



TEXAS
Health and Human Services

Texas Department of Family
and Protective Services

2016

Annual Report



"The mission of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is to protect children and people who are elderly or who have disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation by involving clients, families, and communities."

2016 Annual Report

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This report is an overview of DFPS programs, services, and accomplishments for FY (fiscal year) 2016 – September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016.

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TEXAS
Health and Human Services

**Texas Department of Family
and Protective Services**



Agency Overview

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) provides protective services, regulates child care, and works to prevent abuse and neglect. We do this through five major programs:

- Statewide Intake
- Adult Protective Services
- Child Care Licensing
- Child Protective Services
- Prevention and Early Intervention

DFPS is a unified part of the Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) System and the HHS executive commissioner appoints the commissioner of DFPS. The DFPS commissioner oversees employees in 274 local offices located in 11 regions and a state headquarters in Austin. You can learn more about the agency at DFPS.state.tx.us.

DFPS experienced a major change in leadership during FY 2016. This included the appointment of Henry “Hank” Whitman Jr. as the commissioner of the department. Commissioner Whitman promptly detailed a [ten-point plan](#) for improving CPS, built around four major themes:

- Accountability
- Building investigation expertise
- Improving foster care
- Preventing child abuse

Some early results from this plan included hiring new CPS leadership in most regions of Texas and arranging for advanced training in forensics and interviewing techniques for CPS special investigators, who can then train other investigators.

Unrelated to the ten-point plan, DFPS also gained new associate commissioners (formerly assistant commissioners) for three of its five major programs: Child Protective Services, Child Care Licensing, and Prevention and Early Intervention.



Sunset Review and HHS Transformation

The 84th Texas Legislature passed two Sunset Advisory Commission laws that had a significant effect on DFPS in FY 2016: Senate Bill 200 and 206.

Senate Bill 200, outlines a phased approach to reorganizing the HHS System. This process is now known as [HHS Transformation](#). Senate Bill 206 did away with a number of requirements to give CPS caseworkers the flexibility to spend more time with clients. It also required CPS to produce an annual business plan to focus its efforts and resources on its mission, which it did in FY 2016. The [CPS Business Plan for Fiscal Year 2016](#) is published on the DFPS website.

Consistent with legislative direction in Senate Bill 200, the Nurse-Family Partnership and the Texas Home Visiting programs moved from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to DFPS on May 2, 2016, and were consolidated with the Prevention and Early Intervention program. It was the first of a number of program transfers and consolidations designed to make the HHS System a more efficient, effective, and responsive system for the people it serves. Some DFPS support staff also transferred to HHSC in FY 2016, while continuing to work hand in hand with DFPS.

Throughout FY 2016, DFPS participated in system-wide efforts to get ready for the first phase of the reorganization, which happened when FY 2016 ended. Those transfers mostly affected other HHS agencies. However, the DFPS

Council held its last meeting in FY 2016 because it and all other HHS agency councils were replaced by the new HHSC Executive Council as part of HHS Transformation

The goals of HHS Transformation are to create a system that:

- Is easier to navigate for people who need information, benefits, or services.
- Aligns with the HHS mission, business, and statutory responsibilities.
- Breaks down operational silos to create greater program integration.
- Creates clear lines of accountability within the organization.
- Develops clearly defined and objective performance metrics for all areas of the organization.

Office of Consumer Affairs

DFPS takes complaints seriously. The Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) handles complaints and legislative inquiries about DFPS programs and addresses the concerns of DFPS clients, their families, other stakeholders, and the public in a fair and unbiased way. OCA validated 31.1 percent of the 4,652 complaints it handled in FY 2016. OCA shared the results of its reviews with DFPS managers to help them improve the quality of services. OCA also fielded 12,564 general inquiries and 803 legislative inquiries.

OCA actively reached out to foster parents and both current and former foster youth to make them aware of

its services. As a result, OCA received 176 complaints from foster parents, 64 from youth in foster care, and 14 from former foster youth. As part of HHS Transformation, the newly created Foster Care Ombudsman at the Health and Human Services Commission's Office of the Ombudsman took over the duty of handling complaints from foster youth on May 2, 2016.

You can contact the [Office of Consumer Affairs](#) toll free at 800-720-7777, by email (OCA@DFPS.state.tx.us), or through the DFPS website's Contact Us page.



Volunteers

DFPS caseworkers rely on communities to help families struggling with abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Eleven thousand, eight hundred and sixty-eight (11,868) trained volunteers and at least 114 volunteer groups worked with DFPS to help families. Volunteers logged more than 100,000 hours doing a variety of important things to help Texans who are least able to protect themselves. Examples include answering phones and text messages at the Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline and building community resources for families.



Statewide Intake (SWI)

What We Do

SWI operates the Texas Abuse Hotline to take reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and route them to the right program for investigation. These reports include allegations of:

- Child abuse and neglect at home.
- Abuse and neglect of children in childcare.
- Abuse, neglect, and exploitation of people who are elderly or have disabilities and are living at home.
- Abuse of adults and children in state facilities and programs for people with mental illness or intellectual disabilities.

We also operate the [Texas Youth Hotline](#), which provides counseling, resources, and referrals to youth and their parents in an effort to prevent abuse, neglect, truancy, delinquency, and running away from home.

2016 Accomplishments

Customer Service Awards

In FY 2016, Statewide Intake was named one of the “Best Places to Work 2016” by the Austin American Statesman. This was the second time that SWI won this award. The year before, we won several awards for customer service and efforts to develop and keep qualified staff, including the Statesman’s “Best Place to Work 2015” award.

Greater Collaboration

SWI has been collaborating with Children’s Advocacy Centers of Texas to better coordinate investigations by law enforcement agencies, Child Protective Services, and Child Care Licensing. Everyone has a single point of contact to make communication easier and to make investigations and interviews more cohesive. We expanded the program in FY 2016 to involve 60 children’s advocacy centers and more than 350 law enforcement agencies.

SWI Services

State law requires anyone who believes a child or an adult who is 65 years old or older or who has a disability is being abused, neglected, or financially exploited to report it. Statewide Intake’s primary job is to evaluate these reports and route them to the right local office.

