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Texas Department of Family and Protective Services





Introduction

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Annual Report 2003

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) serves the state's children, youth, families, the elderly, and people with disabilities. We accomplish our mission – to protect the unprotected – through our Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, Child Care Licensing, and Prevention and Early Intervention programs.

The 2003 Annual Report is an overview of the agency's programs, services, performance, and accomplishments. This report covers the fiscal year beginning Sept. 1, 2002, through Aug. 31, 2003 when the agency was known as the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS). The companion to this report, the 2003 DFPS Data Book, is a descriptive statistical resource of the agency's services. The 2003 Annual Report and Data Book can be found on the agency's web site at www.dfps.state.tx.us.

Statewide, our dedicated DFPS employees make tremendous contributions every day, in cooperation with a vast network of public and private partners, to fulfill our mission. We are pleased to present this summary of the services we provide, as well as highlight the agency's performance and accomplishments. ■



Thomas Chapmond
Commissioner



C o n t e n t s

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Executive Summary

The mission of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), formerly known as the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS), is to protect children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

For the time period covered by this report, the agency was led by a six-member rule-making board, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Texas Senate. Currently, the DFPS commissioner is chosen by the executive commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and directs almost 6,700 employees in five administrative districts and a state headquarters in Austin. Four major programs make up DFPS: Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, Child Care Licensing, and Prevention and Early Intervention.

Cross Program Initiatives

- ◆ **Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services** redesigned the computer-based reporting system for abuse and neglect (called the Child and Adult Protective System or CAPS) to a web browser-based application that increases usability and provides a platform for the future of child welfare, adult protective services, and case management. The new system, which was implemented in 2003, is called Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas (IMPACT).
- ◆ The Advancing Residential Childcare (ARC) Project is a joint initiative of the Health and Human Services Commission and DFPS that began work in December 2002. The ARC Project is dedicated to evaluating and improving the Texas foster care system. With the assistance of DFPS

staff, child-care providers, children's advocates, and many other stakeholders, the ARC Project is working to achieve these goals:

- Implement an integrated philosophy and approach to residential child-care centered on individual child needs.
- Improve and streamline the monitoring of foster families, residential child-care agencies, and residential contract providers.
- Promote the development of best practices in residential child-care services.
- Use outcomes to improve the system of care in Texas.

During the first year, the ARC Project led the effort to convert the level of care descriptions of a child's behavior into a description of the child's needs. These four new service levels were included in the residential services contracts effective September 2003. The ARC Project is currently working on revising the residential child care standards and identifying outcomes measures for children in care related to safety, permanency, and well-being.

Child Protective Services (CPS)

- ◆ In 2003, CPS saw positive results from ongoing efforts to reduce turnover of CPS caseworkers.
- ◆ CPS began a new, collaborative effort with the support of the Casey Family Program to foster cooperation, collaboration, and communication between agency staff and families who come into the CPS system. Through this process, which is known as family group decision making, families who become involved with CPS work with staff to help correct the problems that led to their children coming into the state's conservatorship.

Adult Protective Services (APS)

- ◆ APS worked with the Texas Elder Abuse and Mistreatment (TEAM) Institute, a unique collaboration with the Baylor College of Medicine Geriatrics Program and the Harris County Hospital District, to develop a fatality review team in Houston.
- ◆ APS developed a new system for prioritizing investigations in MHMR settings, worked with the Protective Services Training Institute of Texas to implement a certification program for field workers, and strengthened its quality assurance program to better evaluate the quality of services it provides to its clients.

Child Care Licensing (CCL)

- ◆ In 2003, Child Care Licensing revised minimum standards for child day-care centers. The new standards, which were adopted following an extensive public review period, were also rewritten into an easy-to-understand question-and-answer format designed to improve compliance and reduce mistakes.
- ◆ To increase efficiency, CCL implemented policies that eliminate the duplication of sanitation and fire inspections conducted by local political subdivisions in day-care centers and revised its application policies to process new applications when a child placing agency changes locations.

Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI)

- ◆ PEI completed its first statewide inventory of prevention service providers during 2003. The inventory contains the names of, and contact information for, hundreds of organizations and agencies that provide services to prevent child abuse, juvenile delinquency, and academic failure.
- ◆ PEI collaborated with Austin-based Family Forward to provide a statewide primary prevention services program. Family Forward used materials created by DFPS for its 2000-2002 “It’s Up To You” child abuse prevention campaign.

Ombudsman’s Office

- ◆ DFPS has a strong impact in the lives of the people we serve. When clients have case-specific complaints about our actions, they may contact our Ombudsman’s Office (now known as the Office of Consumer Affairs) at 1-800-720-7777 for an impartial review of their case. The review determines whether the agency’s policies have been followed properly. If corrective action is needed, DFPS offers a variety of solutions such as administrative reviews, hearings, and mediation.

During Fiscal Year 2003, the Ombudsman’s Office received 8,347 contacts from various sources including the public, consumers, elected officials, other agencies, and DFPS staff. Of the total contacts received, 2,821 were handled as case-specific complaints or legislative inquiries. The validation rate of complaints has consistently been 4 percent for the past several years.



2003 Budget Shortfall and Reorganization of Health and Human Services Agencies

In 2003, Texas government changed the way its state agencies provide health and human services. The changes were due to two separate but related events: A funding shortfall in general revenue that affected all state government, and a reorganization of health and human services agencies due to the enactment of House Bill 2292, 78th Texas Legislature, Regular Session.

As directed by the Texas Legislature, PRS began 2003 by developing a budget from the ground up based on a reduced general revenue amount determined by the Legislative Budget Board, which was about 12.5 percent less than the previous biennium. As a result of the budget process, the agency reduced staffing in the areas of administration and support.

Executive Summary

The appropriation for Child Protective Services staff who deliver services directly was increased to account for anticipated increases in caseloads during the next biennium. At the same time, the appropriation for foster care reimbursement and adoption subsidies increased 5.1 percent from 2003—less than cost projections—and CPS purchased services' appropriation was reduced 7.5 percent from the 2003 level.

The appropriation for Adult Protective Services in home services was reduced by less than 1 percent, but with anticipated caseload increases in 2004 and 2005, caseworkers are expected to take on larger caseloads. One section of APS experienced a more substantial reduction: MHMR investigations, an area whose appropriation was reduced 25.7 percent from the 2003 level. The impact of that reduction may mean slower response time to non-priority cases, and increased workload for staff investigators who perform these investigations.

The agency's Child Care Licensing budget was reduced by 8 percent overall. Impact of that reduction may mean fewer staff and less frequent inspections for the roughly 24,000 Texas child-care facilities regularly inspected.

The Prevention and Early Intervention division's overall appropriation was reduced 24 percent. As a result, the following programs ceased to be funded: Healthy Families, Family Outreach, At-Risk Mentoring, Home Instruction Program for Pre-school Youngsters, Second Chance, and Parents as Teachers. Services to At Risk Youth, Community Youth Development, and the Texas Youth and Runaway Hotlines had their budgets reduced by 16 percent each. The Buffalo Soldiers program received zero funding, but the agency received legislative direction to fund that program from monies within the PEI budget up to \$250,000. The Communities In Schools program saw its \$17.6 million budget slightly increased, however, that program moved to the Texas Education Agency effective Sept. 1, 2003.

House Bill 2292 consolidated the number of health and human services agencies from 12 to four under the direction of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. Through House Bill 2292, Texas health and human services agencies began mid-2003 to consolidate organizational structures and functions, eliminate duplicative administrative systems, and streamline processes and procedures. The legislation also renamed the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS) as the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), with a name change effective February 1, 2004. ■



In 2003, Statewide Intake enhanced the secure web site for receiving non-emergency reports of child abuse and neglect. Originally launched in 2002 for use only by teachers, the site was expanded to include all professionals reporting abuse or neglect to CPS as required by the Texas Family Code 261.101. Professionals required to report include teachers, nurses, doctors, attorneys, day-care employees, clergy, medical practitioners, social workers, mental health professionals, employees of clinics or health care facilities that provide reproductive services, law enforcement, juvenile probation officers, and juvenile detention or correctional officers.

Comments from professionals using the web site have been generally very positive. One person shared, "This type reporting screen allowed me to complete the report very confidentially. I have many interruptions and to be able to take care of the students' needs and come right back and continue where I left off was a tremendous blessing. Thank you for the quick responses. We appreciate all that you do for our children." Another said, "I appreciate this opportunity to have a quiet way to inform CPS of suspected abuse. A telephone call is easily overheard in our offices by other co-workers or our clients."

During Fiscal Year 2003, CPS received close to 12,000 web-based reports, an increase of about 34 percent from Fiscal Year 2002. In Fiscal Year 2004, the agency plans to expand the web site to non-emergency reports of abuse/neglect/exploitation for elderly/disabled adults and launch public awareness efforts about the web site to professional organizations and associations.



