



# Lorain County Children Services

***IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE  
COMMUNITY***

A GUIDE FOR MANDATED REPORTERS

# The Partnership Between Mandated Reporters and Lorain County Children Services



Protecting children who have been abused or neglected is what we do at Lorain County Children Services (LCCS.) **But child protection is something that involves the whole community.**

And it especially involves you – someone who sees children on a regular basis, and can recognize that something isn't right with a particular child. **That is why you are designated as a Mandated Reporter of child abuse or neglect.**

**Our ability to provide social services to a child begins only after we receive a referral from someone like you.** That's why it is so important that we work together, as partners, to help the children of our communities.



CREDIBILITY • INTEGRITY • ACHIEVEMENT

LCCS received its initial Accreditation in 1999 and was reaccredited in 2015. LCCS is currently one of twenty-five children services in Ohio to maintain accreditation.



## In 2017...

Lorain County Children Services received **4,422 referrals from people in our community** who were concerned about a child.

Nearly 2,500 of those calls were screened out or the person calling was provided with Information and Referral.

**1,802 referrals were screened in** as possible child abuse or neglect.

Workers were assigned to these 1,802 situations to see if the allegations were true/child needs our intervention.

20% of these cases were provided with a Traditional Response, and

80% cases were assigned the Alternative Response pathway.



# Types of Cases

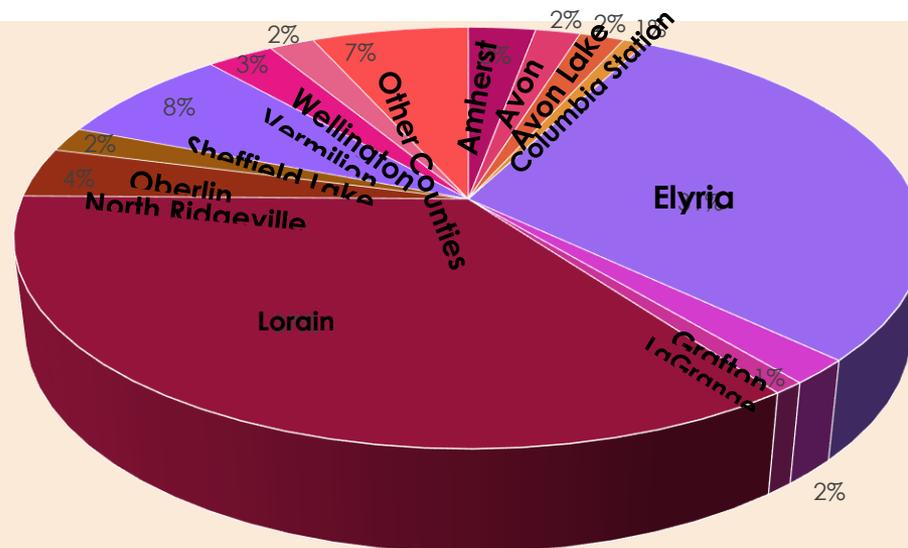
| 2014            |      | 2015            |      | 2016            |      | 2017            |      |
|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|
| Total Received  | 4343 | Total Received  | 4912 | Total Received  | 4535 | Total Received  | 4422 |
| Screened Out    | 1054 | Screened Out    | 2443 | Screened Out    | 2250 | Screened Out    | 2454 |
| I/R             | 890  | I/R             | 136  | I/R             | 230  | I/R             | 284  |
| Dependency      | 20   | Dependency      | 25   | Dependency      | 28   | Dependency      | 13   |
| Screened in CAN | 2156 | Screened in CAN | 2012 | Screened in CAN | 1747 | Screened in CAN | 1802 |
| FINS            | 175  | FINS            | 190  | FINS            | 149  | FINS            | 154  |