Texas Abuse Hotline

The Texas Abuse Hotline accepts reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation from across the state on the phone at 800-252-5400 and on its secure website, [TxAbuseHotline.org](#). The hotline also accepts reports of violations of childcare standards as well as reports of abuse in facilities operated by other state agencies or community providers that serve adults and children with mental illness or intellectual disabilities.

The Statewide Intake program assigns a priority to all reports that meet the legal definitions of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. SWI bases the priority on the safety of the alleged victim and sends each report to the right DFPS program to investigate. SWI also notifies law enforcement agencies in cases that involve children. SWI operates around-the-clock every day of the year, including nights and holidays.

You can learn more about reporting abuse on the [Report Abuse page](#) of the DFPS website.

Texas Youth Hotline

This toll-free hotline provides 24-hour confidential crisis counseling, advocacy, and information and referrals to runaways and at-risk youth, their families, and other adults. Volunteers talk, text, and chat with callers who are facing a variety of problems such as family conflict, abuse and neglect, and youth who skip school or commit crimes or run away from home.

The Texas Youth Hotline serves youth and their families, school employees, youth-care workers, law enforcement agencies, and anyone in need of community services. Hotline staff and volunteers are available by phone, online chat, and text. Learn more by visiting the Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline website at [TexasYouth.org](#).

Adult Protective Services (APS)

What We Do

At APS, we investigate reports of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of adults in the community who are 65 or older or who have disabilities, and provide or arrange for protective services when needed. We also investigate allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of people living in state facilities and those receiving services in state-contracted community settings that serve adults and children with mental illness or intellectual disabilities.

2016 Accomplishments

SHIELD

The APS In-Home Investigations and Services program put a new casework practice model into action on September 1, 2014. It benefits clients by helping our caseworkers make decisions, identify needs, and resolve problems so clients are less likely to be abused, neglected, or financially exploited in the future. APS calls the practice model SHIELD (Strategies that Help Intervention and Evaluation Leading to Decisions). SHIELD includes three assessment tools:

- Safety Assessment
- Risk of Recidivism Assessment
- Strengths and Needs Assessment

In FY 2016, SHIELD tools marked their first annual milestone. APS provided follow-up training to all staff and began an evaluation process to ensure that SHIELD was working as intended and to ensure performance measures are being met.



Improving Provider Investigations

APS took steps to improve investigations involving clients who have intellectual or developmental disabilities or mental illness. Effective September 2015, the Texas Legislature broadened the type of cases APS investigates, protecting more vulnerable Texans. In FY 2016, APS worked closely with other agencies on implementation, communication, and training of providers to ensure understanding by all. APS was able to reach a consensus on the roles and responsibilities of providers and APS in the new types of investigations. The expanded scope of Provider Investigations caused a rapid and significant increase in cases and workload. APS managed the increases and received approval to hire 27 new positions.

Partnership with WellMed

In 2012, the Administration for Community Living gave APS a grant to test, measure, and put in place new approaches to prevent elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, as well as to study risk factors to improve prevention efforts. WellMed Charitable Foundation is APS' primary partner in this effort.

APS and WellMed developed a screening tool for physicians consisting of six questions endorsed by the World Health Organization. WellMed uses this tool in its clinics in San Antonio, Austin, the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and El Paso to help identify those at-risk for abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation. It also helps identify caregivers suffering from burnout. APS embedded two APS specialists with WellMed in San Antonio to provide training, technical assistance, and case consultation at WellMed clinics.

By the end of FY 2016, physicians used the new tool in over 12,000 screenings, surpassing the target of 10,000. The partnership increased communication and collaboration between APS and WellMed when providing services to the same person.

Restructure

In 2016, APS restructured the organization of its two programs to streamline the structure and improve efficiencies by consolidating regional boundaries. This equalized the management to worker ratio across the state,

increased accountability, and enhanced consistency. The In-Home program changed from a regional format to a district format so that nine regions became five districts. APS centralized the Provider Investigations programs under a single director.

APS Services

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 from 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.

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. APS may also provide or arrange for emergency services to alleviate or prevent further abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation. These services may include short-term shelter, food, medication, health services, financial help with rent and utilities, transportation, and minor home repair.

APS works in partnership with other social service agencies to provide resources to vulnerable adults. APS works closely with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) on cases that require guardianship services.



APS caseworkers or intake specialists at the Texas Abuse Hotline may notify law enforcement at any point during an investigation if they suspect a crime has been committed.

For more information, see: [APS In-Home Investigations and Services](#) in Data and Statistics on the DFPS Website.

Provider Investigations

APS is responsible for investigating abuse, neglect, and 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. The [APS Provider Investigations](#) program conducts investigations 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 the 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 should be added to the Employee Misconduct Registry and submits the person's name after all due process and appeals. This registry bars people from certain jobs that involve working with people with disabilities. This also applies to certain In-Home cases.

For more information, see: [APS Provider Investigations](#) in Data and Statistics on the DFPS Website.

Working with Partners

APS works with many partners to protect vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation, and to increase resources and services for adults who are elderly or have disabilities.

Law Enforcement

DFPS intake staff and APS caseworkers contact local law enforcement when they believe that the alleged neglect or abuse of an adult with disabilities or an elderly person might be a criminal offense. In such cases, APS staff may coordinate investigations with local law enforcement, or work with local courts when seeking emergency legal action to protect clients.

Forensic Assessment Center Network

The network gives APS access to the knowledge of medical professionals to help assess client injuries as part of abuse and neglect investigations. The Forensic Assessment Center Network also gives APS staff ongoing training in geriatric medicine and the psychological and psychiatric issues of persons with mental illness and cognitive disabilities. DFPS contracts with the University of Texas Health Science Center (UTHSC) Houston for these services.

Children's Advocacy Centers

Children's advocacy centers (CACs) work with APS on abuse and neglect investigations. CACs provide an environment where community agencies share information and develop coordinated strategies to meet the needs of APS clients. They provide specialized forensic interviews and minimize the need for multiple agencies to interview victims of abuse separately. In 2015, 97 percent of the people in Texas lived in a county served by a CAC.

