



Texas Department of Family and Protective Services  
2004 Annual Report

## Letter from the Commissioner

**T**he Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) serves the state's youth, families, elderly, and people with disabilities. We accomplish our mission — to protect the unprotected — through four programs: Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, Child Care Licensing, and Prevention and Early Intervention.

The 2004 Annual Report is an overview of the agency's programs, services, performance, and accomplishments. This report covers the fiscal year beginning Sept. 1, 2003 through Aug. 31, 2004. The companion to this report, the 2004 DFPS Data Book, is a comprehensive statistical resource of the agency's services. The 2004 Annual Report, Data Book, and additional information can be found on the agency's web site at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us).

In cooperation with a vast network of public and private partners, dedicated DFPS employees across Texas make tremendous contributions every day to fulfill our mission. I am pleased to present this summary of the services we provide, as well as highlights of the agency's performance and accomplishments.

Carey D. Cockerell  
Commissioner





# Table of Contents



# Table of Contents

## Letter from the Commissioner 1

## Executive Summary 5

- Agency Reform 5
- Child Protective Services 5
- Adult Protective Services 5
- Child Care Licensing 6
- Prevention and Early Intervention 6
- Other Changes and Initiatives 6
- Office of Consumer Affairs 7

## Child Protective Services (CPS) 9

- Responsibilities 9
- 2004 Child Protective Services Reform 9
- Accomplishments 9
- CPS Services 10
  - Intake 10
  - Investigations 11
  - Family-Based Safety Services 12
  - Foster Care 12
  - Permanency Planning Teams 12
  - Adoption 12
  - Dual-Licensed Homes 13
  - Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Families 13
  - Texas Adoption Resource Exchange 13
  - Adoption Support Services 14
  - Preparation for Adult Living 14
  - Working With Partners 15
    - Children's Justice Act 15
    - Law Enforcement 15
    - Texas Court Improvement Project 15
    - Child Fatality Review 15
    - Abuse/Neglect Fatalities 16
    - Racial Disparity Work 16
    - Transitioning Youth 17
    - Texas State Strategy 17

## Adult Protective Services (APS) 19

- Responsibilities 19
- 2004 Adult Protective Services Reform 19
- Accomplishments 19
- APS Services 20
  - In-Home Investigations 20
  - Guardianship 21
  - MHMR Investigations 23

## Child Care Licensing (CCL) 25

- Responsibilities 25
- Accomplishments 25
- CCL Services 25
  - Regulating Child-Care Operations 25
  - Listed Family Homes 25
  - Registered Operations 26
  - Licensed Operations 26
    - Child Care 26
    - 24-Hour Care 26
  - Training 27

## Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) 29

- Responsibilities 29
- Accomplishments 29
- PEI Services 29
- PEI Programs 29
  - Community Youth Development 29
  - Dan Kubiak Buffalo Soldiers Heritage Program 29
  - Services To At-Risk Youth 29
  - Texas Families: Together and Safe 29
  - Texas Youth and Runaway Hotlines 30
  - Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention 30
  - Tertiary/Secondary Child Abuse Prevention 30
  - PEI Special Initiatives 30
    - Child Abuse Prevention Kit 30
    - Partners in Prevention Training Conference 31
    - Look Before You Leave 31

## Regional Map 32

## Hotlines and Online Resources 33

## Organization Chart 34



# Executive Summary

## Executive Summary

**T**he mission of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is to protect children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. A nine-member council appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate makes recommendations regarding the agency's rules and policies. The DFPS Commissioner is appointed by the Executive Commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and directs approximately 6,700 employees in five administrative districts further divided into 11 regions, and a state headquarters in Austin. Four major programs make up DFPS: Child Protective Services (CPS), Adult Protective Services (APS), Child Care Licensing (CCL), and Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI).

### Agency Reform

In 2004, several cases from Adult Protective Services (APS) and Child Protective Services (CPS) generated increased attention from the news media and elected officials. As a result, the Governor issued Executive Order RP 33 on April 14, 2004 and Executive Order RP 35 on July 2, 2004. The orders called for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to review and reform Adult Protective Services and Child Protective Services.

HHSC's response included an independent review of cases, training procedures, policy, management and organizational structure, data analysis, personnel records, and statutes related to APS and CPS.

In October 2004, HHSC issued a report that made a number of recommendations to improve APS: divide workload between investigative and social work staff; increase worker accountability; reorganize management structure to ensure more compliance with statewide policy; increase training; revise statutes to allow psychologists to make house calls rather than medical doctors or psychiatrists; increase coordination with law enforcement; revise how workers determine clients' capacity to consent for services; and review guardianship issues. In December 2004, HHSC issued a report that identified six priorities for improving CPS. They were reducing caseloads, ensuring a well-trained

work force, retaining experienced staff, ensuring compliance with policies and procedures, developing effective community partnerships, and ensuring outcomes that focus on children.

These reports formed the basis for corrective actions and recommendations for consideration in 2005 by the 79th Texas Legislature.

### Child Protective Services-Highlights

- ◆ In 2004, CPS had two programs to better support extended families caring for children who come into our custody. Supporting and Educating Relatives As Placements (SERAPE) was launched in five South Texas Counties in 2004. Comprehensive Relative Enhancement, Support, and Training (CREST) kinship care initiative, which began in Bexar County seven years ago, was expanded in 2004. Services include case management, training and support groups, family counseling, and day care. The SERAPE initiative also provides some limited financial assistance.
- ◆ In December 2003, CPS implemented the Family Group Decision-Making Initiative to strengthen the participation of extended family members in planning for the safety, permanency and well being of children in substitute care. CPS also expanded parent collaboration groups, which are designed to give parents who are involved in the system a greater voice in improving overall services.
- ◆ In response to the passage of Senate Bill 1489, in the regular session of the 78th Legislature, Child Protective Services began a unique collaboration with Texas' faith-based communities in 2004. Through this partnership called Congregations Helping in Love and Dedication (CHILD), CPS has increased its collaborations with faith-based community groups to find loving homes for children who have come into the state's care due to abuse and neglect.

### Adult Protective Services-Highlights

- ◆ In 2004, APS further strengthened its quality assurance program. Efforts included developing surveys to measure client outcomes, and evaluating local compliance with statewide policy. All APS districts implemented quality assurance projects to improve services in their area of the state.
- ◆ In 2004, APS worked with the Baylor College of Medicine Texas Elder Abuse and Mistreatment (TEAM) Institute to establish a telemedicine project for the Houston and Amarillo areas. Telemedicine is an area of increased interest for APS as it involves the use of advanced telecommunications technologies for medical and mental health assessments.





- ◆ APS staff strengthened ties with law enforcement by distributing elder abuse awareness videos to South Texas law enforcement agencies that are shown during police roll call. Training sessions were also held between APS and law enforcement agencies in Arlington, Corpus Christi, Houston, San Angelo, and San Antonio.

### **Child Care Licensing-Highlights**

- ◆ Working with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), DFPS Licensing staff revised rules related to a type of 24-hour care known as “therapeutic camps.” The new standards bring these types of programs into compliance with other residential treatment operations.
- ◆ For the first time, the majority of Licensing inspectors and investigators were issued digital cameras to help them document the facility inspection process. Workers gained the ability to photograph playground equipment and potential safety hazards and immediately review the digital photos with supervisors. As a result, there was a reduction in the number of administrative reviews.
- ◆ Staff enhanced the Child Care Licensing Automated Support System (CLASS) to allow child-care providers to log in and submit criminal background checks through the Internet. CCL staff use the CLASS system to enter all pertinent information about regulated operations and agencies, including monitoring, inspections, and investigations.

### **Prevention and Early Intervention-Highlights**

- ◆ PEI updated the statewide inventory of prevention service providers in March 2004. The inventory contains the names and contact information for hundreds of organizations and agencies that provide services to prevent child abuse and neglect, juvenile delinquency, and academic failure.
- ◆ Staff developed new outcome measures for PEI programs to ensure that the services delivered accomplish the goals of the programs and make a positive difference in the lives of those served. Staff will incorporate these new measures into contracts starting in fiscal year 2005.
- ◆ PEI streamlined many of the processes undertaken in contracting with community agencies. As a result, DFPS and these agencies will be able to collaborate more efficiently and effectively.

### **Other Changes and Initiatives**

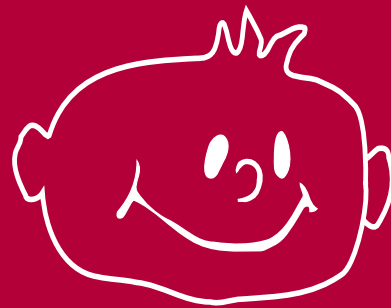
- ◆ During fiscal year 2004, the agency had almost a complete renewal of its executive staff, including a new commissioner, deputy commissioner, and assistant commissioners for Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, and Purchased Client Services (the latter includes the Prevention and Early Intervention program).

◆ Volunteers and community involvement play an important role at DFPS. Volunteer programs rely heavily on public-private partnerships. In 2003, DFPS centralized management and coordination of its volunteer programs to increase their effectiveness. The Office of Volunteer and Community Engagement helps link community resources through volunteers and community partnerships. It establishes policies and procedures for statewide community engagement and volunteer resource development, and provides direction to regional and state headquarters for the development and implementation of volunteer plans and activities. In 2004, more than 3,600 groups and individuals contributed almost 170,000 hours of their time to assist DFPS caseworkers deliver important services to our clients.