Child Protective Services

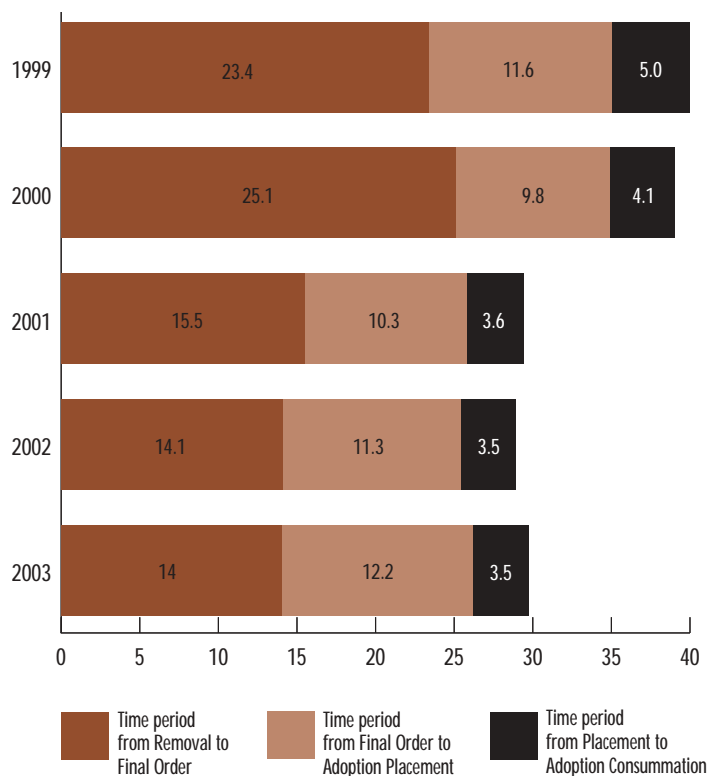
Responsibilities

- ◆ Conduct civil investigations of reported child abuse and neglect.
- ◆ Protect children from abuse and neglect.
- ◆ Promote the safety, integrity, and stability of families.
- ◆ Provide permanent placements for children who cannot safely remain with their own families.

Advances

- ◆ CPS and Adult Protective Services redesigned their computer-based reporting system for abuse and neglect to a web browser-based application that increases usability and expandability. (See Executive Summary.)
- ◆ During 2003, CPS hired 11 regional developmental disability and education specialists, who will help staff provide effective services to children with disabilities and improve educational outcomes for children in foster care.
- ◆ CPS began a new, collaborative effort with the support of the Casey Family Program to foster cooperation, collaboration, and communication between agency staff and families who come into the CPS system. This family group decision-making process seeks immediate and extended family members to work with CPS staff to help correct the problems that led to their children coming into the state's conservatorship. This approach has shown it can help decrease the number of children in care, increase involvement with extended families, and increase kinship care. During 2003, DFPS also worked with the Casey Family Program to improve services for youth transitioning to adulthood through public and private partnerships.
- ◆ CPS participated in the Texas Kincare Task Force, a public/private collaboration to examine current laws and policies and determine what is needed to make family caregiving more effective.
- ◆ In 2003, CPS began a project that links mentors who provide support and career guidance with youth age 21 and younger who recently left the state's care. Called the E-Mentoring initiative, the project matched 48 young adults with E-Mentors set up through the Orphan Foundation of America.

Months Spent in State Care for Children Whose Adoptions Were Consummated



- ◆ In the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex, CPS was involved in establishing a resource center for children ages 14 to 18 who were in the process of aging out of the state's care. Known as the Transition Resource Access Center, this one-stop resource provides these youths with support programs in which they can learn to become independent and realize their full potential. The center is housed in a 6,300 square foot building donated for 10 years, rent-free, by the Meadows Foundation, which also provided financial resources to remodel the structure.
- ◆ In 2003, staff in Dallas County established a new program called Foster Friends that recruits and trains volunteers to assist caseworkers with transportation, visitation supervision, and clerical duties.

Responsiveness

◆ In September 2002, CPS submitted a plan to the federal Administration for Children and Families to improve outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being of children who come into the state's care. The plan, known as the Child and Family Service Review Program Improvement Plan, includes strategies for the agency to implement during the next two years and was written in response to a federal review of the agency. As part of the process, the agency also began conducting regional reviews in 2003, with an estimated completion date in Fiscal Year 2004.

◆ In 2002, Texas Health and Human Services Commission Children's Policy Council made suggestions for improvements to CPS. In 2003, CPS responded by developing a plan to implement the council's recommendations.

◆ CPS staff initiated a plan called CHILD (Congregations Helping In Love and Dedication), to recruit foster and adoptive parents in faith-based communities. Agency staff also worked with Judge Robin D. Sage, 307th Family District Court, Longview, to begin a recruitment effort for foster parents from the faith-based community. Under Senate Bill 1489, 78th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, CPS was directed to recruit foster parents from faith-based organizations.

◆ In 2003, the PRS Board adopted a rule so the agency could comply with federal regulations regarding the number of months children remain in the state's care and a funding methodology for finding permanent homes when appropriate. Prior to this, PRS had followed the terms of the permanency rider as set forth in Senate Bill 1, 77th Texas Legislature, Article II, Rider 2 (II-110).

Ongoing Initiatives

◆ CPS continued to expand its Collaborative Adoption Project, a federal grant to improve collaboration between the public and private sectors. During 2003, CPS established formal agreements with private adoption agencies in the Beaumont, El Paso, and Tyler regions.

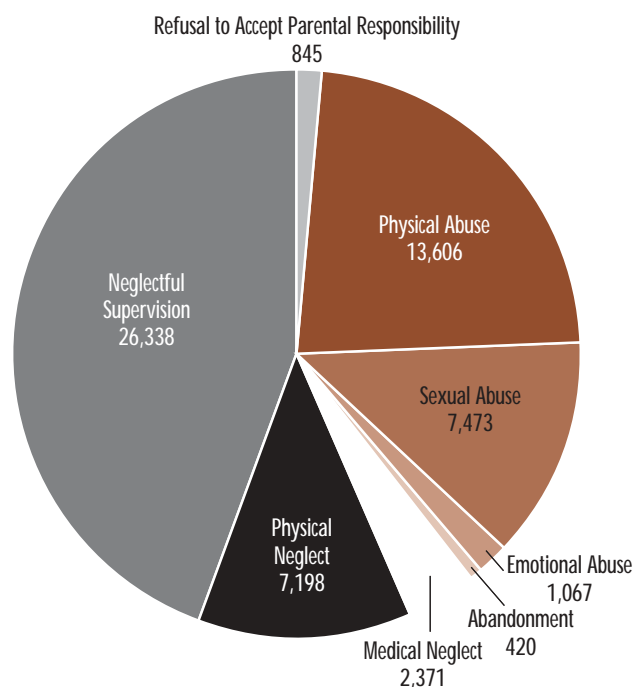
◆ CPS entered into an agreement with the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse to help treat youths in the state's care. Before the agreement, CPS contracted with adolescent residential treatment facilities to access similar services.

◆ In 2003, CPS began to revitalize a nationally recognized, team-oriented, parent-mentoring program called FAME (Family Advocate Model for Empowerment). The program, based in the Panhandle, pairs birth parents with foster parents to teach them the importance of creating stable homes for families and children. The resulting mentoring relationships not only help minimize the separation trauma children experience when they are placed in foster care, but also help when families are reunified.

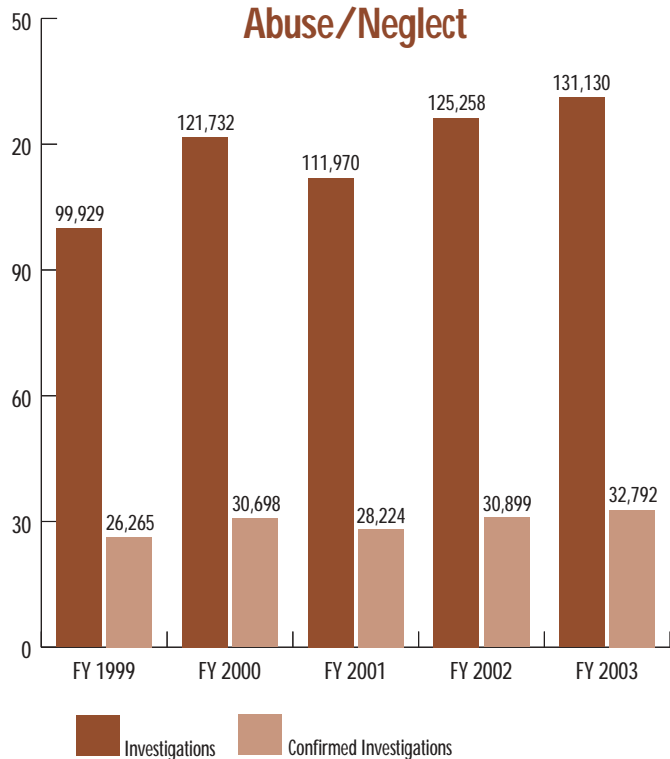
◆ An ongoing effort to reduce turnover of CPS caseworkers resulted in improved staff retention. In 2003, the turnover rate was 23.5 percent, down from 25.3 percent in 2002 and 27.9 percent in 2001.

◆ The rate of recidivism for abuse/neglect within 12 months declined to 8.6 percent in 2003 from 10 percent in 2002. This reduction in repeated cases of abuse and neglect can be attributed to the involvement of CPS Risk Directors, who now review and consult with caseworkers on each new investigation involving children age 3 and younger. Other contributing factors are a greater emphasis on risk factors found in investigations, and the overall decline in caseworker turnover.

Confirmed Victims of Abuse/Neglect by Type FY2003



Completed Investigations of Child Abuse/Neglect



What CPS Does

Intake

DFPS administers a toll-free, 24-hour statewide hotline for reporting suspected abuse or neglect of children, disabled persons, or the elderly at 1-800-252-5400. Anyone needing to report abuse or neglect (in English or Spanish) can reach a professional intake worker. All reports meeting the statutory definitions of abuse and neglect are assigned a priority based on the level of risk to the alleged victim. Law enforcement agencies are also notified of reports regarding children. The agency received 185,732 reports of child abuse and neglect in 2003. During 2003, an increasing number of professionals took advantage of an option to report suspected abuse or neglect online using a secured web site. In 2003, close to 12,000 web-based reports of abuse or neglect were received through this Internet reporting option.

