



## **Better Serve Kids and Families** By Moving Some Functions of the Ombudsman's Office Outside of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Kentucky kids rely on the systems within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) to keep them safe and healthy. Those systems that serve children in the Cabinet for Health and Family Services are complex, involve multiple departments, and can vary based on the needs of a family. When families feel that these systems did not best serve the children who rely on them, they may contact the Ombudsman's Office to file a complaint or appeal. However, the Ombudsman's Office that receives the complaints and appeals 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.

To ensure children are protected and cared for, increase transparency and accountability, and reduce potential conflicts of interest, several states locate their Ombudsman's office for children's services in an independent location. These measures would keep kids at the center of the Ombudsman's Office's decisions.

### **To better serve kids and families, move some functions of the Ombudsman outside of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, including:**

- Issuing reports about the number and types of complaints that the Department for Community Based Services (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
- Ensuring access to critical services, such as Medicaid, for families and children with disabilities

### **Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Solution:**

Better serve kids and families by moving some functions of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services' Ombudsman's office to an office outside of CHFS.



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