◆ In 2004, the functions of forecasting statistics, strategic planning, and employee grievance hearings were moved to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). The function of human services for all HHSC agencies, which was consolidated to HHSC in fiscal year 2003, will be outsourced in 2005. HHSC has also consolidated purchasing for all of its agencies, which gives agencies the benefit of leveraging their purchasing power.

### Office of Consumer Affairs

DFPS has a positive impact in the lives of the people we serve. When clients have case-specific complaints about our actions, they may contact the Office of Consumer Affairs at 1-800-720-7777 for an impartial review of their case. The review determines if 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 2004, the Office of Consumer Affairs received 8,078 contacts from various sources including the public, clients, elected officials, other agencies, and DFPS staff. Of the total contacts received, 2,905 were handled as case-specific complaints, and 493 were inquiries from elected officials. The validation rate of complaints was 2.6 percent. During fiscal year 2004, the Office of Consumer Affairs worked with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's Ombudsman Office, which established a toll-free line for people to report complaints in response to the Governor's ordered statewide investigation into the practices and procedures of Child Protective Services. 🌸



LOOK  
BEFORE YOU  
LEAVE

**D**uring the summer of 2003, 10 Texas children, most of them infants, died after being left in vehicles in which they had been riding. In fact, the Lone Star State led the nation for the number of such fatalities. None of these children would have died if their adult caregivers had remembered to remove them from their vehicles once they arrived at their destination.

Although no single entity can prevent such tragedies, DFPS took the initiative to try to reduce the chances of another terrible toll in the summer of 2004. Three of the agency's divisions, Child Protective Services, Child Care Licensing, and Prevention and Early Intervention, developed a statewide public awareness campaign on the dangers of leaving children in hot cars.

The campaign, called "Look Before You Leave" ([www.lookbeforeyouleave.org](http://www.lookbeforeyouleave.org)), included billboards, radio public service announcements, and news conferences in Abilene, Amarillo, Austin, Beaumont, Corpus Christi, Dallas/Fort Worth, El Paso, Laredo, Lubbock, Midland, the Rio Grande Valley, San Angelo, Victoria, and Wichita Falls. Agency staff participated in public awareness activities with child care providers, law enforcement, emergency medical staff, and elected officials.

The campaign ran from Memorial Day to Labor Day 2004. Three Texas children died in hot cars that summer, compared to 10 the year before.



# Child Protective Services



## 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.

### 2004 Child Protective Services Reform

In 2004, Child Protective Services came under increased scrutiny from elected officials and the news media because of several serious cases of child abuse. In response, the Governor issued Executive Order RP 35 on July 2, 2004. The order called for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to review and reform Child Protective Services. This effort continued into the next fiscal year.

### Accomplishments

- ◆ In fiscal year 2004, CPS continued to work on process improvements as dictated by the federal Child and Family Services Review. Conducted by the Administration for Children and Families, this federal oversight helps state child welfare systems improve the safety, permanency, and well being of children in their care. In fact, many of the major initiatives begun in fiscal year 2004 were designed to address some of the improvements identified in the federal review.
- ◆ In 2004, the Child and Family Services Review team completed six reviews in the agency's Amarillo, Austin, Houston, Midland, and San Antonio regions. Staff reviewed and rated 1,050 cases.
- ◆ In 2004, CPS worked with the American Public Human Services Association and the Casey Family Program to articulate and reinforce the program's vision and values. The vision statement, "Children First: Safe and Secure," focused on the values of compassion, respect, integrity, inclusiveness, and commitment. Statewide training on the CPS vision and values heralded the year's initiatives and strengthened leadership development.
- ◆ For many generations, extended families have raised children in their homes when the birth parents were unable. Kinship care helps reduce the psychological trauma experienced by children when they are removed from their homes and families due to child abuse and neglect. In 2004, CPS launched the Supporting and Educating Relatives As

Placements (SERAPE) initiative in five South Texas Counties. Additionally, as a component of the CPS Family Group Decision-Making Initiative, CPS expanded the Comprehensive Relative Enhancement, Support, and Training (CREST) kinship care initiative that began in Bexar County seven years ago. The SERAPE and CREST initiatives provide extended families with services, which include case management, training and support groups, family counseling, and day care. The SERAPE initiative also provides limited financial assistance.

- ◆ In December 2003, CPS implemented the Family Group Decision-Making Initiative in several cities across the state to strengthen the participation of extended family members in planning for the safety, permanency, and well being of children in substitute care. After CPS intervenes to protect a child from abuse, the child's family is invited to participate in a facilitated conference along with the extended family and trusted friends. The conferencing process focuses the family on the needs of the child and community resources available so that decision-making is more inclusive and responsive to each child's needs. The process includes identifying the strengths of the family, as well as the family's goals, hopes, and dreams for the children. Family Group Conferencing also addresses the need for CPS involvement, any continuing concerns, and the tasks required for the family to attain their goals related to child safety, permanency and wellbeing.

- ◆ In 2003, CPS created parent collaboration groups in the agency's El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio regions. In 2004, the groups expanded to the agency's Arlington, Austin, and Midland regions. The groups are designed to give parents involved in the system more of a voice in improving overall services. The goals of these groups are to identify gaps in services, what services should continue, and policies that need improvement. They provide an avenue for parents to make recommendations and help social workers improve their skills.

- ◆ In response to Senate Bill 1489, which was passed in the regular session of the 78th Texas Legislature, Child Protective Services began a unique collaboration with Texas' faith-based communities. Through this partnership, which is called Congregations Helping in Love and Dedication (CHILD), CPS has increased its collaborations with the faith community to find loving homes for children who have come into the state's care due to abuse and neglect. Through CHILD, CPS hopes to recruit and approve at least two families per congregation who can provide foster and adoptive care services and to help congregations develop supportive services for the approved foster and adoptive families and the placed children. The support services may





**B**eing a parent hasn't always been easy for Dana Rodriguez. A single mom of four children ages 8, 6, 4, and 2 (she is pictured with Daniel, age 4 and Emily, age 2), she was hit by two life-changing events last year: a physical illness and a separation from her boyfriend. As a result, Dana says she became depressed and in her words turned into a "couch parent," which led to her leaving the children in a state of neglect and eventually required intervention by Child Protective Services.

Dana worked with Kristyn Gonzales, a CPS worker in Amarillo, to develop a plan of service. The plan included parenting classes, psychological and psychiatric evaluations, family assessment, and counseling to address self-esteem and depression.

"My work with CPS did not start immediately," Dana says. "After my children were placed in protective care, I was so depressed I basically slept for two weeks. Then, things got even worse. I was arrested, spent time in jail, lost my apartment and all my possessions, and became homeless. Rather than feel even more depressed, I tried to remember that I needed to never give up. I had to keep trying."

According to Kristyn, that is when Dana started to turn her life around. "Dana got a job, found a trailer house that appealed to her, and spoke to the owner about renting it. She discovered it was for sale and that if she fixed it up, she could move in immediately. Dana paid off the home last February."

Kristyn says Dana continued to overcome her issues. After 12 months in care, Dana was reunited with Daniel and Emily. Her two older children remain with their paternal grandparents. "Dana visits them on a regular basis," says Kristyn. "She has had to overcome a lot to establish a positive relationship with the grandparents. Dana knows this is the best place for her children to be right now, as they have behavioral and emotional needs."

Dana appreciates what Kristyn has done to help her. "I was not always fond of Kristyn, however, she told me things that I needed to hear, even though I didn't always like to hear them. My advice for other parents working with CPS is to work your service plan. If you think you have hit the bottom, there is only one way to go, UP! Sure, I worry about backsliding. But I have learned much during the past year, including the skills needed for positive parenting, and the confidence to ask for help if needed. Look how much I accomplished in the past year—I'm looking forward to years to come."

include respite care, tuition for day care services, tutoring, and after school programs.

- ◆ In January 2004, CPS centralized its process of placing children in residential treatment. The goal of centralization was to reduce the average number of children in such placements and improve the lives of those children by placing them in the most appropriate settings. The new process gave residential treatment providers a centralized point of contact.

- ◆ In 2004, CPS received federal funding to create a new program that helps youth who age out of the state's care to reach their educational goals. The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program began providing additional money for youth who have left CPS care and are going to school to help cover expenses such as rent, computer, day care, and transportation. The program supplements the state's Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program, and the state's tuition waiver program at state funded universities, colleges, junior colleges, and vocational schools.

- ◆ In 2004, CPS placed in each administrative district a Best Practice Specialist who has worked closely with each respective district director to identify and promote best practices in all areas of delivering services. Best Practice Specialists have provided local leadership on several of the major initiatives, as well as a variety of topics including revitalizing permanency planning, enhancing child and family visitations, accessing substance abuse treatment services, and assessing family reunification readiness.

## CPS Services

### Intake

State law requires that anyone who believes that a child is being abused or neglected report the situation to the DFPS abuse hotline. DFPS administers a toll-free, 24-hour statewide hotline for reporting suspected abuse or neglect of children, and people who are elderly or have disabilities 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 206,978 reports of child abuse and neglect in 2004. During 2004, an increasing number of professionals took advantage of a new option, reporting suspected abuse and neglect through a secured web site. In 2004, 20,883 web-based reports of abuse or neglect were received through this Internet reporting option.

In September 2003, the statewide hotline received an unprecedented number of phone calls, which resulted in



delays. The increase in calls, which averaged more than 700 a day, coincided with the start of the school year when the agency historically receives more calls. As a result, the agency shifted manpower, authorized overtime, hired temporary workers, and implemented flexible hours to handle the increased call volume.

