

Prevention and Early Intervention

Responsibilities

- ◆ 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 adopting outcome measures that demonstrate the effectiveness or public benefit of programs.

Accomplishments

New Programs Implemented

In FY 2007, DFPS contracted with the Relief Nursery of Eugene, Oregon to begin replicating their comprehensive model program in Texas. This program provides at-risk families with comprehensive support services. These services are based on research identifying core elements for enhancing protective factors and delivering effective child abuse and neglect prevention services. The program includes outreach, therapeutic early childhood services, parent education, mental health services, substance abuse recovery support, parent resource room, and ancillary support services.

To begin replicating the program in Texas, DFPS attempted a competitive procurement to identify two contractors within Texas to replicate the model. Though there were no successful applicants, Relief Nursery and DFPS identified two local groups of community stakeholders that were interested in and had resources to replicate the program. DFPS plans to enter into a contract or contracts during FY 2008, to begin developing the infrastructure and services, which are anticipated to begin in FY 2009.

New Programs Funded

The 80th Texas Legislature granted DFPS additional funding to implement two new programs. The first will be a juvenile delinquency prevention program called the Statewide Youth Services Network (SYSN). This program will provide community and evidence-based juvenile delinquency prevention programs in each DFPS region. The program will begin in FY 2008, with services focused on youth ages 10 through 17.

DFPS also received funding for the Community Based Family Services (CBFS) program to help reduce and prevent child abuse

and neglect. This program will serve families who have been investigated by Child Protective Services and the allegations were unsubstantiated. The program will provide community and evidence-based services to prevent child abuse and neglect. Services include home visitation, case management, and additional social services to provide a safe and stable home environment. DFPS will implement the Community Based Family Services program in FY 2008.

Interagency Coordinating Council

PEI collaborated with the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) for Building Healthy Families to develop a report entitled, "Recommendations for Improving Coordination and Collaboration of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and Early Intervention Programs and Services Among State Agencies." The ICC submitted the report to the Texas Legislature on December 1, 2006, in partial fulfillment of the requirements specified in House Bill 1685 of the 79th Legislature.

The ICC's recommendations to the Legislature were:

- ◆ Continue support for child maltreatment prevention and early intervention efforts delivered through state agencies.
- ◆ Consider an evaluation of the effectiveness of state-funded child maltreatment prevention programs and services.
- ◆ Continue the ICC and focus its efforts on child abuse and neglect, as well as on state agency initiatives to develop healthy families.

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. All services are not available in all Texas communities. To find out if services are available in your community, look under Prevention and Early Intervention on the DFPS web site at www.dfps.state.tx.us.

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. Approaches used by communities to prevent delinquency have included mentoring, youth employment programs, career preparation, and alternative recreational activities. Communities prioritize and fund specific prevention

DFPS-funded Program Gives Concho Valley Families New Hope



As we all know, there are plenty of moms and dads who could hone up on being better parents. When things go horribly wrong, Child Protective Services may get involved. In recent years, however, there has been a trend toward programs to prevent abuse or neglect. Many of those programs are successful because they don't only include professionals, but also parents who mentor each other. This mixed approach to learning better parenting is known as "shared leadership."

Not all communities have enough resources in place to offer such services, but in San Angelo, the Children's Advocacy Center of Tom Green County did that. It is one of a few agencies receiving funding from the DFPS Prevention and Early Intervention division that use a shared leadership model to work to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families.

"Everything we do has shared leadership. Parents, facilitators, and professionals work together," said Heather Ward, director of family services for the center (right). "Our services are not only about preventing child abuse. They're about making families stronger. We use trained parents as leaders and experts in everything we do. Our classroom is not only a way for professionals to teach parenting skills, really a circle where parents exchange information and tips based on their own experiences. We hope that we can help make parenting a better journey by making better choices."

Onice Luna (pictured left), explained how she got involved and eventually became a parent leader. "I was really young when I had my first child and found that being a parent could be stressful at times," she says. "I heard there were parenting classes for people who were already involved with CPS, but I wanted something before anything like that happened. I came to the center because I wanted to learn a new way to discipline my children, who are ages 10, 7, and 13 months. I came from a different background so I wanted a better way for my kids. I knew the way I was handling my kids probably wasn't the best way for them to turn into more productive adults."