State law requires that anyone who believes that a child is being abused or neglected report the situation to the DFPS abuse hotline at 1-800-252-5400.



Every year, thousands of children enter the state's care due to abuse or neglect. Many are part of sibling groups, have special medical, physical, or developmental needs, or belong to ethnic minority groups. Most of these children are eventually reunited with their families, but are often placed in foster care until their birth families can be stabilized. As a result, there is a severe need across Texas for foster parents, especially those who can help reinforce the children's cultural identity.

After adopting and raising a child (whom they adopted through CPS), Juanita and Manuel Trujillo of Brownsville decided they had more love to share. "Although we already had an adult child who was married and raising his own children, my family decided we could foster," says Juanita (left). They began in 1994 with a sibling group of two girls and one boy and since then, they have fostered more than a dozen more children. "There are lots of children who need love," says Juanita. "They keep you on your toes. They bring you happiness."

Juanita says she enjoys the assistance her family receives from CPS and foster care worker Elizabeth Garza-Higgins (right). "The agency has been very supportive. Whenever I need her help, Elizabeth is there."

Investigations

When an intake is assigned, CPS workers interview children, parents, and others with knowledge of the family. These interviews help determine if child abuse or neglect has occurred and assess the risk of further harm to the child. If criminal conduct is involved, law enforcement may investigate at the same time to determine if criminal charges will be filed. In 2003, CPS completed 131,130 investigations. Even if evidence of abuse or neglect is not found, caseworkers may refer families to services in the community, such as individual or family therapy, parenting classes, or programs offering financial assistance for utilities, rent, and child care.

Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS)

When child safety can be reasonably assured, CPS provides in-home services to help stabilize the family and reduce the risk of future abuse or neglect. Services provided include family counseling, crisis intervention, parenting classes, substance abuse treatment and child care.

Most children served through FBSS continue to live at home while the agency works with their families. In other cases, children may live elsewhere temporarily, usually with relatives or family friends, until the home becomes safe enough for them to return. In 2003, an average of 9,484 families per month received in-home services.

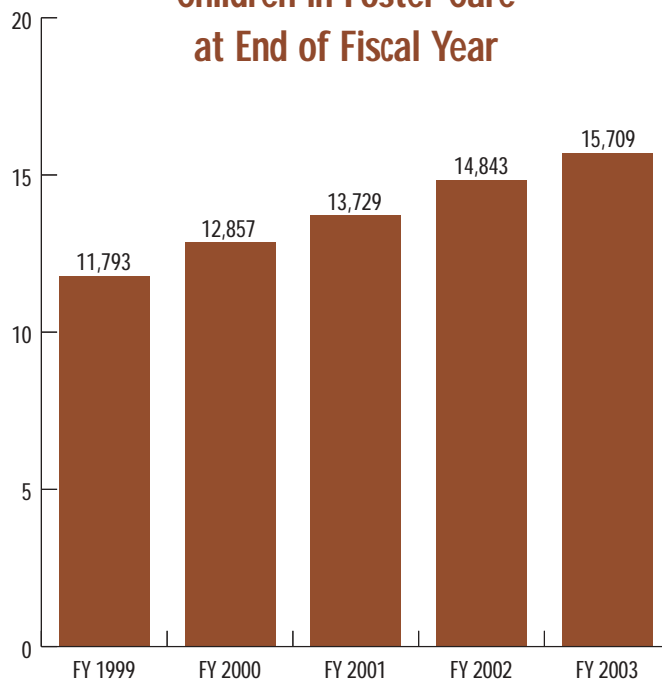
Foster Care

When it isn't safe for children to live with their own families, CPS petitions the court to provide for their safety. They may be placed temporarily with relatives, a verified foster family, or an emergency shelter. Certified foster families provide a safe, nurturing environment for most children in CPS care. Foster families receive reimbursements for the cost of caring for children. CPS is required to arrange all medical, dental and therapeutic services needed by the child. Some children have special emotional needs or other disabilities that can be difficult to address in a foster care home. These children may be placed in specialized group homes, residential treatment centers, or other facilities.

Permanency Planning Teams

When children are removed from their home and placed in the state's custody, the CPS caseworker, the parents, and the children's temporary caregivers work together to develop a written case plan and address the factors that caused abuse or neglect. They also review the progress made in the case plan on a regular basis with the input of the other professionals

Children in Foster Care at End of Fiscal Year



involved in the case. The goal is to ensure that children live in a stable, nurturing environment and do not remain in foster care. This coordination helps all parties concerned to determine a permanent solution for the child – or what is known as a “permanency plan.” Whether the plan is for a child to return home or be adopted, the team works to avoid unnecessary delays in the process.

Adoption

When it is not possible for a child to return home, the court may terminate the parents' rights and legally free the child for adoption. DFPS completed 2,444 adoptions in 2003. DFPS contracts with licensed private child-placing agencies to increase the number of adoptive homes available to adopt foster children. At the end of 2003, there were 4,016 children in the agency's custody waiting for adoption.

Dual-Licensed Homes

The number of foster parents who adopt children placed in their homes continues to increase. In 2003, 52.3 percent of adoptions were by foster parents. National studies indicate greater opportunities for successful adoptions in these situations because children and their new parents form a bond

Child Protective Services

during the foster care placement. CPS has made a concerted effort to “dually license” homes for both foster care and adoption services.

Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Families

CPS actively recruits foster and adoptive families through national, state, and regional campaigns. Examples include the statewide Foster Care Month in May, Adoption Awareness Month in November, and the One Church, One Child programs currently in place in Fort Worth/Dallas, Beaumont, and Houston. In the San Antonio area, staff worked with Ujima Services for Children, a private agency promoting the adoption of African American children. In the agency’s Beaumont region, staff continued to work closely with Rev. W.C. Martin of the Bennett Chapel in Possum Trot, Texas to encourage adoption of African American children.

Texas Adoption Resource Exchange

The Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE) provides information on children waiting for adoption. Photos, profiles, videos and inquiry forms are on the Internet at www.adoptchildren.org. TARE participates with national

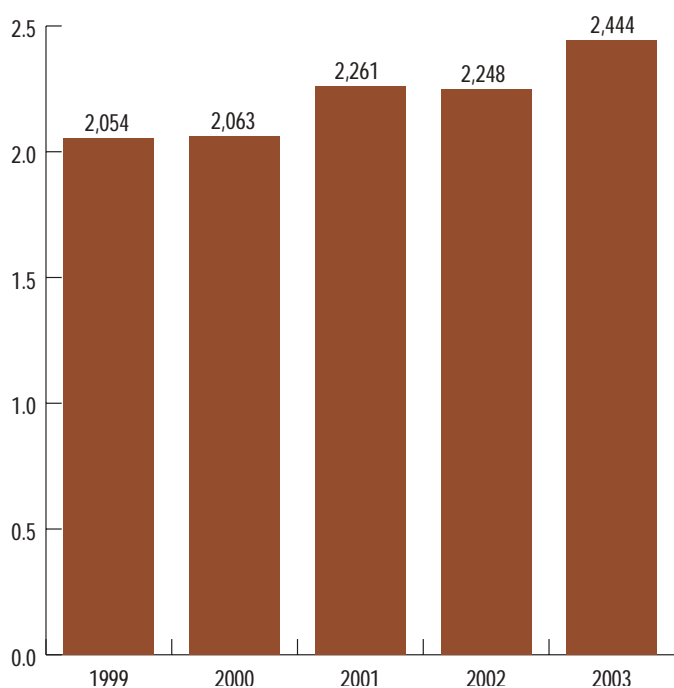


In recent years, juvenile courts, adoptive families, attorneys, and child welfare agencies across the country have begun to schedule clusters of hearings for finalizing adoptions to coincide with the month of November, which has been recognized since the 1970s as Adoption Awareness Month. The first National Adoption Day, held on Nov. 18, 2000, was created and coordinated by The Alliance for Children’s Rights and sponsored by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and the Freddie Mac Foundation. In 2003, the Adoption Coalition of Texas, a partnership of five private Central Texas adoption agencies and Child Protective Services, held its Adoption Day recognition and celebration on November 20.

“When we first met Jacob and John, we fell in love,” said Sue Mayfield. (above). “At first, we decided to be foster parents. We didn’t know the scope of the whole thing and once they were placed with us, we weren’t sure where it would go. But in time, they warmed up and before long they started asking if we would adopt them.”

Mayfield said once she and her husband made the commitment to adopt, it was a little difficult to wait for Adoption Day to finalize things, but worth it. “We got a phone call about Adoption Day and decided we could wait. Child Protective Services and everyone worked together. They all wanted us to succeed. We weren’t stressed out and I would do it again in a minute.”

Completed Adoptions





adoption organizations during national recruitment campaigns and promotes children on TARE in other national web sites. TARE had more than 900 children registered in 2003.

The TARE Family Network (TFN) is another service offered through TARE. TFN is a listing of adoptive families and individuals across the United States who have approved adoptive home studies. The family's adoption preferences on children they are willing to parent are available to CPS adoption staff in a searchable database. More than 280 approved adoptive families were registered in the TFN in 2003.

Adoption Support Services

Adopted children who have suffered abuse or neglect often need help coping with the effects of abuse and the loss of their birth family. Each CPS region contracts with private agencies to provide post-adoption services to adopted children and their families, including casework, mental health, therapeutic services to children and families, parent training, support groups, and respite care for adoptive parents. Post-adoption services were provided to 1,592 children and families in 2003.

