Call Children Services at 419-213-CARE (2273). You will be making what is called a "referral." We will ask you a series of questions that will help us determine if, and how, we should assess the matter. We understand that making a child abuse or neglect referral might be difficult, especially if the child's caretaker is a relative or friend. But it is the right thing to do. Your call will remain confidential. We do not disclose the identities of people who make referrals. Anyone can make a referral.



What happens after I call to make a report?

If there is enough information to lead us to believe that a child is at risk, LCCS sends a caseworker to visit with the family. We investigate what may have happened, take steps to ensure the child's safety, come to a conclusion about the concerns, and make a plan to remedy the situation. This often includes working with parents to help them make changes in their lives and engaging them in services to address the family's needs. Our primary concern is ensuring that all children in the family are free from risk of abuse or neglect and are having their basic needs met on a consistent basis.

How does the agency help children and families?

We refer parents and children to a variety of services aimed at keeping the family together, or reunifying them if the child has been removed from the home. These can include substance abuse assessment and treatment, psychological evaluations, family counseling, parenting classes and child care. We also work with each family to ensure and plan for their children's safety if serious concerns are identified.

LCCS works with about 1,500 children at any given time. Slightly more than a third of them are able to live at home while their families receive services. No child remains at home if we believe there's a risk of future harm. When a child is not safe at home, we first look for a suitable relative to provide care. If no relative is available, we turn to one of our 250 foster families.

Do any children live at the agency?

No. Children Services does not operate a residential facility. We believe children should live in a family



environment whenever possible, and 95 percent of the children in our care are either living at home, with a relative or in a foster home. A few children live in group homes, institutions or other residential facilities that meet their unique needs.

Can Children Services remove a child from his or her home?

No. Only law enforcement and the courts have the authority to remove children from the family home. When children must be removed, Children Services will get help from the police, county sheriff's department or juvenile court. Similarly, Children Services does not have the authority to charge people with crimes. Any criminal charges, such as child endangering, are a matter for law enforcement and the county prosecutor's office.

When children are removed from their homes, do they ever go back?

Yes, whenever it is safe for them to do so. We value families, and believe the best place for a child is a safe, loving home with the birth family. We provide services to families—directly or indirectly—aimed at reunifying children with their parents.



Children are precious. We need to do everything we can to protect them. Every social problem, from substance abuse, to domestic violence, to poverty, to crime, has a direct impact on the lives of children. We are all responsible for the children of Lucas County. Please help us do our job by doing your part. We need you to report suspicious behavior. We need you to reach out to other families in your neighborhood. We need you to become foster or adoptive parents. By working together as a community, we can protect children who have been abused and neglected.



Robin Reese
Interim
Executive Director



What happens if Children Services determines that a child can never live safely with his or her birth parents again?

In that case, LCCS will do one of the following:

1. Ask that the court award legal custody to a relative, who then becomes the child's primary caregiver;
2. Place the child in foster care while we work on a permanent plan for his/her long-term care; or,
3. Petition the courts for permanent custody of the child, and upon receiving custody, place the child into an adoptive home.

About 100 children are adopted through LCCS each year.

Who can become a foster or adoptive parent?

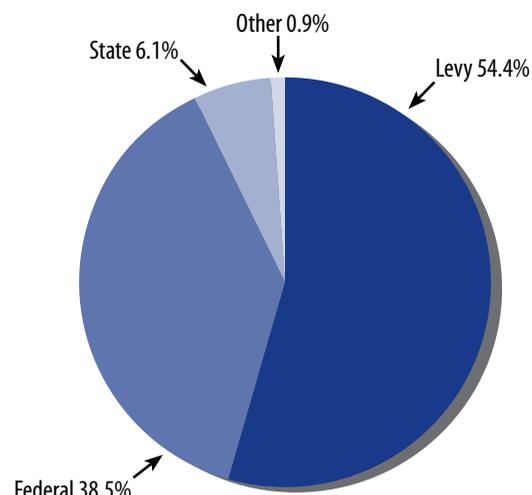
We welcome anyone who is at least 21 years old, completes the training program, complies with a background check, meets certain criteria and can provide a safe, loving home! Single or married, with children or without, male or female—it doesn't matter.

Are foster parents and adoptive parents paid?

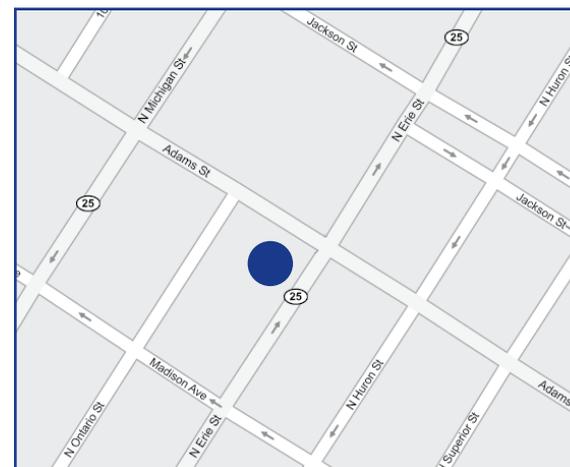
Not exactly, but there is financial support. The amount varies based on each child's unique needs. Once a child is adopted, LCCS and the federal government provide a monthly subsidy until the child reaches legal age.

How large is the agency and how is it funded?

LCCS has about 340 employees. The agency budget is about \$42 million. More than half of it comes from Lucas County citizens in the form of two levies. We also receive small amounts of funding from the federal government, the State of Ohio and other sources.



SOURCE: Lucas County Children Services 2014 Annual Report



To report abuse or neglect

419-213-CARE (2273)

Switchboard

419-213-3200

Ombudsman

419-213-3253

Website

www.lucaskids.net

Adoption or foster care information

419-213-3336

Public information

419-213-3253

Email

information@co.lucas.oh.us

Frequently Asked Questions



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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