Luna, who is now a mentor to other parents through the center's Parent Mentor Program, says one of the best aspects of the classes is that parents share their experiences. "When people relate to each other, that's what makes you want to come back," she says. "You start to find out there other parents going through the same things and you build relationships. I got my self esteem and felt better about being a parent. Coming here has empowered me and now I have a way to give back to my community."

services according to local needs. CYD services are available in 15 targeted Texas ZIP codes. In fiscal year 2007, 12,319 youth received services through the CYD program.

Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR)

The STAR program contracts with community agencies to offer family crisis intervention counseling, short-term emergency respite care, and individual and family counseling. Youth, up to age 17, and their families are eligible if they experience conflict at home, truancy or delinquency, or 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 fiscal year 2007, 32,085 youth received services through the STAR program.

Texas Families: Together and Safe (TFTS)

TFTS funds evidence-based, community-based programs designed to alleviate stress, and promote parental competencies and behaviors that increase the ability of families to become self-sufficient and successfully nurture their children.

The goals of TFTS are to:

- ◆ Improve and enhance access to family support services.
- ◆ Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of community-based family support services.
- ◆ Enable children to remain in their own homes by providing preventative services.
- ◆ Increase collaboration among local programs, government agencies, and families.

In fiscal year 2007, 2,741 families received services through the TFTS program.

Texas Youth and Runaway Hotlines

The toll-free Texas Runaway Hotline and the Texas Youth Hotline offer 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 program increases public awareness through media efforts that may include television, radio, billboards and other printed materials. Hotline telephone counselors received 35,548 calls during FY 2007.

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Texas Runaway Hotline:

◆ <http://www.texasrunaway.org> or 1-800-580HELP.

Texas Youth Hotline:

◆ www.texasyouth.org or 1-800-98YOUTH.

Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP)

The CBCAP program seeks to increase community awareness of existing prevention services, strengthen community and parental involvement in child abuse prevention efforts, and encourage families to engage in services that are already available. Community Partnerships for Strengthening Families (a program within CBCAP) involves parents, community members, community faith-based organizations and government agencies in a shared-leadership model that works to improve outcomes for children, youth and families. In addition, CBCAP funds support other child abuse and neglect special initiatives and public awareness campaigns as noted in those sections of this report.

Secondary/Tertiary Child Abuse Prevention

Community-based, volunteer-driven prevention, intervention and aftercare services are provided for children who have been, or who are at risk of being, abused and/or neglected. The goals of the program include reducing child maltreatment and the number of families re-entering the Child Protective Services system. Additional goals are improving the quality and availability of aftercare services for abused children, and enhancing a statewide

network of tertiary child abuse prevention programs. Services are available in select communities. In fiscal year 2007, 59 families received services through the Secondary/Tertiary Child Abuse Prevention program.

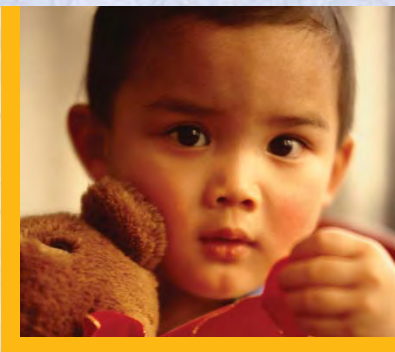
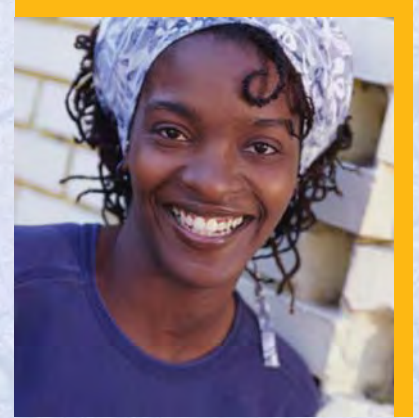
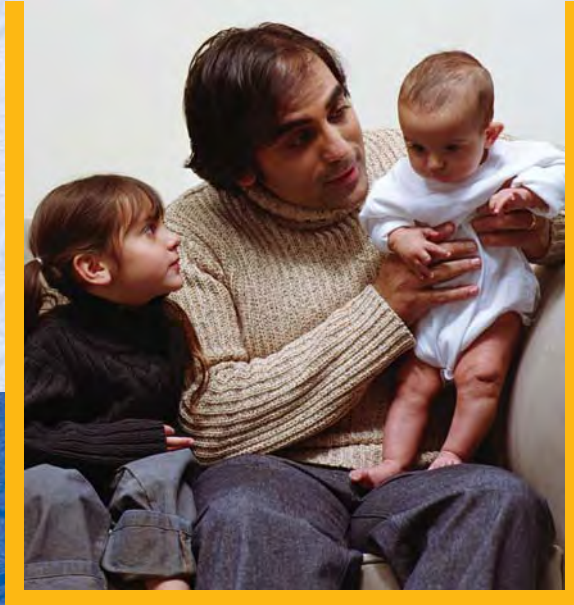
Family Strengthening