Preparation for Adult Living

The Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program helps make the transition to adulthood successful for youth in foster care. PAL services include independent living assessment; time-limited financial help; and training in such areas as money management, job skills, educational planning and interpersonal skills. A statewide youth leadership committee meets quarterly to review policies and practices and submits recommendations to the DFPS Board and other decision-makers to improve services to children and youth.

In 2003, 4,921 youths ages 16 through 20, participated in the PAL program. In addition, 663 youths ages 14 and 15 received PAL services. Through funds of the federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Act, CPS provided aftercare room-and-board assistance for 887 young adults and case management services for 1,361 young adults ages 18 through 21 who exited foster care.

Working With Partners

Children's Justice Act

The mission of the Children's Justice Act (CJA) is to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect cases. CJA funds court-based mediation of CPS cases in collaborative projects throughout the state. Mediation:

- ◆ reduces trauma to the child victim;
- ◆ provides an alternative to often lengthy, hostile, and costly litigation;
- ◆ provides better outcomes for children and families; and
- ◆ achieves prompt permanency for children.

CJA also:

- ◆ funds a telemedicine project for a network of medical professionals who evaluate cases of sexual abuse, and more recently, physical abuse;
- ◆ sponsors training for attorneys ad litem for children and an annual conference to train prosecutors across the state;
- ◆ provides funding for training physicians, nurses, and law enforcement personnel;
- ◆ started family group conferencing in Texas, a mechanism to address cultural differences, allow for more extended family involvement, and reduce lengthy court proceedings; and
- ◆ funds Texas Lawyers for Children, a statewide web-based resource for attorneys representing parties in CPS cases.

CJA is in its second year of funding a statewide multi-city training for law enforcement and investigators on severe physical abuse. This training will be modified for presentation to medical personnel in the coming year.

Beginning in March 2003, CPS staff in the agency's Houston region began a telelegal project that allowed them to testify in permanent managing conservatorship cases without traveling to the courthouse. On one day, about 40 cases were heard in less than 3 hours, thus saving travel and parking expenses for 40 staff, plus retrieval of at least 80 to 120 staff hours previously lost in travel and waiting in court.

Texas Court Improvement Project

The Texas Court Improvement Project (CIP) is a federal grant to the Texas Supreme Court to improve judicial proceedings in foster care and adoption cases. Through an interagency agreement, the grant is administered by DFPS. Texas Court



Since 1998, the agency has had a memorandum of understanding with DIF or *El Desarrollo Integral Familiar*, which is the equivalent protective services agency in Mexico. The official agreement, which grew out of a challenge issued by the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission in 1996, helps both agencies assist each other with day-to-day matters and provides standards for the agencies to investigate allegations of abuse and neglect of children and vulnerable adults.

"For example, an attorney with DIF called me recently and said he had a little boy who was an American citizen," says Sara Treviño (center) who serves as the official Child Protective Services liaison with DIF out of Brownsville. "We had given custody to the boy's grandfather in Matamoros because the boy's father was abusive. Now, the grandfather was too ill to continue providing care. Because the boy had no other relatives in Mexico, we ended up taking custody of the child and placed him with a family in Texas."

Amalia M. Navarro Brito (left) and Gonzalo González Treviño (right) of DIF say the memorandum of understanding is very beneficial. "There are a lot of families on each side of the border and the goal of both of our agencies is the same," says Brito. "We all benefit through our exchange of information. Gonzalez relates, "the biggest challenge we all face is the families themselves."

Child Protective Services

Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) continues to expand with financial help from CIP. This funding also piloted projects known as "Cluster Courts," where a traveling judge hears only CPS cases for a cluster of counties. The Texas Legislature appropriated \$4 million for the coming biennium for 16 such courts throughout the state. CIP continues to work closely with the Office of Court Administration, which now has responsibility for the project.

CIP also helps fund several judicial trainings and training tools on child abuse and neglect. CIP monies:

- ◆ maintain the Judicial Web Page, a tool for judges and DFPS attorneys to check on the status of any child abuse or neglect case filed in Texas;
- ◆ fund several court-driven local projects to recruit foster and adoptive homes; and
- ◆ fund the development of online training software and video conferencing pilot projects, allowing a child to testify from the security and comfort of a remote location. Currently, the CIP main focus is on judicial training on current issues in child abuse and neglect.

Child Fatality Review

Every year, thousands of Texas children die as a result of automobile accidents, accidental drowning, congenital birth defects, accidental shooting, and many other causes. Child Fatality Review Teams are multidisciplinary, multiethnic, multi-agency panels that review all child deaths regardless of how they occurred. The goal of the review team is to decrease preventable child deaths; members include law enforcement, prosecutors, medical examiners, justices of the peace, health-care professionals, educators and child advocates. These teams are uniquely qualified to understand what no single agency or group working alone can: how and why children are dying in their community. From their findings, review teams help develop prevention and public awareness initiatives. Child Fatality Review Teams have grown rapidly since their inception in 1992. Today there are 43 teams that cover 144 counties. Through CPS, DFPS provides technical assistance to the teams and is the state agency charged with maintaining the public information associated with the teams.

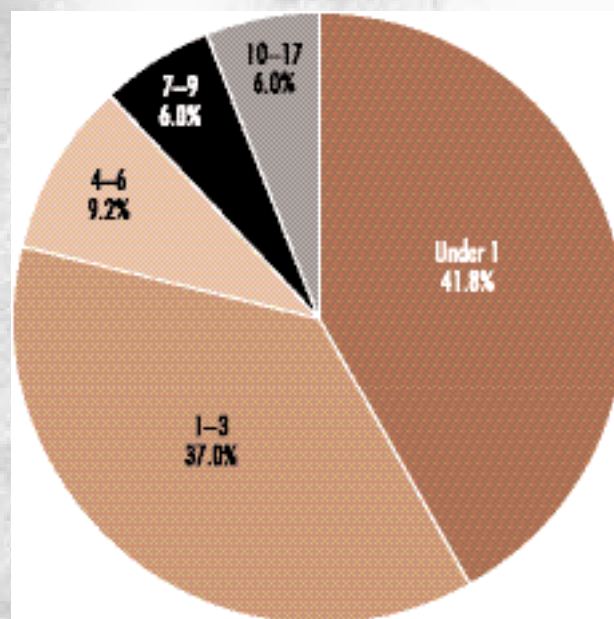
Abuse/Neglect Fatalities

CPS has developed both internal and external mechanisms to review child fatalities due to abuse/neglect. The deaths are reviewed by Citizen Review Teams, Child Fatality Review Teams, CPS Risk Directors, Regional CPS Child Death

Committees, and the state Child Safety Review Committee. While each entity reviews child deaths for unique purposes, a common goal is to help CPS and the larger community identify causes of child fatalities and develop strategies, programs, and training to reduce the rate of preventable child deaths and provide intervention services to families and children at risk.

In 2003, of the children who died due to abuse or neglect, 41.8 percent were less than one year old, and nearly 78.8 percent were age three or younger. Of 689 child deaths reported in 2003, CPS confirmed abuse/neglect as the cause of death for 184 children. ■

Age of Fatality Victims Due to Abuse/Neglect FY 2003



Child Protective Services



The year 2003 marked the 10th anniversary of legislation exempting former foster youth from paying tuition and most fees at state-funded colleges, community colleges, universities, and vocational schools. In 1993-94—the program's first academic year—73 students received waivers. During the 2002-03 school year, the number was 692.

One of the more recent youths to benefit from the waiver is Marco Canas (right), a student at the University of Houston. "I first thought about attending the University of Houston back when I was in junior high school. After I entered foster care, I still thought about attending college because I knew a high school diploma would not be enough. When I turned 17, my CPS worker referred me to Sharon Snow in the Preparation for Adult Living or PAL program. She was and continues to be a lot of help. Today, I'm proud to be the first person in my birth family to go to college in this country," said Canas. The PAL program, which is administered by Child Protective Services, helps prepare youth leaving foster care with the skills and resources they need to be healthy, productive adults.

The University of Houston has gone beyond waiving PAL students' tuitions. Dr. Elwyn Lee (left), vice chancellor and vice president of student affairs at the University of Houston System, implemented supportive services to former foster youth as part of the university's Urban Experience Program. "You have to think outside the box to implement this kind of program. The former foster youths who come here are on their own and the university almost takes on a parental role. The purpose of the Urban Experience Program is to provide a supportive environment for all students with challenges—not only youth leaving foster care, but minorities, women, and people with disabilities."

The program, which is run by Robbie Evans, prepares students for entry into the workforce by combining educational opportunities with valuable internship opportunities, community service, tutoring, mentoring, career development, and, in some cases, on campus housing. "There are profound issues related to foster youth," said Evans. "Most students go home for the summer, but former foster youth don't have that kind of support. These youths need additional assistance so they can have a life beyond state care, otherwise it can be difficult to be a college student. I am so encouraged because these students to have the opportunity to go to college."



Adult Protective Services

Responsibilities

- ◆ Investigate reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of adults who are elderly or have disabilities. As needed, provide or arrange protective services.
- ◆ Provide or arrange guardianship services for incapacitated adult victims of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation and incapacitated children aging out of Child Protective Services conservatorship.
- ◆ Investigate reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of clients receiving services in Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (MHMR) settings.