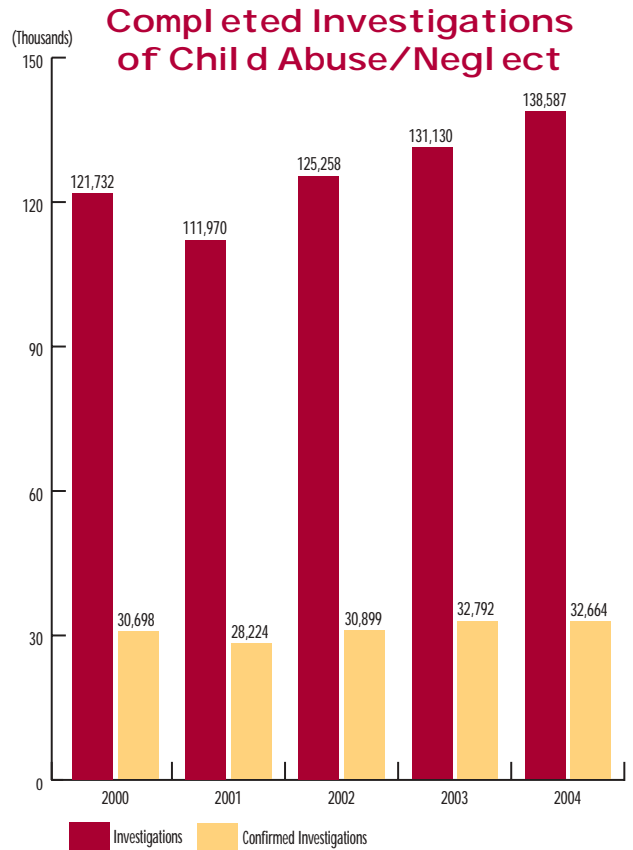
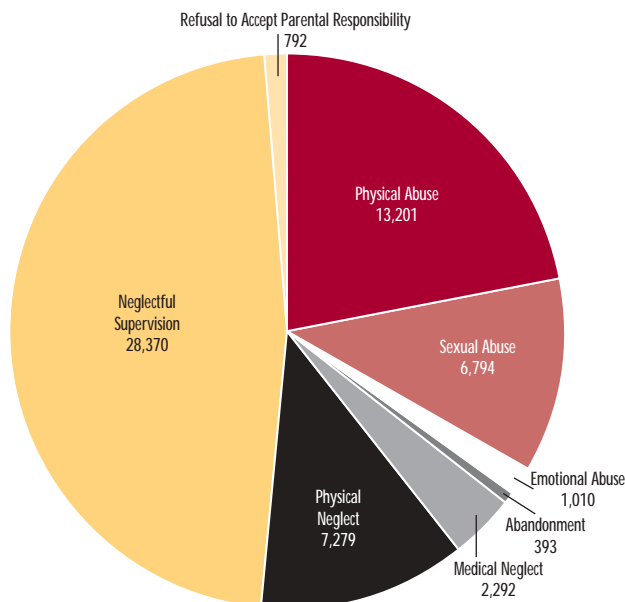
**Investigations**

When an intake report 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 2004, CPS completed 138,587 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

**Confirmed Victims of Abuse/Neglect by Type FY 2004**



family counseling, crisis intervention, parenting classes, substance abuse treatment, and childcare.

Most children served by 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 2004, an average of 9,029 families per month received in-home services.

**Foster Care**

When it is not safe for children to live with their own families, CPS petitions the court to remove the children from their homes. They may be placed temporarily with relatives, a verified foster family, or an emergency shelter. Verified 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 home. These children may be placed in specialized group homes, residential treatment centers, or other facilities.



**T**he Olympic Games in Athens, Greece are a long way from Oliver Wendell Holmes High School in San Antonio. But that's exactly where Darold Williamson found himself in the summer of 2004. As a member of the U.S. Men's Track and Field team, the 6 foot 2 inch, 170 pound athlete won a gold medal in the 4 by 400 meter relay.

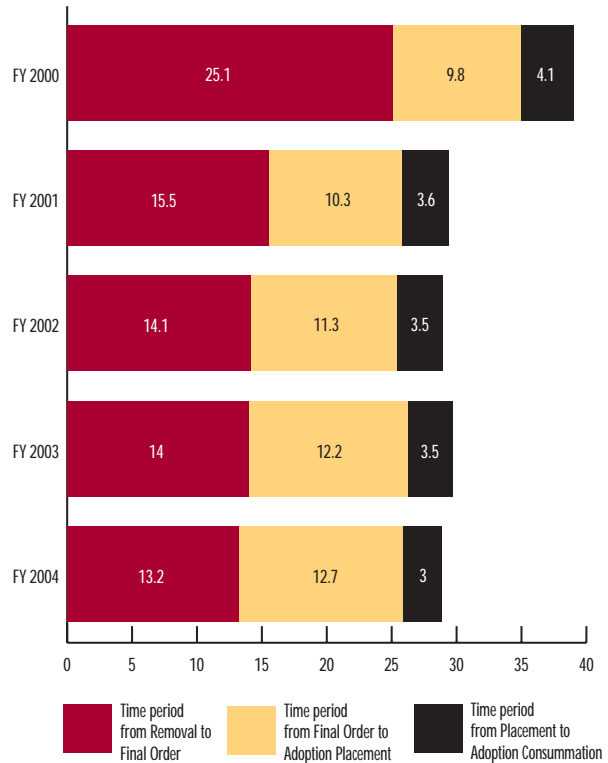
Williamson began his career as an athlete as a teen about the same time he came into the state's foster care system. Fortunately, his grandmother became a foster parent through Casey Family Programs in San Antonio and was there to help coach him on. Now Williamson is at Baylor University, where he helped win Big 12 track and field championships in 2002, 2003, and 2004, Williamson still keeps in touch with Liz Cruz, his caseworker at Casey (pictured above).

"It's been a long road, but I've always been one to focus on the positive things in life," says Williamson. "If you hold onto the bad things, you won't get anywhere. I always strive to do my best, to work hard."

Williamson is an alumnus of the DFPS Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program and was an Education and Training Voucher scholarship recipient. While in foster care, Williamson also received support from Mark Feichtinger, his permanent managing conservatorship caseworker and Nadine Terry, his PAL worker. "Preparation for Adult Living was helpful to get me prepared for life on my own, how to do things right," says Williamson.

As for the future, Williamson hopes to represent the United States in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. When he retires from competition, he is contemplating a career in coaching because he'd like to give back to the sport. His message to foster youth: "Always work hard and don't let the negative things in life hold you down. Set high goals—it will get you something to work toward. Never give up."

### Months Spent in State Care for Children Whose Adoptions Were Consummated



### Permanency Planning Teams

When children are removed from their home and placed in the state's custody, CPS caseworkers, parents, and caregivers work together to develop a written case plan and address the factors that caused abuse or neglect. They also review progress made in the case plan on a regular basis with the input of the other professionals 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 living arrangement for the child--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 permanency. In sites where Family Group Decision-Making has been initiated, the family group conference replaces a Permanency Planning Team meeting.

### Adoption

When it is not possible for a child to return home, the court may terminate the parents' rights and legally make the child available for adoption. DFPS completed 2,512

adoptions in 2004. DFPS contracts with licensed private child-placing agencies to increase the number of adoptive homes available to adopt foster children. At the end of 2004, there were 3,422 children in the agency's custody waiting for adoption.

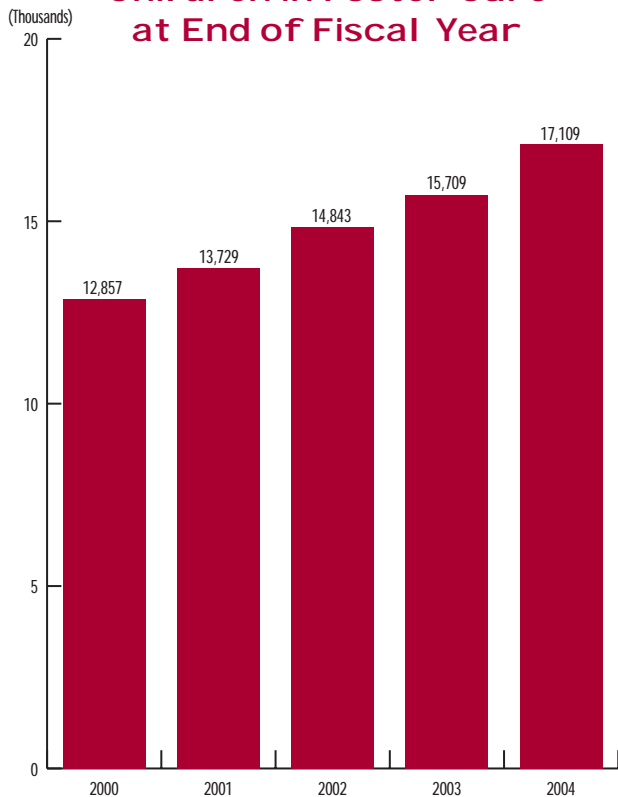
**Dual-Licensed Homes**

In 2004, 51.5 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 during the foster care placement. CPS makes a concerted effort to "dually license" homes for both foster care and adoption.