A variety of Family Strengthening services are available statewide that have been evaluated and proven to effectively increase family protective factors (At-Risk Family Strengthening Services) or that have utilized best practices and sound research in program design (Innovative Family Strengthening Services). These services are designed to increase family resiliency while preventing child abuse and neglect. Programs must also foster strong community collaboration to provide a continuum of family services. In fiscal year 2007, 1,347 clients received services through the Family Strengthening program.

Youth Resiliency

These services are either proven to effectively increase protective factors for youth (At-Risk Youth Resiliency services), or utilize best practices and sound research in program design (Innovative Youth Resiliency services). A variety of services are available across the state designed to increase youth resiliency and prevent juvenile delinquency. Programs must also foster strong community collaboration to provide a continuum of services for youth participants. In fiscal year 2007, 3,338 clients received services through the Youth Resiliency program.





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PEI Child Abuse Prevention Special Initiatives

DFPS worked with parent leaders and agency partners to assess the most effective strategies for prevention outreach. The process included a comprehensive analysis of our previously distributed outreach materials including the Child Abuse Prevention Kits. The results of the analysis indicated the need to focus prevention outreach materials directly toward families, to provide material in a format that is user-friendly for parents and to provide concrete tools that parents can use to strengthen their parenting skills. As a result, DFPS created a prevention calendar for families across the state titled "The Parent Puzzle: Putting the Pieces Together". The purpose of the calendar was to provide caregivers practical advice, as well as tools for dealing with common parenting challenges such as temper tantrums, potty training, and setting rules.

PEI distributed 200,000 calendars to more than 250 agencies, contractors and partners across Texas, including:

- ◆ More than 150 social service providers who work with PEI and CPS.
- ◆ Licensed child care facilities, child welfare boards and child advocacy centers.
- ◆ The Dallas Independent School District (for programs such as Youth and Family Centers, School Campus Parenting Programs, Teen Parenting and Education Program, Health Services and Counseling Services) and other public schools.
- ◆ Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices in many locations.
- ◆ The Children's Partnership, Southeast Dallas Business & Professional Women's Club, local churches and Family Violence Prevention Services, Inc.

PEI also provided 500 copies of the federal child abuse prevention kit and 1,500 child abuse prevention posters to contractors, CPS regional staff, and local child welfare and other nonprofit agencies across Texas.

Additionally, PEI created and distributed 1,000 prevention resource cards to provide tools for practitioners working in the prevention field.

Partners in Prevention Training Conference

Each year, DFPS hosts the Annual Partners in Prevention Training Conference in Central Texas. The conference brings together social services professionals, parents, advocates, educators, law enforcement professionals, childcare professionals, community

