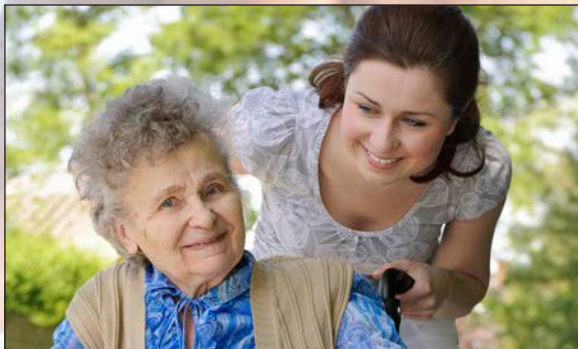




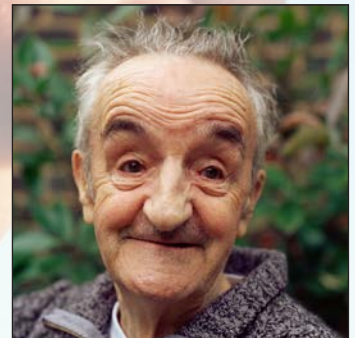
Texas

Department of Family and Protective Services



Our mission

is to protect children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation by involving clients, families, and communities.



Annual Report & Data Book 2013

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Texas Department of Family and Protective Services 2013 Annual Report

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) serves the state's children, youth, families, and people who are elderly or have disabilities. The 2013 Annual Report and Data Book is an overview of the department's programs, services, performance, and accomplishments, as well as a comprehensive statistical explanation of DFPS services. This report covers the period of September 1, 2012 through August 31, 2013. You can find this report and other information on the department's website at dfps.state.tx.us.

Mission

The mission of DFPS is to protect children and people who are elderly or who have disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation by involving clients, families, and communities.

Vision

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services:

- Is recognized for innovative, effective services.
- Builds strong, effective partnerships with clients, communities, providers, and state leaders.
- Provides effective leadership that is accountable for its actions and communicates openly with clients and stakeholders.
- Supports staff members who are highly motivated, diverse, ethical, well trained, and professional.

Values

- We protect the unprotected.
- We involve clients, families, and communities in decision making.
- We provide quality services.
- We are innovative and strive for excellence.
- We are ethical and accountable.
- We promote diversity.
- We value our staff.

DFPS Staffing and Structure

The DFPS commissioner is appointed by the executive commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and directs 10,672 employees in 287 local offices located in 11 regions and a state headquarters in Austin. DFPS has four major programs: Child Protective Services (CPS), Adult Protective Services (APS), Child Care Licensing (CCL), and Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI), which is administered by CPS.

A nine-member council is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Texas Senate. The council makes recommendations on the department's rules and policies and provides a venue for public input.



Texas Abuse Hotline

State law requires anyone who believes a child is being abused or neglected, or an adult who is 65 years or older or who has a disability is being abused, neglected, or exploited, to report it.

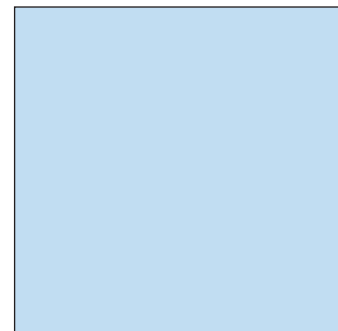
DFPS' Statewide Intake program takes reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation from across the state through its Texas Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400) and through a secure website (TxAbuseHotline.org). The Texas Abuse Hotline operates 24-hours a day, every day of the year.

Statewide Intake also accepts reports of abuse and neglect in facilities operated by the state or community providers that serve adults and children with mental illness or intellectual disabilities. These facilities and providers are managed by the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). Contact 1-800-647-7418 to report abuse, neglect, or exploitation in these facilities and programs.

The Statewide Intake program, assigns a priority to all reports that meet the statutory definitions of abuse, neglect, or exploitation that is based on the safety of the alleged victim. It then forwards these reports to the appropriate program to investigate and notifies law enforcement agencies in cases involving children.

Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline

The toll-free Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline offers crisis intervention, telephone counseling, and referrals to troubled youth and families. Volunteers answer the phones and interact with callers facing a variety of problems including family conflict, delinquency, truancy, and abuse and neglect issues. The hotline phone number is 1-800-989-6884, and is available to youths, their families, school employees, youth care workers, law enforcement agencies, and anyone in need of community services. Learn more by visiting Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline website at TexasYouth.org.



Emergency Resource Rooms

In emergency resource rooms, caseworkers can get emergency supplies or special items like diapers, cleaning supplies, clothes, and small furniture to meet the needs of their clients. CPS resource rooms are called Rainbow Rooms and APS resource rooms are called Silver Star Rooms or Bridge Rooms. 216 emergency resource rooms served 113,105 DFPS clients in FY 2013.

DFPS Volunteers

DFPS caseworkers rely on community action and awareness to assist families struggling with abuse, neglect, and exploitation. In FY 2013, over 4,500 DFPS volunteers and volunteer groups worked along-side DFPS employees to provide awareness, prevention and intervention services

Trained DFPS volunteers:

- Deliver prevention and intervention services.
- Promote policies and programs that build healthy families.
- Expand a network of community resources that support and nurture DFPS clients.
- Make unique contributions to those Texans least able to protect themselves.



Office of Consumer Affairs

The Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) handles complaints and legislative

inquiries about DFPS programs. The purpose of OCA is to address the concerns of DFPS clients, their families, other stakeholders, and the public in a fair and unbiased manner. OCA also documents and shares the results of their reviews with DFPS state and regional administrators to help improve the quality of services. Individuals may contact the OCA by calling a toll number (1-800-720-7777), through the DFPS website, or by email at OCA@DFPS.state.tx.us.

OCA handled 4,590 complaints, 14,002 general inquiries, and 717 legislative inquiries in FY 2013. OCA validated 8.7 percent of complaints received.

Adult Protective Services

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Adult Protective Services (APS) are to:

- Investigate reports of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of adults in the community who are 65 or older or who have disabilities, and to provide or arrange for protective services as needed.
- Investigate reports of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of individuals living in state-operated facilities as well as adults and children with mental illness or intellectual disabilities who are served in state-contracted community settings.

2013 Accomplishments and Initiatives

Regional Reviews

APS conducts regional reviews to ensure quality service is being provided to the program's clients at the local and regional level. In FY 2013, APS conducted reviews in Northwest Texas (Regions 2/9) and Central Texas (Region 7) to assess program performance, learn about best practices, and more fully understand the unique challenges facing frontline case-workers. APS uses this information to improve APS policy and casework practice. APS will review other areas throughout the state in coming years.

Improving Facility Investigations

APS continued its effort in FY 2013 to improve the timeliness and efficiency of facility investigations. The focus was on consistency in decision-making. APS implemented new processes to better coordinate and communicate with its facility-investigation units statewide. These changes included a new program improvement committee for facility investigations, improving the quality of feedback from state office after case reviews, developing new quality assurance standards, and holding quarterly meeting for supervisors.

Improving In-Home Investigations and Services

APS implemented changes in rules and policies in FY 2013 to improve the services of its In-Home program,

which investigates allegations of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of vulnerable adults in the community. When maltreatment is confirmed, the program provides and arranges for services to stop the abuse, neglect or financial exploitation (ANE).

The Texas Legislature (Senate Bill 221, 82nd R.S.) gave APS the authority to define abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation in rule, replacing definitions in law. The new rules focus investigations and limited resources on the alleged victims APS is most able to help. They also hold paid caretakers to a higher standard of duty than unpaid caretakers.

New guidelines also strengthen the screening of ANE reports by Statewide Intake and clarified the types of adults with disabilities that qualify for APS services. As expected, the number of APS investigations dropped. APS closely monitored this decline to guard against unintended consequences.

APS' other major focus for improving the In-Home program was developing new processes and assessment tools, known collectively as SHIELD. An APS group that included field staff worked with national experts to design the new processes and create tools to assess the safety, risk of recidivism, strengths, and needs of clients. APS used a pilot to gain valuable feedback on the new tools and expects to put them into practice in FY 2015.

Supervisor Training

APS offered training to all management staff in the summer of 2013 to help them become better leaders. Individual sessions for Facility and In-Home program supervisors focused on issues specific to each program.

Public Awareness

APS continued its public awareness campaign titled "It's Everyone's Business" in FY 2013. The campaign targets the general public, law enforcement, judicial partners, and other partner organizations that provide services to vulnerable adults through news stories, local conferences, and community awareness events.

The goals of the campaign include:

- Raising awareness about the problems of adult abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.

- Enlisting community collaboration and support.
- Increasing awareness of APS programs and resources.

During October 2012, the campaign focused on financial exploitation with the theme, "If it's not your money, it's a crime." Regions worked with community partners such as law enforcement agencies, district attorneys, and banking institutions to provide education and awareness about financial exploitation of the people who are elderly or have disabilities. To learn more about APS public awareness activities and download information on elder abuse and financial exploitation, visit EveryonesBusiness.org.

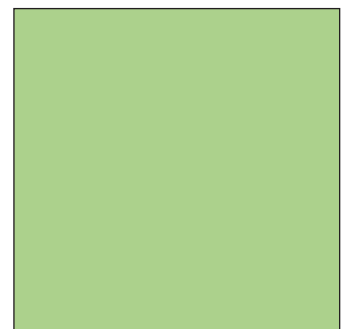
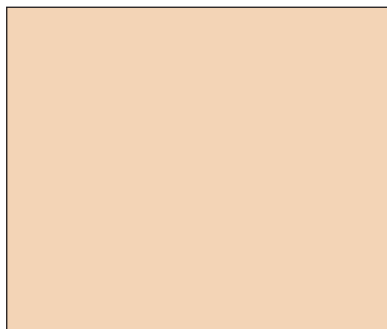
May is Older Americans and Elder Abuse Prevention Month. On May 6, 2013, Senator Jose Rodriguez from El Paso welcomed APS Assistant Commissioner Beth Engelking and two members of Texas Partners for APS, Gabriella Reed and Michael Melson, to the Senate floor of the Capitol to proclaim May as Elder Abuse Prevention Month in Texas. In May, APS partnered with community agencies to promote education and awareness of elder abuse. Regional conferences, local media campaigns, and state and county proclamations highlighted the importance of protecting vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.

Texas Partners for Adult Protective Services

Texas Partners for Adult Protective Services is a statewide non-profit organization that is affiliated with APS. It helps improve the lives of APS clients by developing resources and providing assistance to local boards that support APS. Texas Partners for APS is made up of volunteers who are nominated by local non-profit boards. Currently, APS collaborates with twenty-four non-profit boards throughout the state.

Texas non-profit boards:

- Sponsor community events to raise funds to purchase items for APS clients.
- Assist APS staff with educating the public and other service providers about elder abuse issues.

