



Prevention and Early Intervention

Responsibilities

- ◆ Work with Texas communities to develop services for preventing child abuse, delinquency, running away, truancy, and dropping out of school.
- ◆ Develop and maintain a statewide inventory of prevention programs aimed at preventing child maltreatment, juvenile delinquency, and academic failure.
- ◆ Plan, develop, and administer a comprehensive and unified approach to deliver prevention services to avoid fragmentation and duplication of services.

Advances

- ◆ PEI implemented a new database in 2003 to be used as a resource for volunteers who work at the Texas Runaway and Youth hotlines. The database, which contains information on about 2,800 programs across the state, will allow volunteers to better serve clients.
- ◆ PEI completed its first statewide inventory of prevention service providers during 2003. The inventory contains the names of, and contact information for, hundreds of organizations and agencies that provide services to prevent child abuse, juvenile delinquency, and academic failure.

Responsiveness

- ◆ In November 2002, PEI hosted its second annual Partners in Prevention Conference. More than 400 representatives of programs that contract in local communities to promote prevention were in attendance. The conference offered a great opportunity for brainstorming on topics such as innovations, problem solving, and gaps in services.
- ◆ As stated in the Executive Summary (see beginning of this annual report), the 2004-2005 appropriation for PEI was reduced 24 percent. As a result, six prevention programs ceased to be funded and several others had their budgets reduced by 16 percent, adjustments that fundamentally changed the complexion of the division.

Ongoing Initiatives

- ◆ In 2003, PEI worked with Austin-based Family Forward to provide a statewide primary prevention services program. Family Forward used materials created by PRS for its 2000-2002 "It's Up To You" child abuse prevention campaign.

What PEI Does

PEI manages and contracts with community-based programs to prevent the abuse, neglect, delinquency, truancy, and school dropout of Texas children. PEI programs are administered through contracts with local community agencies or organizations. PEI also helps local communities enhance the services provided by all DFPS programs. All services are not available in all Texas communities. To find out if your community has services available, visit our agency's web site at www.dfps.state.tx.us.

Programs Benefiting Children, Youth, and Families

At-Risk Mentoring

Adult mentors spend time on a weekly basis with youth. Mentors are supervised during their involvement with the youth to ensure that the relationships are mutually beneficial. Youth served through this program are ages 7 through 17 and are at risk of substance abuse, educational failure, dropping out of school, juvenile delinquency, gang activity, or running away. In 2003, the agency provided support to 10 community-based mentoring programs. At the end of 2003, appropriated funding for this program was eliminated.

Communities In Schools (CIS)

CIS develops and coordinates programs, community and business partners, and resources as a one-stop shop to improve school attendance, academic performance, everyday behavior, and the Texas dropout rate. At the end of 2003, there were 27 CIS programs receiving state contract funds. At the end of 2003, the program was moved to the Texas Education Agency.

Community Youth Development Grants (CYD)

The CYD program provides grants to develop juvenile delinquency prevention programs in communities that have a high incidence of juvenile crime. Approaches used by communities

to prevent delinquency include mentoring, parenting skills, tutoring, youth employment, career preparation, and alternative recreation activities. Local communities decide the exact prevention services provided. In 2003, the agency awarded grants to serve 15 targeted communities. Currently, DFPS provides ongoing training and technical assistance for all local CYD programs. DFPS also supports an annual youth conference, the Teen Summit, to promote youth leadership and provide training and activities.

Dan Kubiak Buffalo Soldiers Heritage Program

This specialized program helps develop honor, pride and dignity in minority and at-risk youth. The goal is to reduce and prevent risky behavior, truancy, and juvenile delinquency in males ages 10 to 17. The program strives to increase youth volunteer work, community service, leadership, and cultural activities. Referrals are received from juvenile probation departments, schools, churches, and civic groups. There are four projects located in Bexar, Dallas, Tarrant, and Tom Green counties.

Facility-Based Youth Enrichment Services

Local after-school and summer youth programs deliver enrichment activities to youth who reside in communities identified as at-risk due to indicators such as juvenile crime and high dropout rates. In 2003, the agency funded three such programs. At the end of 2003, appropriated funding for this program was eliminated.

Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)

HIPPY helps prepare children ages 3 to 5 for school and increases their parents' skills. Home instructors, recruited from targeted communities, are trained paraprofessionals who have or have had a child in the HIPPY program. In 2003, the agency funded four HIPPY programs in Austin, Dallas, Denton and Houston. At the end of 2003, appropriated funding for this program was eliminated.

