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# An Overview of DFPS Programs Serving Children Under Age Six

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# Prevention and Early Intervention

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## *Early Childhood Programs and Services*

Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) contracted with eight providers under Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES) serving eight counties, nine providers under the Helping through Intervention and Prevention (HIP) program serving 29 counties, eight providers under the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) program serving 10 counties and four providers with the Texas Families Together and Safe (TFTS) program serving 20 counties to provide services for families with children under the age of six in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015. All HOPES, HIP, and one of the CBCAP providers specifically target families with young children using evidence-based programs. HOPES, TFTS, and CBCAP providers offer various services including parent education with child care services, case management, mentoring, counseling, concrete supports, transportation, and home visitation. Not all services are available in every program. The programs are designed to reduce child abuse and neglect; therefore, services often focus on the caregivers of the child, with the child receiving few direct services.

## *Service Enhancements and Innovations*

The HOPES and HIP programs, PEI's newest programs, targeting children under 6 were procured in FY14 and procurement efforts to expand the program began in FY15. The HOPES program is an early childhood collaborative program that includes home-visiting services and targets families with children between the ages of 0-5, with an emphasis on community collaboration and wrap-around services. HOPES serves at-risk families who have two or more risk factors for child abuse and neglect and are expecting a child or who already have a child between the ages of 0-5 years of age. The first eight counties served through the HOPES program included Cameron, Ector, El Paso, Gregg, Hidalgo, Potter, Travis, and Webb. A second round of HOPES counties, HOPES II, was selected based on a county risk assessment completed in 2013. Those counties include: Lubbock, Wichita, Taylor, Dallas, McLennan, Harris, Jefferson, and Nueces. Contracts for HOPES II began January 2016. PEI will procure another set of high risk counties, HOPES III, following similar methodology and takes into account existing home visiting contracts. HOPES III contracts are estimated to begin in November 2016.

The HIP program provides an extensive family assessment and home visiting programs that include parent education and basic needs support to targeted families. Eligible families include those who have previously had their parental rights terminated due to child abuse and neglect in the past two years who currently have a newborn child, families who have previously had a child die with the cause identified as child abuse or neglect in the past two

years or later who have a newborn child, or current foster youth who are pregnant or who have given birth in the last two years.

Another PEI program targeting young children is the Home-visiting, Education, and Leadership (HEAL) program which began in FY14 using CBCAP funds. The HEAL program provides home visiting and parent education services to families and encourages participants to become leaders in their communities. Interested parents receive training in leadership skills, how to access resources and services in their community and how to work with other parents and community leaders to enact change. The HEAL program serves the following counties: Concho, Harris, Runnels, Tarrant, and Tom Green.

### *Collaboration and Coordination*

The 84<sup>th</sup> Legislature directed the merger of the Texas Home Visiting Program formerly with Health and Human Services Commission with PEI. The merger became effective May 1, 2016. Prior to the merger PEI collaborated closely with the Texas Home Visiting Program. Texas Home Visiting funds Nurse Family Partnership (NFP), Parents as Teachers (PAT), and Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPPY) with 31 providers in 41 primary counties.

PEI at the state level, in addition to through its local providers, collaborates with CPS, hospitals, schools, and other community agencies to increase awareness of services and initiatives such as safe sleep and water safety. Through social media and the HelpandHope.org website, PEI is reaching hundreds of thousands of Texans including those with children under six with potentially lifesaving information. PEI's positive parenting campaign, which has been refreshed with new videos and articles on parenting topics, has reached more than 2.6 million people resulting in a half-million video views and nearly 62,000 website clicks. In addition, PEI's water safety initiative, which was recently rolled into Help and Hope for maximum impact, has reached 1.3 million people, resulting in 126,000 video views and 23,000 website clicks. Both websites are available in English and Spanish. PEI also continues to promote the Room to Breathe campaign collectively with the Department of State Health Services and Child Care Licensing to encourage parents and caregivers to follow safe sleep practices for infants.