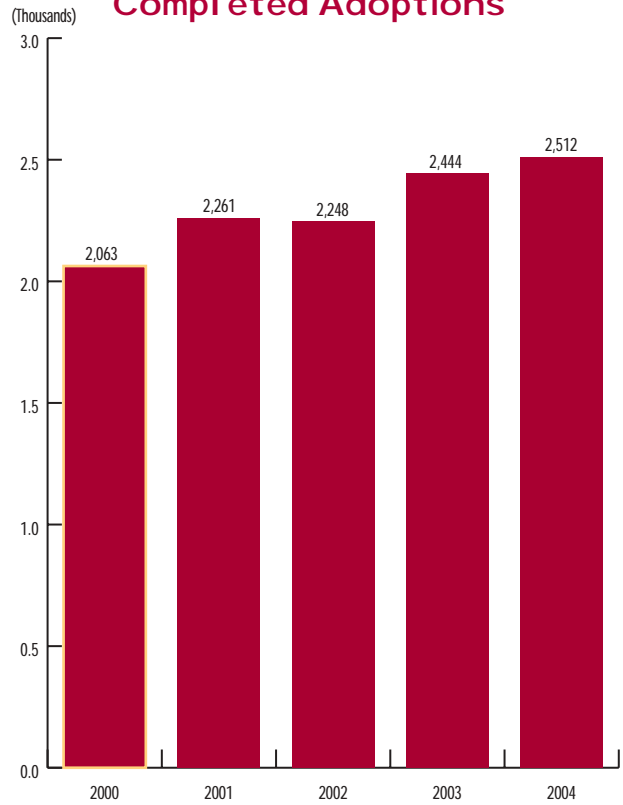
**Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Families**

CPS actively recruits foster and adoptive families through national, state, and regional campaigns and through the Texas Adoption Resource Exchange web site. Examples include the statewide Foster Care Month in May, Adoption Awareness Month in November, the CHILD initiative, and the One Church, One Child programs currently in place in Dallas/Fort Worth, Beaumont, Tyler, and Houston.

**Children in Foster Care at End of Fiscal Year**



**Completed Adoptions**



**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](http://www.adoptchildren.org). TARE participates with other adoption organizations during national recruitment campaigns and promotes children on TARE in the AdoptUSKids national web site as well as other web sites.

TARE had 1,131 children registered in 2004:

- ◆ 339 children were placed or are pending placement;
- ◆ 170 children were removed from TARE due to numerous inquiries (more than 20);
- ◆ 75 children were removed due to changes in their permanency plan or changes in medical/therapeutic needs; and
- ◆ 547 children registered in 2004 are still waiting.

TARE offers a toll-free Statewide Adoption and Foster Care Inquiry Line--1-800-233-3405--and the Adoption Family Network (AFN). AFN is a free, self-registration listing of adoptive families and individuals across the United States who have been approved for adoptions. Through AFN, families may list their preferences on children they





**C**ountry music fans around Plainview may know Brandy Haines because of the “Wake Up Kickin’ Morning Show With Tom and Brandy” on KKYN FM, The Bulldog. But around the house, she’s just known as, “Mom.”

After having one biological child, Jared (left), Brandy and her husband Michael decided they had a lot more room in their home and in their hearts. As a result, they decided to become foster parents through DFPS in 2001. “Mike was the one who had the idea to become foster parents,” says Brandy. “We always loved kids, and worked with the children’s ministry at our church.”

While being trained to become foster parents, they were approached about becoming licensed to adopt children as well. “At the time, this was something we had never considered,” said Mike. “We were told there could be instances when children in our home would become available for adoption, and since we would already have a relationship as foster parents, we might want to adopt. So we decided to do it.”

Soon after her birth mother abandoned her, the Haines became foster parents to a newborn named Brianna. Mike and Brandy were glad that they had been dual licensed! Although they began with the intentions of fostering, they decided to legally add Brianna to their family.

Mike and Brandy encourage other families to consider becoming foster/adoptive parents because it is very rewarding. “The hugs, I Love Yous, and witnessing the change and development of the children is incredible,” says Brandy. “DFPS provides a reimbursement for the care of children, and the kids qualify for Medicaid and often other services. You’ll need to have patience, time, and love to share. It is a great reward and there is a great need in our community.”

are willing to parent and this information is available to CPS adoption staff through a searchable database. More than 600 approved adoptive families were registered in AFN in 2004.

The toll-free statewide inquiry line receives about 150 to 200 calls a month from prospective foster care and adoptive families across the state. These calls are entered into the Internet inquiry forms and forwarded to their respective regions as soon as they are received.

### **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. Those services include case management, mental health services, 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 2004.

### **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 Council and other decision-makers to improve services to children and youth.

In 2004, 5,341 youths ages 16 through 20, participated in the PAL program. In addition, 534 teenagers ages 14 and 15 received PAL services. Funds from the federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Act enabled CPS to provide aftercare room-and-board assistance for 891 young adults and case management services for 1,599 young adults ages 18 through 21 who exited foster care.

### **Working With Partners**

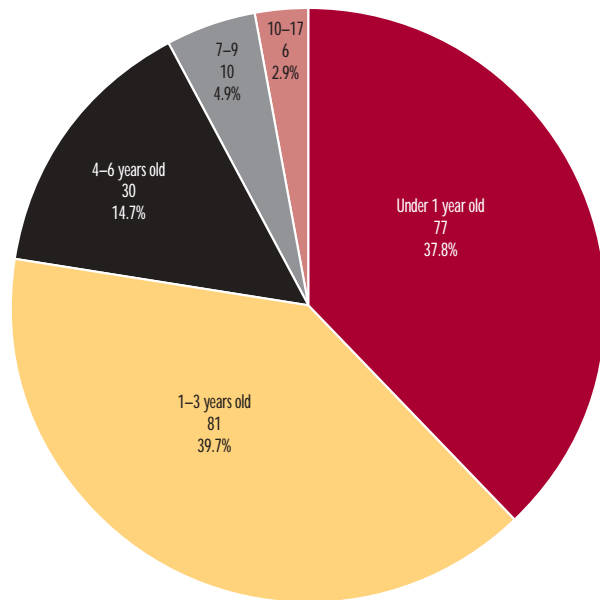
#### **Children's Justice Act**

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;

### Age of Fatality Victims Due to Abuse/Neglect FY2004



- ◆ 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.

In 2004, CJA also provided funding for training law enforcement, prosecutors, legal personnel, social workers, and medical personnel on recognizing and investigating child abuse.

#### Law Enforcement

In an effort to monitor legislation requiring that law enforcement and CPS conduct joint investigations of Priority 1 reports, CPS is reviewing the availability of law enforcement involvement in these cases, as well as the impact on victims and parents when law enforcement is present. The agency made changes to its automated information system to more accurately capture cases in which law enforcement was involved.

#### 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 Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) continues to expand with financial help from CIP. This funding also has 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 last biennium for 15 such courts throughout the state. CIP continues to work closely with the Office of Court Administration.

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

- ◆ Maintain the judicial web site, 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.

In 2004, CIP also funded a "Cluster Prosecutor" to handle cases in the northern Panhandle child protection Cluster Court of Judge Phil Vanderpool in Pampa.

#### 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 local, multidisciplinary, 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 46 teams that cover 150 counties. Through CPS, DFPS provides technical assistance to the teams and is the state agency charged with maintaining 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. Citizen Review Teams, Child Fatality Review Teams, CPS Risk Directors, Regional CPS Child Death Review Committees, and the state Child Safety Review Committee review child deaths. While each entity reviews child deaths for unique purposes, a common goal is to help CPS and the broader community identify the causes of child fatalities and develop strategies, programs, and training to reduce the rate of preventable child deaths, as well as provide intervention services to families and children at risk.

In 2004, of the children who died due to abuse or neglect, 37.8 percent were less than one year old, and nearly 77.5 percent were age three or younger. Of 616 child deaths reported in 2004, CPS confirmed abuse/neglect as the cause of death for 204 children.

### **Racial Disparity**

CPS began to tackle the problem of over the representation of African American children in the Texas foster care system. While African American children made up only 12.8 percent of the Texas population, they made up 27 percent of the children entering foster care in 2003.

In an effort to address this issue, CPS entered into a partnership with the Casey Family Programs. Based in Seattle, Washington, Casey Family Programs is a national organization that provides direct services to foster, kinship, and adoptive parents and promote advances in child-welfare practice and policy. The goal of the partnership is to work with community members to find better ways of keeping families intact and keep children out of foster care, while still protecting children from neglect and abuse. The Casey Family Program/CPS partnership began to build community advisory committees in Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston.

Some of CPS' other strategies such as family group decision-making, kinship care, and CHILD will help mitigate disparities that arise among children in CPS care. These disparities arise from African American children remaining in care longer than Anglo children and exiting less often to permanent homes.



### Transitioning Youth

In 2004, the Texas Workforce Commission, in collaboration with DFPS, the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, and the Texas Workforce Commission, received a U.S. Department of Labor demonstration grant to develop a one-stop transition services center in the Houston area. Once completed, the center will offer a wide range of services to youth (ages 16 to 21) who are transitioning from foster care to adulthood. The transition center, scheduled to begin operation in fiscal year 2005, will assist youth in gaining employment, stable housing, and self-sufficiency.

### Texas State Strategy

The Texas State Strategy is a collaborative systems improvement effort of Casey Family Programs and DFPS. The strategy addresses challenges in the areas of kinship services and foster care transition services in Texas. In 2004, Casey and DFPS addressed the increase in kinship care referrals and began evaluation of a kinship pilot in South Texas.