Parents As Teachers (PAT)

Using age-appropriate curricula, volunteers, mostly former teachers, work with parents of newborns to 5-year-old children to minimize developmental problems and lay the foundation for school success. In 2002, the agency expanded eligibility for participation in the program. During 2003, the

agency funded five PAT programs that served Travis, Brooks, Dallas, Webb, Taylor, and Callahan counties. At the end of 2003, appropriated funding for this program was eliminated.

Second Chance Teen Parent Program

This program provides an array of services to teen parents who receive benefits through the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. The goals are to reduce and prevent the problems teenage parents and their children face and to break the cycle of welfare. Services are accessible to teens referred by the Texas Department of Human Services. Priority is given to those youth who can't live at home and are at risk of losing their TANF benefits. In 2003, Second Chance programs operated in Bexar, Dallas, Harris, and Hildalgo counties. At the end of 2003, appropriated funding for this program was eliminated.

Services To At-Risk Youth (STAR)

Through contracts with community agencies, STAR offers family crisis intervention counseling, short-term emergency residential care, and individual and family counseling to youth ages 7 to 17 who experience conflict at home, have been truant or delinquent, or have run away. STAR services are available in all 254 Texas counties.

Texas Families: Together and Safe (TFTS)

TFTS funds community-based programs that alleviate parental stress, promote parental competency, and increase child nurturing while working toward family self-sufficiency. During 2003, there were 14 programs that provided services in 42 counties.

Texas Youth and Runaway Hotlines

The toll-free Texas Runaway Hotline (1-888-580-HELP) and the Texas Youth Hotline (1-800-210-2278) offer crisis intervention, telephone counseling, and referrals to troubled youth and families. The phones are answered by a volunteer workforce of about 70 people. Many callers face a variety of problems including family conflicts, delinquency, truancy, and abuse and neglect issues. During 2003, the programs increased public awareness through television, radio, billboards and other media efforts. Hotline telephone counselors received 38,095 calls during Fiscal Year 2003.

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The idea of a charitable holiday gift drive benefiting children of homeless families may not seem like a big deal to many. But a project such as this takes on a whole different meaning when several of the youth organizing the effort don't expect to get any presents themselves for the holidays.

Such was the case in 2003 when members of the Waco Youth Action Committee (above) planned their campaign. Some of the less fortunate youth are in families where gift giving isn't always possible due to economic hardships at home.

Otherwise known as Students Together Achieving Real Success (STARS), the group is comprised of about a dozen youth, ranging in age from 8th to 12th grades from schools in the 76707 ZIP code of Waco, and is organized through the Community Youth Development program.

The holiday gift program was their first community project, according to the group's president Rhonda Alexander, a 10th grader at Waco High School. "We have a positive attitude, working together. This year, the STARS want to help others and the group consensus is, 'It's good karma,'" she said.

The Community Youth Development (CYD) program, which was created by the 74th Texas Legislature, provides services to alleviate family and community factors that lead to juvenile delinquency in 15 communities identified as having a high incidence of juvenile crime. Committees like this one in Waco serve as the youth voice to identify local service needs for funding through the CYD program. Service projects help with the learning process in gaining leadership skills and increase involvement by youth in decision-making about program services.



In most parts of the state, emergency resource centers for Child Protective Services workers are referred to as “Rainbow Rooms.” These store-like settings provide workers with 24-hour access to basic necessities that they can use to benefit children who enter the state’s care due to abuse or neglect.

In Wichita Falls, however, the “room” has 3,700 square feet, and is therefore called Rainbow House. This resource, the largest of its kind in the state, is co-located with the area’s children’s advocacy center, Patsy’s House, which is named in honor of Patsy Baggett, a woman who worked for CPS for 42 years. The same building also houses CPS investigators, police officers who work with CPS, and a resource room maintained by the area’s foster parent association. Recently, Rainbow House and Patsy’s House expanded their service areas to include nearby rural counties.

“Rainbow House is an incredible resource that helps our staff better serve children and families,” says Geneva Schroeder (left), a CPS program director in Wichita Falls. “It’s an example of how people in a community with common goals and concerns can work together.”

Penny Henderson (right), chairperson for Community Partners of North Texas, says Rainbow House receives an incredible outpouring of support from area businesses and organizations. “A Sunday school class from First Baptist Church adopted us recently and agreed to supply toilet paper for our clients for a year. Sheppard Air Force Base held a kids’ coat drive for us. The Eagle Lodge donated blankets. The Wichita Falls Police Officers Association does a jeans drive for us every year called Kids in Blue. After hearing about the effort, the police department in Odessa began conducting a similar drive in their area.”

Henderson adds that if they are running short on certain items, Junior League volunteers use grant money to go out and shop for them. “We are truly blessed to have so much support and such a big place.”

