

Layton Center working to save, expand parenting program

By **CLEON RICKEL**
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The Elizabeth Layton Center for Health and Wellness and Community Corrections received the county commission's blessing Wednesday to pursue a grant that will keep a better parenting program alive.

And with the grant, the program will be expanded and be used as one of the alternative programs suggested by a jail consultant to keep juveniles out of the county's crowded juvenile detention center, Diane Drake, executive director of the Layton Center, formerly Franklin County Mental Health Center, said.

The two agencies will seek a \$160,000 federal Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant for the Parenting with Love and Limits program, Keith Clark, Community Corrections director, said.

The Layton Center will provide a match of 25 per-

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cent from Medicaid funds, he said. The center's share increases each year, he said.

The program was financed with a special legislative appropriation three years ago but expires June 30, he said.

No money was appropriated for the program this year and to keep it going, Clark said he and Drake had to find a new source of funding.

The program works with troubled families, he said.

"It improves the lives of the families and their homes and the way the families interact," Clark said. "It reduces the recidivism rate of kids in the juvenile justice system, it reduces the number of kids in out-placement and it reduces the number of beds in Juvenile Detention by keeping more kids out."

Presently, juveniles and

their families are referred to the Layton Center for the program after they've been embroiled in the juvenile justice system at least twice, he said.

However, with the new grant, juvenile justice officials won't have to wait until they see a youth twice; they can act immediately as a preventive measure, he said. Other social agencies will also be able to refer juveniles to the program, he said.

"It will give us more flexibility," Clark said.

The program originally was for Franklin, Anderson, Coffey and Osage counties, which are in the 4th Judicial District, plus Miami County, which has a contract with the Layton Center to provide that county's mental health services.

With the new grant, the program will be extended to the other counties in Miami County's 6th Judicial District and Linn and Bourbon counties, Clark said.