



Kinship Quarterly

Strengthening Families

April 2017

IN THIS ISSUE: BIG CHANGES

April is **Child Abuse Prevention Month!** In this issue, we are featuring information on changes to Medicaid and introducing the new Post-Permanency Services. We also have a wonderful success story from ECI.

Changes in Your Medicaid

Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) has moved the remaining Medicaid fee-for-service recipients into managed care. Beginning November 1, 2016, about 300 children receiving Adoption Assistance (AA) or Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) who have certain disabilities began receiving Medicaid services through a managed care program, STAR Kids. HHS sent letters about the program to their parents/caregivers before this change.

In addition, beginning September 1, 2017, the remaining PCA/AA fee-for-service Medicaid recipients will change to Medicaid managed care. Most PCA/AA recipients will switch to STAR, which includes benefits such as traditional Medicaid services and unlimited prescriptions. Some children eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare or are SSI eligible will switch to STAR Kids.

At the request of HHS, this information is also being provided to post-adoption assistance contract providers and residential providers. Letters will be sent to PCA/AA families before September 1, 2017, with program and enrollment information for STAR Kids and STAR.

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) will continue to determine eligibility for the Adoption Assistance and Permanency Care Assistance. DFPS is responsible for updating addresses into the agency's casework management system. Families who receive PCA or AA benefits who need to change an address or phone number should call the Texas Foster and Adopt Inquiry Line at (800) 233-3405.

Post Permanency Services

Post-permanency services are now available to families who have obtained permanent managing conservatorship (PMC) of a child through DFPS. As the child's permanent managing conservator you may need assistance to help the child cope with the effects of abuse and neglect.

All families in the **Houston, Corpus Christi and Edinburg** areas that have been granted PMC of a child through DFPS can receive post-permanency services. Services are available to help the child and family:

- Adjust to permanency
- Cope with any history of abuse or neglect of the child
- Avoid permanent or long-term removal of children from the PMC family setting.

Some services available are:

- Information and referral

- Casework services and service planning
- Parent groups
- Parenting programs
- Counseling services
- Respite care reimbursement
- Crisis intervention

The availability of services is dependent upon funding to DFPS and the individual child and family situation.

To use post-permanency services, you must contact the service provider. If you live in the Houston area, please contact:

[Spaulding for Children](#)

6925 Portwest Drive, Ste. 110
Houston, TX 77024
(713) 681-6991 Ext. 108

If you live in the Corpus Christie/Edinburg area, please contact:

[Spaulding for Children](#)

500 N. Water St., Ste. 604
Corpus Christi, TX 78401
(361) 850-8200 and (800) 460-6298



Good to Know

Effective September 1, 2016, the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) program became a part of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC).

ECI programs provide services to children birth to 36 months with developmental delays or disabilities and their families statewide. To find the number of the ECI program in your area, or for questions or complaints, call the Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of the Ombudsman at (877) 787-8999 or visit our new web site: hhs.texas.gov/eci

For more than 30 years, Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) has provided early intervention services to families with children from birth to 36 months of age who have developmental delays or disabilities. ECI professionals and families members incorporate activities into the child and family's daily routines to promote the child's development.

At Texas ECI, we know that parents are the most important person in their child's life and they know their child better than anyone. Parents are their child's first and best teacher. ECI encourages parents to join in every step of the process, from deciding on what

kind of support their child and family may need, to working daily with their child to help him grow and learn. Read how the Brown-Easley family and ECI worked together to promote Noah's development.

Building Blocks Help Noah and Family Connect

Deidre and Dustin of Mansfield, Texas were ecstatic when they welcomed their son Noah into their family. As Noah grew, Deidre did not suspect he was not reaching developmental milestones at the same time as other kids his age until Deidre talked with coworkers who shared that their children were waving goodbye, pointing to items they wanted, or saying simple words like "mama" or "dada."

"I know you're not supposed to compare your child to someone else's, but something just didn't seem right," said Deidre. She spoke with Dustin and they decided it was time to consult Noah's pediatrician, who referred them to the Early Childhood Intervention program (ECI).

At first, Deidre thought her son might need a little more time to reach developmental milestones. Once ECI professionals conducted an evaluation and assessment, Deidre and Dustin made the decision to enter Noah in the ECI program at 18 months old. A plan of services was developed for Noah and his family, which included occupational and speech therapies.