Texas Partners for APS & Resource Rooms

Texas Partners for Adult Protective Services is a statewide non-profit organization that works with APS to help improve the lives of clients by developing resources that support APS clients. Twenty-five non-profits elect members to Texas Partners, which works with local boards to raise funds and educate the public and service providers on elder abuse issues. Texas Partners and local boards raise donations to stock emergency resource rooms in APS offices with supplies that APS caseworkers use, 24 hours a day, to help adults who are being abused or neglected. In FY 2015, there were 44 resource rooms meeting needs in 157 Texas counties. Resource rooms go by different names such as Bridge Rooms, Silver Star Rooms, and Silver Ribbon Rooms.

Public Awareness Campaign

It's Everyone's Business is an APS outreach campaign done every May to promote ways to protect the elderly and adults with disabilities from abuse and neglect. The major goals of the campaign are to raise awareness about the problems of adult abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation, increase awareness of APS programs and services, and enlist community support for clients and resources. In October, the campaign focuses on financial exploitation by working with organizations that provide services to vulnerable adults and supplying them with information on financial exploitation. See EveryonesBusiness.org for more information.



Child Care Licensing (CCL)

What We Do

Child Care Licensing (CCL) works to promote the health, safety, and well-being of children and youth in daycare as well as in foster care and other types of 24 hour childcare. We do this by:

- Regulating childcare operations and child-placing agencies¹.
- Issuing permits and checking to make sure operations and agencies comply with licensing standards, rules, and laws.
- Giving technical assistance to help childcare providers meet licensing standards, rules, and laws.
- Investigating reports of violations of minimum standards and reports of abuse or neglect in daycare and residential childcare.
- Educating parents and others about choosing regulated childcare and how each daycare or business complies with state standards.

2016 Accomplishments

Supporting Members of the Military, Their Spouses, and Veterans

A licensed administrator has supervision and direct control over a child-placing-agency or general residential operation and is responsible for the operation's programs, personnel, and compliance with licensing regulations. Child Care Licensing issues administrator's licenses to individuals who apply and meet certain criteria outlined in law and rule. CCL made changes to administrator licensing rules that allow exceptions and special considerations for active duty military, military spouses, and military veterans. The new rules:

- Allow CCL to waive prerequisite requirements for getting an administrator's license.
- Require CCL to expedite the application process.

- Allow CCL to substitute educational qualifications, waive application and examination fees, and issue a full rather than provisional license.
- Allow for special considerations for license renewal, including waiving continuing education requirements and late fees.

Protection against Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is the practice of controlling and exploiting others for profit. Children who have been victims of human trafficking have specific needs for services that differ from those of other children, which is why CCL has specific regulations for operations that provide this type of service. To protect the safety and privacy of these children and service providers, CCL waived the requirement to provide notice and hold a public hearing regarding residential services to be provided in a community for applicants who intend to provide services to victims of human trafficking.

In recognizing the danger posed by human traffickers to all children in care, CCL added sex and labor trafficking to the list of Central Registry offenses which bar individuals from working in permitted child care operations.

Don't Be in the Dark Campaign Gets New Light

On the heels of CCL's amplified efforts to find unregulated daycare operations and educate the public on the risks associated with choosing them, we revamped the Don't Be in the Dark campaign in the summer of 2016. The newly energized campaign features a [new website](#) and was promoted with online and social media advertisements including videos to educate both parents and those who might be operating a daycare illegally. Early results of the new campaign indicate that page views of the website increased from 4,251 in summer 2015 to 64,072 in summer 2016. Furthermore, visitors to the site were spending more time on the site, indicating the content was more engaging and useful than in the past. These early results are encouraging as they indicate both parents and unregulated

¹ Private agency that places children in its own foster/adoptive homes

providers are accessing information that ultimately will improve the safety of children in out-of-home care.

Childcare for Preschool and School-Aged Kids with Special Needs

In 2015, CCL partnered with the Texas Workforce Commission and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to develop online and instructor led training and supportive materials to educate childcare providers on inclusive care for infants and toddlers with special needs. This partnership developed from a long standing need for families of children with special needs to find quality childcare. This partnership expanded in 2016 to:

- Give online training and resources to childcare providers of preschool and school-aged children with special needs.
- Offer technical assistance documents to parents of preschool and school-aged children with special needs.

Childcare providers took 54,346 online training courses to learn about ways to care for preschool and school-age children with special needs. Seventy-nine percent of those who completed the training indicated they planned to make changes in their program as a result of the training.



CCL Services

At CCL, we have two programs (Day Care Licensing and Residential Child Care Licensing) that protect the health, safety, and well-being of children and youth in daycare and residential childcare, including foster care. We do this in two ways: regulation and investigations. Both programs have licensing inspectors and abuse and neglect investigators. Inspectors and investigators work hand in hand to make sure childcare providers follow state standards and rules and to address allegations of abuse or neglect. Child Care Licensing:

- Develops rules and minimum standards for daycare, child-placing agencies, and residential childcare.
- Takes applications and issues permits to childcare operations.
- Inspects daycare and other childcare operations.
- Investigates alleged violations of licensing laws, rules, or minimum standards.
- Investigates reports of abuse or neglect in childcare.
- Makes sure criminal background checks are done on childcare owners, employees, or anyone who is at least 14 years old and regularly present while children are in care.
- Helps current and potential childcare providers learn to comply with minimum standards.
- Takes enforcement action against operations when necessary.
- Helps parents and others make informed decisions by giving them information about the types and availability of childcare as well as results of inspections and investigations.

Who We Regulate

At CCL, we regulate four basic categories of childcare. They are licensed operations (daycare and 24-hour residential childcare), registered childcare homes, listed family homes, and operations with a compliance certificate.

