



Child Protective Services (CPS)

House Human Services Committee

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Overview

- CPS Pre-Reform
- CPS Reform
- CPS Next Steps

CPS Pre-Reform

- In FY 2004, there were a number of high profile child deaths across the state in cases with previous CPS involvement.
- CPS Investigation staff were facing the following challenges:
 - CPS Investigation caseloads were increasing
 - CPS investigations were taking longer to complete
 - CPS Investigation turnover rates were higher than other stages of service
- Supervisory tenure was decreasing.

CPS Pre-Reform – HHSC Review

- On July 2, 2004, Governor Perry issued Executive Order RP 35 directing the Health and Human Services Commission to review and reform the state’s CPS program.
- Actions included: review of case files; administrative and organizational reform; partnering with law enforcement and local communities; review of state policy and statute.
- Office of Inspector General (OIG) Findings:
 - Policies and procedures appeared sound.
 - Staff, however, often did not comply with policies and procedures.
 - OIG concluded the lack of compliance with policies was a result of high caseloads and volume of work.

CPS Pre-Reform – Issues

- CPS Reform is part of the complex and expansive DFPS agency reform requiring a project management framework to manage changes in policy, practice, and performance expectations.
- There were 164 recommendations to improve CPS and ensure the safety and protection of Texas children.
- Targeted Reform Issues from the Executive Order RP 35:
 - Caseloads are too high, particularly for investigative staff.
 - CPS needs to strengthen its focus on investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect.
 - CPS' relations with law enforcement, the judiciary, and community partners are not adequate.
 - CPS does not have sufficient management controls to make staff accountable.
 - CPS does not effectively support caseworkers.

CPS Reform – SB 6

- The 79th Texas Legislature enacted Senate Bill 6 with sweeping reforms. Emphasis was on the following initiatives:
- Strengthen investigations
 - Support quality casework and reduce caseloads
 - Improve services to families and children
 - Build community partnerships
 - Expand prevention efforts

CPS Reform – Strengthen Investigations

- Created an Office of Investigations.
- Improved screening to reduce unnecessary investigations.
 - 41 screener positions created.
- Incorporated Special Investigators with law enforcement background into CPS investigation units.
 - 430 special investigator positions will be created by end of FY 2007.
- Implemented policies for audio/video taping of investigations and transportation of children.
- Revised risk and safety tools to recognize high-risk cases and designed automation enhancements.
- Retrained all field staff, supervisory level and above, on Risk and Safety Assessment.

CPS Reform – Strengthen Investigations

OLD SYSTEM

Concentrated – all functions centered within a single caseworker

Integrated Caseworker

- Investigations
- Child safety intervention
- Documentation
- Working With Supervisor
 - Gathering Evidence
 - Case-related travel
- Reviewing Case Histories
- Making Initial Collateral Contacts
- Transporting Children to Visits
- Paperwork to Initiate Services
- Notification Letters
- Supervising Parent-Child Visits

NEW SYSTEM

Distributed – all functions performed by most appropriate staff

Dedicated Investigative Caseworker

- Investigations
- Child safety intervention
- Documentation
- Working With Supervisor
- Gathering Evidence
- Case-related travel