Advances

- ◆ In 2003, Adult Protective Services (APS) worked with the Texas Elder Abuse and Mistreatment (TEAM) Institute, a unique collaboration between the Baylor College of Medicine Geriatrics Program and the Harris County Hospital District, to develop a fatality review team in Houston. The TEAM Institute received a grant from the American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging to start the Elder Abuse Fatality Review Team that includes TEAM partners, law enforcement, and various other medical and community agencies. In 2001, the 77th Legislature authorized the creation of multidisciplinary and multi-agency adult fatality review teams at the county level to review deaths involving abuse, neglect, family violence, or suicide. The establishment of such teams is voluntary and authorizes the commissioners' court of a county or a designated county department to oversee the activities of the review team. An adult fatality review team is also operating in Bexar County.
- ◆ Working with the Protective Services Training Institute of Texas, APS implemented a certification program for field workers in October 2002. In 2003, 286 APS workers completed the specialist certification program, and 74 of those workers went through the advanced certification program. This year, five APS supervisors completed the supervisor certification program, bringing the total to 52 actively certified supervisors. The institute, established in 1991, is a partnership between APS and the graduate schools of social work in Texas.

- ◆ APS and Child Protective Services redesigned their computer-based reporting system for abuse and neglect to a web browser-based application that increases usability and expandability. (See Executive Summary.)

Responsiveness

- ◆ In response to a 25 percent reduction in staffing for MHMR facility investigations, APS worked with stakeholders to develop a new system for prioritizing such investigations. The new priority system will be implemented in 2004.
- ◆ Staff from APS and the PRS Legal Division responded to inquiries from the U.S. Department of Justice regarding the impact of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) on its investigation process. The Department of Justice, which is responsible for enforcing HIPAA regulations, is concerned that APS programs not be saddled with overly restrictive interpretations of the statute. Implementation of HIPAA resulted in difficulties for some APS workers obtaining information from hospitals, physicians, and pharmacies. In response to these problems, the PRS Legal Division developed a form for clients to authorize the release of medical information to APS.
- ◆ In compliance with the Promoting Independence Plan, developed by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission in January 2000, APS continued its commitment to seek opportunities for people with disabilities to live outside traditional institutional settings. APS, the Texas Department of Human Services, and MHMR coordinated procedures for placing incapacitated adults in APS guardianship on the waiting lists for home and community-based services. APS oversees the search for services and placements in the least restrictive settings.

Ongoing Initiatives

- ◆ APS staff worked with law enforcement agencies in Houston, El Paso, San Antonio, and Weslaco to educate officers about the issues of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. In January 2003, APS collaborated with the TEAM Institute in Houston to launch a series of 13 training courses for 700 members of the Houston Police Department's Crisis Intervention Team. In Dallas, APS worked with the city's police academy and helped establish the Silver Shadow program for elderly victims of crime. In the Beaumont area, APS partnered with MHMR and law enforcement agencies to create a task force to move people with mental illness from the criminal justice system to the mental health system.

Adult Protective Services



When Ms. Ozell Boles of Kirbyville (left) lost her hearing aide set last summer, she found herself in a bad situation. Little did she know that it would soon get worse.

Without much means or income, she was just about ready to sell her car in order to pay for another set. Then along came a man who made a \$250 down payment for her. Boles, who also suffers from poor vision, was thankful for the man's seemingly kind nature. So when he brought her a document to sign, she was more than willing to comply. "I didn't really know what I was signing. He explained that I was getting my power of attorney back," said Boles. It was only later that Boles learned she was actually signing away her house and property.

Then her daughter found out about the Texas Abuse Hotline and made the call that would eventually turn the whole situation around. "Thanks to James Sims (right) and Adult Protective Services, I was able to get my place back. As soon as the man got the call about APS, I was surprised how quickly he responded and transferred back the deed. I appreciate James more than you'll ever know," said Boles. Through emergency funds, Sims was also able to get her a new hearing aide set.

"It's not the money that keeps us here at APS," said Sims. "It's the positive outcomes like this that makes our job rewarding."

◆ APS trained employees of financial institutions in the agency's Edinburg Region on how to recognize, report, and prevent financial exploitation. The project, Banks and Seniors Against Financial Exploitation (B-SAFE), is based on a similar program in Oregon. APS provided a training manual and video to assist in the training process at certain banks. A total of 207 bank employees, executives, and board members were trained at South Texas branches of the Alamo National Bank of Texas and Wells Fargo Bank. This project will be renamed Businesses Safeguarding Against Financial Exploitation and expanded to other regions of Texas in 2004.

◆ APS strengthened its quality assurance efforts by adding program reviews to its evaluation of the quality of services it provides to its clients. A program review involves case reading, statistical analysis, review of staff and client interviews, and questionnaires for staff and community partners. In 2003, APS completed comprehensive program reviews in the agency's Austin, Beaumont, and Edinburg regions. The agency previously conducted reviews in its Amarillo, Arlington, and Tyler regions and plans to conduct reviews in its Abilene, Houston, San Antonio, Midland, and El Paso regions in 2004.

◆ APS and the agency's Professional Development division piloted a legal training course involving self-paced training on the computer prior to participants meeting for classroom discussion and group activities. Overall, the effort reduced the time workers spent away from their home offices, as well as travel expenses. Staff provided positive feedback about the course and indicated an interest in future web-based courses. As a result, the agency also identified on-the-job training requirements for new workers and is developing a structured on-the-job curriculum to be completed prior to attending classroom training.

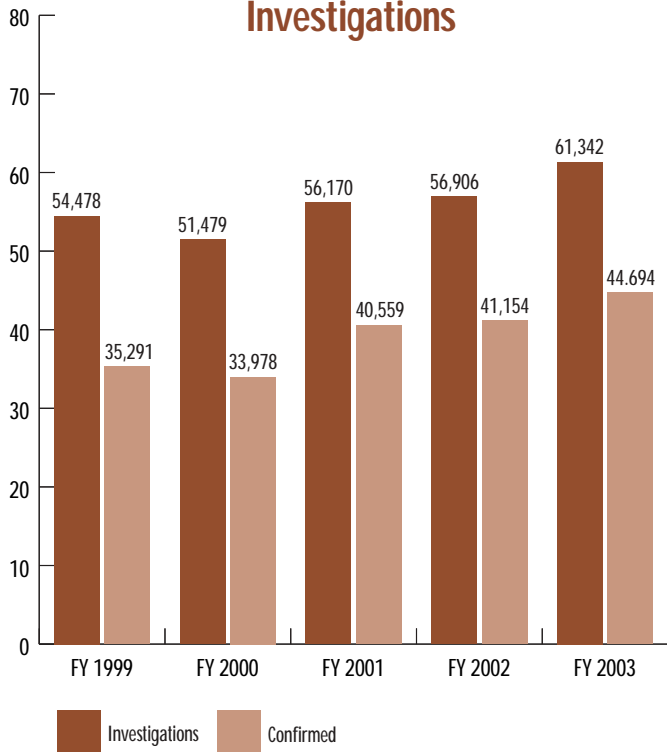
What APS Does

APS clients are adults who live in their own homes, in facilities regulated or operated by MHMR, or in unregulated facilities. Three program areas serve APS clients: in-home investigations and services, MHMR investigations, and guardianship services.

Protecting people who are elderly or have disabilities continues to be a growing issue in Texas. Based on the 2000 Census of non-institutionalized people, these Texans make up about a quarter of the state's population. In 2003, more than 2.1 million Texans were age 65 and older, according to population projections. Nearly one out of five adults have a disability, and almost one-half of people over 65 have a disability. Many of those people live alone or are dependent on others for care.

Adult Protective Services

Completed In-Home Investigations



In-Home Investigations and Services

The largest and most well-established APS program area is in-home investigations and services. The program area protects people 65 and older who reside in their own homes or in room-and-board homes not subject to licensure. In-home also protects adults with disabilities and adults living in nursing homes who may be financially exploited by someone outside the facility. State law requires anyone who believes that an elderly person or adult with a disability is being abused, neglected or exploited to report it to the DFPS hotline at 1-800-252-5400.

An investigation begins within 24 hours of receiving a report. In 2003, APS completed 61,342 investigations. APS confirmed 44,694 cases of family violence perpetrated by a family or household member. Nearly 86.1 percent of perpetrators are related to the victim. When maltreatment is confirmed, this program provides and arranges for services to alleviate abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Clients who have the cognitive ability to consent have the right to refuse services. APS may provide or arrange for



Nathaniel P. of Midland (left) was living in a modest home that had just lost its water and electricity when he became ill and learned he needed pacemaker surgery. Without any family support during the recovery process, he had no place to turn for assistance. Adult Protective Services received a report and APS worker Annette Romero (right) was able to temporarily place him in a nursing home. Then, when his time at the nursing home was over, Nathaniel P. learned that the shack he had been renting was no longer available.

"I helped Nathaniel find a clean apartment where he could feel safe and secure," said Romero, who also got him a bed, table, chairs, dishes, radio, pots, and pans. "I also bought him a beta fish to keep him company. Although Nathaniel was eligible for nursing care and assistance in his home through the Community Care program of the Texas Department of Human Services, he declined. I also set him up with Meals On Wheels, which he likes, although he still enjoys cooking his specialty—black-eyed peas with bacon and sweet potatoes."

Nathaniel said that without Annette he would probably be living on the street with no one to look after him. "Annette is always there to assist with whatever I need. I thank the Lord every day for her."

Adult Protective Services



What would you call a person who swindled money out of and made death threats against a 70-year-old woman? She called him “grandson.”