Licensed Operations

CCL routinely monitors and inspects licensed operations. Licensed operations must follow specific minimum

standards and they must complete an overview of regulation before they apply and pass background checks. We issue a license only after inspecting the operation to ensure the applicant meets minimum standards. We also inspect licensed operations at least once a year or more often if we get a report of child abuse or neglect or violations of licensing laws, rules, or standards. Some licensed operations provide daycare and others provide 24-hour residential childcare.

Daycare

- Licensed childcare homes (group daycare homes) provide daycare in the caregiver's home for 7-12 children under 14 years old for at least two hours a day, three or more days a week.
- Childcare centers (daycare centers) care for 13 or more children (under 14 years old) for less than 24 hours, at least two hours a day, three or more days a week.
- Before and after-school programs provide care before or after school and on holidays for at least two hours a day, three days a week, to children in pre-kindergarten through 6th grade.
- School-age programs supervise children in pre-kindergarten through 6th grade and teach recreational skills or provide other training before or after school for at least two hours a day, three or more days a week. A school-age program may also operate during holidays or any other time when school is not in session.

24-Hour Residential Childcare

- Foster family homes provide around-the-clock care for six or fewer children under 18 years old. Some are screened and approved (verified) by a child-placing agency and some are approved directly by CCL.
- Foster group homes provide around-the-clock care for seven to 12 children under 18 years old. Foster group homes can be approved by a child-placing agency or directly by CCL.
- General residential operations, which include residential treatment centers, provide around-the-clock care for 13 or more children under 18 years

old. They may provide various treatment services, emergency care services, or therapeutic camps.

- A child-placing agency is a business that places or plans to place children in foster or adoptive homes that it approves and monitors.

Registered Childcare Homes

Registered childcare homes provide regular care in the caregiver's home for up to six children under age 14 and up to six more school-age children. Regular care means at least four hours per day, three 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 registered childcare home depends on the ages of the children. No more than 12 children can be in care at any time, including the caregiver's children.

Applicants must pass background checks and complete an overview of regulation before they apply. We issue a registration only after an inspection to make sure the provider is meeting the standards that apply. We inspect registered childcare homes every two years and also will investigate any allegation of child abuse and neglect or violations of licensing laws, 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 14 years old. Regular care means at least four hours per day, three 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. 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.

These providers do not have to meet minimum standards or take training. We do not routinely inspect listed family homes, but do investigate reports that:

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

Operations with a Compliance Certificate

Anyone wanting to operate a shelter care or an employer-based childcare operation must complete an application and get a compliance certificate. We conduct an on-site inspection before issuing the permit to make sure laws and minimum standards are met.

Shelter Care

Shelter care is childcare provided at a temporary shelter for children while their parents, who also live at the shelter, are away. At CCL, we regulate shelter care that involves seven or more children under the age of 14 for at least four hours a day, three or more days a week. Anyone wanting to operate a shelter care must pass criminal background checks and an initial inspection. We do not regularly inspect shelters, but do investigate allegations of child abuse or neglect or violations of licensing laws, rules, or minimum standards.



Employer-Based Childcare

Employer-based childcare cares for up to 12 children of employees (under age 14) for less than 24 hours per day in the same building where the parents work. CCL issues a compliance certificate only after the operation passes the application process, which includes criminal background checks and an inspection. An employer-based childcare doesn't have to meet minimum standards and is not inspected after it gets a certificate. As always, CCL will investigate allegations of child abuse or neglect or a violation of licensing laws or rules.

Violations and Technical Assistance

Our goal is to correctly and consistently enforce minimum standards for all types of childcare and to help them improve their compliance. Consistent understanding and enforcement of minimum standards is a challenge for all involved. That's why we analyze violations trends to get a better idea of how consistent we are and to learn what technical assistance we can give providers to help them meet or exceed minimum standards in the future.

Child Protective Services (CPS)

What We Do

Child Protective Services (CPS) investigates reports of child abuse and neglect to protect children from harm now and in the future. CPS works to strengthen and stabilize families so that they can safely care for their children at home. When that is not possible, CPS works with the courts and communities to find permanent homes or other places for children to live.

2016 Accomplishments

Achieving Positive Outcomes

Children in state custody often suffer from great trauma due to the abuse or neglect in their past. Because of this, they are more vulnerable and have greater needs than other children. Improving outcomes for these children can take time, but CPS has made progress. Compared to five years ago, CPS is:

- Finding permanency for more children who have been in care for an extended period of time.
- Improving child well-being by reducing the number of placement disruptions.
- Connecting more children with their extended family.

CPS identified a spike in FY 2013 and FY 2014 in the time to achieve permanency and focused efforts in FY 2015 and FY 2016 to reversing that. Permanency means leaving state care to live in a permanent home. In FY 2016, time to permanency returned to FY 2012 levels. Between December 2014 and April 2016, 65 percent of the children under the age of six who had been in care for two or more years had achieved permanency.

CPS' goal is a target of 14 months to permanency by 2020.

Adoptions

Children who leave state custody are increasingly more likely to find a permanent home. When a child cannot safely return home, adoption is the most legally permanent alternative. In FY 2016, CPS continued to take steps to decrease the length of time that children wait for adoption, increase the number of adoptions, and overcome barriers to permanency. CPS completed 5,703 adoptions in FY 2016, an increase of 0.5 percent from the previous year. Over a five year period, the annual number of children adopted from the state has increased by more than 600, or about 7 percent.

Faith-Based Efforts

CPS collaborates with faith-based organizations and community partners statewide to serve children and families who are involved or at risk of becoming involved with the CPS system. CPS provides local churches with data on the needs of children, youth, and families in their area so these congregations can determine the type of ministry they want to develop. Churches may get involved in a number of ways, ranging from prevention to permanency.

One opportunity for faith communities to support children and families is through the Care Portal, a web-based tool that allows CPS staff to connect with the faith community. CPS staff use the portal to request church support for the needs of children and families. The portal began on August 1, 2014, in Bell, Williamson, and Travis counties. It has since expanded to 19 counties in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, and 11.