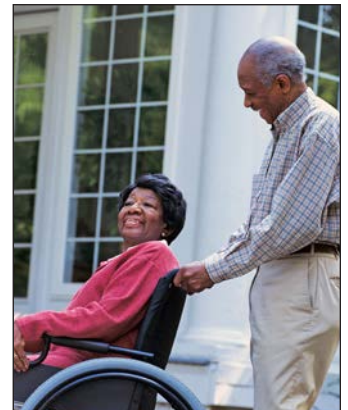


- Provide expertise as speakers for community events and training.
- Sponsor APS staff with recognition and appreciation events.
- Stock and maintain emergency resource rooms in APS offices, giving APS caseworkers easy access to basic necessities for clients.

APS Conference

The annual APS conference is a major national training event that offers continuing education credits to social workers. APS held the 29th annual APS conference in San Antonio during November 2012. The conference drew over 530 attendees from 16 states.

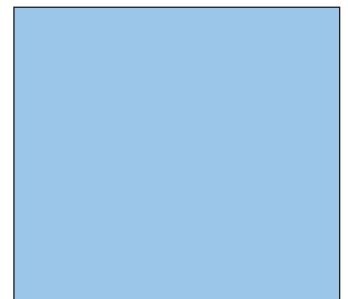
The conference offered two general sessions and 45 workshops. Workshops included topics such as identifying and assessing injuries in homes versus institutional settings, working with law enforcement, and untangling dementia. Every year, the conference gives staff the chance to network and to learn from and with others who serve, treat, and represent victims of abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation.



APS Programs

Two program areas serve APS clients: In-Home Investigations and Services, and Facility Investigations.

As the population of adults who are 65 and older or who have a disability continues to grow, so does the need for protective services. The workload for the In-Home Investigations and Services program had been at record high levels the past few years,



but declined in FY 2013 due to new rules and policy. Many of APS' clients lived alone and depended on others for care. In FY 2013, the workload for the Facility Investigations program remained at the record high levels reached in 2011 and 2012.

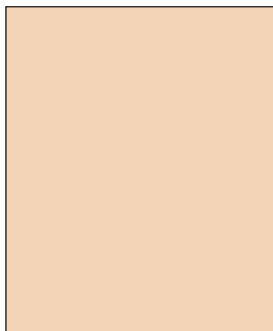
For more information on Texas population demographics, see: DFPS Data Book, pages 9, 10, 123-128.

In-Home Investigations and Services

The largest APS program is In-Home Investigations and Services. The In-Home program investigates allegations of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of adults who are elderly or have disabilities and live in their own homes or in unlicensed room-and-board homes.

This program also investigates allegations of financial exploitation of adults living in nursing homes who may be financially exploited by someone outside the facility. State law requires anyone who believes that an adult who is elderly or has a disability is being abused, neglected, or financially exploited to report it. DFPS takes these reports at 1-800-252-5400 or online at TxAbuseHotline.org.

APS begins an investigation by contacting someone who has reliable and current information about the alleged victim within 24 hours of receiving a report. APS can make the initial contact in person or by phone. If APS confirms the allegation, it may provide or arrange for emergency services to alleviate abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation. These services may include short-term shelter, food, medication, health services, financial assistance for rent and utilities, transportation, and minor home repair.



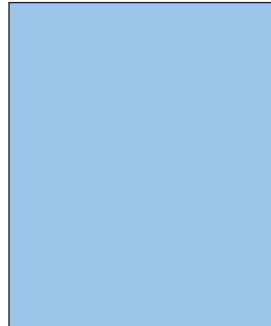
APS works in partnership with other social service agencies to provide resources to vulnerable adults. APS also works closely with the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) on cases that may require guardianship services. APS investigators or

DFPS intake caseworkers may notify law enforcement at any point during an investigation if they suspect the allegations constitute a crime.

For more information, see: DFPS Data Book, pages 7-20, 123-128.

Facility Investigations

APS is responsible for investigating abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of people living in state-operated



facilities and those receiving services in state-contracted community settings that serve adults and children with mental illness or intellectual disabilities. Investigations are conducted in:

- State-supported living centers, state hospitals, and the Rio Grande State Center.
- Community centers.
- Privately operated intermediate-care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities.
- Home and community-based waiver programs.

APS starts an investigation after DFPS' Texas Abuse Hotline receives an allegation. DFPS notifies the facility or provider agency within one hour and notifies law enforcement and the Health and Human Services Commission Office of Inspector General (OIG) within one hour if necessary. APS completes the investigation, makes a finding for each allegation, and sends a report to the provider as well as law enforcement and OIG if necessary. The provider is responsible for taking appropriate steps to protect their clients. APS also determines if the perpetrator meets the criteria for being added to the Employee Misconduct Registry. This registry bars people from certain jobs that involve working with people with disabilities (this also applies to certain In-Home cases). DFPS will send the name of the confirmed perpetrator to the registry after providing due process.

For more information, see: DFPS Data Book, pages 21-25, 129-131.

Going the Distance to Protect the Elderly

Twyla Young, APS caseworker who coordinated services for APS client, right, Otis Plaxton

Eighty-two year old Otis Plaxton was a kind man, who served his country, saved for retirement, and earned relaxing years as a senior citizen. However, in a matter of months, his life changed dramatically. A victim of financial fraud, he found himself being evicted from his assisted-living facility for non-payment. At the time, the only person he had to rely on was his daughter who lived in Florida.

That's when APS In-Home Caseworker Twyla Young of Abilene entered the scene. At the beginning of their year-long journey together, Young committed herself to making sure Plaxton got the help he needed and received a high standard of care.

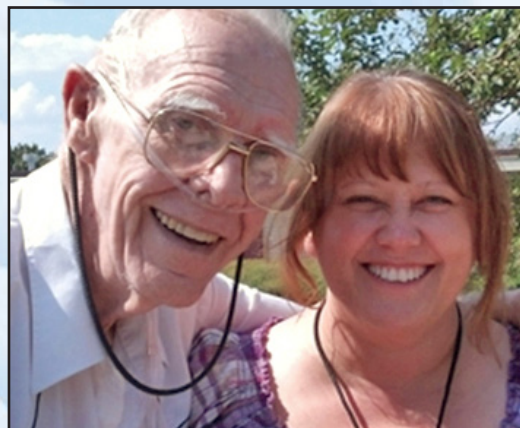
Young soon discovered that this wonderful man didn't know where to start. He owed the facility thousands of dollars and had no long-term insurance to cover his stay. After several visits, she discovered that his monthly income was very small and he didn't qualify for veteran benefits. She knew that he needed to move due to his financial circumstances and did all she could to make the process as smooth and gentle as possible.

Mr. Plaxton also showed signs of short-term memory loss, which put his safety at even higher risk. So Young promptly sought the support of Mr. Plaxton's daughter so that he could get the care he needed.

Young began tackling both the issues of Plaxton's medical care and finances. She escorted him to his banks to get a better understanding of his finances and also educated

him on Medicaid and assisted him with the application. She took him to visit three different housing options and helped him with the housing authority application as well.

When her client needed medical attention, she accompanied him to a doctor's appointment and advocated for a complete health assessment. She also took him to an appointment with a specialist. Ultimately his diagnosis qualified him for nursing home placement



but none of the eleven nursing homes she contacted would accept him. Young enlisted the help of a health insurance provider and an attorney and finally found a nursing facility where Mr. Plaxton could get the care he needed.

But, that's not the end of the story. Young took it upon herself to protect her client's belongings. She contracted with a cleaning company, a moving company, and a local antique dealer to help allow Mr. Plaxton to decide what to do with his belongings. While he was sad to have to let go of what little he had left, he decided to box everything

up, and he was comforted by Young that everything would be okay.

After such a long journey, Young had finally ensured Mr. Plaxton's safety and care. However, as she was wrapping up the case, she received a call from Mr. Plaxton. He wanted Young at his side for a meeting with his doctors, nurses, and daughter. Because he was losing weight at a disturbing speed, had long-term breathing problems, and dementia, the team of care

providers decided it was time for Mr. Plaxton to enter hospice. With tears in her eyes, Young knew she had done her job, and now he was in good hands.

Mr. Plaxton's daughter was so grateful for everything Young had done for her father. After the meeting she contacted APS to let them know about her outstanding care and work. "She is an amazingly compassionate person with a gift for working with the elderly as well as family members. My father and I are truly blessed that she was assigned to him."

Child Care Licensing

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Child Care Licensing (CCL) are to:

- Regulate all childcare operations and child-placing agencies to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children in care.
- Permit and monitor operations and agencies for compliance with state licensing standards, rules and laws.
- Investigate complaints alleging violations of minimum standards and reports of abuse or neglect in daycare and residential childcare operations.
- Inform parents and the public about child care, including how specific daycare and residential childcare operations are complying with minimum standards of care.
- Give child-care providers technical assistance on meeting licensing standards, rules, and laws.

2013 Accomplishments and Initiatives

Improving Texas Child Care

Crib Safety

Child Care Licensing changed the minimum standards in FY 2013 to reflect the crib safety requirements adopted by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). All cribs sold in the U.S. must meet five federal requirements for overall crib safety. These include stronger hardware, no traditional drop sides, improved slat strength, improved mattress durability, and more rigorous safety testing. The changes in federal law are now part of minimum standards. Childcare operations serving infants must show that their cribs either comply with the new standards or are listed and registered with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as a medical device. CCL consults with operations to help them understand crib requirements and checks to make sure they comply. CCL also provides the CPSC Guide to New Crib Standards in both English and Spanish in its online [Technical Assistance Library](#), which is available to everyone.

Safe Sleep

Childcare minimum standards on safe sleep were changed to reflect the updated safe sleep practice guidelines issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The AAP guidelines recommends against using sleep positioners and blankets for children younger than 12 months of age. CCL revised minimum standards to prohibit the use of loose bedding such as blankets and sleep positioning devices for infants up to 12 months of age.

Fees

In FY 2013, CCL improved processes for collecting and recording licensing fees to better meet its legal responsibilities. CCL replaced its old fee payment form with five, simplified fee forms. The new forms are specific to the operation type and clearly identify the types of fees required. New applicants now only need the fee form in their application packet, and existing operations are sent the correct fee form when their annual fee is due. CCL also strengthened procedures for collecting fees to ensure it does not issue permits when an operation fails to pay fees required by law.

Surveys

In order to continually improve inspections and protections for children, CCL asks for feedback from daycare and residential childcare providers on their licensing inspections. Providers are asked to complete an online survey after each inspection. The questions relate to professionalism, fairness, and the helpfulness of the inspector or investigator. Data for FY 2013 shows that providers are generally satisfied with their inspector or investigator in both programs and say inspections and investigations are positive experiences.

