



Increase Transparency

By Moving Functions of the
Ombudsman's Office Outside of the
Cabinet for Health and Family Services

The child welfare system, and specifically the process of substantiation of abuse and neglect, is complex, involves multiple departments, and can be subjective. When people feel the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) did not take appropriate steps or make the right decisions in child abuse cases, they may contact the Ombudsman's office to file a complaint. However, the Ombudsman's office that takes complaints for child abuse cases is currently housed within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, meaning that people are filing a complaint within the same Cabinet that made the decision in a case.

Several states locate their Ombudsman's office for the child welfare system in an independent location in order to increase transparency and accountability of the child welfare system. This creates an independent point of contact and reduces potential conflicts of interest between DCBS and the Ombudsman's office.

As Kentucky continues to have high numbers of child abuse reports and investigations, moving the Ombudsman's office will help Kentucky better serve kids and families.

To increase transparency and better serve families, move the following Ombudsman functions to a place outside of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services:

- Issuing reports about the number and types of complaints that DCBS receives
- Recommending corrective action or administrative hearings based on complaints
- Reviewing requests to appeal child abuse and/or neglect substantiations
- Investigating complaints about DCBS

Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Solution:

Increase transparency by moving functions of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services' Ombudsman related to appeals and cases to an office outside of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.



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