At the end of FY 2016, more than 400 faith-based organizations had signed on to participate in the Care Portal. One hundred and fifty one (151) faith-based organizations were active participants and 259 faith organizations were working with CPS while waiting for the Care Portal to activate in their local area.

| Outcome | FY 2012 | FY 2013 | FY 2014 | FY 2015 | FY 2016 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <i>Exits to permanency for children in care 2 or more years</i> | 28% | 31% | 32% | 33% | 34% |
| <i>Average number of placements for children in foster care</i> | 3.4 | 3.3 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.1 |
| <i>Children in substitute care placed with relatives</i> | 39% | 40% | 41% | 42% | 43% |

CPS Services

Investigating Child Abuse and Neglect Reports

State law requires anyone who believes a child is being abused or neglected to report it so CPS can investigate. CPS interviews children, parents, and others who know about the family to help determine if abuse or neglect happened, if children are safe, and to gauge the risk of further harm. CPS investigators also consider physical evidence such as injuries, illegal drug use, and other factors such as lack of food or medical care. If needed, CPS investigators may refer families to services to help stabilize the family and address their needs. However, if services are not enough to make a child safe, CPS may ask a judge to remove the child from the parents' custody and place the child in a relative's care or foster care.

Alternative Response

In FY 2015, CPS started using an alternative to traditional investigations in a few parts of the state. Alternative Response lets CPS handle less serious allegations of abuse or neglect in a more flexible way – engaging families while still focusing on the safety of the children. CPS provides services and support to help families resolve safety issues and reduce future involvement with CPS. CPS continued to expand the use of Alternative Response. In FY 2016, CPS was using this practice in the Amarillo, Austin, Dallas, Laredo, and Midland areas. CPS plans to use this approach statewide by December 2018.

For more information, see [CPS investigations](#) in Data and Statistics on the DFPS website.

Family Based Safety Services

CPS provides in-home services to help stabilize families 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. These services often make it possible for children to return home by helping families understand and protect their children from danger. Services include family counseling, crisis intervention, parenting classes, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence intervention, and daycare.

Most children receiving these services live at home while CPS works with their families. In some cases, children may live elsewhere, usually with relatives or family friends, until they can safely return home.

For more information, see Family Preservation in the [CPS section](#) of Data and Statistics on the DFPS Website.

Children in State Care

CPS explores every reasonable alternative to keep children safe from abuse and neglect at home. But, when children cannot live safely with their own families, CPS may ask the court to remove them from their homes and temporarily place them with relatives or foster families, or in an emergency shelter or foster care facility. CPS and the courts must consider relatives and others with close ties to the child or family as an option. CPS asks parents to name relatives and family friends who might care for their children. CPS contacts relatives and explains their options and the state support that is available. These “kinship caregivers” may also adopt or accept legal responsibility for children when they cannot return home safely. Kinship care gives children more stability and keeps them connected to family when they cannot live with their birth parents.

See more on [Kinship Care](#) in Data and Statistics on the DFPS website.



Foster Care

Children live in foster care when kinship care is not an option. Foster families are reimbursed for the costs of caring for children. Together, CPS and foster parents arrange all the child's educational, medical, dental, and therapeutic services. Some children with 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. 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.

See more on foster care and other placements in Data and Statistics on the DFPS website.

Permanency

Permanency means leaving state care to live in a permanent home. This usually means children go home to their parents, go to live permanently with relatives, or get adopted. We call this positive permanency. Planning for positive permanency starts as soon as CPS removes a child from a home and ends when the child leaves CPS' legal custody.

The goal is to reunite children with their parents when possible, and CPS provides reunification services to families immediately before and after a child returns home.

Goals of the Permanency Strategic Plan created in 2015 are to:

- Safely reduce the average time to achieve positive permanency by 25% by 2020.
- Achieve positive permanency for children under six years old who have been in DFPS conservatorship for more than two years.
- Reduce the number of youth exiting care without a permanent home.
- Create a sense of urgency to achieve positive permanency.

When a child cannot return home safely, the court may give permanent custody to a relative or make the child available for adoption. The number of children adopted from foster care increased significantly in the last decade. DFPS approves adoptive homes and contracts with licensed, private child-placing agencies to increase the number of parents available to adopt children from foster care.

The Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE) website (AdoptChildren.org) is an important tool for recruiting foster and adoptive parents and also promotes adoption with photo listing and profiles of children awaiting adoption. TARE also has a toll-free nationwide Adoption and Foster Care Inquiry Line.

CPS offers services to children and their families to help adopted children overcome the trauma of abuse or neglect and the loss of their birth families. These services include counseling, crisis intervention, parent training, and support groups.

For more information, see [Adoption Placements](#) in the CPS section of Data and Statistics on the DFPS Website.

Youth Transitioning to Independence

In some cases, CPS cannot find someone to take permanent custody of a child. These youth generally stay in state care until age 18. CPS works to connect these youth with adults who are committed to them and can provide support to them. These youth may stay in foster care until the age of 21 while they seek an education or a job.

The Transitional Living Services (TLS) program provides various services to help these youth learn to live successfully on their own. Preparation for Adult Living services help youth ages 16 to 18 years of age prepare for the future. Programs for older youth include Education and Training Vouchers, College Tuition and Fee Waivers, Extended Foster Care, and more.

Extended Foster Care

Foster youth who don't achieve permanency usually leave state care after their 18th birthday. However, they can stay in or return to foster care through age 21 or 22, depending on their situation. Unless they have a medical condition



that prevents it, youth must do one of the following to stay in Extended Foster Care:

- Attend high school or a program to get a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate (GED).
- Attend college or other institutions of higher learning.
- Take part in a program or activity to make them job ready.
- Work for at least 80 hours a month.

Education and Training

The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program gives financial help to youth before and after they leave CPS care while they go to college or attend other educational programs after high school. ETV helps with expenses such as rent, computers, books, daycare, and transportation. This voucher is for former foster youth, youth adopted from state care, and some other youth whose guardians are not their parents. Youth who get Permanency Care Assistance after age 16 are also eligible. Former foster youth also get free tuition and fees at state-supported universities, colleges, junior colleges, and vocational schools.

You will find more about services for youth at TexasYouthConnection.org and the DFPS website.