Case Screeners

- Review Case Histories
- Make Initial Collateral Contacts

Special Investigators

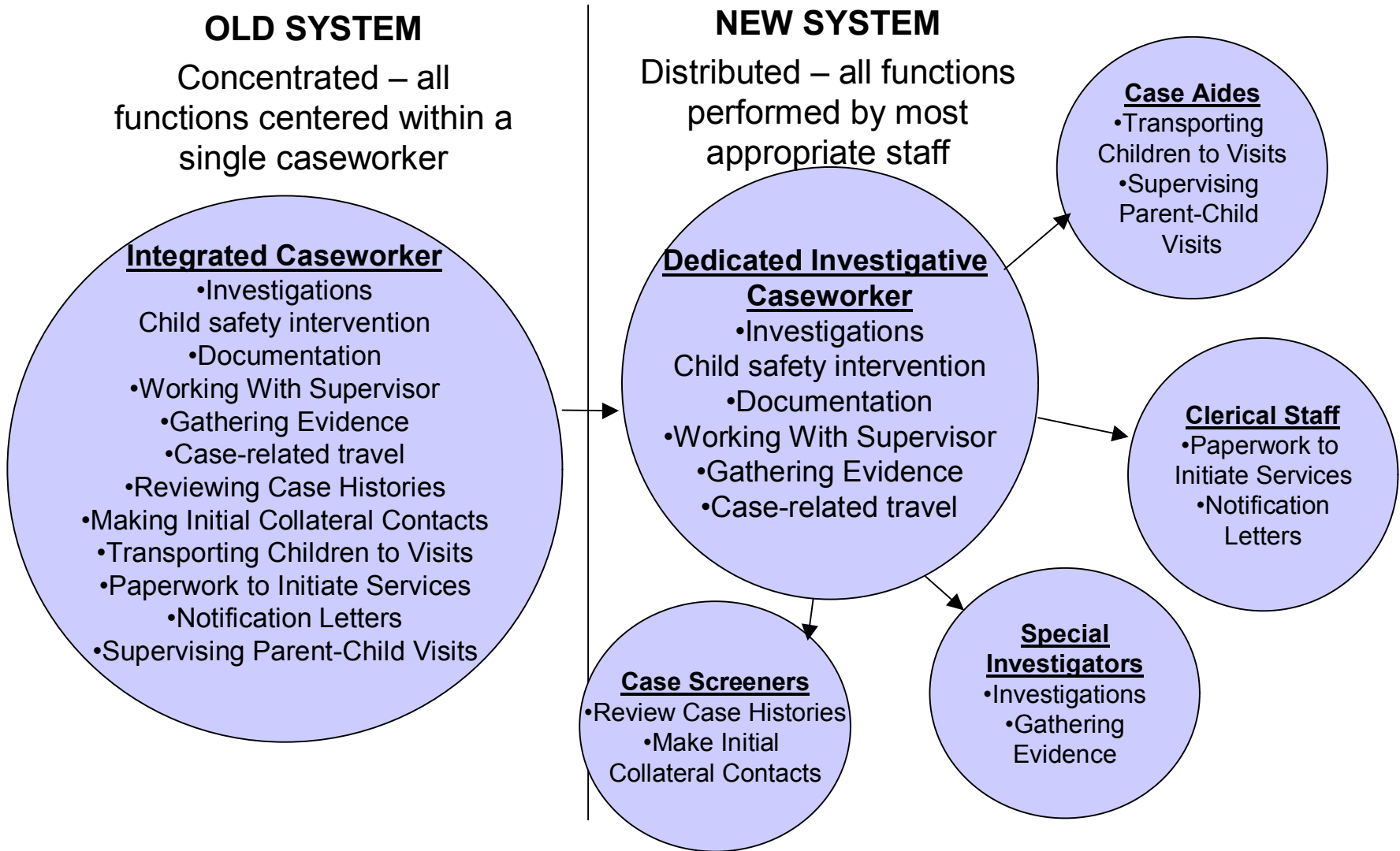
- Investigations
- Gathering Evidence

Case Aides

- Transporting Children to Visits
- Supervising Parent-Child Visits

Clerical Staff

- Paperwork to Initiate Services
- Notification Letters



CPS Reform – Support Quality Casework

- Reduced investigation caseloads.
 - Daily caseload went from 44 in FY 2004 to 34.7 in FY 2006.
 - Daily caseload at the end of the first quarter FY 2007 is 28.7
- Transformed direct delivery staff to “functional units”, reducing span of control for supervisors and connecting caseworkers to support staff.
- Deployed mobile technology to Investigative and Family Based Safety Services staff.
- Increased salaries for Investigative staff.
- Implemented statewide centralized placement process for children in conservatorship.
- Redesigned and expanded new caseworker training.

CPS Reform – Improve Services to Families and Children

- Implemented performance management initiative.
- Expedited home studies.
- Expanded kinship care initiative statewide.
- Expanded Family Group Decision Making services to 59 counties.
- Collaborated on Health Care Delivery Model, medical passport, and forensic medical assessments.
- Activated Medicaid coverage for youth age 18 until 21 with a single application.
- Implemented psychotropic medication protocols.
- Developed education portfolios.
- Created Youth Specialist positions in each region.
- Created regional nurse positions.

