

FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Shy's Journey: How Early Intervention Transformed Our Little Miracle

by Shannon Grime

Although we had heard of Early Intervention Services before, it was not until we brought our sweet little Shy home from the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) that we began to fully understand what these services truly mean for a child with developmental delays. Shy was born with a rare condition called Fetal Warfarin Syndrome, which led to multiple complex medical issues including but not limited to hydrocephalus, feeding difficulties, cerebral palsy, and global developmental delays. She spent the first 2.5 months of her life in the NICU and when we brought her home, she was frail, vulnerable, and in need of substantial, ongoing care. We immediately got her plugged into Early Intervention Services at the recommendations of her doctors. Early Intervention soon came to our home, completed a thorough evaluation of Shy, listened to our concerns, and put together a comprehensive team of service coordination and therapist including PT, OT, ST, and TVI (teacher for the visually impaired). Shy's team helped us establish challenging, but realistic goals for her to work towards and within no time we began to see progress.

Shy's Service Coordinator, Debbie Rupp, played a huge role in helping us develop goals and plans for Shy with routine follow up for evaluation. If goals have been met, we celebrate and start working towards the next appropriate targets. If Shy has not met an objective, we discuss how to tailor the next plan to a more achievable goal. Debbie also keeps in regular contact with us to identify any issues or needs that may arise for Shy and if so quickly works to find solutions. She also worked closely with Shy's caseworker prior to her adoption to ensure that all of Shy's care was appropriately approved by the county.

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Shy's physical therapist, Teresa Lutz, has been instrumental in helping Shy reach numerous physical achievements including self-regulation of her body as a newborn, head and neck control, rolling over, sitting up independently, and most recently crawling. Shy's cerebral palsy has primarily affected her legs and even though we are not sure what the future holds regarding her ability to stand, walk, and run; Teresa continues to push Shy towards these ultimate future goals. She knows how to motivate her and is always coming up with creative ways to adapt everyday tasks and devices to be more functional to her current abilities. One of our favorite things to witness is when Teresa arrives to our home for her scheduled visits, Shy squeals with excitement as she hollers "Good Morning, Teresa".

Shy has also worked closely with her Speech and Language Pathologist, Rhonda Gingerich. Not only does Shy have significant feeding difficulties, her language and speech development were also delayed. Rhonda provided many exercises, tools, and fun ways to help Shy grow in these areas. Shy now talks non-stop and loves to be the loudest one in the room.

At an early age, Shy was also identified to have some visual impairments and Early Intervention quickly added a TVI (teacher of the visually impaired) to her team. We have had the pleasure of working with both Lori Board and Jenni Remeis, who have helped to adapt toys and activities for Shy's visual field, helped us find appropriate fitting eyeglasses, and provided us with numerous other valuable resources.

Shy is now 2.5 years old. Most people who know her would say she is not the same little girl we brought home from the NICU. She is thriving, strong, gaining independence, and full of life and spunk. Early Intervention has played and continues to play an integral role in helping Shy not only meet many of her goals, but even exceed expectations. Her entire team continues to be some of her biggest cheerleaders, and they are always celebrating her achievements with us.

EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES



Starting July 1, 2024, Ohio's Part C Early Intervention system transitioned to the Department of Children and Youth (DCY), shifting from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. The DCY coordinates services such as adoption, childcare, early intervention, and preschool special education. The Early Intervention program was designed for infants and toddlers under three years old with specific medical or developmental needs. It offers evaluations, parent coaching, and community playgroups through a team of specialists, including therapists and developmental professionals. Pictured: Kathy, our Occupational Therapist, and a child engaged in a fun finger painting activity during our monthly community playgroup.

69

Children are
Currently Being
Served

126

Children
Received
Services

137

Referrals
Received

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

The Fulton County Board of Developmental Disabilities is pleased to present to you and to the community our 2024 Annual Report. The Annual Report is an opportunity to highlight our programs, strengths and accomplishments for the year. We are fortunate to live in a community that cares deeply about individuals with developmental disabilities.

Fulton County Board of Developmental Disabilities supports individuals with developmental disabilities throughout a lifetime. Our Early Intervention (EI) team continues to embrace the opportunity to serve the growing number of children who come our way. As providers of Early Intervention services, Fulton County Board of Developmental Disabilities has built an exceptional team who are experts in family-centered practices and devoted to providing excellent services. In addition, our Service and Support Administration (SSA) department has also seen a tremendous amount of growth. Our SSA team members are given the opportunity to showcase their talents on a daily basis. They are passionate and dedicated to the individuals we serve and continue to build on the core values of integrity, collaboration, community, vision and fiscal responsibility.