As part of the Texas State Strategy, a foster care alumni leadership forum brought alumni together with state agency leaders to work on strategies for improving services to children and youth. "Better Together" training was held for foster care alumni and adult partners to work together in communities. Technical assistance was provided for ongoing training of caseworkers, care providers, alumni, and other stakeholders on life skills tools. The web-based Chafee Assessment Supplement moved to the pilot stage. 🌸



**V**olunteers like Patty Gonzales of Austin play an important role at DFPS. In 2004, she and her friend Aida Douglas had a casual chat—little did they know at the time where it would lead.

"I was speaking with Aida one night about how we get to go to annual galas but don't know what to do with the dresses afterward," says Gonzales, who works for Time Warner Cable. "Aida, who at the time, was chair of the Travis County Child Welfare Board, suggested we help girls in foster care because they have difficulty getting ready for the prom."

After pulling together additional friends and contacts from *Las Comadres*, a social group, and the Association for Women in Communications, the program was able to get dresses and a team of volunteers to provide youth with a complete "prom prep" experience. "Initially, I sent out two e-mails to my contacts and in turn, those people sent e-mails to their friends and organizations. As a result, we collected close to 400 dresses in a matter of two or three weeks."

In a short time, Gonzales' house was transferred into a "boutique" where volunteers for the young ladies gave them manicures, pedicures, facials, make-up lessons, refreshments, and gift bags containing perfume and make-up. Young men were treated to a complimentary tuxedo rental and a "gentlemen's lunch" at the Hula Hut restaurant where they brushed up on table etiquette and manners suitable for escorting a princess. Estrada Cleaners provided dry cleaning for the dresses and tuxedos.

"It was great fun and it's an event we plan to continue doing," says Gonzales. "Having the opportunity to put a smile on someone else's face is well worth it and educating volunteers about the plight of foster children is an added bonus."

In 2003, DFPS centralized management and coordination of its volunteer programs to increase its effectiveness. In 2004, more than 3,600 groups and individuals contributed almost 170,000 hours of their time to assist DFPS caseworkers deliver important services to our clients.



# Adult Protective Services

## Adult Protective Services

### Responsibilities

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

### 2004 Adult Protective Services Reform

In 2004, several Adult Protective Services cases in El Paso and Tarrant County attracted the attention of the news media and elected officials. As a result, the Governor issued Executive Order RP 33 on April 14, 2004. The order called for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to review and reform Adult Protective Services. As a result, HHSC completed:

- ◆ A review of more than 1,200 case files involving 200 clients within the last two years that had three or more referrals to APS;
- ◆ A review of APS management structure, policy, internal reports, data analysis, personnel records, and statutes related to APS;
- ◆ Follow-up visits with clients to verify that information in case files was accurate; and
- ◆ Interviews with staff and community leaders.

In July 2004, HHSC issued a report that identified three areas that needed systemic and organizational changes. They were: improving investigations and delivery of services, increasing efficiencies, and enhancing program accountability.

The report formed the basis for 252 corrective actions and recommendations for consideration in 2005 by the 79th Texas Legislature.

### Accomplishments

- ◆ In 2004, APS further strengthened its quality assurance program by eliminating processes that do not contribute to quality casework, developing surveys to measure client outcomes, and evaluating local compliance with statewide policy. All APS districts implemented quality assurance projects to improve services in their area of the state.

- ◆ In December 2003, the DFPS Board adopted revisions to rules relating to APS investigations in MHMR facilities. The revised rules redefined the types of allegations that result in investigations and created a more flexible priority system. As a result, APS was able to maintain quality casework despite a 25 percent reduction of staff.

- ◆ In 2004, APS worked with the Baylor College of Medicine Texas Elder Abuse and Mistreatment (TEAM) Institute to establish a telemedicine project for the Houston and Amarillo APS areas. Telemedicine is an area of increased interest for the APS program as it involves the use of advanced telecommunications technologies for medical and mental health assessments. In 2005, APS will expand the use of teleconferencing and/or videoconferencing technologies to other areas in Texas to provide immediate medical and mental health assessments for clients who may not have such services in their community.

- ◆ APS worked with financial institutions to train bank tellers on how to recognize, report, and prevent financial exploitation and scams that target seniors. The program, known as Businesses Safeguarding Against Financial Exploitation (B-SAFE), is based on a similar program in Oregon.

- ◆ In conjunction with the May 2004 Elder Abuse Awareness Month, APS distributed a public service announcement to 100 TV stations. As of May 21, 2004, the public service announcement aired 232 times to an audience of more than 2 million Texans. Other activities included distribution of silver ribbons and flyers in utility bills, billboards, and senior fairs.

- ◆ APS worked with communities across the state to stock resource rooms with emergency items for APS clients. Supplies include detergent, bath soap, toilet paper, food, and gently used walkers, canes, and bathtub benches. In fiscal year 2004, several new coalitions were formed throughout the state. Dedicated APS staff continued to strengthen and build relationships with community partners such as financial institutions, animal protection agencies, retail stores, the postal service, Girl Scouts, and economic development boards. Progress continues in the development of local APS coalitions and boards that support the needs of APS clients.

- ◆ APS staff strengthened ties with law enforcement by distributing elder abuse awareness videos to South Texas law enforcement agencies that will be shown during police roll call. Training sessions were also held between APS and law enforcement agencies in Arlington, Corpus Christi, Houston, San Angelo, and San Antonio.





**I**f anything, DFPS workers are resourceful when it comes to helping our clients. And when they need help, they're usually not shy about turning to community resources.

On Feb. 5, 2004, Adult Protective Services staff in Abilene teamed up with volunteers from Adult Protective Services Partners, Inc. to install plastic sheeting on an APS client's windows to provide insulation in order to lower client's electric bill.

Jan Dagenhart (left), board member of APS Partners, Inc., said she enjoys helping clients because she thinks the more we help others, the better things are. "Any of us could be in that situation," she says. "In this world, we have to help each other. We have to give a piece of ourselves."

Donna Wittliff, (right) an APS worker in Abilene, appreciates help from community volunteers and is willing to go above and beyond the call of duty to help her clients in her spare time. "The people in Abilene are always willing to assist APS with our clients," says Wittliff. "One reason this client's electric bill was so high was due to a lack of insulation around the windows. The cost to replace the windows was prohibitive. I talked to APS Partners, and we decided to put plastic sheeting in the windows, as an alternative for insulation."

APS Partners, Inc. supports caseworkers as they meet immediate needs of elderly or disabled clients. Services include assistance with prescriptions, wheelchair ramps, home repairs, utilities, dental care, and eye care. The organization also supports a resource room where caseworkers have 24 hour access to donated items such as wheelchairs, walkers, grab bars, bathtub benches, and canes. APS Partners Inc. also has helped raise money and increase awareness of APS services and client needs.

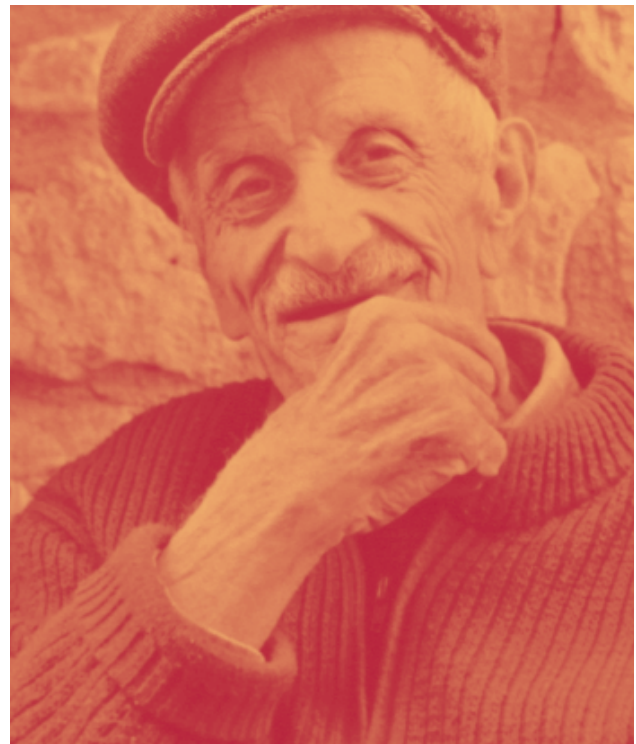
## APS Services

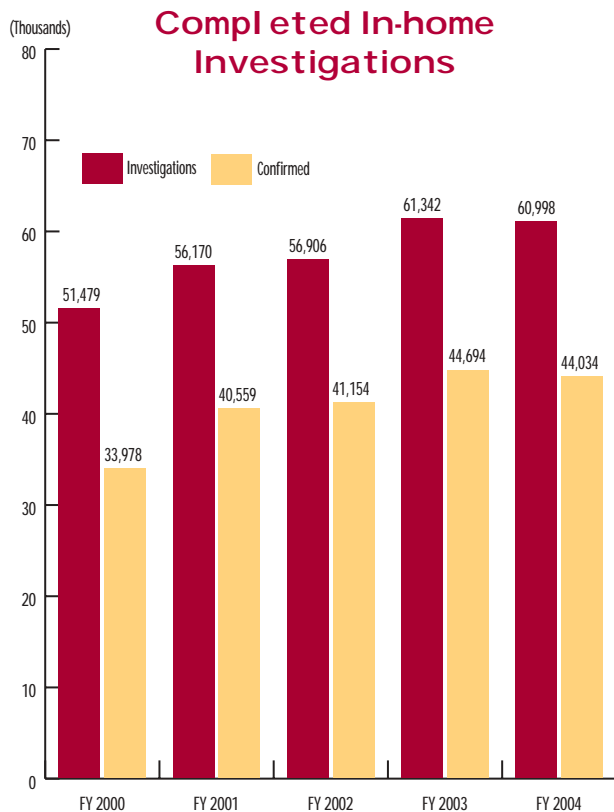
APS clients are adults who live in their own homes, in facilities regulated or operated by Mental Health Mental Retardation (MHMR), or in unregulated facilities. Three program areas serve APS clients: in-home investigations and services, MHMR investigations, and guardianship services.