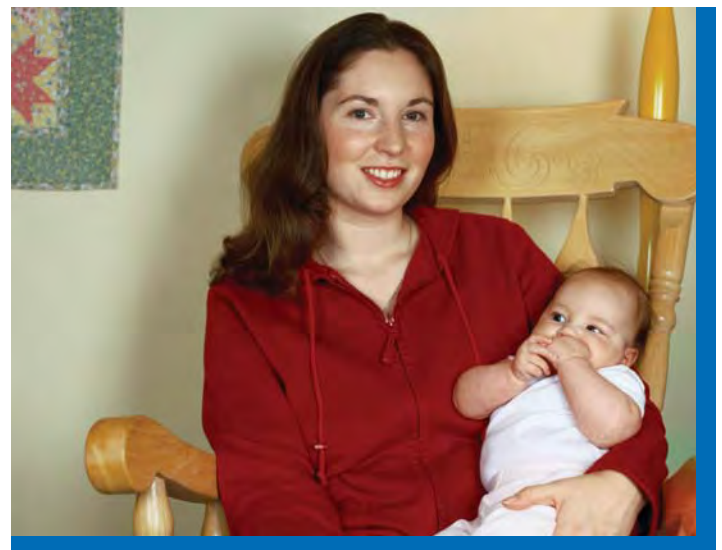
leaders, and faith leaders interested in improving programs and sharing expertise. The conference is open to prevention and early intervention agencies that contract with DFPS, as well as all other prevention service providers and interested parties. Department collaborators for the FY 2007 conference (held in Austin in November 2006) included the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services, Texas Youth Commission, Texas Education Agency, Office of Attorney General, Texas Workforce Commission, and the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission. More than 400 people attended the Partners in Prevention Conference in November 2006.

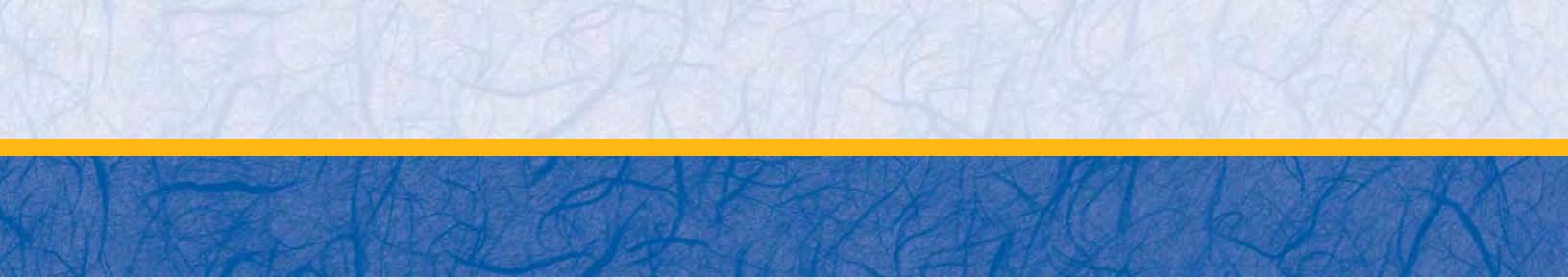
Public Awareness Campaigns

During FY 2007, PEI and other DFPS staff continued to conduct public awareness campaigns targeting child safety, to assist with parent resiliency, and to increase awareness of specific child safety issues. Those campaigns include:

