



Child Protection Roundtable Legislative Agenda for the 84th Legislative Session

Child Abuse Prevention Priorities *Safeguard children and stop the intergenerational cycle of abuse*

1. Consolidated Prevention Structure

Establish a Prevention and Family Strengthening functional area under the Health and Human Services Commission by consolidating existing prevention focused programs/offices/divisions. This functional area would be responsible for:

- Serving as the coordinating body for the development, funding and evaluation of prevention services and initiatives.
- Developing a coordinated state plan around the development, funding, delivery and evaluation of state level prevention services.
- Establishing coordinated intake, measurement, outcomes and data collection and analysis.

2. Social Impact Financing

Support Social Impact Financing that would allow the state to enter into a Social Impact Bond (SIB) and pay out saved government funding under an SIB contract.

3. Post-Partum Depression

Support legislative that enhances awareness, screening, treatment, accessibility, and affordability of services for individuals with post- partum depression.

Child Protection Services Improvements Priorities *Caseworker Retention and Recruitment: The key to child safety and stability*

1. Educational Incentives for Caseworkers

- Legislation would allow DFPS to expand the Title IV-E education program for Conservatorship (CVS) workers and apply the waiver to Family-Based Safety Services (FBSS) and Investigative (INV) caseworkers as well. Increase the amount of funding put into the Title IV-E program on the state level.
- Create a loan repayment program for frontline and first tier supervisors in INV, CVS, and FBSS incentivized for those who do not qualify for IV-E.

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2. Strengthening Accountability of DFPS Office of Consumer Affairs / Ombudsman

Establish policies to ensure that there is an independent ombudsman/ Office of Consumer Affairs.

- Policies should:
 - Ensure that the Division of Family and Protective Services would have no authority to:
 - create or change the policy and practice of the Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA)
 - determine the budget of the Office of Consumer Affairs or
 - make decisions regarding personnel of the Office of Consumer Affairs
- Administrative attachment would move from DFPS to HHSC
- A budget line item for the Office of Consumer Affairs shall be established under the Health & Human Services Commission

- The Office of Consumer Affairs shall be required to regularly report performance data.

3. Educational Support for Foster Youth

SB 294 by West

- Require the designation of a foster care liaison at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Texas Education Agency and at postsecondary education institutions.
- Postsecondary education institutions would be required to proactively contact incoming students who qualify for the tuition and fee waiver or who are otherwise identified as former foster youth to provide information on services and supports that are available.
- Require DFPS and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to promote data exchange.

4. Child Fatality Data

Improve child fatality measures in Texas to be more consistent and reflective of true child abuse and neglect related deaths. Ensure that child fatalities that have had or currently have or had a “Reason to Believe” disposition (RTB) are reported as a second measure of abuse-related child fatality while also ensuring that all “RTB-Near Fatal” dispositions where the child subsequently dies are re-disposed as “RTB-Fatal”.

5. CPS Records Retention

Improve records retention so that CPS cases are retained long enough so that caseworkers have a clearer picture of family history to inform decisions while also aiding in the effort to measure recidivism and target prevention services.

6. Normalcy for Foster Youth

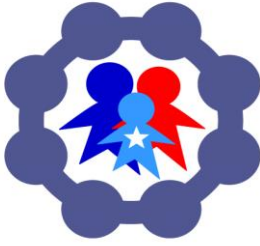
Strengthens the right of children in Foster Care to participate in normal activities and experiences

- Defines: normalcy; age-appropriate; and reasonable and prudent parent standard.
- Facilitates the Department of Family and Protective Services’ efforts to normalize the lives of children in Child Protective Service’s custody. This legislation’s aim is to empower substitute caregivers to approve or disapprove a child’s participation in activities based on a caregiver’s own assessment and availability to help facilitate a child’s access to these activities, using a reasonable and prudent parent standard, without prior approval of the Department.
- Requires the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to eliminate impediments to substitute caregiver’s flexibility in parenting. DFPS is directed to identify residential child care licensing (RCCL) policies and procedures which would impede the full implementation of this normalcy legislation, specifically as they impede the ability of caregivers to make reasonable and prudent parenting decisions. DFPS shall eliminate and streamline RCCL policies and procedures necessary to accommodate the full implementation of this new standard. This directive shall be applied to Statewide Intake as well.
- The foster parent and/or the associated child placing agency shall not be held responsible for potentially negative outcomes beyond their reasonable control as a result of the child’s participation in an age-appropriate normalcy activity, provided the activity is approved by the foster parent using the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

7. Civil SOLs in Minor Sexual Assault Cases

SB 113 by Van Taylor

Legislation will eliminate the statute of limitations for civil cases that involved the sexual assault of a minor.



