



**TEXAS**  
Department of Family  
and Protective Services

**Capacity Strategic Plan**

**Region 3 West and East (Catchments 3A and 3C)**

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September 26, 2019

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## **Introduction**

As outlined in Chapter 264.1261, of the Texas Family Code, “appropriate management personnel from a child protective services region in which community-based care has not been implemented, in collaboration with foster care providers, faith-based entities, and child advocates in that region, shall use data collected by the department on foster care capacity needs and availability of each type of foster care and kinship placement in the region to create a plan to address the substitute care capacity needs in the region.” The statewide foster care needs assessment was completed in August 2019 and helped to inform the goals and objectives outlined in this plan, which specifically addresses the needs of the catchments 3a and 3c areas located in Regions 3 West and East.

## **Foster care placement forecast and assessment of capacity need**

The Region 3 West and East Plan was developed using the data from the August 2019 DFPS Foster Care Capacity Needs Assessment found using the following link:

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About\\_DFPS/Reports\\_and\\_Presentations/CPS/documents/2019/2019-08-06\\_Foster\\_Care\\_Needs\\_Assessment.pdf](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About_DFPS/Reports_and_Presentations/CPS/documents/2019/2019-08-06_Foster_Care_Needs_Assessment.pdf)

## **Regional plan to increase capacity**

Building capacity goes beyond recruiting more foster homes for the children in CPS care, even though that remains an important part of our state-wide effort. Decreasing the number of placement disruptions and ensuring children are in the most appropriate placements will allow the catchments to free placement capacity for the children who are in need.

Therefore, our plan to increase capacity starts with the belief that children deserve to be part of a permanent home with a caring committed individual, and children and youth must maintain a positive connection with their family and supports in the community. Positive outcomes including reunification, permanent placement with relatives or adoption are more likely when we

strengthen family supports, including supports to our kinship families throughout the process of verification.

A stakeholder/provider meeting for Region 3 West and East was held on September 24, 2019. The Foster Care Needs Assessment was reviewed, and regional/catchment data was presented focusing on historical analysis and forecasted capacity needs for Fiscal Years 20-21.

While DFPS is honored to submit this plan on behalf of the community, the goals and strategies contained herein belong to us all. DFPS would like to thank the following organizations for participating in the development of the Regional capacity strategic plan: Amazing Grace, Our Community Our Kids, CK Family Services, Upbring, Children's Hope, Agape Manor, Texas Family Initiative, Vessels with Purpose, Jonathan's Place, Hope Cottage, Texas Baptist Home for Children, AGH, Azelway, Arrow, Make A Way, Kids First Inc., TGIF, Benchmark, Angelheart, Passage of Youth, Refugee House, TFL, and ACH.

The following strategies were identified by stakeholders and the DFPS regional leadership team:

## **Regional Plan to Increase Capacity**

### **Goal 1: Support children and youth transitioning between settings**

Positive outcomes including reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or adoption are more likely when we strengthen family supports.

#### **Objective 1.1: Support the transition of youth from paid foster care to kinship or other placements**

- Ensure earlier and adequate communication with treatment team to include but not limited to CPS, the children involved, therapists, and CPAs
- Implement pre-placement program to include: pre-placement staffing, pre-placement visit, post-placement staffing and follow up via skype or phone
- Ensure we inform staff of the need for wrap around services and pre-placement visits
- Connect kinship families with supports provided by the Kinship Development Worker and maintain communication with kinship placement to offer support
- Have foster parents create a "scrap book" for the child of his/her experiences, etc in foster home with pictures, child "likes," what a typical day looks like for child before any placement changes and for child to take to home when reunified
- Educate regarding the creation of safety plans with the child's support network if there are any issues
- Keep the child involved in planning and ensure their voices are heard

#### **Quick Wins**

- Ensure that CPS revisits KIN options throughout the case, even though a relative may not have been an option early in the case. Ask the question: "What can we do to make this Kinship placement work?"
- Quicker referrals to Kinship Unit once a relative is identified.
- When child is accepted for placement, send worker a photo/video of home, pets, and other things to make child more comfortable
- Reduced risk of child behavioral reactions due to increased child involvement in transitions

**Goal 2: Maintain sibling groups and build capacity for sibling groups**

Children deserve to be part of a permanent home with a caring committed individual, and children and youth must maintain a positive connection with their family and supports in the community.