Healthcare Benefits

Texas provides healthcare to children in foster care and youth who reach adulthood in foster care up to the month of their 26th birthday. These youth get healthcare through [STAR Health](#), a form of Medicaid that is overseen by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and administered by Superior HealthPlan. STAR Health includes a medical home for each child, service coordination and management, 24-hour nursing and behavioral health helplines, and psychotropic medication monitoring.

When a youth aging out of DFPS care needs long-term care or support due to a health or mental condition, DFPS refers them to the Texas Department of Health and Human Services (HHSC). If a court makes HHSC the guardian, that agency takes responsibility for the youth. However, DFPS may continue to provide foster care for young adults even if they receive guardianship services.

Working with Partners

CPS works with many partners to protect children from abuse and neglect and provide services to children and their families. Some of those partners include foster parents, child-placing agencies, CASA volunteers, child welfare boards, law enforcement agencies, children's advocacy centers, other health and human services agencies, and various providers and community partners.

Foster Parents and Other Providers

Foster parents, private child-placing agencies, residential treatment centers, and other providers work with CPS to care for and support children. While DFPS verified 1,896 foster homes directly, it contracted with 436 foster care providers to provide many thousands of additional foster homes. DFPS spent \$423,084,683 on foster care in FY 2016. DFPS also supports foster and adoptive parents by providing funds to the Texas Council on Adoptable Children and the Texas Foster Family Association. DFPS also provides funds to local foster parent associations to help them educate, train, and retain foster and adoptive parents.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

CASA volunteers are court-appointed advocates for children in CPS cases. They are independent voices for children and an important part of the legal process that helps ensure children's best interests are served.





Child Welfare Boards

Many counties provide additional resources to help CPS meet the needs of children in state care. More than 200 counties have child welfare boards appointed by commissioners courts. These boards provide significant support to enhance care and services for children in foster care and their families and help with child abuse prevention efforts.

Law Enforcement

CPS and law enforcement jointly investigate where there are allegations that children are crime victims and are at immediate risk of death or serious harm. CPS and law enforcement also work together on cases when children are exposed to the selling and making of drugs. Law enforcement notifies CPS if they plan to raid a home so CPS can protect the children. CPS contacts law enforcement if it finds evidence of a possible crime. CPS and law enforcement also work together on cases involving human trafficking.

Children's Advocacy Centers

Children's advocacy centers (CACs) provide a safe place where law enforcement, CPS, and other professionals can interview children who may be victims of sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, or who witnessed a violent crime. Many CACs also offer services such as counseling, medical

exams, and classes for abuse victims and their families. CACs have also partnered with CPS to train caseworkers on child welfare topics.

Forensic Assessment Center Network (FACN)

CPS works with the Forensic Assessment Center Network (FACN) to ensure that caseworkers have access to the most current information about abuse and neglect so they can make sure children and adults are safe. The network ensures that doctors and other experts are available to offer advice and expertise to caseworkers.

Community Partners Programs

- *Rainbow Rooms* help meet the critical needs of abused and neglected children. These resource rooms supply a variety of items such as 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 the needs of children involved with CPS. Groups have also furnished items such as birthday presents, prom dresses, household goods, and groceries.



Prevention & Early Intervention (PEI)

What We Do

PEI takes a public health approach to preventing child abuse, neglect, and child deaths. This includes supporting better outcomes for children and families by addressing challenges related to poverty, family instability, poor health, drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, and more.

We support the healthy social, emotional, and mental development of children in safe and stable families and nurturing communities. We do this through public education and contracts with community organizations that provide services to children, youth, and families, and by promoting decisions and actions that improve the environments where children and families live.

We help communities develop and improve prevention programs to strengthen families so they can live better lives. This can mean families don't get involved with CPS and their kids stay in school, avoid risky behavior, and don't get in trouble with the law. We make prevention services available at no charge. Some of these services are available statewide. Others are only available in some areas of the state. You can search for [programs available in your county](#) under Prevention Services on the DFPS website.

Our Office of Child Safety focuses on programs that work to reduce fatal and serious child abuse. This office does critical case reviews, examines data and trends, and works with other agencies to provide a safety network across Texas. The Office of Child Fatalities develops recommendations and works together with non-profit, private sector, and government programs to achieve these outcomes.

2016 Accomplishments

More Served and Better Outcomes

PEI prevention programs served 14,665 families and 44,527 youth in FY 2016, an increase of more than 20 percent from FY 2015. These services help youth avoid trouble with the law, strengthen families, and help them avoid getting involved with CPS.

- 32,029 youth between the ages of 10-16 served by PEI-funded programs did not enter the juvenile justice system in FY 2016.

- 26,603 parents served who were at risk of child abuse or neglect did not become confirmed perpetrators in a DFPS abuse or neglect investigation.

Five-Year Strategic Plan

PEI worked with many stakeholders across the state in FY 2016 to develop its five-year strategic plan, which was required by the DFPS Sunset Review law (SB 206, 84th Legislature). The strategic plan outlines PEI's goals and strategies for reducing the risk of child abuse and neglect and other childhood hardships and to promote positive outcomes for children, youth, and families. We incorporated input from webinars, think tanks, contractor surveys, regional meetings, conference participation, and staff surveys. The plan will guide how PEI conducts its business. It will ensure we collaborate with community partners and other stakeholders to make decisions that are informed by data and rooted in best practices. You can [read the plan](#) on the DFPS website.

Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES) Expanded

Project HOPES is a community-based program that brings child abuse and neglect prevention services to families with children from birth to 5 years of age. It focuses on



community collaboration in high-risk counties and on increasing protective factors in families to reduce the likelihood of abuse. In FY 2016, Project HOPES expanded to eight new counties: Dallas, Harris, Jefferson, Lubbock, McLennan, Nueces, Taylor, and Wichita. This made services available in 16 Texas counties.