Child Protection Roundtable Budget Consensus Agenda for the 84th Legislative Session

Child Abuse Prevention Priorities

Safeguard children and stop the intergenerational cycle of abuse

1. Maintenance and Expansion of State Home Visiting Funding

- **Maintain** previous funding for the Nurse-Family Partnership program (**\$17,749,998**) and Texas Home Visiting Program (**\$7,910,544**) at HHSC
 - **Increase** the Nurse-Family Partnership by \$2,696,607¹ and Texas Home Visiting Program by \$158,210 to reflect 2% inflation growth since program inception for a biennium total of \$20,446,605 for Nurse-Family Partnership and \$8,068,754 for the Texas Home Visiting Program.
- **Maintain** funding for home visiting in the Prevention and Early Intervention division at DFPS²
- **Expand** funding by **\$40,930,790** to stay on track with 2023 goal
 - An estimated 12,500 additional families could be served with the funding request
 - This represents the State funding portion of the goal to serve at least 112,502 families with home visitation by 2023.

2. Zero to 3 Child Fatality and Abusive Head Trauma Prevention Funding

- Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) is the leading cause of infant maltreatment fatalities in the US.
- On average, 191 Texas children are confirmed victims of AHT each year; of these 18 die of their injuries annually.
- Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) is a common form of AHT with children ages 1 to 3 months at greatest risk. Excessive crying is cited as the most common trigger for SBS.
- **Fund** the Period of Purple Crying, a primary prevention program, to educate new parents on infant crying, increase knowledge and safety behaviors and ultimately reduce AHT caused by SBS.
 - Program costs would be \$5.2 million
 - Program to be implemented in birthing hospitals and by home visiting programs

3. Support DFPS Exceptional Item #8 to Expand Prevention Services

Support is conditioned upon the following:

- Expansion of project HOPES and continued inclusion of evidence-based home visiting as a chief component of project HOPES.
- Programs targeting families with children ages 0 to 5 with the programs necessary to strengthen a family's protective factors and reduce risk factors.

¹ Includes cumulative inflation amounts for 2008-2014.

² This amount is an estimate based on results from TexProtects' 2013 home visiting survey. It was reported that in 2013, PEI spent approximately \$1,924,674 on home visiting. This amount may increase for 2014, but we assumed funding will remain consistent; thus, the two year spending amount on home visiting by PEI is approximately \$3,849,348.

- Statewide expansion of evidence-based abusive head trauma prevention and child abuse fatality prevention programs: Expand Period of Purple Crying.
 - Allocation of resources based on multivariate needs assessment.
- 4. Promote efforts to secure the reauthorization of federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV) funds. Ensure that state GR funding required for Texas' maintenance of effort (MOE) to draw down MIECHV funds is maintained.**
- Texas has been awarded over \$60 million dollars in MIECHV funds.
 - Currently supporting over 34 programs across Texas that could impact over 2,800 families in 2014
 - Programs include Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, and Early Head Start (Home-Based)
 - MIECHV funding is set to expire on March 31, 2015

Child Protection Services Improvements Priorities

Caseworker Retention and Recruitment: The key to child safety and stability

1. Add FTEs to Lower Caseloads for INV, CVS, and FBSS

- High caseloads and workloads are consistently ranked as a top reason for turnover
- Additional FTEs to reduce caseloads for INV, CVS, FBSS
- Caseloads should not exceed the recommendations at any time

Caseworker	Current Caseloads (FY14 – 2nd Quarter)	Recommended Caseloads*	LBB Target Performance Measure(FY14)
INV	20.5	12	16.3
FBSS	16	12	15.3
CVS	32.4	15	26

**CWLA Recommended Caseloads*

- Utilize existing policy that allows for a staffing model that hires ahead to account for projected turnover and vacancies

2. Cap Caseloads for New Hires

- BSD recommends that academy graduates not carry a full caseload for 3 months; however, this recommendation is not being adhered to in the field
- Cap caseloads at 50% for new hires graduating from the BSD academy for 3 months

Caseworker	CWLA Recommendation	LBB Target Performance Measure
INV	6	8
FBSS	6	7.5
CVS	7.5	13