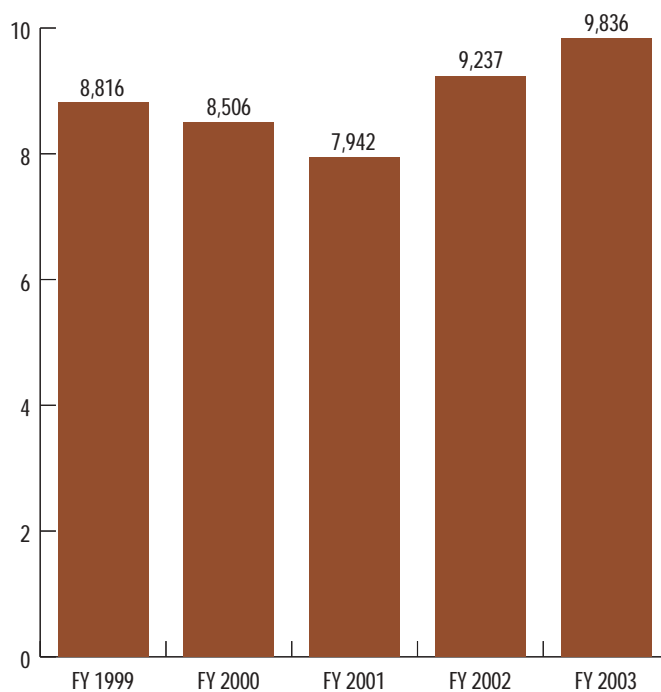
Meet Eileen P. of Amarillo (left). In 2003, she was one of hundreds of elderly Texans bilked out of their life savings by the people they trusted most. Even though she was living on a fixed income and had just lost her part-time job, Eileen was still willing to take in her grandson, his wife, and their two children.

Things started off all right, but as time passed, Eileen became a prisoner in her own home. Her grandson, addicted to pain medication and alcohol, said he was injured and therefore claimed he couldn't work. His wife didn't work, either. After a while, Eileen asked them to move, but they refused. On one occasion when they actually did come into some money, the couple went on a shopping spree. Because they didn't contribute anything to the household, Eileen eventually filed for bankruptcy.

“I knew things needed to change, but I didn't know how to go about it,” said Eileen. “So I prayed and one day, I asked God what his plan was for me. The next day, a caseworker from Adult Protective Services showed up. If it weren't for her, I would be dead now.”

Eileen said she has a wonderful respect for Susan Hammett (right), the APS caseworker who helped her. “Susan is really neat. I love her and am thankful she came into my life.”

Completed MHMR Investigations



services including short-term assistance, shelter, food, medication, health services, financial assistance for rent and utility restoration, transportation, and minor home repair. APS also refers clients to other social or community services.

Guardianship

Guardianship is a legal method to protect individuals' well-being when they cannot protect themselves. A guardian is court-appointed to make decisions on behalf of an incapacitated person, known as a ward. Guardianship duties may include managing a ward's estate, living arrangements, medical treatment, funeral arrangements, and disposal of property.

When no family member, interested party, or other alternative is available, APS may seek guardianship of incapacitated CPS children with severe disabilities reaching adulthood, or incapacitated adults who are abuse, neglect, or exploitation victims.

APS guardianship, which may be provided directly or through contracts with local entities, is a part of a statewide system. APS works closely with the Texas Guardianship Alliance to develop more resources for guardianships in the

state. When guardianships are needed, APS works with family members, interested parties, local guardianship programs and contractors to arrange services. At the end of 2003, APS directly provided 552 guardianships and contracted for an additional 170.

MHMR Investigations

APS is responsible for investigating abuse, neglect, and exploitation of clients in MHMR facilities and related programs, including:

- ◆ State schools
- ◆ State hospitals
- ◆ State centers
- ◆ Community mental health/mental retardation centers
- ◆ Facility and community center contractors, including home and community-based waiver programs

During 2003, APS completed 9,836 investigations in MHMR settings.



“I have lived a complete life,” said Arthur Waterman (right). Complete indeed.

The 98-year-old San Antonio resident, who is fluent in Spanish and French, served in the Air Force during World War II and was stationed in London, Paris, Belgium, and Luxemburg. Sometime after the war, rather than stay in the business world, Waterman became a professional contract bridge player and teacher. Over the years, he competed in some 60 or 70 countries, and was so skilled at the game that he amassed a fortune.

Waterman had been living alone in Mexico for about 25 years and a few years ago decided he wanted to see more of the country. Not wanting to travel alone, he asked a priest if he knew anyone willing to be his travel companion. The priest put him in touch with three brothers and their mother. During his travels with them, he became ill and needed more care than a Mexican hospital could provide. While waiting to be transferred to the Audie Murphy Veterans Administration hospital in San Antonio, Waterman told Mexican authorities how he had purchased expensive items like cars and houses for the family and had virtually given them his ATM card. They thought it sounded suspicious and Adult Protective Services was alerted.

“Of course, there was nothing we could do to verify the people in Mexico were financially exploiting him,” said Shirley Hynes (left), an APS caseworker who has worked with him. “But after assessing Mr. Waterman, we determined he was of sound mind and spent his money as he saw fit. However, without any family or friends to help him, he was clearly in need of assistance and in danger of self-neglect. Once Mr. Waterman was released from the hospital, we made sure that he had a place to live and was doing OK. He has lived at a V.A. approved home for about a year and loves it.”

Having never been to Texas until now, Waterman wanted to do something to show his gratitude to his newly adopted state. With the money he had left, he funded an endowment at Texas Tech for Mexican students wanting to study in the United States. Hynes and APS helped him get in touch with the university’s representatives. “That was the single most outstanding thing I have ever done. I am pleased for the Texas Tech arrangement.”

Looking back on his experience in Mexico, Waterman said he had been living a little dangerously. “Now that I’m in Texas, the V.A. has made me very comfortable. And I’m glad APS has been here to help out.”



Child Care Licensing

Responsibilities

- ◆ Regulate all child-care facilities and child-placing agencies to protect the health, safety and well-being of children in care by reducing the risk of injury, abuse and communicable disease.
- ◆ Establish and monitor facilities' and agencies' compliance with minimum standards of care.
- ◆ Inform parents and the public about child care in general and minimum standards compliance histories on specific facilities or homes.
- ◆ Provide technical assistance to providers on areas covered in the minimum standards of care.

Advances

◆ In 2003, Child Care Licensing revised minimum standards for child day-care centers. The new standards were adopted following an extensive public review period from July to November 2002. More than 4,000 people, including child-care providers, parents, elected officials, business groups, professional organizations, and governmental entities submitted more than 15,000 comments to agency staff and board members. The standards consolidated six sets of rules into two sets, one for home-based care and one for center-based care. The standards were also rewritten into an easy to understand question-and-answer format designed to improve compliance and reduce mistakes. The Texas Legislature requires DFPS to periodically review, revise, and consolidate the agency's rules and regulations. The last major standards revision for center-based care was in 1995; the last major revision for home-based care was in 1990.

◆ Child Care Licensing worked with the Advancing Residential Childcare (ARC) Project (see entry in Executive Summary) to begin revising the residential child-care standards. The new standards will better address the needs of children and consolidate license types. They will be more closely aligned with CPS contract requirements and the service level structure CPS uses to assess the needs of children in its care. These revised standards will more clearly define expectations regarding the quality of care and services being received by children living in the homes and facilities.



◆ On Nov. 6, 2002, the Child Care Licensing Automated Support System (CLASS) Project received the Best of Texas award for "Excellence in Information Technology Collaboration" from the Center for Digital Government and *Government Technology* magazine. Winning projects were chosen because they showed a high degree of collaboration within or across jurisdictions and improved the transparency of service to citizens, businesses, or employees. CCL staff use the CLASS system to enter all pertinent information about regulated facilities and agencies, including monitoring, inspections, and investigations.

Responsiveness

◆ Senate Bill 74, 78th Texas Legislature, directed the Health and Human Services Commission to study and produce a comprehensive report on collaborative public/private

Child Care Licensing



The main function of the Child Care Licensing division is to regulate all Texas child-care facilities. The ongoing work of a Licensing worker is to ensure each facility assigned to them, whether new or old, meets the state's minimum standards of care, which are the

base-level health and safety guidelines that no facility should fall below.

Like all Licensing workers, Joan Stone (left) has to wear many hats in the course of a day's work. Sometimes she is inspector with a clipboard in hand, reviewing facilities against the minimum standards from front to back, inside and outside. Other times, she is a technical advisor, answering questions and helping child-care directors understand what is needed to make sure their facilities meet minimum standards. When she finds a violation of the standards, she must take on the role of diplomat, working with the facility on an appropriate timeline to get those violations corrected.

Facilities that fail to meet the standards may be placed on evaluation or probation, which increases the number of inspections and level of technical assistance they receive. If the risk to children is substantial, the agency may suspend a license for a period, or, in worst case scenarios, revoke the license.

"I worked together with Joan to address the issues she found," said the child-care director (right). "In one instance, a violation occurred after I had been desperate to get in someone on a temporary basis to help due to illness of a regular worker. I wished I had looked more into the person's background because she was not responsible enough."

Stone said that it can be very difficult for facilities to find qualified staff. "In this case, the child-care director was very open to being helped. We all had the same goals and wanted to work together to achieve them. Now that the facility has corrected what I found, it is fine. They have built themselves up to have a better compliance with the minimum standards."

initiatives targeted at enhancing the quality of child care. As a result, CCL staff and PRS Board members began preliminary work on the project with the Texas Workforce Commission, Office of Early Childhood Coordination, and Governor's office.

- ◆ In response to other legislative initiatives, CCL implemented policies that eliminated the duplication of sanitation and fire inspections conducted by local political subdivisions in day-care centers; added a search feature to the www.txchild-caresearch.org web site to look specifically for adoption agencies; changed standards to require carbon monoxide detectors in day-care homes and centers; changed standards to allow exemptions from immunization requirements if parents object; and changed standards to call for joint investigations with law enforcement within 24 hours on highest priority abuse/neglect investigations.