Pathway: 80% Alternative response, 20% Traditional Response



## Where do children live who are Alleged Child Victims or Children Subject of Reports

Percentage of Intake Across Lorain County in 2017

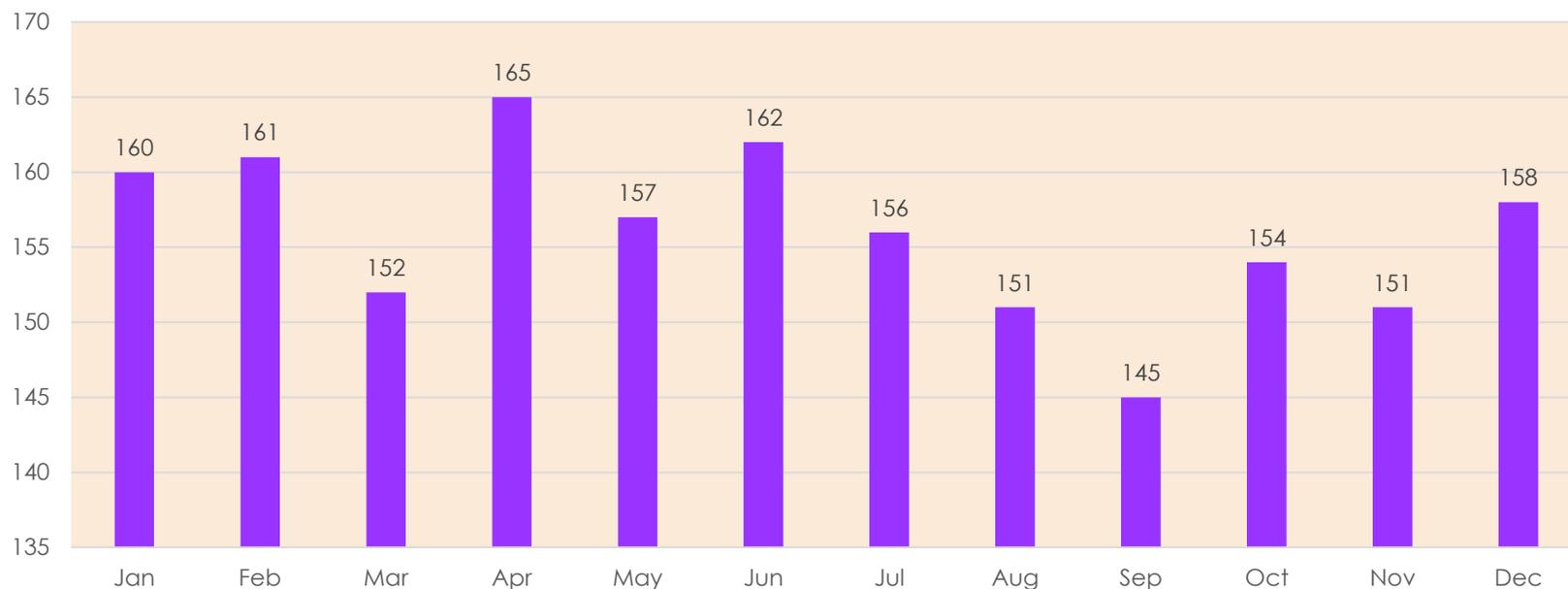


- Amherst
- Grafton
- Sheffield Lake
- Avon
- LaGrange
- South Amherst
- Avon Lake
- Lorain
- Vermilion
- Columbia Station
- North Ridgeville
- Wellington
- Elyria
- Oberlin
- Other Counties



Throughout 2017, many children went to live with Family/Friends while their parents worked on a case plan.