3. Improve Education Incentives for Caseworkers

- Expand the Title IV-E education program for CVS and apply for waiver to expand the program to FBSS and INV caseworkers
 - a. Encourages more trained professionals and has been shown to promote more skilled workforce
- Create a loan repayment program
 - b. For CPS frontline and first tier supervisors in INV, CVS, and FBSS
 - c. Incentive for those who do not qualify for IV-E

- d. \$5000 a year for a maximum of 4 years to be paid directly to institution

4. Increase Frontline Caseworkers Compensation

- Increase salary/stipend for frontline caseworkers and supervisors in: FBSS, CVS, FAD, KIN, supervisors of \$10,000.
- Add a pay differential/hazard pay for investigative caseworkers and supervisors of \$7,500.
 - The smaller pay differential would reduce self-selection into Investigations
- **According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, the average salary for teachers in Texas is \$50,290, \$58,070 for social workers, and \$53,030 for police officers.³**
- According to the Department of Family and Protective Services, the departure of a single caseworker costs taxpayers \$54,000. In the last fiscal year (2013), **CPS lost 1,346 caseworkers, resulting in a \$72.7 million impact to the agency.⁴**

Options	Estimated Cost (FY13 FTEs)	FY15 Estimated Cost (FY15 FTEs)
<i>Increase Salary for Frontline Caseworkers and Supervisors - \$10,000</i>		
Stipend	\$33,345,000 (3,334.5 FTEs)	\$38,415,000 (3,841.5 FTEs)
Salary Increase	\$49,620,694	\$57,165,361
<i>Pay Differential for Investigators and Supervisors - \$7,500</i>		
Stipend	\$15,783,000 (2,104.4 FTEs)	\$18,108,000 (2,414.4 FTEs)
Salary Increase	\$23,487,208	\$26,947,118

5. Reward Excellence and Productivity: Performance Based Compensation

- Establish a performance-based compensation system that incorporates:
 - Objective performance measures to award quality casework
 - Meaningful compensation/bonus award to encourage quality improvement
 - Annual merit toward areas which tend to have high turnover
- Caseworkers would be eligible annually based upon yearly evaluations
- Merit awards would be given to units and supervisors would distribute as appropriate

6. Add Case Aides and Case Techs

- Case aides and techs were cut after the 82nd legislative session, and their numbers have not been restored. These critical staff support provide tools to help reduce caseworker's workload
 - Ensure each unit has at least 2 slots for case aids and/or techs - Unit decides how to fill

7. Reduce Supervisor Span of Control

- Recommended supervisor-caseworker ratio not to exceed 6 caseworkers for CVS and 5 for INV⁵
- Supervisors play a crucial role in ensuring CPS caseworkers have the skills and support to manage demands, expectations, and other work-related stressors.
- Supervision is a key factor in turnover.

³ Occupational employment and wages. (May 2013). National Salaries, U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics. Retrieved from www.bls.gov

⁴ Texas Sunset Advisory Commission Staff Report. (May 2014). Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

⁵ Child Welfare League of America recommends supervisory span of control ratio of 5:1

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8. Add FTEs to Reduce Statewide Intake Hold Times and Abandonment Rate

- Abandonment rates in 2013 were at 27.5%, and hold times on average were 8.1 minutes

9. Maintain and Fund Caseload Growth for Critical Services.

- Pre-adoption and post-adoption services
- Foster and protective day care
- Relative caregiver support
- Purchased Client Services

10. Increase Adoption Support

- Create a pilot in one contract area to prevent adoption disruptions and dissolutions. Pilot should utilize:
 - Family Group Decision Making during pre-adoption period to strengthen families' support system and offered during post-adoption to prevent adoption dissolutions.
 - Parent mentoring during post-adoption to support family.

11. Initiate PAL Services at Earlier Age: 14 years.

- Critical PAL services for youth 14-15 include: assessments of independent living skills and the services, classes and case management necessary to prepare youth in foster care for adulthood.
- By starting at age 14, youth can develop the necessary skills to transition to adulthood.

12. Support the following DFPS Exceptional Items: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19

- Support for DFPS Exceptional Item #16 is conditioned on the following:
 - Youth should be included, when safe and age appropriate, in permanency planning.
 - Current foster youth should be part of the planning process for activities, seminars, and conferences (e.g. Aging-Out Seminars, Leadership Councils and Regional Conferences).