- ◆ As part of a statewide public awareness campaign, CCL staff distributed CD-ROMs with a multitude of useful information on child care and provider resources such as such as parenting information, training materials, posters, and sample forms to all day-care providers.

- ◆ In May, CCL staff presented the first-ever training on child abuse in the Vietnamese language to 178 Arlington region, non-English speaking Vietnamese child-care providers. The training was conducted at University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) and was a joint collaboration between CCL, UTA, and First Texas Campfire.

- ◆ In 2003, CCL revised its application policies to increase efficiency in processing new applications when a child placing agency changes locations.

- ◆ Staff worked with the Texas Department of Public Safety to create a new procedure for obtaining positive identification of criminal matches, which will save staff time and money when conducting criminal background checks on potential child-care employees.

Ongoing Initiatives

- ◆ CCL staff in the agency's Houston region participated in the "Preschool for All" project. Working with staff from the University of Texas Public Health Center and others, CCL will benefit from this project by better preparing for future training and monitoring needs. This collaborative effort will help show potential new owners of child-care facilities which sections of the greater Houston area have the highest need for child care.

What CCL Does

Child Care Licensing is responsible for protecting the health, safety, and well-being of Texas children who attend or reside in regulated child-care facilities. These facilities include day-care centers, family day homes, residential care facilities, emergency shelters, child-placing agencies, foster homes, adoptive homes, and maternity homes. CCL also licenses child-care administrators.

Inspections

CCL staff conduct inspections and investigation of child-care operations to monitor compliance with minimum standards, the base-level health and safety requirements that no facility should fall below. Facilities failing to meet minimum standards may be placed on evaluation or probation, which increases the number of inspections and the level of technical assistance they receive. If the risk to children is substantial, the provider's license or registration may be suspended for a period, or it may be revoked. Once a license is revoked, the license-holder may not reapply for two years.

Day-Care Licensing

Day-care providers care for children for less than a full day.

- ◆ Child-care centers provide care for 13 or more children who are younger than age 14.
- ◆ Registered child-care homes provide care in the caregiver's home for up to six children who are younger than age 14. They may also care for up to six more school-age children after school. The total number may not exceed 12, including the caregiver's own children.
- ◆ Licensed child-care homes provide care in the caregiver's home for seven to 12 children who are younger than age 14, including the caregiver's own children.
- ◆ Listed family homes provide regular care in a caregiver's home for one to three children who are not related to them. Unlike other facilities, listed family homes do not have minimum standards and are not inspected.

Residential Licensing

Residential child-care facilities care for children 24 hours a day.

- ◆ Foster family homes provide care for up to six children.
- ◆ Foster group homes provide care for seven to 12 children.



Due to the implementation of newly revised minimum standards for child care, the summer of 2003 was a time of transition for child-care providers across the state. In order to help with the training process for the new standards, Child Care Licensing specialist Mary Anne Beauregard of Longview (right) wrote a comprehensive, 21-hour, self-study training module and made it available on computer disk to any child-care director who requested it. The module was designed in such a way that a director could assign portions of the standards to caregivers working at the center, helping the worker become familiar with the new standards as well.

"The new standards have so many changes that just reading them isn't enough to have a working knowledge of them," said Beauregard. "The self-study module helped directors to train their caregivers in the new standards to ensure compliance and reduce risk to children in care."

Jasmine Williams (left), Director of Agape Learning Academy of Longview, thought the training module was excellent and made her job a little easier. "It was and will continue to be very beneficial to the Agape caregivers, especially to the ones who have never worked in child care before, to improve the quality of our care to children."

Child Care Licensing



During the Summer of 2003, Child Care Licensing staff trained about 13,000 child-care providers across the state about the newly revised minimum standards for child care. The new standards were rewritten into an easy-to-understand question-and-answer format designed to improve compliance and reduce mistakes. The standards also consolidated six sets of rules into two sets, one for home-based care and one for center-based care.

In order to enhance the training process about the new standards, Tiffany Bezdek of Child Care Licensing in Austin (above) did a takeoff of the game show, "Jeopardy." The use of games, color, stories, visuals, and props all help trainee's retain information and improve the transfer of information to the workplace.

The agency, which is required by the Texas Legislature to periodically review and revise the standards, adopted them following an extensive public review period from July to November 2002. More than 4,000 people, including child-care providers, parents, elected officials, business groups, professional organizations, and governmental entities, submitted more than 15,000 comments to agency staff and board members.

- ◆ Emergency shelters provide short-term residential care, including any necessary medical care, for more than 12 children.
- ◆ Residential treatment centers provide care and treatment for more than 12 children and adolescents who have therapeutic needs.
- ◆ Basic child-care institutions provide 24-hour care but do not offer specialized programs such as those at emergency shelters and residential treatment centers.
- ◆ Institutions serving mentally retarded children care for children or adolescents with deficits in intellectual function or adaptive behavior.
- ◆ Halfway houses serve as transitional living facilities for no more than 24 children who are 15 years or older. They provide therapeutic group living to help children make the transition to living in the community.
- ◆ Therapeutic camps provide special outdoor experience programs for children older than age 6 with behavioral problems.

Residential Licensing also regulates the following:

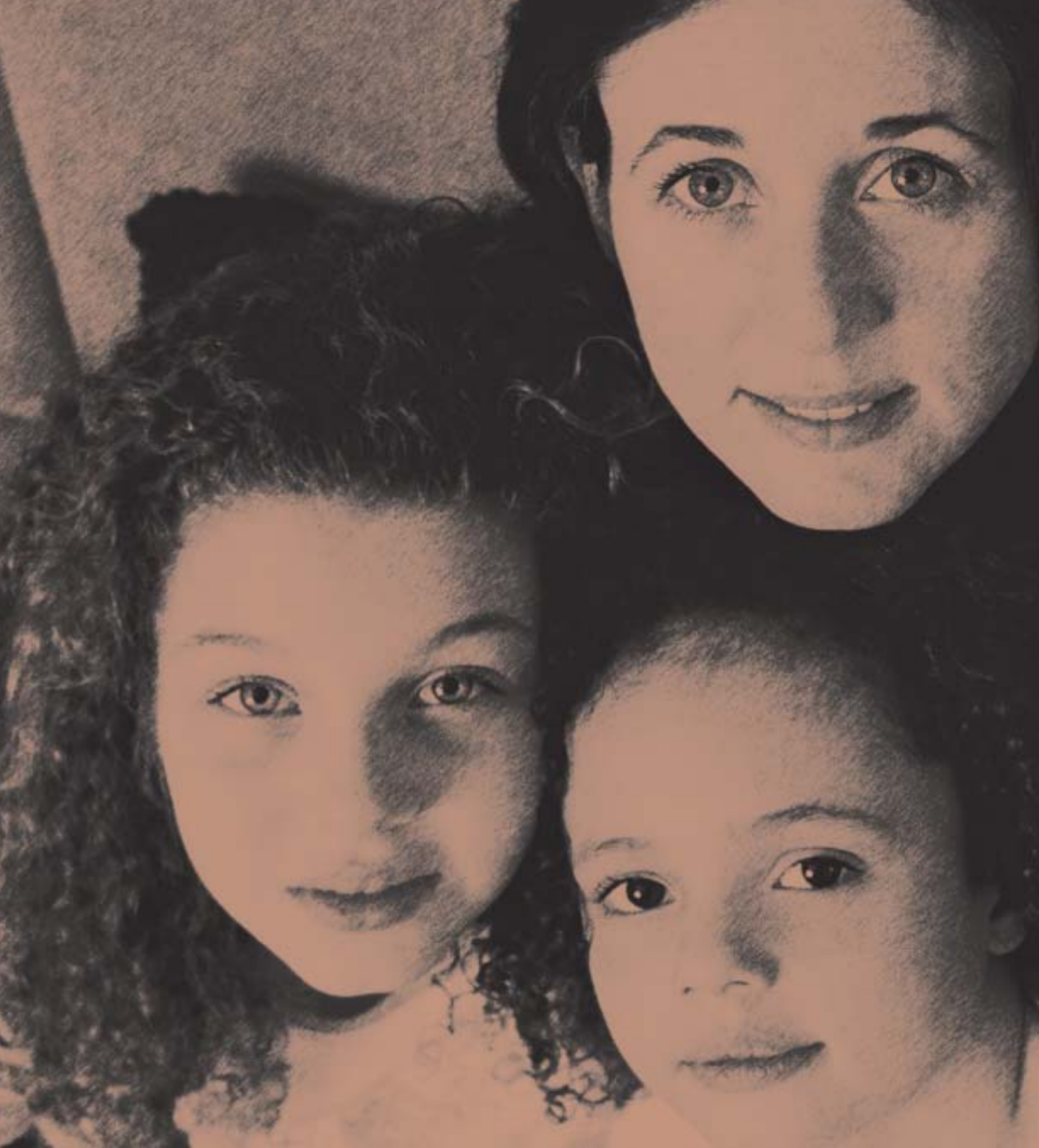
- ◆ Child-placing agencies, which arrange for placement of children in adoptive or foster care. Agencies are responsible for assuring that their foster homes meet minimum standards.
- ◆ Maternity homes provide residential care for four or more pregnant women or women who have given birth within two weeks prior to the date of admission.
- ◆ Child-care administrators who supervise and exercise direct administrative control over a 24-hour child-care institution.