Legislative Initiatives

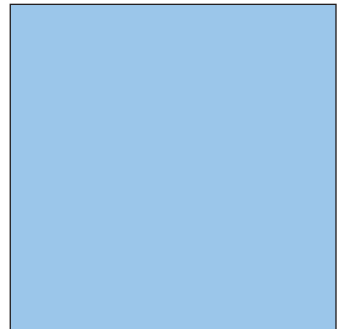
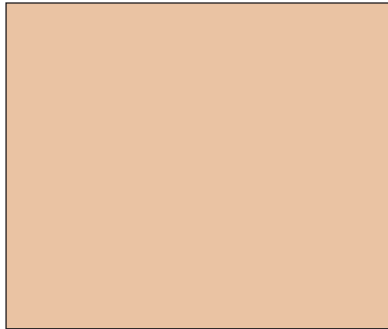
Controlling Persons Initiative

The Controlling Persons initiative enables Texas Health and Human Services agencies to share information through a database containing information about the permits they revoke or deny to see if one agency's actions have a bearing on another's regulatory decisions. The initiative began in 2011 when the Legislature

expanded “controlling persons” to apply to daycare in addition to residential operations. The initiative focused on building strong staff processes and automated tools to share the required information. It became fully operational in FY 2013 when system improvements made it possible for operations and some applicants to submit controlling person information to CCL online. A controlling person is a person who, either alone or in connection with others, has the ability to directly or indirectly influence or direct the management, expenditures, or policies of a childcare operation.

Illegal Childcare Operations

In FY 2013, the Texas Legislature approved 40 additional staff for CCL’s Day Care program to address the risk to children in unregulated daycare settings. Beginning in FY 2014, these new staff will help find and investigate illegal operations and either help them obtain a permit, or shut them down. Texas law requires daycare and residential childcare operations to obtain a permit from DFPS to provide care outside a child’s home, unless they meet criteria to be exempted. Illegal operations present higher risk to children because they don’t get inspected or meet training, background check, or other basic health and safety requirements.



Human Trafficking

CCL licenses 24-hour residential childcare operations that care for abused and neglected children, but it can be particularly challenging to treat the complex trauma that human trafficking inflicts on children. In FY 2013, the 83rd Texas Legislature passed House Bill 2725, which will result in a tailored set of licensing standards to address the needs of these children. The Legislature also made information about the location of human-trafficking shelters confidential by law.

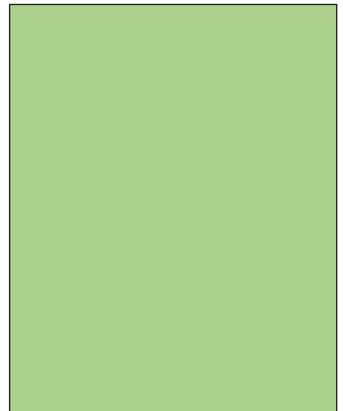
Biennial Inspections

In FY 2013, the Legislature gave CCL the option of conducting an unannounced monitoring inspection every

two years instead of annually for licensed daycare centers and licensed daycare homes with a good record. CCL will work with stakeholders to develop rules and processes for deciding which operations qualify. Until then, CCL will continue to inspect operations at least once a year.

Technology Enhancements

DFPS made several improvements in FY 2013 to CCL’s automated case management system (CLASS) and to other online systems to better support childcare providers and CCL staff. These include a stronger search feature for CCL staff, address validation, and an online director and administrator vacancy indicator. When a person applies for a childcare permit, CCL staff can now search for and



review an individual’s history in CLASS. The address validation feature standardizes and validates addresses to help ensure required notices and other communications reach childcare providers. The online vacancy indicator helps CCL ensure vacancies for required positions are filled in a timely manner, increasing protections for children.

Public Awareness

Search Texas Child Care

One of the most important services that CCL provides is information to parents, stakeholders, and others interested in child care. The DFPS website contains comprehensive compliance and regulatory information for both residential and daycare operations. Anyone

who wants to find and compare child care can use our online database (TxChildCareSearch.org) to search by type of care, location, services offered, name, or address. They will find two years of compliance history for each operation, including a summary of inspections and deficiencies. The Texas Child Care Search results were viewed 1,501,447 times in FY 2013.

Don't Be in the Dark

CCL continued its Don't Be in the Dark (about child care) campaign during FY 2013. CCL launched the campaign in 2006 and expanded it in 2010 to feature two sets of public services announcements in English and Spanish. One focused on choosing regulated care and the other on parents listening to their children and talking to their childcare provider. The spots are available to the public on the campaign website as well as the DFPS YouTube channel at <http://youtube.com/user/TexasDFPS>.

The campaign directs parents, consumers and others to the agency's childcare database (TxChildCareSearch.org), where they can find and research the regulatory compliance history of daycare and residential childcare operations. Visit DontBeInTheDark.org for more information.

Baby Room to Breathe

The Baby Room to Breathe campaign continued during FY 2013 with the goal of educating parents and caregivers on ways to lower the risk of infants dying in their sleep. There is also a parent instructional video in English and Spanish on safer infant sleep located on the DFPS YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/TexasDFPS>) and the campaign websites, BabyRoomToBreathe.org and BebeEspacioParaRespirar.org.

Watch Kids Around Water

"Watch Kids Around Water" the water safety campaign, sponsored by the CCL and the Prevention and Early Intervention programs, continued in FY 2013. Press releases were issued before the 2013 Memorial Day and July 4th holiday weekends to call attention to the issue of child drowning deaths. WatchKidsAroundWater.org provides water safety tips, drowning statistics, and a "Lifeguard 101" teaching tool. The goal is to educate and motivate parents and other adults to "be a lifeguard" for kids.

Car Safety- Look Before You Lock

CCL collaborated with the Prevention and Early Intervention program to raise awareness of the dangers of leaving children in hot vehicles because a child trapped in a car can die from the heat in only a few minutes. CCL distributed over 56,000 rearview mirror hangtags with the message "Check Every Seat Every Time" to remind those transporting children to make sure all children get out of the vehicle after every trip. CCL distributed the hangtags to daycare and residential childcare operations in a variety of ways including during inspections and investigations, orientation and training sessions, and community events related to child care.

Partners for Child Care Licensing

CCL continues building and strengthening connections with community partners and other agencies and programs. These include the Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas Workforce Commission, AgriLife Texas Cooperative Extension (Texas A&M University system), Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services Division of Early Childhood Intervention, Texas Education Agency, Texas Department of Agriculture, Office of the Attorney General, HHSC Office of Early Childhood Coordination, HHSC Family Violence Program, State Fire Marshal's Office, the Forensic Assessment Center Network, and 2-1-1 Texas.

CCL Services

The CCL program is responsible for protecting the health, safety, and well-being of children (birth through 17 years of age) who attend daycare or reside in residential childcare operations. Through a process mandated by Chapters 42 and 43 of the Human Resources Code, CCL develops administrative rules and minimum standards for daycare operations, child-placing agencies, and residential childcare operations. CCL also develops policies and procedures for CCL staff to follow when conducting regulatory activities, which include:

- Processing applications and issuing permits.
- Inspecting childcare operations.
- Investigating complaints alleging violations of licensing laws, rules, or minimum standards.
- Investigating reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation of children in care.

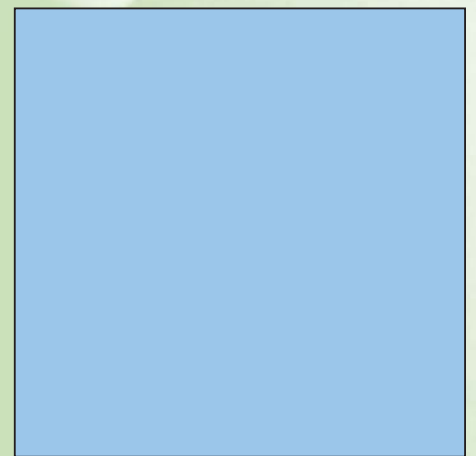
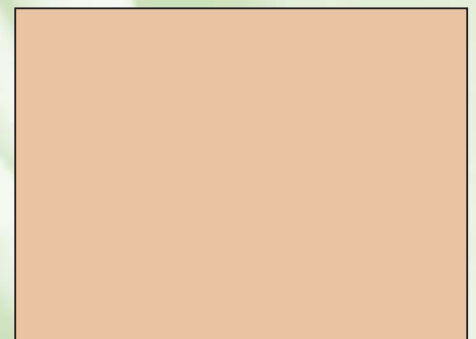
Pint-Size Playhouse Stands Tall in Licensed Home Care Community

Nicole Perez opens up her home to 8 children each day and goes the extra mile to keep them safe. “Proper supervision and strong classroom management skills are the keys to classroom safety,” she says. When asked how she continues to receive high marks on licensing inspections she says, “Being organized is my secret.”

Perez is adamant when she discusses child safety, “I never intended to open this business and gives less than 110%!” To keep track of everything she writes important dates and activities on her calendar such as her annual renewal deadline, needed background checks, and fire extinguisher inspections. “It’s easy to lose track of time

when you work from home in your own environment and have a repetitive routine,” she says. But having high standards for safety and organization doesn’t mean she’s not having fun. She describes her approach to child care as “fun-spirited” and intentionally creates an atmosphere that is comfortable, fun, and designed to foster creativity and social development in the children.

Perez is not new to providing child care, after college she worked in several nanny positions and provided care at various licensed child care centers. She even taught parenting classes after becoming a certified Parent Educator. After having children of her own she says she was blessed to be a stay at



home mom for four years before deciding to reenter the workforce.

In 2005, Perez opened a Registered Child Care Home. Then, in 2010 she applied to be a Licensed Child Care Home provider. She would recommend to anyone interested in starting up a Licensed Home to first start with a smaller group of kids in a Registered Home. “When you’re your own boss, administrator, bookkeeper, teacher, and nurse...

having a smaller group at first is really helpful.” She also sought the advice and guidance of the Child Care Professionals of Greater Austin (CCPGA), a local child care association dedicated to supporting home care providers, which she says was invaluable to her small business getting off the ground.

Since opening up her licensed operation Perez has worked hard to provide quality care to the children she cares

for each day, which means going above and beyond the Texas Licensing Minimum Standards. “They’re called Minimum Standards for a reason, meaning you can always perform better,” she says. If there is ever confusion about a state licensing requirement or policy, she picks up the phone and calls the agency. With a smile Perez says, “I’m in the Kid Business, this is serious stuff, and I love it.”

- Ensuring criminal background checks and DFPS abuse and neglect Central Registry checks are conducted as required on childcare personnel, and anyone 14 years or older who will regularly be at an operation while children are in care.
- Providing consultation, technical assistance, and training to potential and existing childcare providers on how to comply with minimum standards.
- Taking corrective or adverse actions against operations as necessary.

CCL also helps parents and others make informed decisions when choosing child care or making residential placements by giving them information about the types of child care available, the locations of childcare operations in Texas, and the results of licensing inspections and investigations.

Who We Regulate

CCL regulates four basic categories of childcare operations: licensed operations (day care and 24-hour residential child care), registered childcare homes, listed family homes, and operations with a compliance certificate.

Licensed Operations

All licensed operations have specific minimum standards to follow and are routinely monitored and inspected by CCL. The applicant must complete a pre-application overview or orientation on regulation and be cleared by background checks. CCL issues a license only after it completes an on-site inspection to ensure the applicant is meeting licensing standards. CCL inspects licensed operations at least annually or more often if there are reports of alleged child abuse or neglect or violations of licensing statute, administrative rules, or minimum standards. Licensed operations include both day care and 24-hour residential child care.