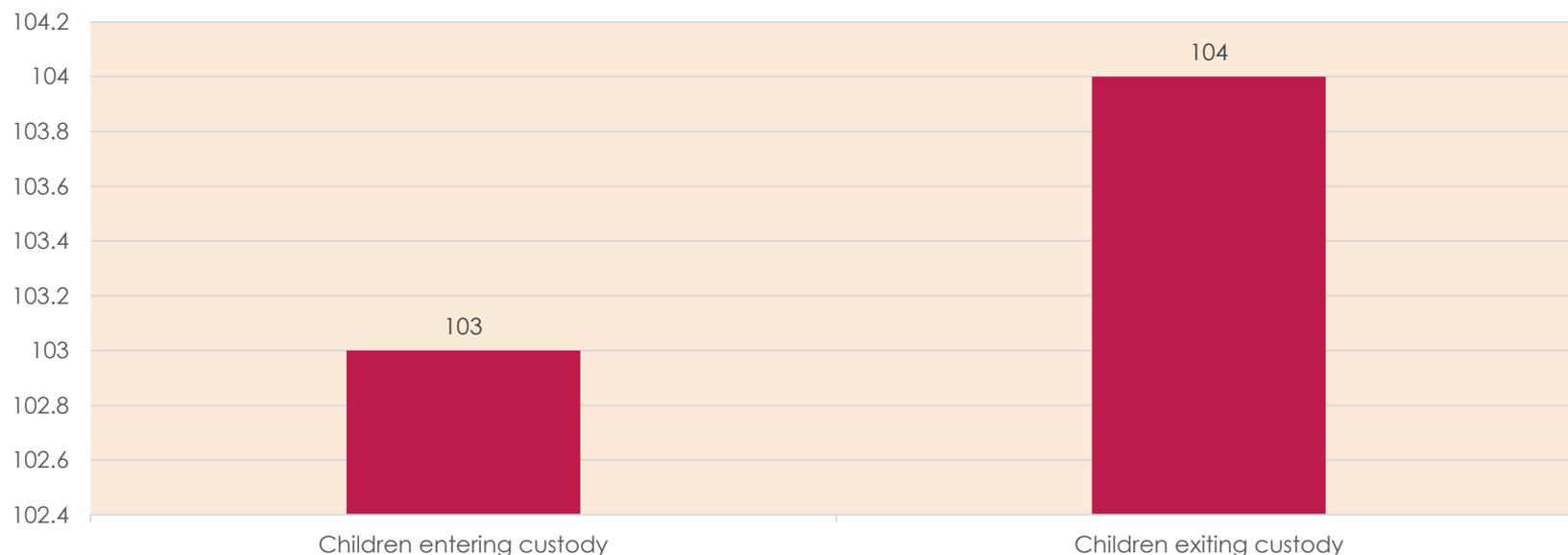
Kinship Care in 2017





On January 1, 2017 LCCS had 104 children in custody. On December 31, 2017 LCCS had 103 children in custody.

Children Entering and Exiting Custody 2017



# How Can I Tell If A Child May Be Abused or Neglected?



Your interaction with so many children, your professional training regarding child development, and your innate sense of a child's well-being, gives you the ability and responsibility to protect Lorain county children from abuse and neglect.

It is an accumulation of everything you know and sense about a child or a situation. **Recognition does not always come about in a concrete way.** It can be an inner voice that tells you that something is just not right.

That's when you should call LCCS.



# What are the Legal Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect?

The full legal definitions of abuse, neglect and dependency are rather lengthy. You can look up the entire text in the Ohio revised code sections referenced below each category. However, they can be summarized as follows:



# Taken from ORC

## Abused Child (taken from ORC 2151.031)

Any child who is the victim of sexual activity, is endangered, or exhibits evidence of any injury or death inflicted other than by accidental means, or at variance with the history given of it, or because of acts or omissions of his parents, guardians, or custodian, suffers physical or mental injury that harms or threatens a child's health or welfare.

## Neglected Child (taken from ORC 2151.03)

Any child who is abandoned by his parents, guardian or custodian, lacks adequate parental care because of the faults of the parents, or whose parents neglect or refuse to provide him with proper or necessary sustenance, education, medical or surgical care, or any other care made necessary by his mental condition.

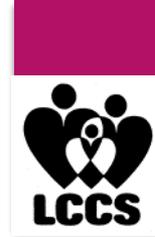
## Dependent Child (taken from ORC 2151.04)

Any child who is homeless, destitute or without adequate parental care through no fault of his parents, guardian or custodian; who lacks proper care or support by reason of the mental or physical condition of his environment, in such as to warrant the State, in the interest of the child, to assume his guardianship; or any child who is residing in a household in which a parent, guardian or custodian or other member of the household has committed an act that was the basis for an accusation that a sibling of the child, or another child who resides in the household is an abused, neglected or dependent child and, because of circumstances surrounding the abuse or neglect of the sibling and other conditions of the household, the child is in danger of being abused or neglected by that parent, guardian, custodian or other member of that household.