### *Identified Needs for Early Childhood Programs and Services*

- Expand the HOPES program to additional counties during FY 17
- Expand the pool of HIP contractors and the HIP service area
- Continue to expand our prevention campaign efforts to de-stigmatize getting parenting help in addition to promoting healthy parenting
- Continue to work on collaborations with diverse partners

<b>PEI Programs for FY15</b>	<b>Number of Children Age 0 to 6 Served*</b>	<b>Expenditures by Program**</b>
<b>Project HOPES</b>	1,371	\$7,035,006
<b>Project HIP</b>	58	\$141,037
<b>Services to At-Risk Youth</b>	3,298	\$19,212,514
<b>Community Youth Development</b>	509	\$5,836,340
<b>Texas Families: Together and Safe</b>	289	\$2,585,487
<b>Statewide Youth Services Network (SYSN)</b>	31	\$1,536,983
<b>Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention</b>	104	\$2,578,021
<b>Community-Based Family Services</b>	248	\$621,195
<b>All Program Total</b>	<b>5643</b>	<b>\$39,546,583</b>

\* Additional children could have been served. These numbers only include the target child.

\*\* Includes all ages 0-18

Source: Fiscal Year 2015 DFPS Data Book

# Child Protective Services

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## *Early Childhood Programs and Services*

CPS becomes involved with families and children only after a report of abuse or neglect is received. CPS investigates the allegations and assesses the family for safety and risk and, if needed, provides referrals for the family to community resources or pursues further action to ensure child safety. CPS refers all children under the age of 3 with a substantiated case of abuse or neglect to Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) for assessment, evaluation, and services. All children in CPS legal custody age three to five are referred to the Head Start program, and those under the age of 3 are referred to the Early Head Start program. The children have priority status for available slots, but are not guaranteed enrollment. In addition to these services, children in DFPS conservatorship who are ages three and four, are eligible for enrollment in the free pre-kindergarten programs offered at local public schools.

## *Service Enhancements and Innovations*

CPS serves all children from birth to 17, and any special services required for children under the age of 6 are procured or referred to appropriate community agencies and resources. Currently, CPS supports a number of initiatives designed to improve outcomes for all ages of children, including Foster Care Redesign, Permanency Roundtables, and the CPS Practice Model, which incorporates elements of the agency's safety decision making model along with other components such as trauma informed care.

CPS developed a Statewide Permanency Strategic Plan to guide the ongoing permanency work across the state. Further, DFPS prioritized the goal of achieving positive permanency for children under six years old who have been in DFPS conservatorship for more than two years. For young children under the age of six, spending two or more years in substitute care constitutes a huge percentage of their lifetimes. Each region created action plans, which outline specific strategies and tasks to achieve this goal. CPS State Office monitors these plans quarterly.

Young children (age 0-5) in care are categorically eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start, regardless of biological or foster family income; however, local Head Start programs establish priorities for enrollment and have limits on capacity, so children in DFPS conservatorship are not guaranteed slots in all Head Start programs. DFPS, the Texas Education Agency, and Head Start and Early Head Start developed a model statewide Memorandum of Understanding to support early childhood services to children in foster care.

### Collaboration and Coordination

Building community relationships and partnerships has strengthened the Texas CPS system. Best practices have been incorporated to reinforce relationships and increase communications. With the assistance of an Advisory Committee, community meetings, focus groups, and Town Hall Meetings to gather stakeholder input, have been held across Texas. CPS has sought and supported stakeholder and community participation in workgroups, the development of policy revisions, and training with staff. Churches and non-profit organizations host meetings and join community advisory groups. Partnerships with independent school districts across the state look at ways the educational outcomes of children and youth in foster care may be improved, including disproportionality in school disciplinary practices and special education and other issues.