Training

Regional CCL representatives, investigators, supervisors, directors, and clerical staff received more than 9,400 hours of training and professional development on topics related to their work such as child development, using automation support, regulation and inspection of facilities, and health and safety.

CCL staff, provided more than 730 training events for more than 18,000 child-care providers and caregivers. The topics included minimum standards, health and safety, infant and toddler needs, guidance, discipline, staff/child ratios, and child development. The training was provided through conferences, licensing meetings and orientations, and technical assistance to centers.





Prevention and Early Intervention

Responsibilities

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

Advances

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

Responsiveness

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

Ongoing Initiatives

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

What PEI Does

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

Programs Benefiting Children, Youth, and Families

At-Risk Mentoring

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

Communities In Schools (CIS)

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

Community Youth Development Grants (CYD)

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

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

Dan Kubiak Buffalo Soldiers Heritage Program

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

Facility-Based Youth Enrichment Services

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

Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)

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

Parents As Teachers (PAT)

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

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

Second Chance Teen Parent Program

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

Services To At-Risk Youth (STAR)

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

Texas Families: Together and Safe (TFTS)

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

Texas Youth and Runaway Hotlines

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

Prevention and Early Intervention



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Community Initiatives Programs that Address Abuse

Child Abuse Prevention Kit

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

Community-Based Family Resource and Support Program (CBFRS)

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

Family Outreach

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

Prevention and Early Intervention

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

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

Healthy Texas Families

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

Tertiary and Secondary Prevention Training and Technical Assistance

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

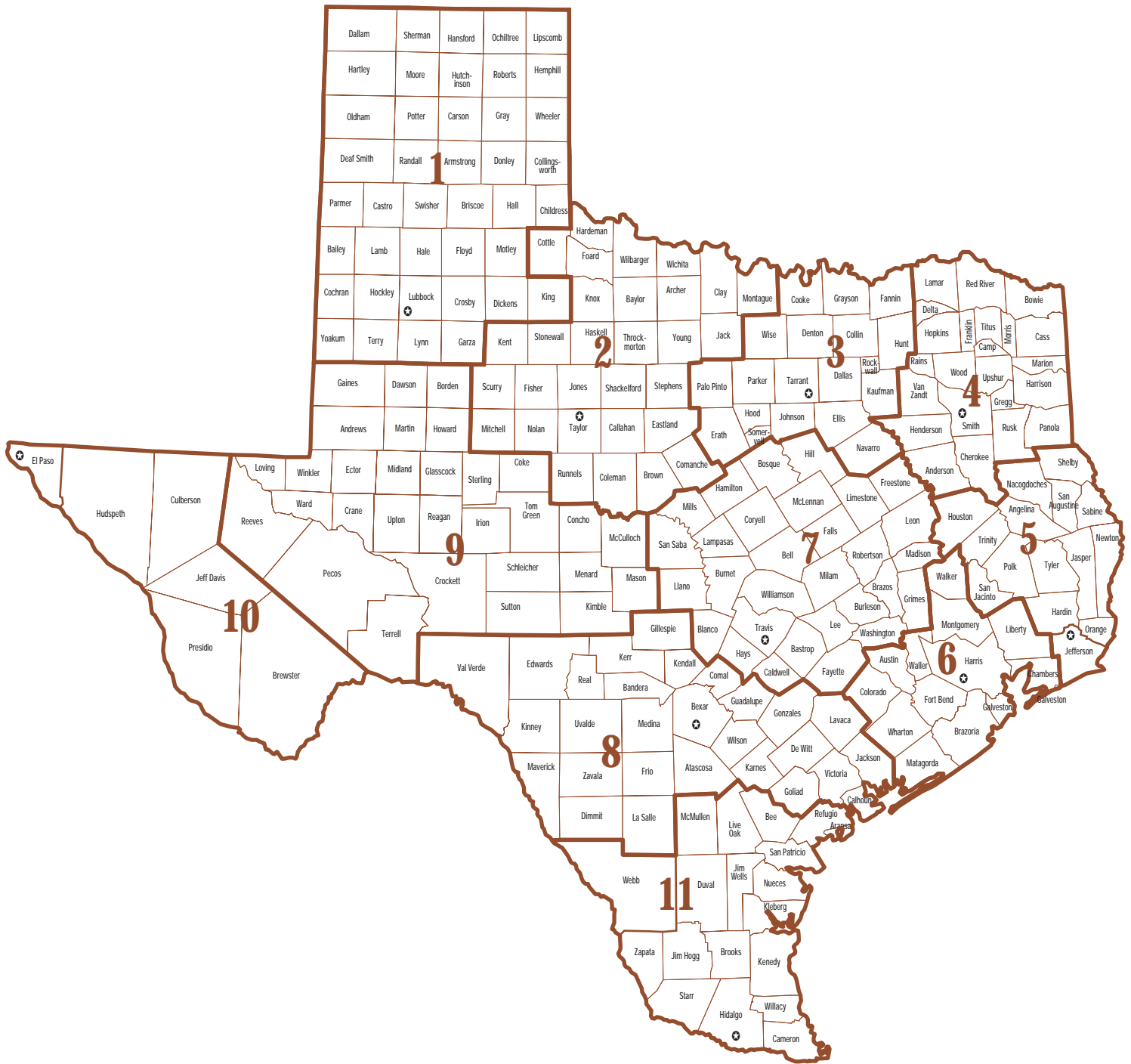


Cay Quoyeser, secretary of the Comal County Child Welfare Board, receives donations for the New Braunfels Rainbow Room. The donations were collected during a holiday drive in which agency staff in Austin donated more than 200 new items for children and families involved with Child Protective Services.

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

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

Regional Boundaries



Hotlines and Online Resources

Hotlines

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

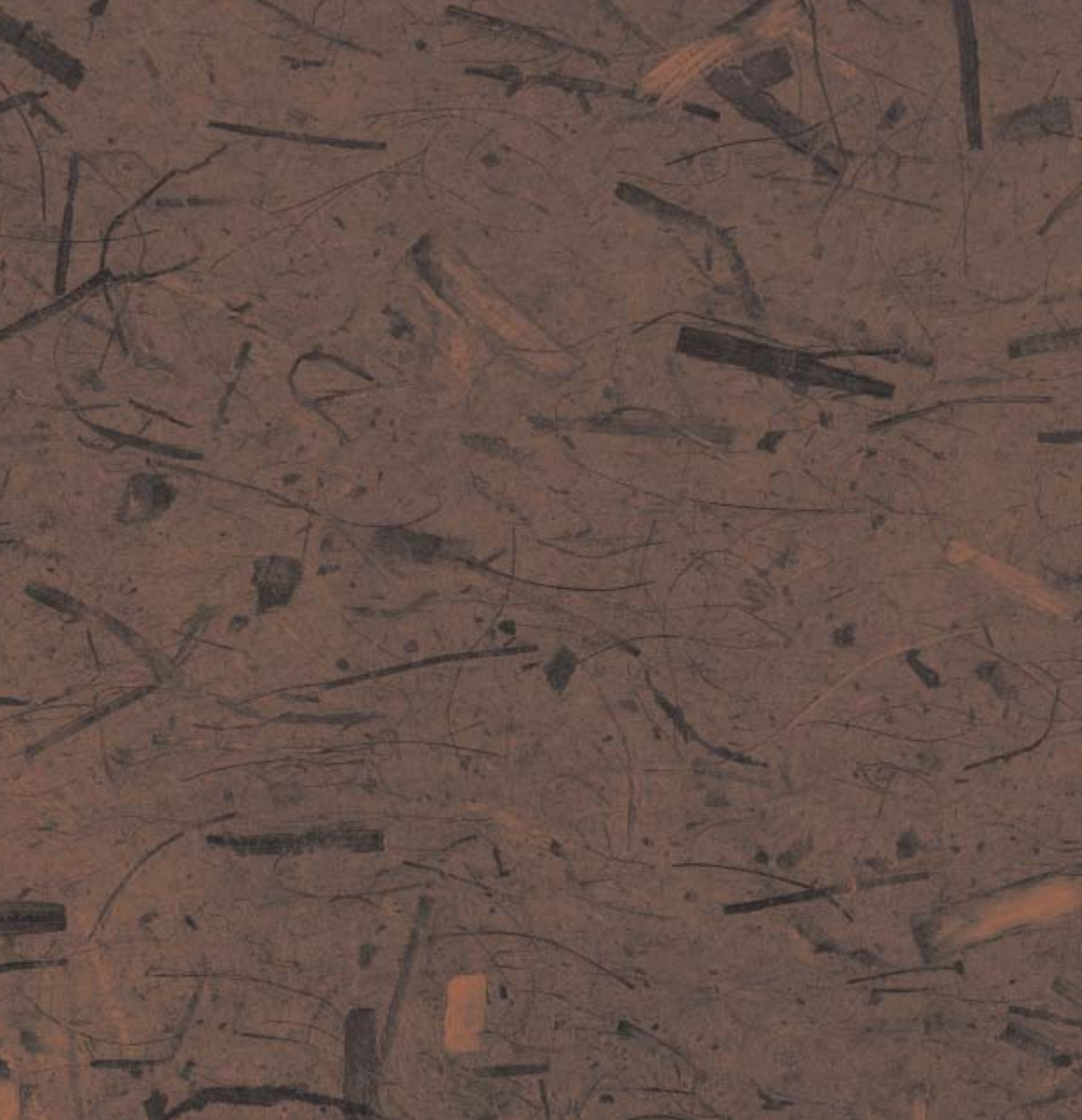
Agency Web Sites

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

Agency Address

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





www.dfps.state.tx.us