Military Families and Veterans Preventive Services

PEI launched new efforts to support military families and veterans in Bell, Bexar, and El Paso counties. These counties are home to Fort Hood, Fort Sam Houston, Lackland Air Force Base, Randolph Air Force Base, and Fort Bliss. These initiatives are designed to:

- Prevent child abuse and neglect in military communities.
- Help military and veteran parents have more positive parental involvement in their children's lives.
- Improve the ability of these parents to give their children emotional, physical, and financial support.
- Build community coalitions focused on preventing child abuse and neglect.

The services helped 119 families in FY 2016. Contractors have agreed to serve 904 families in FY 2017.

Merger with Texas Home Visiting

The Texas Home Visiting program, including the Texas Nurse-Family Partnership program, merged with PEI in May 2016. This was one of the first consolidations of HHS Transformation, which is making Texas Health and



Human Services into a more integrated system. This change put all child abuse prevention programs in the HHS System in one group. As a result of the merger, PEI's staff has nearly doubled, program decisions are more integrated, and DFPS's positive impact on Texas children, youth and families will be greater.

Parent Education

In FY 2016, PEI revitalized its Help for Parents, Hope for Kids campaign. The campaign works to give parents the knowledge and resources they need to be successful parents and, ultimately, prevent child abuse and neglect. PEI added hundreds of new resources and four animated videos to the website, and ran TV ads promoting the campaign statewide for one month and online/mobile advertising for five months. Some of the online advertising was targeted at water safety for children.

During the five months of the media campaign, more than 255,316 people visited the website, consuming more than 432,431 pages of information or videos. Help and Hope education videos were viewed approximately 1,000,000 times on the campaign's Facebook page, [4MyKid](#).

In FY 2016, PEI ran online/mobile advertising for the Room to Breathe campaign, which focuses on safer sleep for babies. As a result, more than 70,557 people visited the website and viewed 80,029 pages of information or videos. Plus, PEI created a new TV ad and several animated videos for future use.



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 programs available in your county in the [PEI section](#) of the DFPS website or HelpandHope.org.

Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP)

This program funds community-based organizations that provide child abuse and neglect prevention services. CBCAP services include parent education, fatherhood services, parent leadership, home visitation, and various special initiatives. CBCAP direct services were available in Bexar, Cameron, Concho, Denton, El Paso, Fort Bend, Harris, Hudspeth, Kerr, Nueces, Runnels, Tarrant, Taylor, and Tom Green counties. In FY 2016, 1,105 families were served.

CBCAP also supports primary prevention efforts such as public awareness campaigns and outreach. This includes the DFPS child abuse prevention campaign, Help for Parents, Hope for Kids.

Community-Based Family Services

This program serves families that CPS investigates and either does not confirm abuse or neglect or does confirm an allegation but the situation is low risk. Services include home visitation, case management, parent education, and additional services shown to contribute to a safe and stable home environment. This program served 420 families in Bexar, Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Comanche, Eastland, Guadalupe, McCulloch, Mills, Runnels, and San Saba counties in FY 2016.

Community Youth Development (CYD)

PEI contracts with community-based organizations to develop juvenile-delinquency prevention programs in 15 ZIP codes that have high juvenile crime rates. Communities tailor services to their need. Some of the approaches include mentoring, jobs programs, career preparation, and recreational activities. CYD includes youth leadership development and a youth advisory committee. CYD

served 15,538 youth in Bastrop, Bexar, Caldwell, Cameron, Dallam, Dallas, Denton, El Paso, Galveston, Garza, Gillespie, Glasscock, Harris, Hidalgo, Loving, Lubbock, Maverick, McLennan, McMullan, Medina, Montgomery, Nolan, Nueces, Potter, Randall, Tarrant, and Travis counties.

Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES)

HOPES uses community collaboration in high-risk counties to reduce the likelihood that parents or other caregivers will abuse children. The goal is to increase “protective factors” in families with children up to age five. This means qualities, skills, or strategies that help people parent effectively even under stress – reducing the risk of abuse or neglect. HOPES providers use nationally-recognized methods, including home-visiting, that are either a promising practice or already proven effective. They also include other support services such as case management and help with basic needs. In FY 2016, HOPES served 2,102 families in Cameron, Ector, El Paso, Gregg, Hidalgo, Midland, Potter, Randall, Travis, and Webb, and Williamson counties. PEI expects this program to grow in the future.

HOPES II served 532 families in 19 Texas Counties (Archer, Brazoria, Dallas, Fort Bend, Hardin, Harris, Houston, Jefferson, Jones, Kleberg, Lubbock, McLennan, Nolan, Nueces, Orange, Shackelford, Tarrant, Taylor and Wichita).

Helping through Intervention and Prevention (HIP)

The goal of HIP is to help families ensure the safety and well-being of their children and prevent abuse and neglect by providing in-home education and support services through providers within their community.

The program helps:

- Current and former foster youth who are pregnant or are parenting a child up to 24 months old.
- Single teen fathers who are current or former foster youth.
- Youth who have aged out of foster care, are receiving [Preparation for Adult Living Services](#), or are in [Extended Foster Care](#).
- Families with a child up to 24 months of age, who previously lost parental rights to another child because of abuse or neglect within two years of the birth month of the new child.

- Families with a child up to 24 months of age, who previously had a child die because of abuse or neglect within two years of the birth month of the new child.

Foster youth accounted for 52 of 182 total referrals in FY 2016. HIP recently expanded from four to eight regions and now includes the Abilene, Austin, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, Lubbock, San Angelo, San Antonio, and Tyler metro areas.

Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR)

The STAR program is available in all 254 Texas counties. PEI contracts with community agencies to offer crisis-counseling for families, individual and family counseling, emergency short-term respite care, and youth and parent skills classes. STAR serves families with youth through 18 years old who are dealing with conflict at home, school attendance issues, delinquency, or have a youth who has run away from home. In FY 2016, the STAR program served 24,974 youth and 19,498 parents or other primary caregivers. STAR contractors also provide child-abuse prevention services, outreach material, and educational presentations that serve everyone in the community.

Statewide Youth Services Network (SYSN)

These contracts make community and evidence-based juvenile delinquency prevention programs available to youth ages 6-17 in each DFPS region. This includes school and community-based mentoring programs, such as Big



Brothers Big Sisters and Texas Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs. This program served 4,015 clients in FY 2016.