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, Texans who are elderly or have disabilities make up about a quarter of the state's population. In 2004, more than 2.2 million Texans were age 65 and older, according to population projections. Nearly one out of five adults between the ages of 18 and 64 have a disability, and almost one-half of people over 65 have a disability. Many of these people live alone or are dependent on others for care.

## In-Home Investigations and Services

The largest APS program area is in-home investigations and services. The in-home program investigates allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of the elderly or adults with disabilities. Specifically, APS works with vulnerable adults who reside in their own homes or in room-and-board homes not subject to licensure. APS also investigates alle-





gations of exploitation involving vulnerable 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 2004, APS completed 60,998 investigations of which 44,034 cases were confirmed cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. When maltreatment is confirmed, APS provides or arranges for emergency services to alleviate abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

APS may provide or arrange for 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 used to protect the well being of individuals when they cannot protect themselves. A guardian is court-appointed to make decisions on behalf of an incapacitated person. Guardians can be family members, county attorneys, banks, private attorneys, etc.

Photo by Rudy Gutierrez, Courtesy *The El Paso Times*



In 2004, several Adult Protective Services (APS) cases in El Paso and Tarrant County generated heightened concern and attention among members of the news media and elected officials. As a result, the governor called for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to review and reform APS.

In August, Erica Molina of *The El Paso Times* profiled Marie Borrego (right) who was one of the APS caseworkers caught in the middle of the controversy. "I want (the public) to understand the people here are very committed and doing the absolute best they can," said Borrego in *The Times* article. "If they didn't care, they would not be here."

Borrego explained that in order to help clients, she must gain their trust over time. "It's not easy to just go into someone's house and say, 'I want to look at your place,'" Borrego said. "You have to have a manner about you that will allow you to develop a rapport."

One of the clients with whom she developed a good working relationship is Roy Holguin (left). Thanks to Borrego's help, he was able to regain his electrical service. "This agency is wonderful," said Holguin. "They put them in a bad light because of what happened. People do make mistakes, but they have a lot of people to take care of. Ms. Borrego is wonderful."

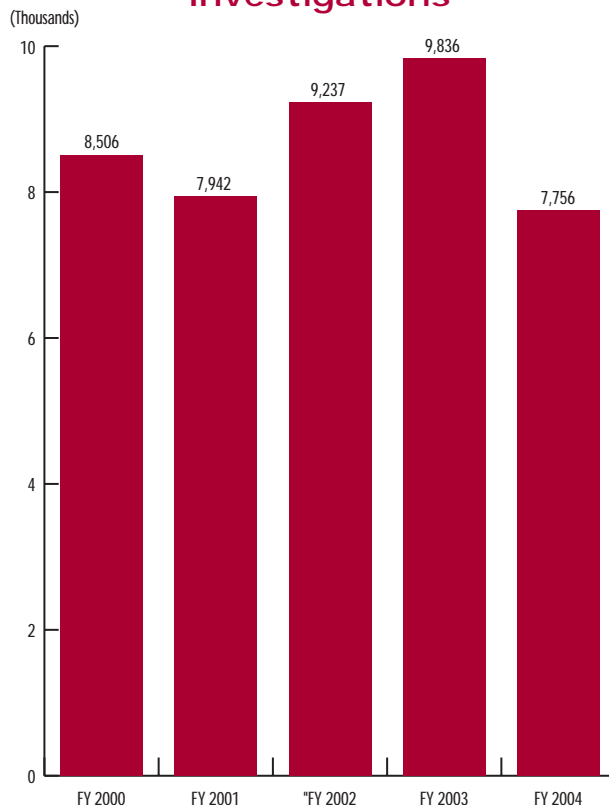
Borrego said that although her job was challenging, it was all worth it just to see people's problems solved. "When the black eyes are gone and ...they are smiling, it makes all the difference."



**W**hen his doctors told him he would be living out his life in hospice care due to emphysema, diabetes, kidney disease, and cellulitis in both legs, William Jones of Brownwood knew he was facing a challenging future. Although he knew his medical conditions were serious, Mr. Jones also wanted a say in how he was being treated. “Angie Medina, my case-worker, became an advocate for me and spoke on my behalf to the doctors,” says William. “APS does good things and they helped me.”

When William went into hospice care, doctors gave him three to six months to live. He’s hoping to beat the odds. “I’m just tickled pink to be home with my dog, Chester.”

## Completed MHMR Investigations



Guardianship duties may include managing a person’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 children aging out of the CPS system who have severe disabilities. APS may also seek guardianship of adults who are incapacitated and victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

APS guardianship, which may be provided directly or through contracts with local entities, is 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 2004, APS directly provided 584 guardianships and contracted for an additional 184.



### Mental Health Mental Retardation (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; and
- ◆ Facility and community center contractors, including home and community-based waiver programs.

During 2004, APS completed 7,756 investigations in MHMR settings. ❀



**L**inda Evans (right) of May, Texas has known about Adult Protective Services for many years. When she was younger and working as a home health care worker, she contacted APS because of an elderly client living in a state of self-neglect. She never expected that some day she would find herself in a similar situation. "I'm living on disability and needed help, so I called the 1-800 number," she says.

APS worker Joseph King (left) was assigned the case and was able to get her the medical attention she needed. Ms. Evans is glad that Joseph and APS were there to help. "Joseph has been so kind and helpful. He kept me informed every step of the process and checked on me to make sure I was okay. And I'm just so grateful Adult Protective Services was there for me."

# Child Care Licensing



## Child Care Licensing

### Responsibilities

- ◆ Regulate all child-care operations 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 operations' and agencies' compliance with minimum standards of care.
- ◆ Inform parents and the public about child-care in general and about the histories of specific homes and daycare operations in complying with minimum state standards.
- ◆ Provide technical assistance to providers on areas covered in the minimum standards of care.

### Accomplishments

- ◆ In collaboration with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), DFPS Licensing staff revised rules related to a type of 24-hour care known as “therapeutic camps.” The new standards bring these types of programs into compliance with other residential treatment operations.
- ◆ For the first time, the majority of Licensing inspectors and investigators were issued digital cameras to help them document facility inspections. Workers gained the ability to photograph playground equipment and potential safety hazards and immediately review the digital photos with supervisors. As a result, there was a reduction in the number of administrative reviews.
- ◆ Staff enhanced the Child Care Licensing Automated Support System (CLASS) so that it could allow child-care providers to log in and submit criminal background checks through the Internet. CCL staff use the CLASS system to enter all pertinent information about regulated operations and agencies, including monitoring, inspections, and investigations.
- ◆ Staff across the state was trained on how to better assess child-care operations. The project, known as “See The Overall Picture” (STOP), helped staff take a more holistic approach to how they evaluate child-care providers based not only on what they find, but on the history of each provider.
- ◆ Staff in the Houston area worked with the Texas Workforce Commission and the Houston/Galveston Area Council to provide intensive training to child-care

providers in Northeast Houston. The training attracted many providers who historically had not participated in community training sessions or association meetings and rarely networked with each other.

- ◆ Staff in the Dallas area partnered with Red Oak Books to distribute books to children attending low-income child-care centers and to train child-care providers on early literacy topics. Dallas staff also worked with the Texas Education Agency Region 11 Education Service Center to train child-care providers and school district staff regarding the inclusion of special needs preschool children.
- ◆ Staff in Tarrant County helped develop a new coalition to address the needs of early childhood education. The coalition includes Child Care Licensing, Child Protective Services, Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas Work Advantage, Head Start, Clayton Schools Inc., and Child Care Management Services. In April, the coalition partnered with the African American Health Expo which had more than 1,000 participants and more than 70 vendors.

### CCL Services

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

#### Regulating Child-Care Operations

There are three categories of child-care operations regulated by Child Care Licensing: Listed, Registered, and Licensed.

#### Listed Family Homes

Listed Family Homes provide child care on a regular basis (at least four hours per day, three or more days a week, for more than nine consecutive weeks) in the providers' own homes for one to three unrelated children. Providers are required to go through an application process that includes a criminal background check and issuance of a certificate. Listed Family Home providers must be at least age 18, however, there are no minimum standards, orientation, or training requirements. Listed Family Homes are not inspected unless our agency receives a report alleging child abuse or neglect. CCL would also investigate any facility that is reportedly not properly listed or registered.





**K**im Kofron of The Children's Courtyard in Austin is one of thousands of child-care directors in Texas who began using a new DFPS service in 2004 that allows them to conduct online criminal background checks of their employees and volunteers.

"The online check is so much easier," she says. "We just submit it through the Internet and get an e-mail within about 24 to 48 hours that tells us the results. Prior to this, it was a two- to four-week wait where I'd have to fill out a form, fax it to my Licensing representative, and wait for the results to be sent back by snail mail. In fact, sometimes it was as long as six weeks." Kim says in addition to getting faster service, the \$2 per search remains the same as in snail mail days.