**Objective 2.1: Ensure Centralized Placement Unit (CPU) searches remain active until siblings are placed together**

- Communicate to providers the need for targeted recruitment and the need for increasing sibling placements
- License for full capacity
- Emphasize to foster parents, Child Placing Agencies (CPA), CPU, and caseworkers the critical importance of sibling connection. Discuss importance of transition planning when working on placing siblings together and discuss realities of change in role dynamics within a foster family once a separated sibling joins the family where other sibling has been living
- CPA's and DFPS FAD will ask families to be open to placement of at least 2 kids
- If all siblings cannot be placed together, ensure they are placed geographically close and get monthly visits together

**Quick Wins**

- Keep siblings within the same CPA if not all in same home
- Conduct pre-placement visits
- Ensure sibling visits and willingness of caregivers to allow siblings to spend the night
- CPS will meet with the new placement prior to the placement being made and communicate how that child(ren) can be supported.

**Goal 3: Build capacity for older youth to be placed closer to home and in a family like setting**

Children deserve to be part of a permanent home with a caring committed individual, and children and youth must maintain a positive connection with their family and supports in the community.

**Objective 2.1: Ensure older youth are placed close (within 50 miles) to home or with relatives.**

- Break stigmas about older youth and encourage placement by building confidence of caregivers to parent older youth

- Offer pre-placement visits
- Have frank and open conversations with older youth

#### Quick Wins

- Conduct pre-placement visits
- Debunk myths with caregivers on the challenges of caring for older children
- CPS will meet with the new placement prior to the placement being made and communicate how that child(ren) can be supported

### **Goal 4: Identify supports to caregivers to meet children's needs**

Our goal is to increase capacity by supporting our caregivers and children to ensure they have the best opportunity to be in the least restrictive placements and providing appropriate transitions to placements.

#### **Objective 4.1: Cross-provider education and information sharing**

- Cross provider education and information sharing including how to overcome barriers regarding transportation, therapies, doctor's appointments, daycare, etc.
  - Therapy in Homes
  - YES waiver
  - ECI/ECI Hopes
  - Staff Nurse Practitioners
  - Network doctors
  - Transportation-some CPA's have hired transporters
- This conversation will be included in our quarterly provider meetings
- Letting caregivers know what to expect i.e. children being upset after visits, parents not showing up for visits

#### **Objective 4.2: Support transition of youth from RTCs to less restrictive settings**

- Encourage the foster parent to meet the children/youth before they go to the home (Face-to-Face, Skype, Facetime) that could help reduce fear on both ends
- Critical reviews of the common applications to ensure they still accurately depict the child's needs

- Critically reviewing the current local curriculum on completing common applications
- Utilizing respite services, YES waivers, therapy and psychological evaluations
- Utilizing safety plans if there are any issues
- Keeping the child involved in planning
- When a child reaches moderate or basic level begin conversations regarding how we will prepare the needs for transition
- Inform legal stakeholders of the importance of normalcy and least restrictive placements
- Implement step-down visits prior to placement
- Have foster parents create a “scrap book” for the child of his/her experiences, etc in foster home with pictures, child “likes,” what a typical day looks like for child before any placement changes and for child to take to home when reunified

#### Quick Wins

- Pre-placement visits/communication
- Talking to therapist or mentor

#### **Goal 5: Keeping the provider community informed of CPS capacity needs**

Collaborating with providers and allowing opportunity for dialogue, discussion, and identifying trends and progress will ensure we are engaging, planning, and progressing towards meeting our objectives.

#### **Objective 5.1: CPS will communicate with providers what capacity is needed both regionally and specifically for certain children needing placement. Allowing providers to relay to CPS what the plan is for growth while allowing opportunity for questions and concerns**

- CPS will provide information at the quarterly provider meetings regarding capacity need
- Identify what information would be helpful to provide on a regular basis
- Regional Director will request a regularly updated report on sibling placements to be provided as well
- Have continuous conversations with the provider community on CPS capacity needs
- Receive information from providers regarding plans for increasing capacity
- This meeting will also provide an opportunity for providers to share information and strategies with each other