

The Importance of Fathers in the Lives of Foster Care Youth

- Kim Toler, Assistant Deputy Director, Franklin County Children Services
- Carlos Christian, CEO & Founder, The Starts Within Organization
- Susan Brown, Director, Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency

Overview

- Connections with Purpose Initiative
 - ▣ Inspiration
 - ▣ Collaborators
 - ▣ Concept
 - ▣ Purpose
- Franklin County Child Support D.E.U.C.E Program
- The Starts Within Organization



CONNECTIONS WITH PURPOSE



Susan Brown, Director, FCCSEA

Email: susan.brown@jfs.ohio.gov

PH: 614-525-6030

Connections With Purpose

- Initiative to connect foster care youth to their incarcerated fathers
- OCF Pilot Project with Summit County Children Services
 - ▣ Assists Children Services agencies in other counties in identifying and engaging fathers on family case plans and providing support services to fathers.
- FCCS, FCSEA, & Starts Within Collaboration

Connections with Purpose – Concept

- Small pilot program tailored to the needs of foster care youth and their incarcerated fathers
 - ▣ Target an institution with the highest number of fathers with child support cases listing FCCS as caretaker
 - ▣ Partners work together to prepare the fathers and children for the visits to ensure healthy and meaningful time is spent together (not “just a visit”).
 - ▣ Children and fathers spend time on relationship building activities

Connections with Purpose

- Purpose for Foster Care Youth
 - ▣ Attachment to absent father
 - ▣ Build self esteem
 - ▣ Learn communication skills
 - ▣ Increase permanency for the youth by working with incarcerated fathers to gather more family history and try to develop out of foster care placements
 - ▣ Answer questions like “Who will I be?”, “What will I become?”, “What is my family history?”

Connections with Purpose

- Purpose for Fathers
 - Understand the importance of their role in the lives of their child(ren)
 - How to steer their child down a path different from their own
 - Establish the skills and confidence to be effective in assuming in their roles
 - Build the foundation of a relationship in order to make it a long term reality
 - Discuss fears, questions, and misconceptions about child support orders