Day Care

- **Licensed childcare homes** (also known as group daycare homes) provide care in the caregiver's residence for 7-12 children under 14 years old for less than 24 hours a day, but at least two hours a day, three or more days a week.
- **Childcare centers** (also known as daycare centers) are any operation, that cares for 13 or more children under 14 years old for less than 24 hours,

but at least two hours a day, three or more days a week.

- **Before and after-school programs** provide care before or after the customary school day and during school holidays for at least two hours a day, three days a week, to children who attend pre-kindergarten through grade six.
- **School-age programs** provide care and supervision, along with recreational or skills instruction or training, before or after the customary school day for at least two hours a day, three or more days a week, to children attending pre-kindergarten through grade six. A school age program may also operate during school holidays, the summer period, or any other time when school is not in session.

24-Hour Residential Child care

- **Foster family homes** provide 24-hour care for 6 or fewer children under 18 years old. Foster family homes can be verified by a child-placing agency (known as agency foster family homes) or can be independently licensed by CCL (known as independent foster family homes).
- **Foster group homes** provide 24-hour care for 7 to 12 children under 18 years old. Foster group homes can be verified by a child-placing agency (known as agency foster group homes) or can be independently licensed by CCL (known as independent foster group homes).
- **General residential operations** provide 24-hour care for 13 or more children under 18 years old and may provide various treatment services, emergency care services, or therapeutic camps. General residential operations include residential treatment centers.
- **A child-placing agency** is a business that places or plans for the placement of a child in an agency foster or adoptive home that is approved and monitored by the child-placing agency.

Registered Childcare Homes

Registered childcare homes (also known as registered family homes) provide regular care in the caregiver's home for up to six children under age 14 and may also take in up to 6 additional school-age children. Regular care is defined as at least 4 hours per day, 3 or more days a week, for three or more consecutive weeks -or- four hours a day for 40 or more days in a period of 12 months. The number of children allowed in a regis-

tered childcare home is determined by the ages of the children. No more than 12 children can be in care at any time, including the caregiver's children.

Anyone wanting to become a registered childcare home provider must complete a pre-application overview or orientation to regulation and be cleared by background checks. CCL issues a registration only after it completes an on-site inspection to ensure the provider is meeting the standards for a registered childcare home. CCL inspects registered childcare homes every 2 years and will conduct an investigation if it gets a report alleging child abuse or neglect, or a violation of licensing statutes, administrative rules, or minimum standards.

Listed Family Homes

Listed family homes provide regular care in the caregiver's home for one to three unrelated children under age 14. Regular care means at least 4 hours per day, 3 or more days a week, for three or more consecutive weeks or four hours a day for 40 or more days in a period of 12 months. Listed family home providers must be at least 18 years old and go through an application process that includes a criminal background check and getting a "listing" permit from CCL in the form of a letter.

Listed family home providers do not have to meet minimum standards or take training. While CCL does not routinely inspect listed family homes, it does investigate them when it gets reports alleging that:

- Children have been abused or neglected.
- The home is providing child care for too many children.
- A caregiver gave a child medication without their parent or guardian's written permission.
- There is immediate risk to the health or safety of a child.

Operations with a Compliance Certificate

Anyone wanting to operate a daycare at a temporary shelter or employer-based daycare facility must com-



plete an application and be cleared by background checks. CCL completes an on-site inspection before issuing the permit to ensure compliance with legal requirements and minimum standards if applicable. While CCL does not routinely inspect operations with a compliance certificate, it does investigate them when it receives a complaint or report of child abuse or neglect.

Temporary Shelter Child Care

These operations provide child care at a temporary shelter, such as a family violence or homeless shelter, at least four hours a day, three or more days a week, to seven or more children under 14 years of age while parents, who live at the shelter, are away.

Persons wanting to operate a temporary shelter childcare operation have to pass criminal background checks and an initial inspection. CCL does not regularly inspect these operations but does investigate allegations of child abuse or neglect or violations of licensing statute, administrative rules, or applicable minimum standards.

Small Employer-based Child Care

Small employer-based childcare operations provide care for up to 12 of the employees' children (under 14 years of age) for less than 24 hours per day. Care is provided on the employer's premises and in the same building where the parents work.

Before CCL issues a compliance certificate, the operation goes through an applications process that includes criminal background checks and an inspection. There are no minimum standards for these operations and they are not inspected after they have their certificate. However, CCL will investigate allegations of child abuse or neglect or a violation of licensing statute or administrative rules.

For more information, see: DFPS Data Book, pages 73-103, 232-243.

Reports on Licensing Violations

CCL uses licensing standards to protect the basic health and safety of children in out-of-home care. Our goal is to appropriately and consistently enforce minimum standards for all types of childcare operations statewide. Consistent enforcement aims to increase compliance by childcare operations and provide stronger protections for children. Regulating childcare facilities and child-placing agencies routinely presents two challenges for CCL staff and permit holders alike:

- Consistent interpretation of minimum standards.
- Consistent enforcement decisions and actions.

CCL analyzes trends in violations both statewide and regionally to get a better idea of the technical assistance providers will need in the future to help them meet or exceed minimum standards.

Violation Trends

The DFPS Data Book includes a Statewide Trends Table for daycare operations. It includes the top 10 standards deficiencies for daycare operations in FY 2013.

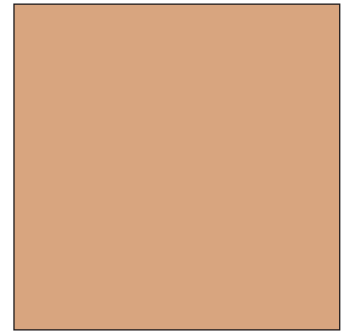
For information on statewide trends, see: DFPS Data Book pages 88.

DFPS also publishes a Statewide Trends Table of the top 10 standards deficiencies for residential childcare operations standard violations during FY 2013.

For information on statewide trends, see: DFPS Data Book page 103.

Addressing Violation Trends with Technical Assistance

CCL cites violations in various types of inspections. Some are found during routine monitoring inspections and follow-ups and others after a complaint about specific incidents. CCL makes a point to give childcare



providers' technical assistance to help them comply with licensing standards. Violation trends data helps CCL target its technical assistance on specific issues to improve compliance.

Quality Assurance

CCL has a Performance Management Unit (PMU) that analyzes data and identifies trends in CCL's performance. CCL uses this information to develop recommendations for training, program structure, policy, and practice to improve the quality and consistency of inspections and investigations. CCL also has specially trained risk analysts in the field statewide. These

analysts and PMU staff review the compliance history of daycare or residential childcare operations that indicates a higher risk of harm to children. They provide objective recommendations to ensure the safety of children. CCL also uses an automated quality assurance and performance management system to obtain measurable feedback on employee casework.

Training

A broad range of CCL staff across the state received over 7,400 hours of training and work-related professional development in FY 2013 to improve the quality of regulation. Topics included effective communication, community engagement, technical assistance, ethics, diversity and disproportionality, and training on automation enhancements. CCL's Professional Development Division also provided additional specialized staff training in the areas of



trauma-informed care, playground safety, advanced interviewing techniques, mobile casework, and managing a mobile workforce.

At the same time, CCL staff held more than 153 training events for 4,570 caregivers. Topics included prevention of abuse and neglect, safe sleep practices for infants, positive child discipline and guidance, appropriate supervision of children, updates to minimum standards, directing for success (for new childcare directors), and emergency preparedness. CCL also gave 253 orientation sessions for 2,025 people to give them an overview of the licensing process and how to complete an application and get a permit to operate a childcare operation in Texas.

Child Protective Services

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Child Protective Services (CPS) are to:

- Conduct civil investigations of reports of child abuse and neglect.
- Protect children from abuse and neglect.
- Promote the safety, integrity, and stability of families.
- Find permanent homes or living arrangements for children who cannot safely remain with their families.

2013 Accomplishments and Program Enhancements

In FY 2013, CPS focused on expanding assistance for families, providing more access to services through public-private partnerships, promoting better outcomes for children in foster care, and delivering additional support for relative caregivers. CPS also advanced efforts to improve permanency for children, increase positive outcomes in domestic violence cases, and prepare youth for adulthood.

Promoting Better Outcomes for Children in Foster Care

Foster Care Redesign

DFPS has been working on a public-private partnership to improve outcomes for children and youth living in foster care since January 2010. In FY 2013, those efforts reached a major milestone when children and youth entering foster care from DFPS Regions 2 and 9 were the first served by the Foster Care Redesign system. Providence Services Corporation of Texas is responsible for finding foster homes or other living arrangements for all children in paid foster care from this area of the state and for getting them the services they need. CPS retains case management and makes the ultimate decisions on placements. Children and youth already in foster care will transition into the new system over time to avoid disrupting their lives. Regions 2 and 9 cover 60 counties and include the communities of Wichita Falls, Abilene, San Angelo,

Brownwood, and Midland/Odessa. Also in FY 2013, DFPS posted a request for proposals (RFP) for the first metropolitan area for Foster Care Redesign in the southwestern part of DFPS Region 3. This metropolitan area includes seven counties: Erath, Hood, Johnson, Palo Pinto, Parker, Somervell and Tarrant.

Foster Care Redesign changes how DFPS obtains, contracts, and pays for foster care and other services for children in state care and their families. The goal of Foster Care Redesign is to create ongoing, community-based placements that meet the needs of children and youth in the least restrictive settings. The public-private partnership of foster youth alumni, the judiciary, providers, advocates, and DFPS staff has guided this project.

More information about Foster Care Redesign is available on the Foster Care Redesign webpage.

Expanding Support for Families

Alternative Response

In FY 2013, DFPS ramped up development of a new investigation practice called Alternative Response that changes the way CPS responds to certain allegations of abuse and neglect. This practice allows for a more flexible, family engaging approach while still focusing on the safety of the children. In 2013, the Texas Legislature approved statutory changes and funded technology to give DFPS the ability to develop the Alternative Response system in Texas.

An alternative response involves assessing the needs of families, including the safety of children, and providing services and supports for less serious cases of abuse and neglect involving older children. Unlike a traditional CPS investigation, there will be no formal finding of whether abuse or neglect occurred and family engagement will be a less adversarial, more collaborative approach. Studies from states that use Alternative Response show that child safety is not compromised and that families felt more engaged and involved with decisions about their children. Caseworkers report families on the alternative track were more cooperative and willing to accept services. Initial roll-out of Alternative Response begins in September 2014 and it will be used statewide in two to three years.

Increasing Access to Services with Public-Private Partnerships

Faith-Based Collaboration

CPS recognizes that partnership with community and faith-based agencies is integral to protecting children and expanding services to children and families even after CPS is no longer involved. In FY 2013, CPS substantially increased efforts to collaborate with faith communities and their leaders statewide. Seventy-seven churches are involved with CPS faith-based efforts and that number is expected to grow.

The focus is on empowering churches to develop community ministries to provide new or enhanced support services to children and families. Each church can offer any service or combination of services that range from prevention (i.e. substance abuse programs, financial assistance, transportation, parenting classes) to permanency (i.e. foster care and adoption, support groups, transitional living programs). CPS provides support and technical assistance to the church, such as supplying data, attending meetings, answering questions, providing subject-matter expertise, and other support.