Other highlights for the year include completing a successful accreditation review in October, using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funding to make the community more accessible by installing universal changing tables in the community and continuing to grow in the use of technology.

It continues to be a privilege to serve people with disabilities and their families here in Fulton County. Thank you for taking the time to review our 2024 annual report. We are very proud to share it with you!

Robin Shepherd

ROBIN SHEPHERD
rshepherd@fultoncountyoh.com



Superintendent Shepherd and Nathan at the 2024 Toledo Buddy Walk.

2024 Board Members



Mike Oricko
President



Scott Anderson
Vice President



Lynlee Reinking
Secretary



Adam Cook



Sam Denn



Larry Restivo



Britney Ward

SERVICE & SUPPORT ADMINISTRATION

Service and Support Administrators (SSAs) provide case management for individuals in need of service coordination for those age 3 and older. SSAs ensure that all care planning is person centered and focused on the needs and wants of the individual. SSAs assist individuals with a wide variety of needs ranging from transportation to and from work, assistance at home, supports at the individual's place of employment, and supporting children and their families as they transition from school to graduation.

Our SSA department is made up of five adult SSAs, three youth SSAs, a Service and Support Coordinator, a Program Support Specialist, and the Community and Medicaid Services Director.

We are always working towards better assisting those in our community and some of the things that we are working on are increasing our knowledge of technology. This includes starting a program where people can come in and trial tech items that might make their lives a little easier. We are also working on increasing resources for those getting ready to transition from middle school to high school to graduation. This can be a time full of many questions, but we are working to build more resources to help our youth and their families through this process.



In the image above, you can see Stephanie (SSA), Brittney, Director Hausch, Becky, and Kelly (SSA) during last year's Advocacy Day held in Columbus.

SSA SERVICES INFORMATION FOR 2024

127

Individuals Receive
Medicaid Waiver
Services

47

Individuals Work in
the Community

68

Referral for
Children Over Age 6
& Adults

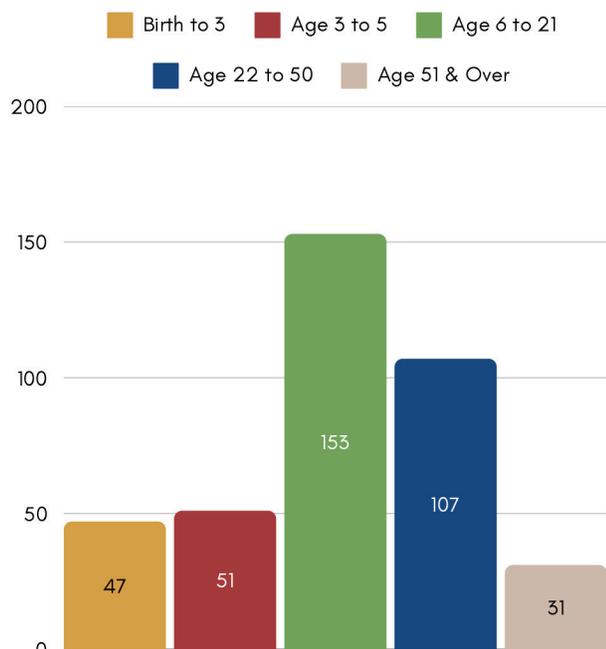
106

Individuals
Received
Residential
Services

19

Referrals Were
Eligible for Services

Individuals Served in 2024



Lucas loves playing basketball for the Special Olympics, and here he is alongside the NHA mascot.