Community Initiatives Programs that Address Abuse

Child Abuse Prevention Kit

PEI worked with Child Protective Services and several partnering agencies including Prevent Child Abuse Texas, Texas Interagency Council on Early Childhood Intervention, Texas Education Agency, and the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards to increase public awareness about abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children through the Child Abuse Prevention Kit. The 2003 kit contains overviews of the agency’s programs, statistics, public awareness materials such as sample press releases and posters, and various informational resources. More than 30,000 kits and 35,000 CD-ROMS were distributed around the state as a resource for parents, teachers, child-care centers, and communities. The kits also can be downloaded from the agency’s web site at www.dfps.state.tx.us or at www.itsuptoyou.org.

Community-Based Family Resource and Support Program (CBFRS)

These contracts enable local communities and state networks to plan and coordinate family resource and support programs aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect. During 2003, the agency worked with 12 communities to increase awareness and community involvement in preventing child abuse and neglect. The Federal grant – part of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act – also funded child abuse prevention awareness materials and a small respite care project.

Family Outreach

Family Outreach is a community-based program that helps families in times of stress. The program enlists volunteers to provide support, encouragement, and parenting information under the supervision of an agency case manager. In 2003, there were 31 Family Outreach centers throughout the state supported by one PEI contract for training and technical assistance. At the end of 2003, appropriated funding for this program was eliminated.

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Greater Texas Community Partners: Rainbow Rooms and Adopt-A-Caseworker

Greater Texas Community Partners supports two projects that help CPS caseworkers meet the needs of their clients: Rainbow Rooms and Adopt-A-Caseworker. Rainbow Rooms, supported by community contributions, provide donated clothes, toys, formula, and supplies in a store-like setting. Adopt-A-Caseworker projects pair church and civic groups, businesses, and individuals with CPS caseworkers to help families and children. Participants donate items such as birthday gifts, household goods, bus passes, new clothes, gift certificates for children's meals, and money to pay for utilities. A unique public/private partnership with DFPS, local Community Partners support more than 100 Rainbow Rooms and 300 adopted caseworkers statewide. At the end of 2003, the agency moved this program to the Child Protective Services division.

Healthy Texas Families

Healthy Families is a primary child abuse and neglect prevention program. Healthy Families services begin as early as pregnancy and may continue until the child is 5 years old. Services are provided by trained professionals and include intensive home visitation, parent education, case management, and information and referral. During 2003, there were 1,169 families served by Healthy Families contracted programs. At the end of 2003, appropriated funding for this program was eliminated.

Tertiary and Secondary Prevention Training and Technical Assistance

DFPS contracts with Family Forward, formerly known as Parents Anonymous of Texas, to provide tertiary and secondary prevention training and technical assistance services to community-based parent support groups throughout the state. The goal is to promote positive parent behavior that will prevent child maltreatment. At the end of 2003, the agency consolidated this into the Tertiary Prevention Training and Technical Assistance program.