Kim says the online system really helps considering her child care operation, which has 65 children and 18 staff, is one of 47 Courtyard campuses in the state of Texas. "We conduct criminal background checks on all staff every two years. It's a service we are now using all the time."

Kim admits she's computer savvy, but says the online check is simple enough for anyone to use. "You go to the web site, enter a user name and password and you are logged on. Then you can enter in a person's information—name, address, Social Security number, etc.—and click on the "Submit" button. It's very user friendly."

### Registered Operations

Registered Child Care Homes provide care in the providers' own homes for as many as six children younger than age 14; they may also take in as many as six more school-age children. The number of children allowed in a home is determined by the ages of the children. No more than 12 children can be in care at any time, including the provider's children. Providers are required to go through an application process that includes completion of an orientation class and criminal background checks. DFPS issues a registration certificate after Licensing inspectors complete an on-site inspection to ensure providers are meeting minimum standards. Registered homes are inspected every 1 to 3 years. Our agency will also inspect them if we receive a report related to child abuse or neglect or standards violations.

### Licensed Operations

All licensed operations must follow published standards and are routinely monitored and inspected. To become a licensed operation, a prospective provider must complete an application process that includes completion of an orientation class and criminal background checks. DFPS issues a license after our staff completes on-site inspections to ensure providers are meeting minimum standards. Licensed Operations are inspected every 5 to 12 months or more often if there are reports of alleged child abuse or neglect or violations of state standards. Licensed Operations include Day Care and 24 Hour Care:

#### Child Care

- ◆ Child Care Centers care for 13 or more children younger than age 14 for less than 24 hours.
- ◆ Licensed Child-Care Homes provide care for less than 24 hours per day for 7 to 12 children younger than age 14.

#### 24-Hour Care

- ◆ Foster Family Homes provide 24-hour care for 6 or fewer children younger than age 18.
- ◆ Foster Group Homes provide 24-hour care for 7 to 12 children younger than age 18.
- ◆ Child Care Institutions provide 24-hour care for 13 or more children younger than age 18 and for the mentally fragile. These Institutions include emergency shelters, residential treatment centers, halfway houses, maternity homes, and therapeutic camps.

### Child Placing Agencies

Child Placing Agencies are persons or organizations other than a child's natural parent or guardian who plan for

placement of a child or place a child in a child care facility, and foster and adoptive homes.

**Training**

District CCL representatives, investigators, supervisors, directors, and clerical staff received more than 30 hours of training and professional development on work related issues like child development, using automation support, regulation and inspection of operations, and health and safety.

CCL staff provided more than 100 training events for more than 5,000 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. CCL workers provide training and collaborate with local associations to provide training for providers on a regular basis. 🌸

**Child Care Facilities in Texas**

<b>Number of homes:</b>		
Listed Family Homes (LFH)	3,845	11.9%
CPS-Approved Adoptive Homes	649	2.0%
Agency Foster Homes	4,906	15.2%
CPS-Approved Foster Homes	3,175	9.9%
Registered Family Homes (RFH)	8,422	26.2%
<b>Number of centers:</b>		
Licensed/Certified Facilities	10,621	33.0%
<b>Number of 24-hour care:</b>		
Residential Facilities & Child Placing Agencies	578	1.8%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>32,196</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



**T**o most people, merry-go-rounds, seesaws, swings, and other playground equipment are just another way for kids to have fun. Michele Adams of Child Care Licensing agrees—she thinks they’re fun, too, but she also wants them to be safe.

With more than 20 years as a child-care regulator and teacher, Michele is certified as a playground safety inspector by the National Playground Safety Institute. Because of her expertise, one of her job duties is to answer questions from DFPS staff members who conduct safety inspections on the state’s approximately 20,000 home-based and center-based child-care operations.

Thanks to the distribution of digital cameras in 2004, Licensing inspectors and investigators can photograph playground equipment and potential safety hazards and immediately review the digital photos with supervisors. When staff aren’t sure, there’s a good chance those photos will end up in Michele’s e-mail In-Box.

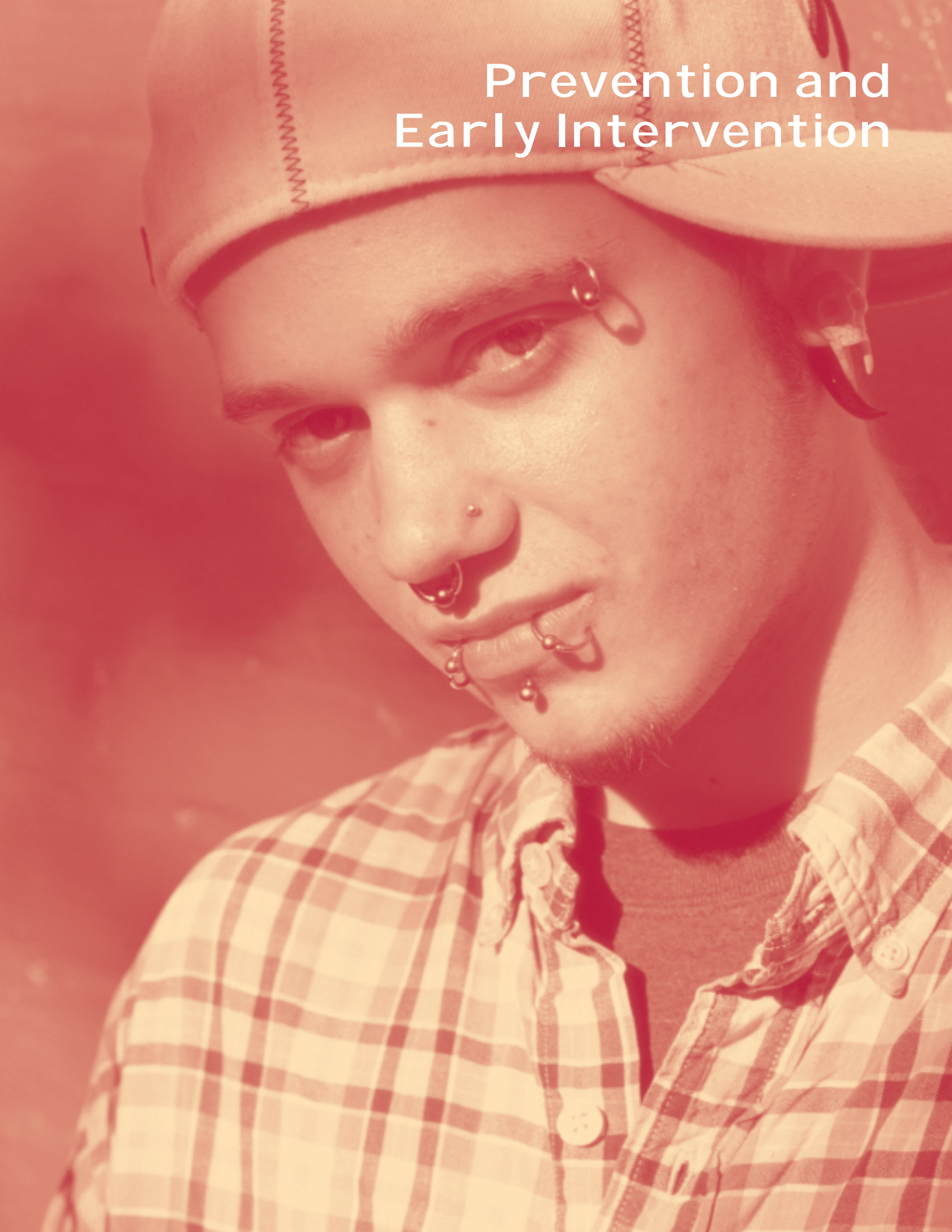
“Digital cameras are an important part of our assessment process and they dramatically increased our ability to communicate with providers and management staff,” says Michele. “By using digital cameras, we not only have almost immediate access to the photos, but save the time and money required when developing traditional film.”

For example, Michele says lately she has been getting a lot of questions about relatively new equipment such as “Water Park” and “Moon Walk” -type attractions. “While this equipment can help a child care center attract business, it also presents a whole new set of safety-related questions from our field staff. Having access to the photos helps me determine if the equipment meets the state’s minimum safety standards for child care operations; and, because the questions and photos are coming to one place, it helps me guide staff across the state in a consistent manner.”

Michele encourages parents who are choosing day care to ask questions of the child care staff and look at the outdoor equipment themselves. “Most modern playground equipment is safer than the older or handmade equipment. People can look to see if the equipment is in good condition, if children are well supervised, and if there is enough protective material such as pea gravel or sand on the surfaces where a child might fall. Parents can read a facility’s last inspection report at the operation on our web site at [www.txchildcaresearch.org](http://www.txchildcaresearch.org).”



# Prevention and Early Intervention





## Prevention and Early Intervention

### Responsibilities

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

### Accomplishments

- ◆ PEI updated the statewide inventory of prevention service providers in March 2004. The inventory contains the names and contact information for hundreds of organizations and agencies that provide services to prevent child abuse and neglect, juvenile delinquency, and academic failure.
- ◆ Staff developed new outcome measures for PEI programs to ensure that the services provided accomplish the goals of the programs and make a positive difference in the lives of those served. Staff will incorporate these new measures into the contracts starting in fiscal year 2005.
- ◆ PEI streamlined many of the processes undertaken in contracting with community agencies. As a result, DFPS and these agencies will be able to collaborate more efficiently and effectively.
- ◆ As a result of an overall 24 percent reduction in funding for PEI programs in 2004, the division lost eight programs, reduced funding to several remaining programs, and underwent a major reorganization. The result included elimination or transfer of programs funded by the agency that address school preparedness.