Learning how to ask for things was a priority goal for Noah. The ECI speech therapist taught Noah and his parents how to use sign language to help Noah communicate his wants and needs, including how to sign the word "more." In addition, the speech therapist helped Noah's family learn techniques to help Noah verbally communicate his needs

to them. Noah's parents were able to use these techniques even when the speech therapist was not present.

Noah enjoyed using his building blocks but his parents noticed he would become upset when his building blocks would fall down. ECI staff asked his parents to have him stack three blocks, knock them down, and then explain to him it was ok. Noah's parents had to repeat this process by increasing the amount of blocks he would stack each time. "Once we began doing this with Noah, we saw a reduction in his tantrums. This was a huge positive step forward for him," Deidre said.

Today, Noah is a happy little boy who is more social with his family and can say, "I love you." Noah loves to read and play on his iPad and attends school where he continues to learn new things. "ECI was there for us when no one else was. They gave us a lot of ideas and strategies and they're working. We are so appreciative of the support to our family," said Deidre.

If you would like to learn more about how ECI helps families, watch our "Texas ECI: Family to Family" video which offers several families' perspectives on ECI services. Families share their personal experiences and explain how ECI's approach strengthened their confidence to be active participants in their child's development.

Remember anyone can make a referral to ECI. Over 25 percent of our referrals come from parents, other family members.

Region 6 Kinship Conference and Sewing Bee



On February 25, Region 6A & 6B Kinship Program co-hosted a Kinship Conference with our fellow stakeholders. The conference was sponsored by the Relatives as Parents Coalition, which includes several agencies working to improve the lives of relatives raising children. We had several exciting speakers to include a CPS panel that discussed all the services provided by the DFPS, a grandparent, Deborah Dickerson, who spoke on "I am not Alone" and a guest speaker from One Voice, Katherine Barillas, who spoke on the importance of advocacy. We also had workshops on Legal-Public Benefits for Kin Parents; Understanding Mental Health- NAMI; Is It Willful Disobedience or Something Else; Nurturing as a Lifestyle and How Your Community Can Help You; Do My Children Need Therapy; and Positive Discipline: Ten Behavior Support Tips. We had over 40 kinship families attend. Not only was it an educational event for our caregivers, it allowed them to network with other kinship caregivers.



The Kinship Program paired with the community to bring our kinship families and children together for a family day. DFPS Kinship staff were also present to share in the fun. Volunteers and our families made pillow slips, blankets, and tote bags to donate to DFPS children. The families were able to take home the items they made.



LINKS TO RESOURCES

- ❖ [Texas Youth Connection](#)
- ❖ [TX Youth Connection Facebook](#)
- ❖ [ETV Program & Services](#)
- ❖ [CASA for Children](#)
- ❖ [iFoster](#)
- ❖ [Youth Scholarships](#)

INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR TEENAGERS

The internet can be a good way to chat with friends, do research for school, and lots of other things. But it can also be a dangerous place.

- Never give out personal information about yourself or your family.
- When in chat rooms, social networking websites and even instant messaging, remember, not everyone is who they say they are.
- Predators will post a fake picture to pretend to be someone else. Do not plan to meet anyone you have met on the internet without first checking with your parents, as you could put yourself in grave danger.
- If someone harasses you online, do not respond. Tell your parents and contact your internet service provider.
- Predators attempt to lure you through the use of the internet. This is a danger to your personal safety and you should take precautions.

ADVICE FOR PARENTING TEENAGERS

- **Give teens some leeway**
Giving teens a chance to establish their own identity, giving them more independence, is essential to helping them establish their own place in the world.
- **Talk to teens about risks**
Whether it's drugs, driving, or premarital sex, your kids need to know the worst that could happen.
- **Keep the door open.**
Don't interrogate but act interested. Share a few tidbits about your own day and ask about theirs.
- **Let kids feel guilty**
Feeling good about yourself is healthy. But people should feel bad if they hurt someone or did something wrong. Kids need to feel bad sometimes. Guilt is a healthy emotion.
- **Choose your battles wisely**
- **Invite their friends for dinner**
- **Decide rules and discipline in advance**
- **Discuss "checking in."**

Be a positive role model!

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We all have the **power** to stop child abuse.



TEXAS
Health and Human Services
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
Child Protective Services

Report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, the elderly, or people with disabilities at
(800) 252-5400 or www.txabusehotline.org.