Empowering Voices: Highlights from Come Together



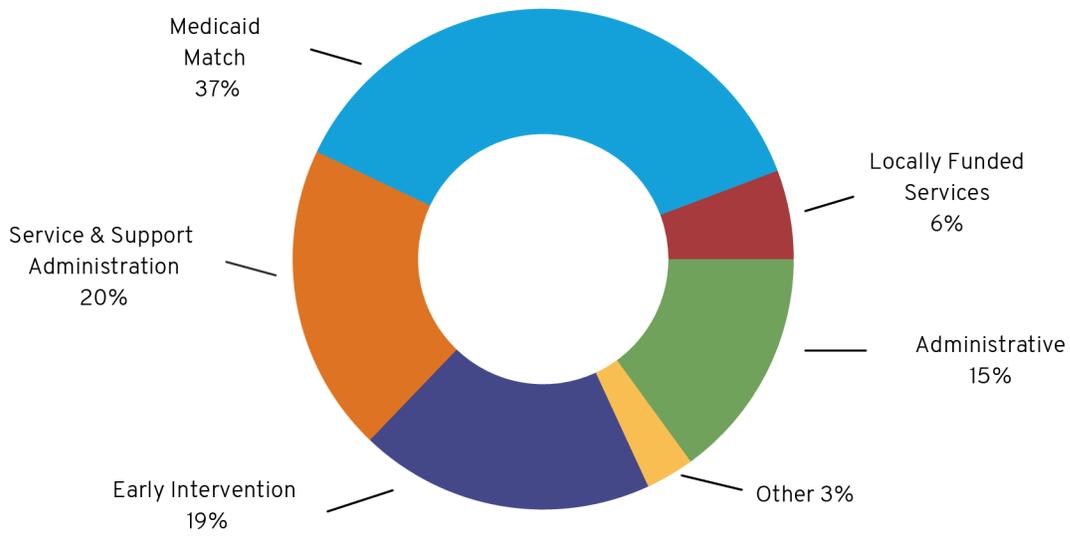
The Board encourages individuals to expand their understanding of making informed decisions and expressing their opinions on what matters most to them. Our self-advocacy group, Come Together, was established several years ago and meets regularly throughout the year, fulfilling this mission. Over the past year, the group was lively and engaged, organizing a range of exciting activities, such as an indoor snowball fight combined with tech learning, a multi-county gathering complete with dancing and karaoke, and a visit to a coffee shop for brewing education. In the spring, we participated in community gardening, while summer brought a delightful Family Feud game with Williams County. September featured a safety session led by a police speaker. We concluded the year with festive cookie decorating, promoting personal growth, skill development, and the creation of lasting friendships for future endeavors.

Pictured: Nick alongside Officer Tera Rogers from the Archbold Police.

2024 BY THE NUMBERS

Operating Expenditures and Revenue

2024 Expenditures -- \$4,763,395



2024 Revenue -- \$4,004,309



The Board determined that current reserve levels exceeded necessary operating requirements, allowing us to temporarily reduce tax collections without compromising essential services to individuals with developmental disabilities. This decision reflects our ongoing commitment to fiscal responsibility and community stewardship.



The image shows McDonald's community workers alongside their supervisor and HR manager at the Employment Recognition dinner held in October.

EMERGENCIES

FCBDD provides 24-hour on-call services for the purpose of addressing crisis or emergency situations. The individual's Service & Support Administrator (SSA) will address any crisis or emergency situation that occurs during normal work hours. However, when a crisis or an emergency situation occurs after 4:00 p.m. on weekdays or on weekends, "Ohio Guidestone" should be contacted at 1-800-468-4357. Assistance is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Ohio Guidestone will contact the Board's on-call staff.

*Note: An emergency is defined as any situation that may threaten the life or well-being of an individual with DD. Examples of emergencies include: the death of an individual or their primary caregiver; serious injury or illness (that requires hospitalization) to an individual or their primary caregiver; sudden homelessness of an individual with DD; the involvement of an individual with DD with law enforcement officials, or alleged abuse or neglect.

RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DD

FCBDD is required to annually provide each of the individuals it serves with a copy of the Rights of Persons with DD. This is typically done at each individual's annual planning meeting. A copy of the Bill of Rights is available to any interested person upon request.

To request a copy of the Rights, contact us by calling 419-337-4575 or by visiting us at 1210 N. Ottokee St. in Wauseon.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS

All individuals who receive or apply for services from the FCBDD are entitled to have their complaints heard and responded to in accordance with the FCBDD Administrative Resolution of Complaints policy. This policy is available to anyone interested, upon request.

To request a copy of this policy, or any other Board policy or procedure, contact us by calling 419-337-4575 or by visiting us at 1210 N. Ottokee St. in Wauseon.

ABUSE OR NEGLECT MAJOR UNUSUAL INCIDENT

FCBDD is required by state law to investigate any instance of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect, misappropriation of personal funds, and other incidents defined by the Ohio Department of DD as Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs). MUI investigations are conducted by contracted Investigative Agents. Children Services and/or law enforcement officials are involved as appropriate. All FCBDD staff and board members are required to report any observed, reported, or suspected instances of abuse or neglect, or violation of human rights.

Ohio
DODD

Ohio Department of Developmental
Disabilities
www.dodd.ohio.gov
800-617-6733



Report Abuse or Neglect
1-866-313-6733



Report Fraud related to DD Services
614-466-6670
reportfraud@dodd.ohio.gov



Fulton County Board of Developmental Disabilities
1210 N. Ottokee St.
Wauseon, OH 43567

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Special Olympics

In 2024, more than 130 adult and school-age athletes, along with 24 young athletes, participated in a diverse range of 11 sports, including basketball, volleyball, softball, flag football, bocce, pep squad, soccer, swimming, bowling, golf, and track and field. Notable events throughout the year featured the State Summer Games at OSU, the Heroes vs. Heroes basketball tournament, Unified Softball, and skills clinics with local high school teams.