Do I Need To Investigate A Suspected Case Before I Report It, To Make Sure It Meets The Legal Definitions?

Your feeling that something just isn't right with a child is sufficient to warrant your call to LCCS. The agency, then, uses the investigative and legal process to manage your referral and possibly open a case.



# How Do I Report Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect?

To report abuse or neglect during regular business hours, call :

**440-329-5340** After hours, on weekends and holidays, please use

**440-406-5121.**

Our mailing address is:

Lorain County

Children Services

226 Middle Avenue

Elyria, OH 44035

Email:

[AllScreeners@Childrenseervices.org](mailto:AllScreeners@Childrenseervices.org)

What If I  
Suspect A  
Case Of Child  
Abuse or  
Neglect, But  
Don't Call  
Anyone With  
My  
Suspensions?



If you do not report your suspicions, it may mean that the child will continue to live in an unsafe environment.

And it may mean that the situation will only get worse before someone else does make that call.

Further, you may be liable for any further harm that comes to the child after you should have called.



Can  
Somebody  
Else Call For  
Me?

No.



## What Happens When I Make A Call About a Suspected Case of Child Abuse or Neglect?

- ▶ When you make a referral to LCCS, your call will be answered by our referral specialist staff.
- ▶ You will be asked some questions regarding your information, your relationship to the child, and for any other information you may know about the child, the family or the circumstances surrounding your referral.



# Differential Response System

## Alternative Response (AR)

- Applied when report DOES NOT allege serious or imminent harm
- No formal finding/substantiation of the allegation
- Facilitates safety-focused partnership with families
- Safety, Risk and Comprehensive Family Assessment completed
- Emphasis on "front-loading" needed services by providing services earlier and without requirement of a finding

## Traditional Response (TR)

- Required for reports of sexual abuse or abuse resulting in serious injury or serious and immediate risk
- Process results in a determination/ finding regarding the allegation
- May involve intervention of the court
- Safety, Risk and Comprehensive Family Assessment completed
- Case Plan developed following completion of the Family Assessment for families with ongoing services needs

**Pathway assignment may change from Alternative Response to Traditional Response if needed in order to assure safety.**



# Over the last few years the use of Alternative Response at LCCS has been going up.

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Pathway: 80% Alternative response, 20% Traditional Response



What happens if I make a referral to LCCS and it turns out I was wrong?

After the facts are gathered and reviewed, our assessment may lead us to conclude that although your referral did indicate a child's safety was being jeopardized, the situation is different than it originally appeared.

Or, our staff may not have been able to find an indication of abuse or neglect.

In this situation, your complaint will be kept in our office records in case additional information comes to our attention at a later date.

It sometimes happens that the agency receives a referral that, when further looked into, has an innocent explanation. In those situations, you, as the person required to report your suspicions, are completely immune from retribution as long as you reported "in good faith."

# Can I Follow Up On The Report? Will I Be Told Of The Outcome?



You can receive some follow-up information regarding your referrals. As a mandated reporter, you will receive an acknowledgement that we investigated your referral, and to learn whether the case is being assigned for on-going services, or closed.

**That letter is generated after we have made those determinations which could take 30-45 days.**

Because we do respect the confidentiality of the people involved, we can't disclose case plans to you, or relate to you discussions with other parties involved in the case.



# Referrals

- ▶ To make a referral
- ▶ 440-329-5340 (typical office hours)
- ▶ **440- 406-5121 (after hours pager/hotline)**
- ▶ Staffing (113 people on staff):
  - ▶ All Direct Services eligible to take screened in reports and either do an assessment or start an investigation
  - ▶ Family Based Care and Independent Living
  - ▶ Administrative departments

Website: [ChildrenServices.org](http://ChildrenServices.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/LorainCountyChildrenServices/](http://www.facebook.com/LorainCountyChildrenServices/)  
[www.facebook.com/LCCSFosterParents/](http://www.facebook.com/LCCSFosterParents/)

# Questions?