CPS Reform – Build Community Partnerships

- Initiated remediation plan to address disproportionality of African American children in Texas child welfare system.
 - Formed Community Advisory Committees (Port Arthur, Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth area, Austin).
- Developed protocol to co-locate CPS staff with law enforcement, school, and medical professionals.
- Signed cooperative agreements with Texas Workforce Commission and local workforce boards to support youth transitioning to adulthood.
- Developed joint investigation training with law enforcement to improve interview techniques and evidence gathering.
- Participated in ribbon cuttings for multiple transition centers.
- Created dedicated community engagement positions.
- Held regular regional stakeholder and town hall meetings.

CPS Reform – Expand Prevention Efforts

- Created the Drug-Endangered Child (DEC) Initiative Task Force; 40+ DEC teams formed.
- Established the Family Drug Court Program to integrate substance abuse treatment services into child abuse/neglect cases, when necessary.
- Enhanced case management application, IMPACT, to better track intakes involving manufacture of methamphetamines.
- Hired substance abuse specialists in each region.
- Procured At Risk Prevention and Innovative Prevention contracts.
- Implemented evidence-based contracting.

CPS Next Steps – Improving Services

- The 79th Legislature funded major improvements in CPS. Foremost among the improvements was strengthening investigations.
- However, additional enhancements are needed to services for children and families once the investigation indicates risk is present.
- Enhancements are recommended to:
 - Keep families together;
 - Reduce the length of time children remain in state care;
 - Improve the quality and accountability of foster care; and
 - Reduce the rate of growth in foster care.

CPS – Keep Families Together

- Engage families to ensure children can remain safely in their own homes through provision of family preservation services.
 - Use Family Group Decision Making in an investigation to help prevent the removal of children.
 - Lower Family Based Safety Services caseloads.
 - Establish the Strengthen Families Through Enhanced In-Home Support program to offset certain poverty-related factors.
- Ensure adequate resources are available for purchased services for children and families prior to removal.

CPS – Reduce Length of Time Children Remain in State Care

- Ensure services are realistic, accessible, and available to children and families.
 - Provide Family Group Decision Making to additional families after removal to ensure a realistic service plan and increase kinship placement.
 - Provide adequate resources for purchased services that are designed to help reunite families.
- Lower conservatorship caseloads.
 - Enable regular, meaningful contact with children and families, such as monthly face-to-face contacts.

CPS – Reduce Length of Time Children Remain in State Care

- Achieve permanency in a timely manner.
 - Support kinship placements by hiring additional kinship workers to provide training and support services to relatives and by funding caseload growth in the Kinship Care Monetary Assistance Program for eligible families.
 - Expedite adoptions with additional staff for timely redaction of records.
 - Improve court services by increasing attorney and support staff for DFPS.

CPS – Improve the Quality and Accountability of Foster Care

- Improve quality and accountability in DFPS services.
 - Provide tablet PCs for conservatorship care and licensing staff for timely, accurate data entry and improved quality of assessments and decision-making.
 - Expand Disproportionality sites.
 - Strengthen program support and administrative services with staff and resources including those needed to make modifications to the automated case management and licensing systems.
 - Integrate case information through the use of technology, system improvements, and dedicated staff to provide access to accurate, complete historical records.

CPS – Improve the Quality and Accountability of Foster Care

- Improve quality and accountability in contracted services.
 - Strengthen licensing oversight through more thorough, objective, and specialized monitoring and investigation of foster care providers.
 - Strengthen contract oversight with additional staff for improved monitoring and by using technology for better information on contractor issues and trends to mitigate risk.
 - Improve the quality and timing of background and criminal history checks and comply with federal regulations by providing additional staff and creating a centralized background check unit.
 - Continue implementation and improvement of medical services for foster children.
- Expand quality and capacity with substitute care annual statewide needs analysis and enhancing community engagement and contractor development activities.

CPS – Foster Care Caseload Reduction

- Fewer children should enter foster care as a result of the following:
 - Family Group Decision Making during an investigation
 - Strengthen Families Through Enhanced In-Home Support program
 - Lower caseloads for Family Based Safety Services workers
 - A strengthened Kinship Care program
- Shorter stays in foster care should be a result of the following:
 - Family Group Decision Making after removal
 - Strengthen Families Through Enhanced In-Home Support program
 - Lower caseloads for conservatorship workers
 - More staff to support adoption efforts