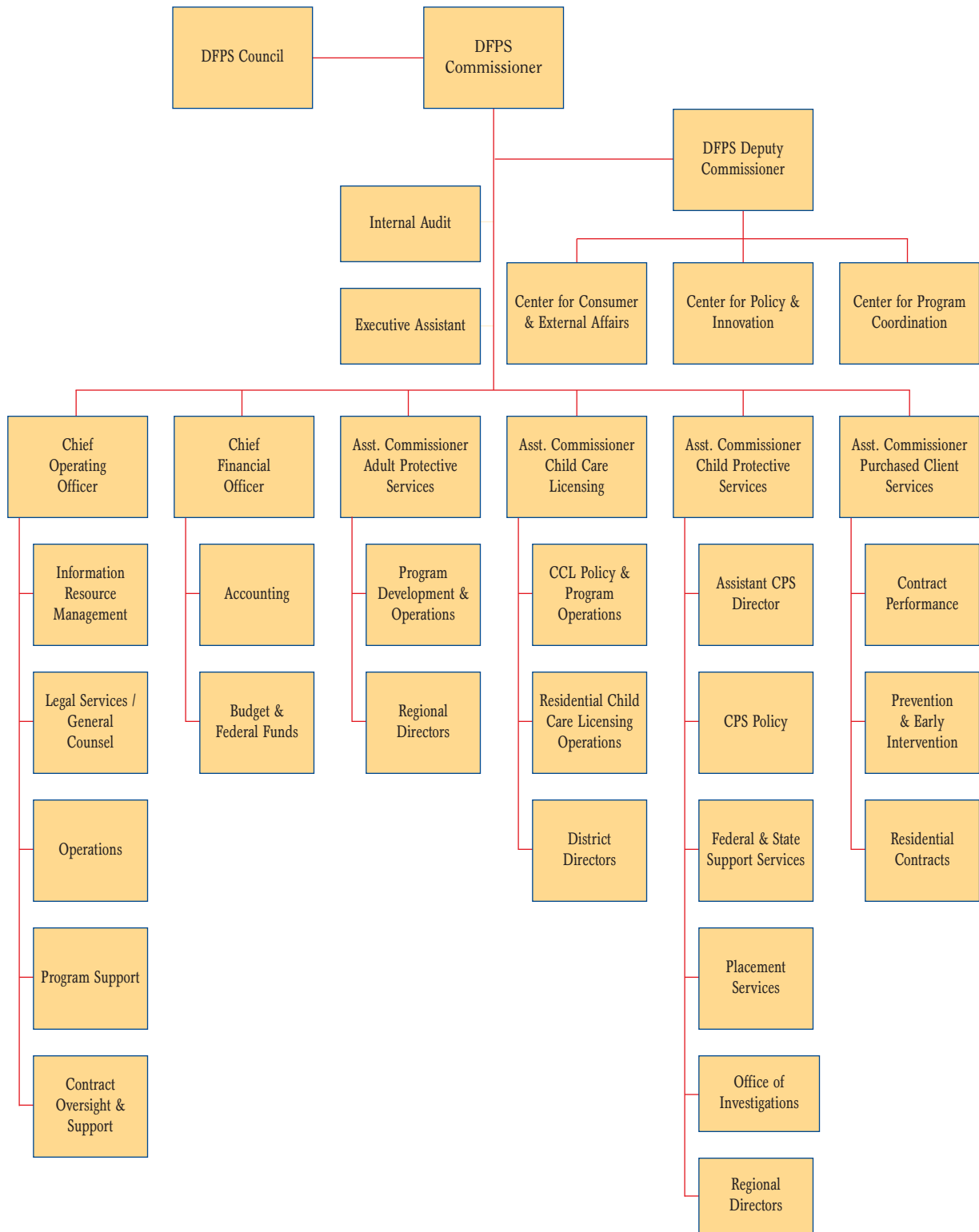
- ◆ See and Save, which seeks to prevent accidental child drowning, and child injury and death due to heat in cars.
www.seeandsave.org
- ◆ Don't Be in the Dark About Child Care, which seeks to increase awareness of the risks of unregulated child care.
www.dontbeinthedark.org

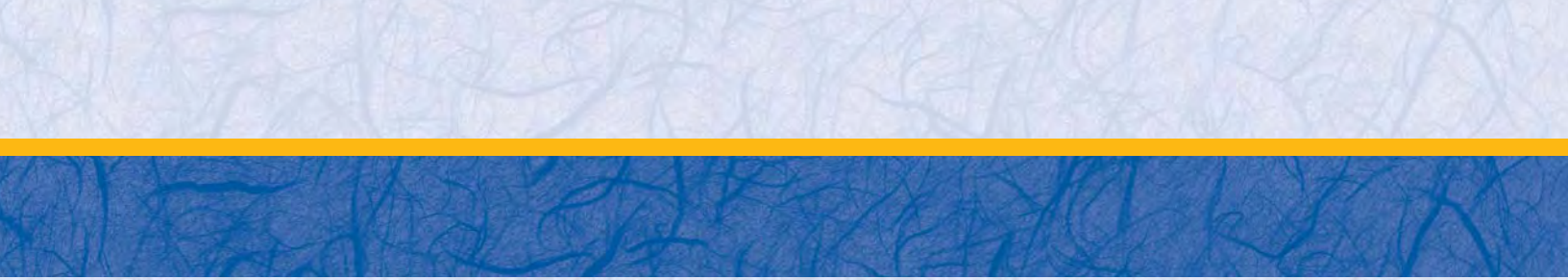
Downloadable information for each campaign is available in English and Spanish. These and other DFPS public awareness campaigns may be found at www.dfps.state.tx.us or www.itsuptoyou.org.





DFPS Organizational Chart





DFPS Regional Boundaries