Promoting and Supporting Relative Caregivers

Permanency Care Assistance

The Federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 promotes finding permanent homes for children and youth. The federal law stresses adoption, care by relatives, and transition services for young adults who have aged out of care. In response, Texas created the Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) program, which achieved significant success in FY 2013 in finding permanent families for children who would otherwise grow up in foster care.

PCA offers financial help to family members who accept legal responsibility for relative children and youth when going home and adoption are not possible. In order to qualify for the program, kinship caregivers must, among other requirements, become verified as foster parents, care for the child as foster parents for at least six months, enter into a PCA agreement, and obtain legal custody through the courts.

In May 2013, the program crossed the milestone of 1,000 children who have found permanent families through PCA since it began on October 2010. That number grew to 1,318 children by the end of the fiscal year.

Finding Permanency for Children

Permanency Roundtables

CPS began Permanency Roundtables in Regions 6 (Houston) and 8 (San Antonio) in FY 2012, providing internal case consultations to find permanent homes for children in DFPS legal custody. In FY 2013, CPS focused on expanding Permanency Roundtables, completing 731 statewide as of July 2013.

Roundtables bring together agency experts to discuss a child's permanency goal, explore strategies, and develop an action plan for getting each child into a permanent family. Another goal is to make systemic changes, such as policy improvements and community involvement, to help get children into families. Ten percent of children exited DFPS custody into a permanent home within a year of a permanency roundtable. Forty-eight percent of those who did not exit had some other type of improved permanency outcome by: (1) moving into a placement intended to be permanent; (2) achieving a higher permanency status; or (3) making new connections with family or supportive adults.

Improving Outcomes on Domestic Violence Cases

Domestic Violence Multi-Disciplinary Task Force

In 2011, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 434 to create a domestic violence multi-disciplinary task force to improve collaboration between CPS and providers who assist victims of domestic violence. The task force's charge was to: (1) assess best practices for cases involving domestic violence and child abuse/neglect; (2) review policies and practices for the domestic violence and CPS systems; and (3) recommend ways to enhance the CPS and domestic violence service provider systems.

As a result, CPS and stakeholders reviewed policy and practice and created the FBSS Domestic Violence Unit in Bexar County in FY 2013. The unit handles Family based safety service cases that have both child abuse and neglect and domestic violence. The goal is to keep children safe by holding the batterer accountable for domestic violence and helping the adult victim stay safe. CPS and stakeholders also developed specialized cross-training for CPS staff and domestic violence providers to support the work of the unit.

Foster Parents Make a Life-Long Commitment

Twins Michael and Curtis Lewis have found a permanent home with foster parents Anita and Stan Tinney who are thrilled to finally have guardianship of the boys.

With the exception of just a few months, the twins have been in the Tinney's life since 2005. At that time, Michael and Curtis' family members placed them in a nursing home in Odessa. That's where the Tinney's daughters, Bailie (age 16) and Amanda (age 13) who volunteered at the nursing home, first met Michael and Curtis. After meeting the twins and volunteering with them for the first time, they called their parents on the phone, saying "Mom! Dad! There are two little boys at the nursing home and they need us! And we need them!" After hearing this, Anita and Stan who lived in Midland, were compelled to meet them and drove the next day to Odessa to meet them.

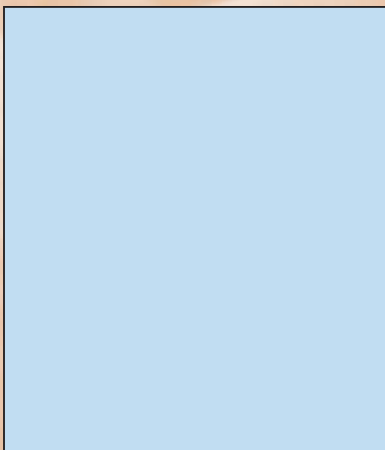
Curtis and Michael were 8 years old at the time and weighed only a little over 20 pounds. Michael has cerebral palsy, mental impairments, hip dysplasia, reactive airway disease, seizures and is legally blind. Curtis also has cerebral palsy, mental impairments, reactive airway disease, scoliosis and also is legally blind. Anita and Stan grew very fond of Michael and Curtis and despite these challenges, the Tinneys decided to

make a life-long commitment to these remarkable boys.

Over a period of months, Anita, Stan and their two daughters got to work on learning how to get through to the boys who were wary of strangers after two years in the nursing home. During this process, the Tinney family became a registered foster home in hopes that someday they could bring the twins to live with them. Michael and Curtis quickly began to recognize the Tinneys as family. Both would delight when Amanda would sing to them and Bailie made them laugh by dressing up as a clown and other costumes to brighten their days.

Michael and Curtis are now 18 years old. Anita and Stan registered for Home Community Service (HCS) so they could continue to have guardianship of Michael and Curtis into adulthood. The family recently moved and Anita says both young men have adjusted amazingly well to their new home and school. They will be receiving music therapy at Richland High School and they both qualified for hippotherapy (therapeutic horseback riding).

The Tinneys delighted in every milestone the twins reached along their journey to becoming a permanent family. Anita and Stan feel very blessed and love their life with Michael and Curtis.



In the future, CPS will evaluate the outcomes of the unit in terms of enhanced safety for children, adult domestic violence victims, and CPS caseworkers. CPS will also look to enhance its domestic violence work in all stages of service statewide.

Preparing Youth for Adulthood

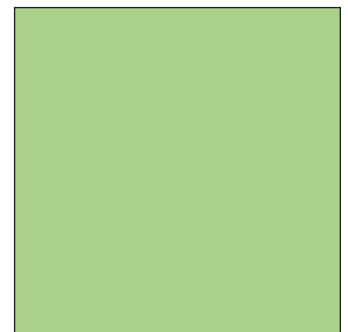
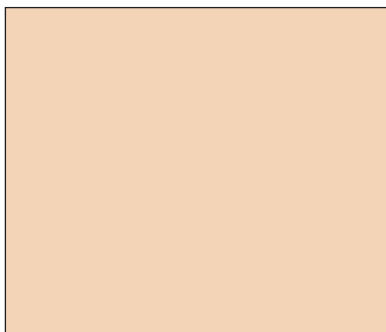
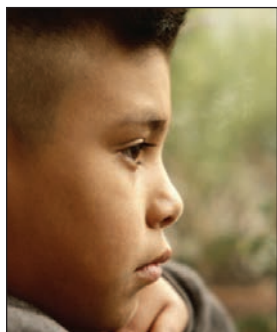
Supervised Independent Living

DFPS created a Supervised Independent Living (SIL) program. This is a voluntary extended foster care placement for young adults to live in a less restrictive, non-traditional living arrangement while receiving casework and support to become independent and self-sufficient. SIL placements began on May 1, 2013, and 17 young adults were participating in the program as of August 31, 2013. More information is available in the “Youth Transitioning Out of Care” section of this report.

CPS Services to Keep Children Safe

Investigations of Child Abuse and Neglect Reports

State law requires anyone who believes a child is being abused or neglected to report the situation so CPS can investigate. Interviewing children, parents, and others who know about the family is an important part of a CPS



investigation. These interviews help determine if abuse or neglect occurred, if children are safe, and assess the risk of further harm. If needed, CPS caseworkers may refer families for services such as individual or family therapy, parenting classes, medical assistance, mental health services, substance abuse assessment and treatment, or programs offering financial assistance for utilities, rent, or childcare.

When CPS caseworkers are concerned about the continued safety of a child, they refer the family for

family-based safety services, which are provided in the home and help make sure children are healthy and safe. If these services cannot ensure the child’s safety, CPS may ask the court to remove the child from the parents’ custody and place the child in a relative’s care or foster care.

For more information on CPS investigations and investigation process, see: DFPS Data Book, page 27, example flow chart and pages 387-46 and 138-173.

Family-Based Safety Services

When a child’s safety can be reasonably assured with the parents retaining legal custody, CPS provides in-home services to help stabilize the family and reduce the risk of future abuse or neglect. Family-based safety services (FBSS) can help avoid the need to remove children from their homes. They can also make it possible for the children to return home by strengthening the family’s ability to protect their child and reduce threats to the child’s safety.



Services include family counseling, crisis intervention, parenting classes, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence intervention, and day care. Most children getting these services live at home while CPS works with their families. In some cases, children may live elsewhere temporarily, usually with relatives or close family friends, until it is safe for them to return home.

For more information on in-home services, see: DFPS Data Book, pages 45, 68, 150-153 and 175-180.

Family Group Decision Making

Family Group Decision Making describes various practices to work with and engage children, youth, and families in decision making as well as safety and service planning.

- **Family Team Meetings** are a rapid response to address critical child safety and placement concerns. CPS uses them to ensure child safety in the earliest stages of a case. These meetings help families, community members, and other caregivers make critical decisions about child protection, safety, placement, and permanent living arrangements.
- **Family Group Conferences** bring families together with relatives, friends, and others to develop a plan to ensure children are safe, cared for, and protected from future harm. This includes private time to give the family a high degree of decision-making authority and responsibility.
- **Circles of Support** are youth-focused, youth-driven meetings to develop a plan for older youth to transition from substitute care to adulthood and to connect them to caring adults who will support them. For more information on Circles of Support, see “Youth Transitioning Out of Care” below.

For more information, see: *DFPS Data Book, pages 69-70.*

Finding Care for Children

Before removing a child from the home, CPS explores every reasonable alternative for keeping the child safe from abuse and neglect. Removing the child occurs only when there is no other reasonable way to protect the child from abuse or neglect in the immediate or short-term future. When children cannot live safely with their own families, CPS may ask the court to remove them from their homes and place them temporarily with relatives, a foster family, an emergency shelter, or other facility.

Placements

When removing a child from a home for safety reasons, CPS and the courts must consider temporary placements with relatives and other people who have a significant relationship with the child or child’s family. CPS asks parents to give contact information for relatives and close family friends who may be able to care for their children. CPS notifies relatives and explains their options and the state support available to help them care for the child. Kinship caregivers may

also provide permanent homes by adopting or accepting legal responsibility for children. Kinship care gives children more stability and a connection to family when they cannot live with their birth parents.

For more information on Kinship Care, see: *DFPS Data Book, pages 49, 53-54, 61-62, 65, 184-189 and 202-213.*

If kinship care is not an option, children may be placed in foster care. Foster families get a daily reimbursement for the costs of caring for children. CPS and foster parents arrange all educational, medical, dental, and therapeutic services the child needs. Some children who have emotional or other needs that are difficult to address in a foster home may live in specialized group homes, residential treatment centers, or other facilities. If parental rights are intact, CPS provides services to the parents until the family is reunited or the courts approve another permanent living arrangement for the children. The court has ongoing oversight while a child is in foster care.

For more information on foster care and other placements: *DFPS Data Book, pages 49, 53-54, 63-64 and 223-225.*

Permanency

Permanency means a child leaves DFPS care to live in an appropriate, permanent setting. Planning for permanency begins when CPS removes a child from the home and ends when a child leaves DFPS legal custody, preferably for a permanent family setting.

Family reunification is the primary permanency goal for every child in state care (foster care, kinship care, etc.) except when a court decides that is not an option. CPS provides reunification services to families immediately before and after a child returns home from state care.