### Identified Needs for Early Childhood Programs and Services

- More Head Start and Early Head Start programs offered in communities and by public schools
- More behavioral health services for children and youth not in CPS legal custody
- More services to help families address identified child safety threats, including substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and domestic violence batterer intervention

Children Served by CPS	FY14	FY15
Texas State Child Population	7,266,760	7,311,923
Total Number of Children Served, all ages <sup>1</sup>	587,152	620,527
Total Number of Children Served, all ages under 6	232,280	239,674

<sup>1</sup> Includes all principals ages 0-17 with an open stage during FY 12 and youth ages 18-21 in open extended foster care or PAL stage  
Sources: DFPS Annual Book and DFPS Management and Report Statistics Division

CPS Expenditures	FY14		FY15	
	State	Total	State	Total
All Ages	\$628,223,434	\$1,268,693,208	\$595,210,034	\$1,338,853,136
Ages Birth to 6	\$248,776,480	\$502,402,510	\$229,751,073	\$516,797,310

Source: DFPS Budget

# Child Care Licensing

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## *Early Childhood Programs and Services*

Child Care Licensing (CCL) does not provide services to children; however, CCL safeguards the basic health, safety, and well-being of Texas children age 0-17 by developing and enforcing minimum standards for 31,000 child care facilities and child-placing agencies. All facilities combined can serve a capacity of 1.1 million children age 0-17. The child day care licensing program regulates child care in registered and licensed homes, licensed centers, before- and after-school programs, school-age programs, employer-based day care facilities, listed family homes and day care programs in temporary shelters. The residential child care licensing program regulates child-placing agencies, general residential operations, and independent foster homes.

## *Service Enhancements and Innovations*

While CCL does not provide direct services to children, there were significant program enhancements that impact children age birth to six years. In Fiscal Year 2015, CCL strengthened minimum standards to reduce risk to children in care, including:

- Adding a new requirement for daycare and residential facilities to develop and implement a policy outlining which vaccines for vaccine-preventable diseases that an employee must receive based on the level of risk the employee presents to children due to the employee's contact with children;
- Limiting a foster family home to care for a maximum of two infants and two more children under six years old, unless the placement is necessary to maintain a sibling group of children;
- Enhancing the home screening process for prospective foster homes and the monitoring of existing foster homes;
- Improving care for foster children with serious medical needs to ensure the most appropriate care and treatment is provided;
- Requiring each foster child's care to address the trauma suffered by the child and the child's unique cultures, experiences, and beliefs;
- Strengthening rules to allow foster children to live as normal a life as possible; and
- Enhancing services for children who are victims of human trafficking in residential care.

In March 2015, CCL announced the availability of free online training for child care providers related to the inclusion of infants and toddlers with special needs in child care settings. With funding provided by the Texas Workforce Commission, CCL contracted with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to develop several online courses, tip sheets, and

multi-media resources intended for parents, providers, and child care licensing staff. There was also an opportunity for some providers to attend face-to-face instructor-led trainings.

### *Collaboration and Coordination*

CCL continually builds and strengthens connections with stakeholders, community partners, and other agencies and programs to positively impact children under age six.

Examples include:

- an extensive collaboration with DSHS and AgriLife Texas Cooperative Extension (a part of the Texas A&M University system) to develop free child-care related training opportunities;
- collaboration with DSHS on policies related to TB elimination, immunizations, general sanitation and environmental health, childhood lead prevention programs, infectious disease control, injury prevention, and comprehensive disaster response protocols;
- coordination and collaboration with the Texas Department of Insurance, State Fire Marshal's Office, on policies and minimum standards related to fire inspections in child care operations; and
- collaborations with community partners to broaden parent/caregiver, provider, and interested others' awareness of CCL campaigns aimed at choosing regulated care and reducing child fatalities due to hot cars, drowning, or unsafe sleep practices.

Other CCL partners include Texas Department of Public Safety, DSHS, Texas Medicaid Program, Texas Workforce Commission, DARS-ECI, the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children, the Texas Licensed Child Care Association, TEA, TDA, Office of the Attorney General, HHSC Office of Early Childhood Coordination, HHSC Family Violence Program, the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services, the Texas Association of Child-Placing Agencies, the Texas Early Learning Council, and 2-1-1 Texas.

### *Identified Needs for Early Childhood Programs and Services*

- Increased public awareness on topics addressed in CCL campaigns, including choosing regulated care to avoid the significant dangers of unregulated, illegal child care operations; safe sleep practices; and preventing child drownings and child fatalities related to hot cars.
- Funding for automation system enhancements to improve documentation and tracking of activities as related to risk to children in child care operations.