

## In Defiance of Instability – Strategies for Ending Homelessness Among Families with Children

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Children Services Intake

COHHIO 2018

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## Research: Families at the Nexus of Housing and Child Welfare

- There is a higher rate of child welfare system involvement among families that are homeless or otherwise precariously housed than among low income families with stable housing.
- Housing problems can become a barrier to the reunification of children who have been placed in out-of-home care.
- Families were more likely than their caseworkers to identify needing help with housing. Caseworkers were more likely to identify needs related to parent functioning.

Amy Dworsky, Ph.D., Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, November 2104

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## Research: Families at the Nexus of Housing and Child Welfare

Direct and indirect ways that families come to the attention of child protective services.

- Homelessness/sub-standard housing can create a risk to health and safety.
- Homelessness can exacerbate stress, AOD, Mental Health issues leading to neglect or abuse.
- Fishbowl Effect – Families in shelter are under a high degree of scrutiny by staff who are mandated reporters.

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## Research: Families at the Nexus of Housing and Child Welfare

- › Coordination across child welfare, housing and homeless services systems has been the exception.
- › None of these systems, by itself, has the capacity to provide all the services and supports families need.
- › Cross-system coordination presents its own set of challenges because each system is governed by different mandates and is dependent on different funding streams.

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Stop the “dumping” and blaming!

CHILD WELFARE

Who is to Blame?



HOUSING

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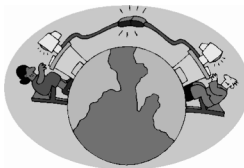
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Take the time to reach a common understanding




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## FCCS



### ► Highly regulated by mandates of State and Federal Law

- Ohio Revised Code: State law that regulates child welfare practice
  - Defines Abuse, Neglect, Dependency
- Ohio Administrative Code: Regulates investigations, case planning, visitations
  - Guidelines for Abuse, Neglect, Dependency

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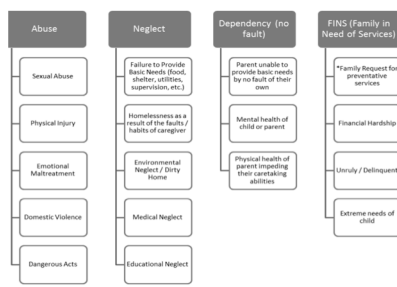
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## FCCS : Screening Categories




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## FCCS: Assessment

### ► Comprehensive Assessment and Planning Model – Interim Solution (CAPMIS)

- Structured assessment and decision making
- Focus on \*Safety\*

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### FCCS: Assessment (cont.)

- Where is family currently living?
- Where did the family live prior?
- Does the family have friends or family that can assist temporarily/permanently?
- ***How are basic needs being met?***
- ***How are children impacted by the living environment?***
- What resources are available to the family?
- What services has the family utilized?

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### FCCS: Resources (Prevention)

- Stable Families Program (Pilot)
- Family to Family (Settlement Houses)
- FCCS Community Service Workers
- One-time financial assistance
- Case management for Emancipated Youth (18-21)




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### FCCS: Resources (cont.)

- Other options
  - ❖ Diversion
  - ❖ Respite Care (short-term foster care / voluntary / no court involvement)
  - ❖ 30-Day Voluntary Agreement for Custody (no court involvement)
  - ❖ Out-of-Home Safety plan (voluntary)
  - ❖ Legally Authorized Out of Home Placement
    - ❖ 24-hour emergency / Officer Acceptance
    - ❖ Court Order

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## YWCA Family Center

- › Families must meet the definition for literal homelessness to be eligible. On the street, in a car or place not meant for human habitation. "The Last Resort"
- › Not a place to go "to get housing" or just financial assistance.
- › Families must be able to care for themselves and their children. We are not a "placement" for children services.
- › Eligible families will be linked with available resources to rapidly exit to next step housing and be connected with community based resources.
- › There is no guarantee a family will exit to a "place of their own" or get access to low-income housing because they entered emergency shelter.

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## Immediately begin working collaboratively

- › Families who have no safe place to sleep are in a serious crisis.
- › Getting to an emergency crisis shelter is just the beginning of resolving the crisis.
- › It is most beneficial when a case worker immediately reaches out to increase services instead of stepping back.
- › It is most beneficial when an emergency shelter serves as a family's support network to help the family stabilize and connect with rapid re-housing services.

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## Operate from a client-centered approach

- ❖Choice
- ❖Empowerment
- ❖Strength-Based
- ❖Collaboration
- ❖Individuality

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## Acknowledge the challenges related to a lack of affordable housing

### FACTS ABOUT OHIO:

- › Minimum Wage \$8.15
- › Average Renter Wage \$12.87
- › 2-Bedroom Housing Wage \$15.00

### MOST EXPENSIVE AREAS HOUSING WAGE

- › Columbus HMFA \$17.04
- › Erie County \$16.60
- › Union County \$16.54
- › Cincinnati HMFA \$15.50
- › Ross County \$15.29

Out of Reach 2017 - National Low Income Housing Coalition

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## Recognize when a family's child welfare issues are beyond the scope of emergency shelter

*Safety is paramount!*




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## Examples of Success




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**\*Principles of a successful partnership\***

- ❖ Stop the “dumping” and blaming
- ❖ Take time to reach common understanding
- ❖ Immediately begin working collaboratively
- ❖ Operate from a client-centered approach
- ❖ Acknowledge the challenges
- ❖ Recognize when a family’s barriers are beyond the scope of emergency shelter




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**Questions?**

Thank you!

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