When a child cannot safely return home, the court may end the parents’ rights, making the child available for adoption. The number of children adopted from CPS care increased significantly from FY 2005 to FY 2013. One major factor was the number of kinship adoptions, which includes adoptions by relatives and others with significant, longstanding relationships with the children or families. Kinship adoptions in Texas have more than doubled since 2005 and now account for about 40 percent of DFPS adoptions. In FY 2013, 5,364 DFPS children were adopted. DFPS approves adoptive homes and also contracts with licensed, private child-placing agencies to increase the number of parents available to adopt children in foster care.

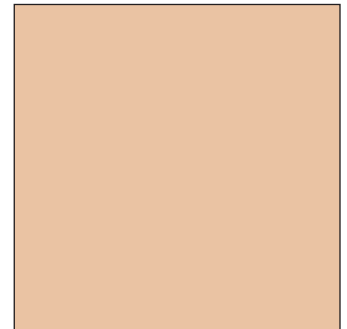
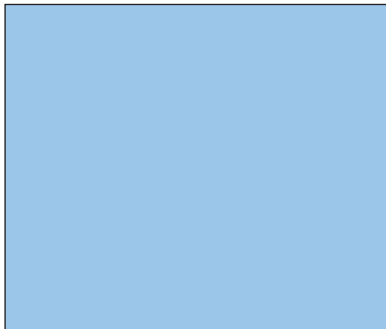
The Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE) website (AdoptChildren.org) is an important tool for recruiting people who may be interested in fostering or adopting. The website's most prominent feature is a photo-listing of Texas children awaiting adoption as well as profiles and videos that give a snapshot of their personalities. TARE also offers a toll-free, nationwide Adoption and Foster Care Inquiry Line. The information from these calls is forwarded to local CPS staff to follow up.

CPS also helps adopted children overcome the abuse or neglect they suffered. These children often need help coping with these experiences and the loss of their birth families. CPS contracts with private agencies to provide post-adoption services to adopted children and their families, such as case management, counseling, crisis intervention, parent training, and support groups.

For more information on adoption, see: DFPS Data Book, pages 49, 53-56, 58-61 and 196-220.

Youth Transitioning Out of Care

CPS is unable to find someone to take permanent custody of a child in some cases. These youth generally stay in DFPS legal custody (conservatorship) until they become a legal adult at age 18. Nonetheless, CPS works to connect these youth with caring adults who have a permanent commitment to the youth and can



provide support. Moreover, these youth may stay in foster care until the age of 21 while pursuing an education or employment. CPS provides a variety of services to help these youth learn to live successfully on their own.

Health Care Benefits

Texas provides healthcare to children in foster care and youth who age out of care up to the month of their 21st birthday. These youth get health care through STAR Health, a form of Medicaid. Youth can continue to receive health care benefits up to age 23 in some circumstances but must be enrolled in an institution of higher

education. STAR Health includes a medical home for each child, coordination and management of services, 24-hour nursing and behavioral health helplines, and monitoring of psychotropic medication. There is more information on STAR Health, in the "Working with Partners" section of this report.

When a youth who is aging out of DFPS care needs long-term care or support as an adult because they are unable to care for themselves due to a medical, mental, or physical condition, DFPS refers the youth to the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) for guardianship services. This process begins when a youth turns 17. If a court appoints DADS as guardian, DADS assumes the main responsibility for the youth when the youth turns 18 or when the court makes its ruling. DFPS may continue to provide foster care for young adults even if they receive DADS guardianship services.



Preparing Youth for Adulthood

The Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program helps youth in foster care make the transition to adulthood more successfully. PAL services include independent-living assessments, financial help for a limited time, and training in such areas as financial management, job skills, educational planning, and interpersonal skills. A statewide youth leadership council meets quarterly to review policies and practices, and recommends ways to improve services for children and youth.

CPS provides seminars to youth ages 15½ to 18 in two separate tracks before they leave foster care. The seminars include topics that youth identify to reinforce their knowledge and skills about DFPS programs and services, benefits, and resources. The seminars build on information from PAL life-skills training classes and are presented in a fun and experiential way.



Transition centers are clearinghouses for many DFPS partner agencies to serve youth (ages 15½ to 25) who are preparing to age out or have already aged out of foster care. These centers are separately funded, privately operated, and supported by partnerships between DFPS, their providers, and the Texas Workforce Commission. The centers provide preparation for adult living services, employment readiness, job search classes and assistance, and mentoring. Partner agencies provide other services, including substance abuse counseling, housing assistance, and leadership development trainings and activities. There are centers around the state. More information is available at TexasYouthConnection.org.

The Texas Youth Connection website is a resource for youth in Texas foster care, alumni of foster care, or other youth seeking general tips and information. This website was designed with input from youth and offers information and resources for education, finances, personal records, diversity, health, employment opportunities, food, housing, books, stories, hotlines, contacts and other information. The Texas Youth Connection Facebook page is another way that CPS shares important information with youth, young adults, and providers.

The Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline serves youth younger than 21 years of age, including those who have aged out of the foster care system. The statewide hotline provides crisis counseling, information, and referrals for youth, including assistance in finding local services in their communities.

Extending Foster Care

Most foster youth leave state care after their 18th birthday but they can stay in extended foster care through age 21 or 22, depending on their circumstances, while they pursue a high school diploma or GED. They can also remain in extended foster care:

- To attend college or a vocational or technical training program.
- To participate in a program or activity to help them get a job.
- To work at least 80 hours a month.
- If they can't perform the activities above due to a documented medical condition.

Young adults ages 18 to 20 who have aged out of DFPS care may return to foster care:

- To attend high school or complete a GED course (up to age 22).
- To attend college or a vocational or technical training program.
- To participate in a program or activity to help them get a job.
- To work at least 80 hours a month.
- If they can't perform the activities above due to a documented medical condition.

Supervised independent living (SIL) is where young adults live in a less restrictive, non-traditional living arrangement while continuing to receive casework and support service to help them become independent and self-sufficient. SIL is available for a young adult who is:

- Turning 18 while in DFPS care and approved for extended foster care.
- Already approved and participating in extended foster care.
- Returning for extended foster care from trial independence or afterwards.

Young adults have more responsibilities with minimal supervision in supervised independent living. They manage their own finances, buy groceries and personal items, and work with a landlord. They receive assistance with the transition to independent living, identifying education and employment goals, accessing community resources, life skills training, and establishing relationships.

Education and Training Opportunities

The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program gives financial assistance to eligible youth before and after they leave CPS care to help them with college expenses such as rent, computers, day care, and transportation. Youth who receive permanency care assistance after age 16 are also eligible. ETV supplements the state's Preparation for Adult Living program, as well as a tuition and fee waiver at state-supported universities, colleges, junior colleges, and vocational schools.

Since 1993, former foster youth and certain adopted youth have been exempt from paying tuition and most fees at state-funded colleges, community colleges, universities, and vocational schools in Texas. The law was later amended to extend this benefit to all youth adopted from DFPS or those whose permanent managing conservator (legal responsibility) is not their parent.

System Support

Disproportionality

In FY 2013, CPS continued efforts to reduce disproportionality in collaboration with the Health and Human Services Commission's Center for Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities. CPS is working to reduce the disproportionate representation of African-American and Native-American children in the child welfare system. Disproportionality is considered in all CPS initiatives, policies and practices. Since 2004, thousands of youth, community members, staff, providers, and others have participated in training on the issue.

Although the removal rate for African Americans remains higher than other races and ethnicities, CPS is closing the gap. In 2006, the removal rate for African-American children investigated for abuse and neglect was 7.6 percent compared with an Anglo and Hispanic rate of 6.1 percent. By 2012, the African-American removal rate declined to 6.6 percent, while the Anglo and Hispanic rate remained about the same. CPS has also reduced the gap in reunifications. In 2006, the

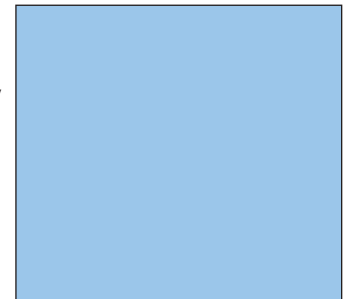
reunification rate for African-American children was 8 percent lower than for Anglos and 11 percent lower than for Hispanics. In 2012, the reunification rate for African-American children was 5 percent lower than Anglos and 9 percent lower than Hispanics.

Fatherhood Initiative

CPS started the Fatherhood Initiative in 2009 to increase permanent living solutions for children in foster care and encourage fathers or paternal family members to get involved in their children's well-being. In FY 2013, the CPS Fatherhood Initiative broadened its impact by working with the Healthy Texas Baby Initiatives to reduce the rate of infant mortality. The Fatherhood Initiative also participated in the Preconception Peer Educator (PPE) Program Planning Committee as well as the Fatherhood Committee, which developed a survey for physicians to gauge their needs related to father involvement shortly before and after birth. In addition, the initiative took part in the creation of a video highlighting the need and value of fathers from pre-conception to birth which demonstrates the importance of improving outcomes for families and children.

Child and Family Services Review

The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Accountability Division conducts structured case reviews using a federal review instrument. In FY 2013, the accountability team reviewed 360 Conservatorship and 360 Family Based Safety Services cases. Debriefings were done to share findings and discuss strengths and areas needing improvement. This feedback helps in



developing best practices, which improve outcomes for children. It is a learning opportunity that staff say they find helpful.

Trauma-Informed Care

DFPS recognizes that addressing the long-term trauma caused by child abuse and neglect is an important component of effective services. Children, families, caregivers, and the staff who serve them experience the effects of trauma. CPS chartered a multi-disciplinary workgroup to further develop the Texas Child Welfare System into one that recognizes and responds to the impact of trauma on those in the system. The goal is to have a system that accounts for the child's (and family's) story and developmental level, and one that use an evidence-based approach to policies, training, leadership, and service practice. The ultimate goal is to improve outcomes for the children, youth, and families that DFPS serves.

Working with Partners

Foster Parents and Child-Placing Agencies

Thousands of children are in the legal custody (conservatorship) of DFPS because of abuse and neglect. Foster parents and private child-placing agencies help DFPS support these children through collaborative partnerships. DFPS supports foster and adoptive parents by providing federal funds to the statewide Texas Council on Adoptable Children and the Texas Foster Family Association. DFPS also provides federal funds to local foster parent associations for education, training, and retention of foster and adoptive parents so they can better meet the needs of children.

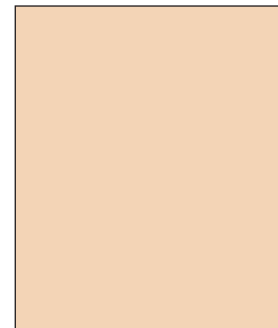
STAR Health

DFPS collaborates with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to oversee and coordinate healthcare for children in foster care. STAR Health, a Medicaid managed care plan, provides service coordination for each child and service management for children with more serious health and behavioral health needs. It also oversees and reviews psychotropic medications, and provides an electronic health passport, nurse and behavioral health hotlines, and liaisons who are co-housed with CPS staff.