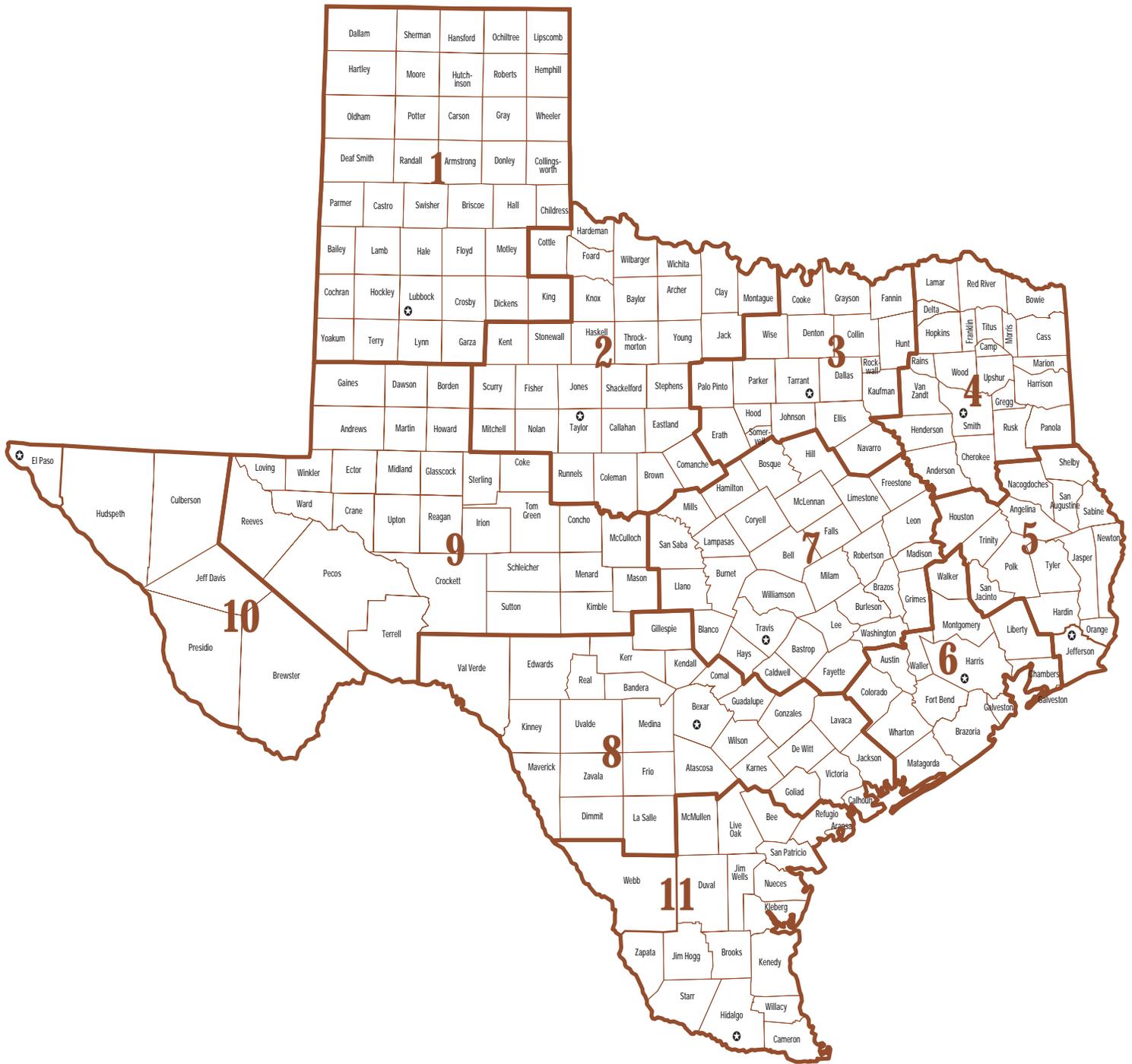


Cay Quoyeser, secretary of the Comal County Child Welfare Board, receives donations for the New Braunfels Rainbow Room. The donations were collected during a holiday drive in which agency staff in Austin donated more than 200 new items for children and families involved with Child Protective Services.

"Child abuse is something that can touch any family and no part of the state is immune," says Quoyeser. "There are so many at-risk families out there and as a community we need to help Child Protective Services help them by donating to Rainbow Rooms. I think these resource rooms are fantastic."

There are more than 100 Rainbow Rooms across the state, the majority of which are supported by Greater Texas Community Partners, Inc., a non-profit umbrella organization founded in Dallas in 1996 that promotes and supports partnerships between local volunteer organizations and CPS. Rainbow Rooms give CPS caseworkers 24-hour access to basic necessities that they can use to benefit children who enter the state's care due to abuse or neglect.

Regional Boundaries



Hotlines and Online Resources

Hotlines

- Texas Abuse Hotline** **1-800-252-5400**
Report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, the elderly or people with disabilities.
- Foster Care and Adoption Inquiry Line** **1-800-233-3405**
Information on how to become a foster or adoptive parent.
- Child-Care Information** **1-800-862-5252**
Information about child care in Texas.
- Ombudsman Hotline** **1-800-720-7777**
Make an inquiry about an existing DFPS case or make a complaint.
- Texas Runaway Hotline** **1-888-580-HELP**
To provide peer counseling to runaways and family members.
- Texas Youth Hotline** **1-800-210-2278**
To provide peer counseling to youth and family members for family conflicts, delinquency, truancy, and running away and situations where youth are delinquent, truant or have run away.
- Abuse in MHMR Facilities** **1-800-647-7418**
To report abuse, neglect, or exploitation in MHMR facilities.

Agency Web Sites

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| www.dfps.state.tx.us | Texas Department of Family and Protective Services |
| www.adoptchildren.org | Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE) |
| www.texasrunaway.org | Texas Runaway Hotline |
| www.texasyouth.org | Texas Youth Hotline |
| www.itsuptoyou.org | Child Abuse Prevention |
| www.notforgotten.org | Adult Abuse Prevention |
| www.txchildcaresearch.org | Search Texas Child Care |
| www.rainbowrooms.org | Rainbow Rooms |
| www.e-provider.org | Residential Child Care |
| www.volunteerfps.org | Volunteer Opportunities through DFPS |

Agency Address

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
P.O. Box 149030 701 W. 51st St.
Austin, TX 78714-9030 Austin, TX 78751
(512) 438-4800