### PEI Services

PEI manages and contracts with community-based programs to prevent the abuse, neglect, delinquency, and truancy of Texas children. PEI programs are administered through contracts with local community agencies or organizations. 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](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us).

### PEI Programs

#### Community Youth Development Grants (CYD)

The CYD program provides grants to develop juvenile delinquency prevention programs in ZIP codes 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. Communities prioritize and fund the specific prevention services identified as needed locally. In 2004, the agency awarded grants to serve 15 targeted ZIP codes. 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 program helps to develop honor, pride and dignity in at-risk youth. The goal is to reduce and prevent risky behavior, truancy, and juvenile delinquency among at-risk youth 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. In 2004, three projects were located in Bexar, Dallas, and Tarrant counties.

#### 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 up to age 17 who experience conflict at home, have been truant or delinquent, or have run away. STAR services are available in all 254 Texas counties. During 2004, due to changes in federal funding policies through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, STAR providers became responsible for delivering community-wide child abuse prevention and public awareness activities for all interested parties.

#### Texas Families: Together and Safe (TFTS)

TFTS funds community-based programs designed to alleviate stress and to promote parental competencies and adoption of behaviors that will increase the ability of families to successfully nurture their children and work toward family self-sufficiency. The goals of TFTS are to:

- ◆ Improve and enhance access to family support services;
- ◆ Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of community-based family support services;



**G**oing through a divorce can be a trying time, especially if there are children involved. Clint Miller (left) of Brownwood wasn't sure at first how he and his daughter would emotionally navigate a divorce, but he's glad they ended up at the Family Services Center.

The agency, which has been around since 1994, provides services such as social skills training, parenting support and training, case management, counseling, and emergency resources for qualifying families. It receives funding from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), the United Way, the Office of Attorney General, and others.

"I think the counseling at the Family Services Center really helped get my daughter through all this," says Miller. "She opened up to Vance Marcum (the counselor) unlike she'd ever done before. In fact, she looked forward to coming here every time. I think the counseling helped my daughter learn not to blame herself for what was going on."

Esmeralda Riojas (right), the agency's resource coordinator, says the staff takes a team approach to look all the facets of what happens when a family goes through a divorce, and tries to bring together the necessary services. "There is a lot of initial turmoil," she says. "In Clint's case, he was taking care of his daughter the best he could without help from the child's mom."

Miller has lived in the Brownwood area all his life. Although he knew about the Family Services Center, he never thought he and his family would benefit from its services. "They did miracles for my daughter," said Miller.

- ◆ Enable children to remain in their own homes by providing preventive services; and
- ◆ Increase collaboration among local programs, government agencies, and families. During 2004, there were 11 programs that provided services in 33 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. In 2004, a volunteer workforce of about 70 people answered the phones. Many callers faced a variety of problems including family conflict, delinquency, truancy, and abuse and neglect issues. The program increased public awareness through television, radio, billboards and other media efforts. Hotline telephone counselors received 35,197 calls during fiscal year 2004.

### **Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP)**

In 2004, the program formerly known as Community-Based Family Resource and Support was renamed at the federal level as Community Based Child Abuse Prevention. The name change came in conjunction with changes in federal funding policies through the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, whose impact will be seen in fiscal year 2005. Through this program, DFPS entered into agreements that enabled local communities and state networks to plan and coordinate family resource and support programs aimed at increasing awareness of child abuse and neglect. During 2004, DFPS had contracts with 10 lead agencies to provide family support and prevention awareness services.

### **Tertiary/Secondary Child Abuse Prevention**

DFPS contracts with Family Outreach of America to provide community-based, volunteer-driven services for prevention, intervention and aftercare for children who have been, or who are at risk of being, abused and/or neglected.

The goals of the program include reducing child maltreatment and the number of families reentering the Child Protective Services system. Additional goals are improving the quality and availability of aftercare services for abused children, and enhancing a statewide network of tertiary child abuse prevention programs.

### **PEI Special Initiatives**

#### **Child Abuse Prevention Kit**

Each April, Child Abuse Prevention Month activities raise awareness about the problem of child abuse - and most



importantly, about what each of us can do to help prevent the abuse and neglect of children. For the past several years, DFPS has joined forces with other agencies to increase public awareness about abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children through the Child Abuse Prevention Kit. DFPS produced the 2004 Child Abuse Prevention Kit with help from Prevent Child Abuse Texas and Early Childhood Intervention. The Texas Education Agency and the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards supported the agency with statewide distribution of the kit. This year's theme was "Helping to Strengthen Texas Families." A total of 30,000 kits were distributed to DFPS district offices and licensed childcare centers across the state. These kits serve as a resource for parents, teachers and communities. Previous versions of the kit can also be downloaded from the agency's web site at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us) or at [www.itsuptoyou.org](http://www.itsuptoyou.org).

#### Partners in Prevention Training Conference

From November 19-21, 2003, DFPS hosted the 3rd Annual Partners in Prevention Training Conference in Austin. The conference brought together social services providers, community advocates, and experts in the field of child abuse prevention who were interested in improving programs and sharing expertise. The conference was open to prevention and early intervention agencies that contract with DFPS, as well as all other prevention service providers and interested parties. There were more than 450 people in attendance.

#### "Look Before You Leave" Media Campaign

During the summer of 2003, 10 Texas children, most of them infants, died after being left in vehicles in which they had been riding. In fact, the Lone Star State led the nation for the number of such fatalities. None of these children would have died if their adult caregivers had remembered to remove them from their vehicles once they arrived at their destination. Although no single entity can prevent such tragedies, DFPS decided to take a proactive approach. Three of the agency's divisions—Prevention and Early Intervention, Child Protective Services, and Child Care Licensing developed a statewide public awareness campaign on the dangers of leaving children in hot cars. The campaign, called "Look Before You Leave" ([www.lookbeforeyouleave.org](http://www.lookbeforeyouleave.org)), included statewide news conferences, billboards, and radio public service announcements and ran from Memorial Day to Labor Day 2004. 🌸



Over the years, the old Central 6 Building at 901 Avenue B in Brownwood has meant many things to many people. Built in 1917, it once served as an elementary school and a high school. Some say back in the 1950s, Elvis Presley performed there, perhaps before putting on a show at the Soldier's & Sailor's Memorial Hall.

Today, it houses several social services agencies that provide area residents with a one-stop-shop. Family Services Center, Inc., which has been around since 1994, provides information and referrals, case management, counseling, literacy and GED programs, child care, and more. The agency receives funding from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), the Brown County United Way, the Office of Attorney General, and others.

Through the Safe Exchange program, Chris Willet (right) and his children participated in supervised visits with his ex-wife. Willet also benefited from Texas Families: Together and Safe, a community-based program funded by the DFPS Prevention and Early Intervention division that alleviates parental stress, promotes parental competency, and increases child nurturing while working toward family self-sufficiency.

"Taking the classes helped us get along during our situation," says Willet, who grew up in the area and remembers attending school in the building. "I was iffy when I first came up here, but I learned we could all make progress taking one step at a time. We learned how our negativity could affect the children. I found the services helpful."

Windy Cardenas (left), the agency's parenting advocate, says the program helps parents stay child focused. "A lot of times, when people go through a divorce they can get caught up in their emotions and forget about how their children feel," says Cardenas. "The program educates parents about things like how to keep children out of the middle, how to handle hot button issues, and how to work through problems."





## Hotlines and Online Resources

### **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**

Provides information on how to become a foster or adoptive parent.

### **Child-Care Information 1-800-862-5252**

Delivers information about child care in Texas.

### **Office of Consumer Affairs 1-800-720-7777**

Make an inquiry about an existing DFPS case or make a complaint.

### **Texas Runaway Hotline 1-888-580-HELP**

Provides peer counseling to runaways and family members.

### **Texas Youth Hotline 1-800-210-2278**

Provides 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**

Report abuse, neglect, or exploitation in MHMR facilities.

### **Agency Web Sites**

<a href="http://www.dfps.state.tx.us">www.dfps.state.tx.us</a>	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)
<a href="http://www.adoptchildren.org">www.adoptchildren.org</a>	Adopt Children Through the Texas Adoption Resource Exchange
<a href="http://www.texasrunaway.org">www.texasrunaway.org</a>	Texas Runaway Hotline
<a href="http://www.texasyouth.org">www.texasyouth.org</a>	Texas Youth Hotline
<a href="http://www.itsuptoyou.org">www.itsuptoyou.org</a>	Child Abuse Prevention
<a href="http://www.notforgotten.org">www.notforgotten.org</a>	Adult Abuse Prevention
<a href="http://www.txchildcaresearch.org">www.txchildcaresearch.org</a>	Search Texas Child Care
<a href="http://www.rainbowrooms.org">www.rainbowrooms.org</a>	Rainbow Rooms
<a href="http://www.e-provider.org">www.e-provider.org</a>	Residential Child Care
<a href="http://www.volunteerfyps.org">www.volunteerfyps.org</a>	Volunteer Opportunities through DFPS
<a href="http://www.lookbeforeyouleave.org">www.lookbeforeyouleave.org</a>	Cars Are Not Babysitters

### **Agency Address**

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services  
P.O. Box 149030  
Austin, TX 78714-9030

701 W. 51st St.  
Austin, TX 78751  
(512) 438-4800

## DFPS Organizational Chart