Superior Health Plan operates the provider network. CPS well-being specialists are experts on the STAR Health program and serve as the primary link between Superior Health Plan Network and CPS staff.

Committee for Advancing Residential Practices

The Committee for Advancing Residential Practices is a stakeholder group dedicated to improving practices in residential and foster care. Residential child care



contractors, associations, and DFPS representatives meet quarterly to strengthen our partnership, improve communication, and work to improve the safety, permanency and well-being of children.

Child Welfare Boards

Many counties provide additional resources to help Child Protective Services meet the needs of children in state care. There are child welfare boards, appointed by local commissioner's courts, in more than 200 Texas counties that. These boards provide significant support to enhance care and services for foster children and their families and help with child abuse prevention efforts in their communities.

CPS works with the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards (TCCWB) to develop resources, programs, and strategies to improve services for vulnerable children and families. Members advocate at the local, state and national level for children who otherwise might have no voice. TCCWB volunteers create, promote, and support events such as Child Protection Day at the Capitol and "Go Blue Day to raise awareness about child abuse prevention.

Giving Texas Children Promise

Children across Texas receive help from three innovative community-partners programs developed by Giving Texas Children Promise (GTCP). These programs are Rainbow Rooms, the Adopt-a-Caseworker Program, and the Purchasing Partnership Program.

- **Rainbow Rooms** help meet the critical needs of abused and neglected children. These resource rooms supply car seats, clothing, shoes, underwear, baby formula, school supplies, and safety

and hygiene items to children entering foster or relative care as well as children receiving CPS services at home.

■ **The Adopt-a-Caseworker Program** connects CPS caseworkers with individuals, churches, businesses, and organizations to help meet needs of children involved with CPS. Groups have also furnished items such as birthday presents, prom dresses, household goods, and groceries.

■ **The Purchasing Partnerships Program** obtains drastically reduced prices on many essential items stocked in rainbow rooms across Texas. In FY 2013, this program delivered 318 new car seats, 3,493 boxes of lice treatment and bedding spray, 1,000 blankets, and 250 port-a-cribs at no cost to local sites.

There were 192 rainbow rooms and 1,200 adopted caseworkers across Texas in FY 2013. Community partners also worked together to leverage more than \$5 million, providing support for approximately 60,000 DFPS children and families.

Children's Commission

The Texas Supreme Court's Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth, and Families published "The Texas Blueprint: Transforming Education Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care", which included more than 100 recommendations. It was the result of an 18-month collaboration with state agencies, school districts, courts, and external and community stakeholders. Many of the recommendations were supported by stakeholders and resulted in laws designed to improve educational outcomes.

The goals listed in the report are to strengthen education stability and improve education outcomes for some 15,000 school-aged children and youth in DFPS legal custody by:

- Reducing the number of times children move to a new school.



- Reducing disciplinary action against children and youth in DFPS custody.
- Helping more children and youth in DFPS legal custody advance to the next grade.

DFPS must also establish and maintain education portfolios for every school-age child and youth in DFPS legal custody. The portfolio contains school-related documentation for school enrollment and educational and ancillary services to ensure student success.

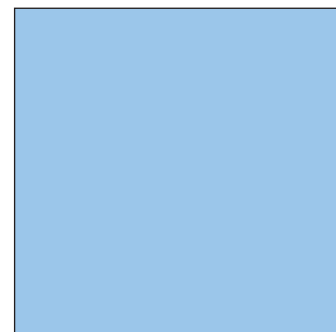
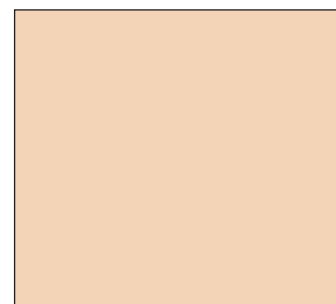
Parent Collaboration Group

The statewide Parent Collaboration Group (PCG) is a partnership between DFPS and parents who have been in the CPS system and succeeded. The group includes regional parent-representatives who meet quarterly to help CPS improve its policies and practices.

The goals are to identify:

- Gaps in services for families and children.
- Services that are working and should continue.
- Ways parents can improve a caseworker's skills in relating to parents.

The group has developed parent-support groups in all CPS regions since its formation in 2002. These support groups help parents learn about the CPS process and navigate the Child Welfare System.



Prevention and Early Intervention

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) are to:

- Work with Texas communities to develop services to prevent child abuse and neglect, delinquency, running away, and truancy.
- Plan, develop, and administer a comprehensive, unified approach to delivering prevention services to avoid fragmentation and duplication.
- Make prevention and early intervention services more accountable by demonstrating the effectiveness or public benefit of programs.

2013 Accomplishments and Initiatives

Interagency Collaboration

PEI remained the lead for the Interagency Coordinating Council for Building Healthy Families during FY 2013 through a memorandum of understanding adopted by the council's 11 member agencies. Participating agencies meet on an ad hoc basis.

PEI funded the Multidisciplinary Approach to Prevention Services (MAPS) program in FY 2012 and FY 2013 in response to the council's recommendations to the Legislature in 2009. This program helps address the needs of families facing multiple issues such as domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health, and child abuse. An evaluation of the MAPS program is scheduled to be completed in FY 2014. Due to another recommendation, PEI shifted from a cost-reimbursement payment method to a fee-for-service payment structure for a number of prevention programs during FY 2013. The new fee-for-service payment structure achieves greater efficiencies and allows PEI staff to focus more on service quality.

Public Awareness Campaigns

PEI promoted the child abuse prevention campaign called "Help for Parents, Hope for Kids" during FY 2013. The goal of the campaign is to prevent abuse by helping parents deal with the stresses that contribute to child abuse and neglect. The campaign

website is featured in both English and Spanish (HelpandHope.org or AyudayEsperanza.org).

In FY 2013 the campaign featured:

- A statewide advertising campaign involving television and online ads.
- A social media campaign on Facebook, Pinterest, and YouTube.
- Video testimonials from parents who had abused or neglected their children and sought help to change.
- Outreach to other organizations to participate by distributing campaign materials or providing services or resources to parents through HelpandHope.org.

The campaign's Facebook page was very successful in sharing ideas and resources designed to strengthen families. The campaign webpages, English and Spanish, were also successful in attracting 408,319 unique visits in FY 2013. Traffic spiked dramatically when television and online ads were shown across Texas. PEI continued these media efforts based on pre- and post-campaign research for 2012, which showed:

- Awareness of the campaign rose by 13 percentage points for single parents and eight percentage points for young mothers, who were the primary target audience.
- Awareness of the website increased five percentage points for all parents, nine percentage points for Hispanic parents, nine percentage points for young mothers, and nine percentage points for single parents.
- Thirteen percent more young moms reported they were likely to change their behavior when stressed out by their children (calm themselves down, stop and think, leave the room, take a walk, etc.).

In FY 2013, PEI also collaborated with DFPS' Child Care Licensing program to promote three campaigns: Baby Room to Breathe, Watch Kids Around Water, and Where's Baby: Look Before You Lock.

- **Baby Room to Breathe** educates parents about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other unexplained infant death. The campaign features a Rules of Safe Sleep DVD in both

English and Spanish for use by organizations who work with expectant mothers and families with infants. The video is available on the campaign website (BabyRoomToBreathe.org or BebeEspacioParaRespirar.org) and on the DFPS YouTube channel.

- **Watch Kids Around Water** aims to prevent childhood drowning. The campaign included news media coverage and agency social media sharing around the Labor Day, Memorial Day, and Independence Day weekends. See: WatchKidsAroundWater.org.
- **Where's Baby: Look before You Lock** reminds parents and caregivers to check their cars for their infants and young children before locking the cars to prevent hot car deaths.

Child Abuse Prevention Calendar

In FY 2013, DFPS created the sixth annual prevention calendar for Texas families titled "Once Upon a Time Parenting: The Beginning of a Great Story." The calendar gave parents and other caregivers practical advice on dealing with temper tantrums, water safety, developmental milestones, healthy eating tips, and more. The calendar's messages are based on the most effective strategies for prevention outreach. Assessments indicate the best approach is to directly target families with user-friendly outreach materials that give parents tools they can use to strengthen their parenting skills.

PEI distributed 536,000 calendars to about 1,000 agencies, contractors, and partners across Texas, including:

- More than 250 social-service providers.
- Licensed child-care facilities, child welfare boards, and child advocacy centers.
- Elementary and secondary schools and Head Start programs.
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices in many locations.
- Local churches and medical facilities.

English and Spanish versions of the calendar were made available for free download at HelpandHope.org and AyudayEsperanza.org. The calendar was endorsed by the Texas Pediatric Society, the Texas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Partners in Prevention Training Conference

Each year, DFPS hosts the Annual Partners in Prevention Training Conference. The conference brings

together social service professionals, advocates, educators, law enforcement professionals, child-care professionals, community leaders, and faith leaders interested in improving programs and sharing expertise. The multi-day conference is dedicated to child abuse prevention and juvenile delinquency prevention. Related areas of focus include substance abuse prevention, mental health promotion, family violence awareness and early childhood safety. Workshops from the 2013 conference included: Preventing Child Abuse and Family Violence through Teen Relationship Education, Welcoming Diversity; Step Toward Building Inclusive Communities, and Childhood Should Not Hurt; Child Abuse Prevention Programs and Strategies. The annual conference is open to prevention and early intervention agencies that contract with DFPS as well as other prevention service providers and interested parties. PEI planned the conference in collaboration with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, and Texas Department of State Health Services. About 260 people attended the Partners in Prevention Conference in February 2013.

PEI Services

PEI contracts with community-based agencies and organizations to provide services to prevent the abuse, neglect, delinquency, and truancy of Texas children. Services are voluntary and provided at no cost to participants. However, all services are not available in all Texas communities. To find out if services are available in your community, search for your county on the Prevention and Early Intervention Program Availability website.

For more information, see: DFPS Data Book pages 105-112 and 245-249.

Community Youth Development (CYD)

The CYD program contracts with community-based organizations to develop juvenile-delinquency prevention programs in ZIP codes with high juvenile crime rates for youth ages 6 to 17 (with a focus on youth ages 10 through 17). Communities used approaches to preventing delinquency that included mentoring, youth-employment programs, career preparation, and alternative recreational activities. Communities prioritize and fund specific prevention services according to local needs. CYD services are available in fifteen targeted Texas ZIP codes. In FY 2013, 16,767 youth received services through the CYD program. In addi-

tion, each contractor must create or participate in an existing community-based collaborative committee or group to help integrate CYD into the community. Each contractor must also provide youth programs that help youth develop leadership skills.

Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR)

The STAR program contracts with community agencies to offer family crisis-intervention counseling, short-term emergency respite care (temporary relief for those who are caring for at-risk youth) and individual and family counseling. Youth as old as age 17 and their families are eligible if they experience conflict at home, truancy or delinquency, or if a youth runs away from home. STAR services are available in all 254 Texas counties. Each STAR contractor also provides universal child abuse prevention services, ranging from local-media campaigns to informational brochures and parenting classes. In FY 2013, 23,677 youth and 19,150 primary caregivers received services through the STAR program.