Texas Families: Together and Safe (TFTS)

TFTS funds community-based parent education programs in many areas of the state that have been shown to relieve stress and promote better parenting skills and behaviors to help families become self-sufficient and successfully nurture their children. The goals are to:

- Make family support services more available.
- Make community-based family support services more efficient and effective.
- Help children stay in their own homes.
- Help local programs, government agencies, and families work together.

This program served 2,592 families in FY 2016.

Texas Home Visiting

The primary goals of the Texas Home Visiting program, including the Texas Nurse-Family Partnership program, are to support community-driven approaches to enhancing maternal child health, parent child attachment, child development, child safety, family stability, and school readiness in eligible communities. Texas Home Visiting uses a multi-layer approach that supports direct services as well as early childhood systems.

Texas Home Visiting funds evidence-based home visiting services to at-risk pregnant women and the parents (or caregivers) of children up to age 5. It also funds early childhood coalitions that work to coordinate services and address broad community issues that affect young children and families. In FY 2016, Texas Home Visiting supported these programs in 40 counties and reached a total of 7,766 families.

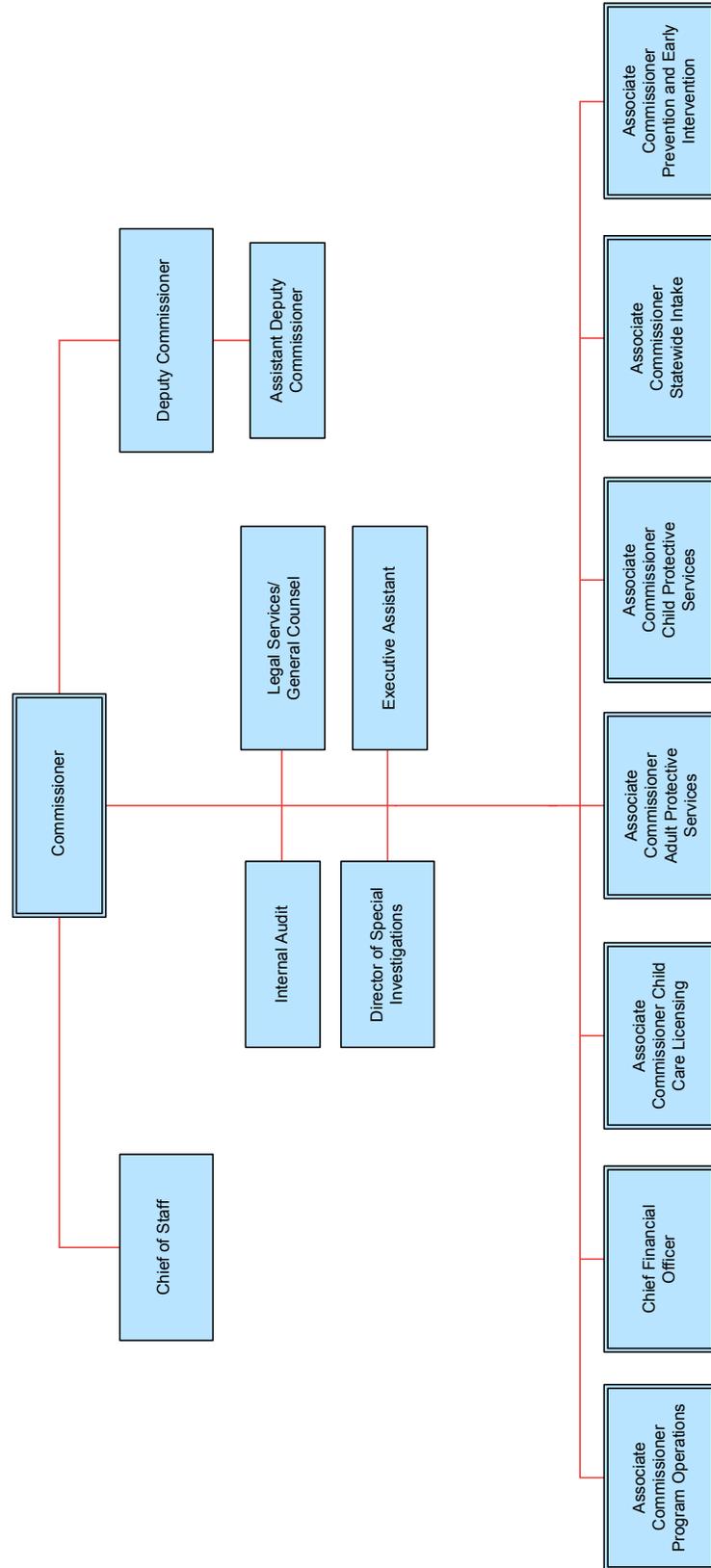


TEXAS
Health and Human Services

Texas Department of Family
and Protective Services

General Information & Resources

DFPS Organizational Chart



General Information & Resources

DFPS Hotlines and Websites

Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 or 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

How to become a foster or adoptive parent and information for current foster or adoptive parents

Child Care Information: 1-800-862-5252

Information about child care in Texas

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

Make an inquiry or complaint about an existing DFPS case

Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline: 1-800-989-6884 (chat & texting also available)

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

DFPS Web Sites

dfps.state.tx.us

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

TxAbuseHotline.org

Report abuse, neglect, or exploitation

AdoptChildren.org

Adopt children through the Texas Adoption Resource Exchange

TexasYouth.org

Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline

HelpandHope.org

Child Abuse Prevention

AyudayEsperanza.org

EveryonesBusiness.org

Adult Abuse Prevention

TxChildCareSearch.org

Search Texas Child Care

dpsf.state.tx.us/volunteer

Become a DFPS Volunteer

WatchKidsAroundWater.org

Water safety for children

CuidadoconlosNinosyElAgua.org

TexasYouthConnection.org

Resources for current and former youth in foster care

DontBelInTheDark.org

Choose regulated child care

NoEsteAOscuras.org

BabyRoomToBreathe.org

Safe sleeping tips for babies

NoEsteAOscuras.org

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