Franklin County Children Services

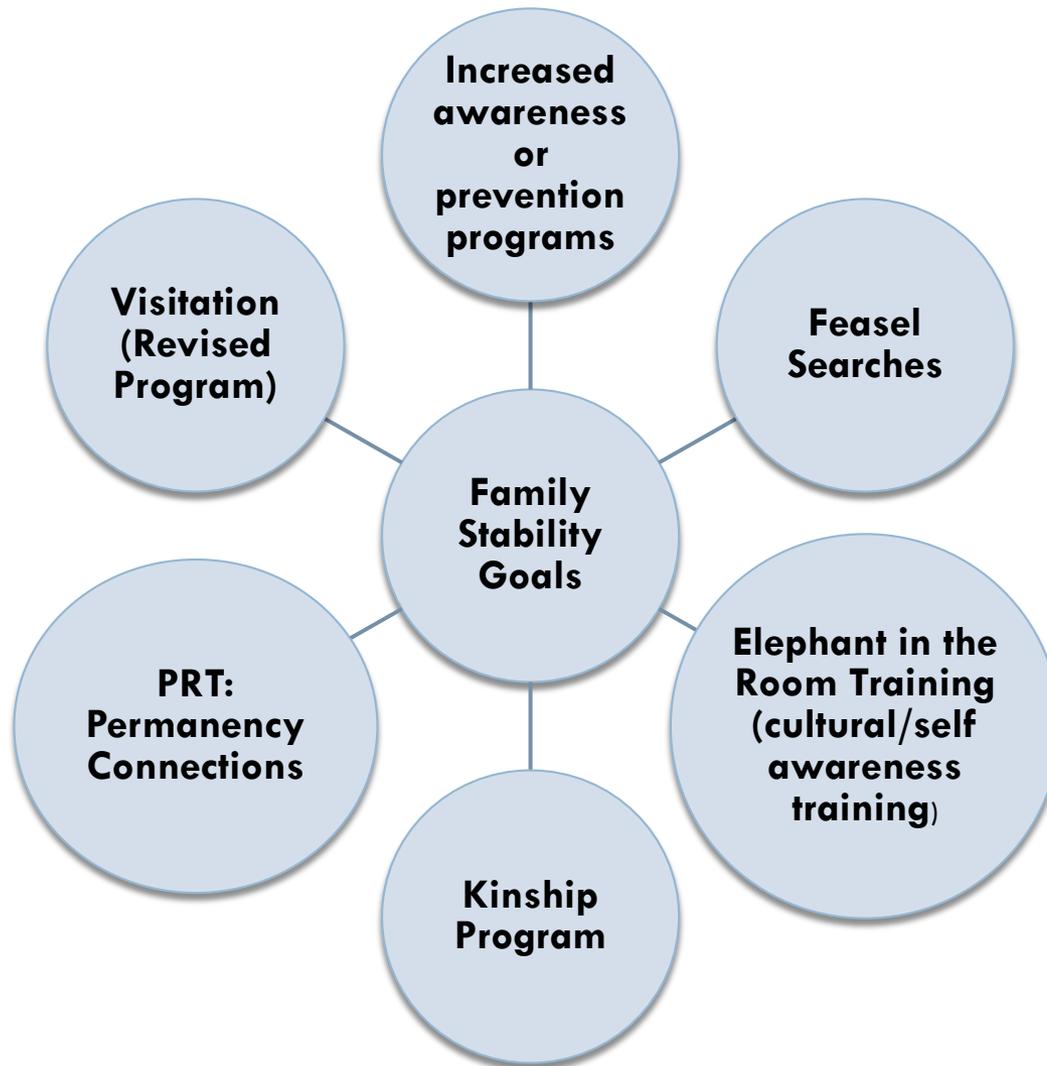


Kim Toler, Assistant Deputy Director

Email: krtoler@fcss.us

PH: 614-341-6033

Family Stability – Current Agency Initiatives



D.E.U.C.E. Program Initiative

Dad's
Empowered by
Utilizing
Community
Education



D.E.U.C.E – Dad's empowered by utilizing community education (Underlying meaning of a second chance.)

- The goals are to:
 - # 1 – Substantially increase the number of fathers actively involved with the agency's case plans.
 - #2 – Improve the culture of fatherhood engagement/empowerment
 - #3 – Stabilize families

Why Do We Need An Initiative?

- Improve agency's engagement/improvement of fathers on case plans/CSFR goals
- Worker bias regarding father involvement (affects participation/case planning)
- Characteristics addressing myths of the fathers who do not live with their children; learning empowerment; learning how to develop positive communication between father, child, mother (or other caregiver)
- Finding culturally competent programs that also encourage family stability in their fatherhood programs.
- Inform staff on stats/research on childhood development in relation to fatherhood involvement.

D.E.U.C.E Program Initiative

- Two providers:
 - The Columbus Urban League
 - Action for Children
 - ▣ As primary linkages (see provider summary of programs)
- Each agency provides staff to work with FCCS staff on Empowerment and Advocacy issues.
- Community staff are onsite (as designated) to work with regions on linkage.
- Community liaisons meet quarterly with designated administrator; and other designee to look at stats; concerns and successes
- Working with community on publishing “Best Practices Successes”

Fatherhood Programs

	Urban League Program Father 2 Father (est. 2007)	Action for Children The Father Factor (est. 2008)
Grant Funding	*	*
	(trained 1,000 to date) 12 week program	8 week program (part of positive parenting model)
Employment training linkage	*	*
Resources for MH/Addiction Services	*	*
Adolescent Parents	*	
Mentor/partner with faith community	*	
Housing	*	No
Link with drug and alcohol in community	*	*



THE STARTS WITHIN ORGANIZATION



Carlos Christian, CEO & Founder

Email: Startswithin@yahoo.com

PH: 614-806-9460

About



- The mission of the Starts Within Organization is to decrease the recidivism rate by targeting incarcerated individuals and providing education and mentoring making the transition from offender to ex-offender a success.
- Provided approximately 400 fathers with Father Factor programming in the last three (3) years.
- Parenting, CBT, Financial Literacy, Employment Readiness, and Small Business/Entrepreneurship programs