Statewide Youth Services Network

These youth-services contracts make community and evidence-based juvenile delinquency prevention programs available to youth ages 6-17 in each DFPS region. In FY 2013, 4,383 clients received services through programs funded by Statewide Youth Services Network.

Texas Families: Together and Safe

Texas Families: Together and Safe is a program that funds evidence-based, community programs to relieve stress and promote parental skills and behaviors that increase the ability of families to be independent and successfully nurture their children. The goals of the program are to:

- Improve and enhance access to family support services.
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of community-based family support services.

- Enable children to stay at home by providing preventative services.
- Increase collaboration among local programs, government agencies, and families.

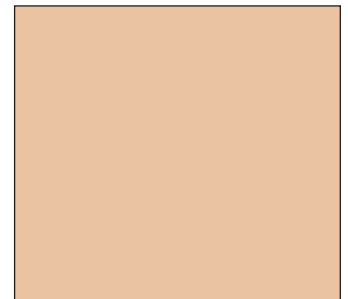
In FY 2013, 1,736 families received services.

Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

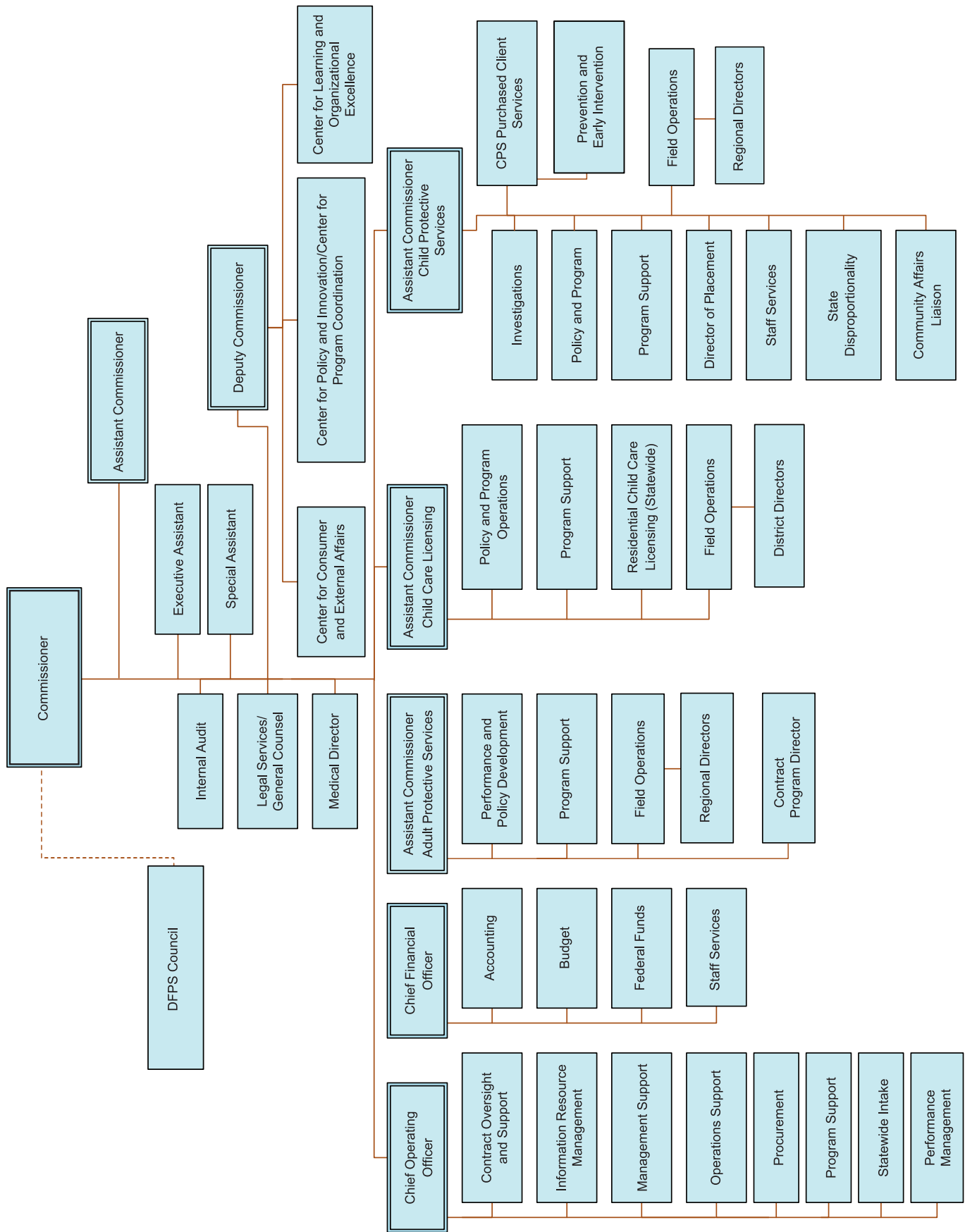
The Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) program builds community awareness of prevention services, strengthens community and parental involvement in child abuse prevention efforts, and encourages families to use the services available to them. CBCAP funds a variety of community-based organizations to provide child abuse and neglect prevention services. In FY 2013, these programs included Family Support, Respite and Parent Education, Basic Parent Education and Multidisciplinary Approach to Prevention. CBCAP also funds various special initiatives and public awareness campaigns that are noted elsewhere in this report. In FY 2013, 990 families received services through CBCAP funded programs.

Community-Based Family Services

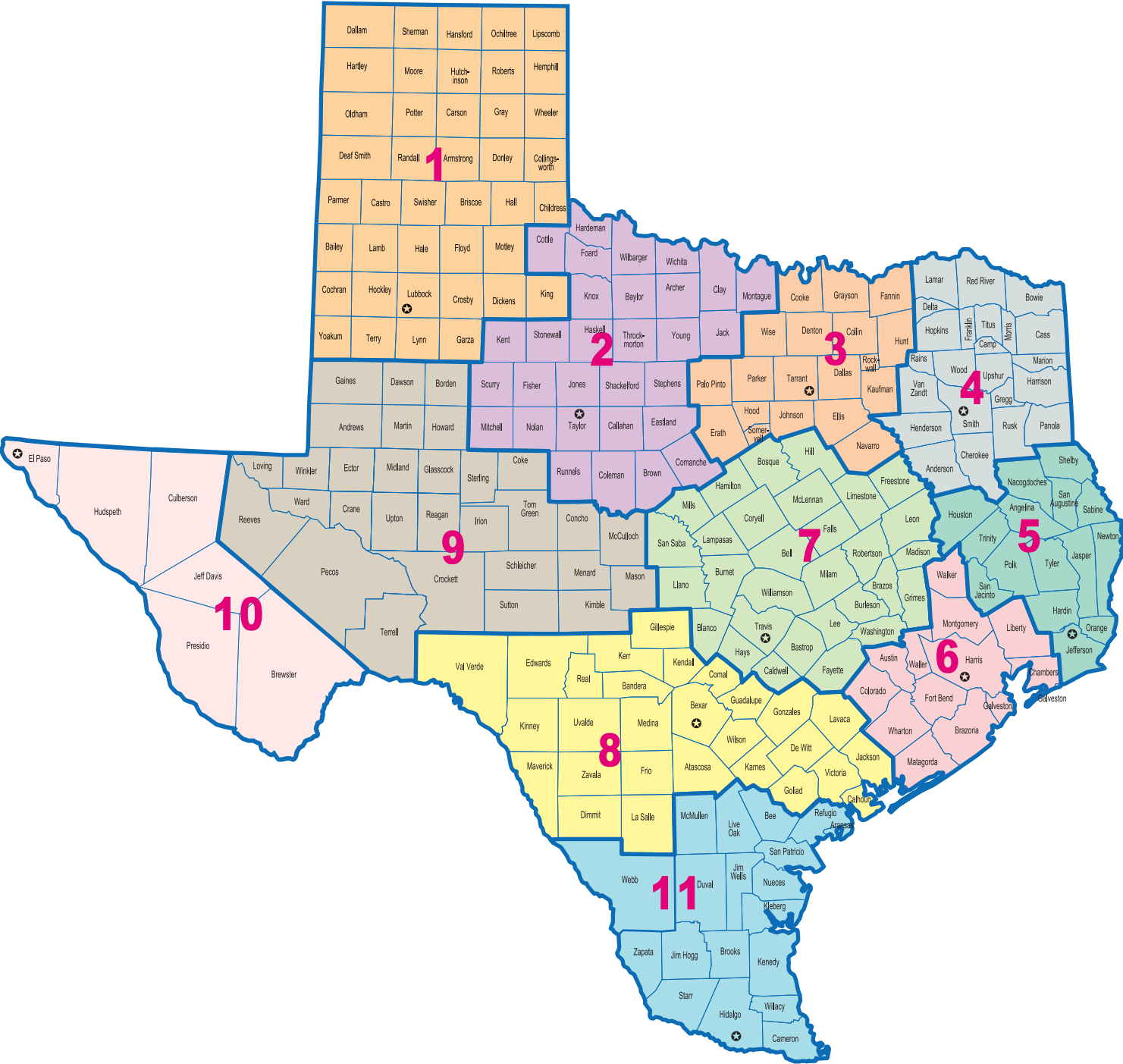
This program serves families who are investigated by CPS but allegations are not confirmed. Services include home visits, case management, and additional social services to promote a safe and stable home environment. In FY 2013, 287 families received services through the Community-Based Family Services program.



Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Organizational Chart



Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Regional Boundaries



Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Hotlines and Online Resources

Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 or www.TxAbuseHotline.org

Report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, the elderly, or people with disabilities

APS Facility Investigations: 1-800-647-7418

Report abuse, neglect, or exploitation in facilities

Foster Care and Adoption Inquiry Line: 1-800-233-3405

Provides information on how to become a foster or adoptive parent

Child Care Information: 1-800-862-5252

Delivers information about child care in Texas

Office of Consumer Affairs: 1-800-720-7777

Make an inquiry about an existing DFPS case or make a complaint

Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline: 1-800-98YOUTH

Provides peer counseling to youth and family members for family conflicts, delinquency, truancy, and running away

DFPS Web Sites

www.dfps.state.tx.us

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

www.TxAbuseHotline.org

Report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, the elderly, or people with disabilities

www.AdoptChildren.org

Adopt children through the Texas Adoption Resource Exchange

www.TexasYouth.org

Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline

www.HelpandHope.org

Child Abuse Prevention

www.EveryonesBusiness.org

Adult Abuse Prevention

www.TxChildCareSearch.org

Search Texas Child Care

www.dfps.state.tx.us/volunteer

Become a DFPS Volunteer

www.WatchKidsAroundWater.org

Safety for children around water or in cars

www.TexasYouthConnection.org

Resources for youth in foster care

www.DontBeInTheDark.org

Choose regulated child care

www.BabyRoomToBreathe.org

Safe sleeping tips for babies

Department Address

MAILING:

P.O. Box 149030
Austin, TX 78714-9030

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
(512) 438-4800

PHYSICAL

701 W. 51st St
Austin, TX 78751



**Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
2013 Annual Report & Data Book**

