



## Child Protection Priorities: 81<sup>st</sup> Legislative Session The Child Protection Roundtable

### Prevention Priorities:

- 1. Increased prevention program investment** weighted by program effectiveness and highest ROI (return on investment), when available; for all forms of abuse, across the lifeline continuum for each risk level before abuse occurs.
  - *Costs of abuse as well as the indirect or long-term costs, suggests that child abuse and neglect costs the nation \$293 million each day, or approximately \$107 billion each year.<sup>1</sup>*
- 2. Appropriation of funds for effective in-home visitation programs**, including sustained funding for the Nurse-Family Partnership implementation.
  - *Home visitation is the most innovative and holistic prevention program used in educating and supporting the at-risk family, while making a wide range of community and professional services available to the family<sup>2</sup>.*
  - *The Nurse-Family Partnership home visiting program has shown consistent improvements in maternal and child health for mothers and children in three randomized controlled trials over three decades.*
- 3. Maintaining funding for STAR/CYD (Services to At-Risk Youth)/ (Community Youth Development)** with additional funding for **rigorous evaluation of effectiveness and ROI** for these programs and all state-funded programs lacking evaluation of efficacy and ROI.

### CPS Legislative Priorities:

#### In order to provide the safest care and highest well-being outcomes for children:

- 1. Increase worker compensation** to increase the pool of high-quality workers and provide pay comparable to teachers.
  - *Research has shown that the lowest turnover, highest paid and highest functioning child welfare organizations have the least recurrence of child maltreatment<sup>3</sup>*
- 2. Institute “hire ahead” training** to ensure caseworker availability and eliminate vacancy gaps in casework from worker turnover.
  - *Real vacancy rates range from 10% to 30% across the state and perpetual vacancies of approximately 20%.<sup>4</sup> Real vacancy includes workers in training who are unable to carry cases. When these approved FTE positions are filled with the hire-ahead, the caseloads are reduced.*

---

<sup>1</sup> (2008) Prevent Child Abuse America

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> (2006) National Center for Crime and Delinquency “Human Services Workforce Initiative: Relationship between staff turnover, Child Welfare System Functioning and Recurrent Child Abuse” for Cornerstone for Kids.

<sup>4</sup> (2008) Texas Department of Family Protective Services Data Request specifically for TexProtects.

## **Substitute Care Priorities:**

- 1. Foster Care Rate Increase** for all provider types to: make rates whole at 100% of allowable costs; fund the cost of inflation; and fund the cost of new licensing standards.
  - *Rate increase links directly to building and meeting capacity needs*
  - *Rate increase links directly to improving the quality of services to children*

## **2. Case Management Pilot**

Implement a privatized case management pilot project in accordance with statute in SB 758 Enrolled (80R) with the following additions and stipulations:

1. Add language to include family preservation known as “family based safety services” in the definition of “permanency services”;
2. Add language that RFP development must be in direct collaboration with stakeholders during each step of development, from initial design to final draft to the extent legally permissible (the drafter, if needed, should include language that would preclude any undue involvement or complications caused by a potential bidder);
3. Add language that the pilot project families will be matched by an equally funded control group and children will be randomly assigned to either the privatized case management group or the public case management control group, as designed by the independent research evaluator to ensure that the results of the pilot are reliable and valid in measuring the case management intervention. The independent evaluator is to determine the costs associated with the case management model that the department expends in order to ensure equal funding; and
4. Add language that the pilot be of a limited size but significant enough to adequately measure the case management intervention variable but small enough to ensure that the pilot is adequately funded and designed and properly evaluated such that the results can be generalized to the broader population.
5. Amend language that the pilot must be evaluated by a qualified, third party, independent evaluator who assists with the design of the experiment but is blind to the assignment of children served by public or private case managers.

## **Cross Group Priority (CPS, Substitute Care and Prevention):**

Provide systems of wraparound funding and remove barriers to integrated funding at state and local levels.

## **CPS and Substitute Care Priority:**

**Design and Invest in a technology integration system** for more effective data sharing between public and private providers, law enforcement, judges, courts, state agencies and other key system stakeholders to minimize duplication of services, provide equal access to case information and promote cooperation and efficiencies among stakeholders.

***The Following 32 Organizations have met dozens of times over the interim to analyze and debate the top issues, agreeing to endorse the preceding list as equal, top legislative and funding priorities for the 2009 Legislative Session:***

Austin Children's Center  
Caring Family Network  
Casey Family Programs  
Center for Public Policy Priorities  
Child Abuse Prevention Center  
ChildBuilders - Houston  
Children at Risk  
Dallas Association for Parent Education  
Dallas County Child Welfare Board  
Dallas Children's Advocacy Center  
DePelchin Children's Center  
Greater Texas Community Partners  
Healthy Family Initiatives – Houston  
Lutheran Social Services of the South  
Medical Director, Pediatrics, Baylor College of Medicine  
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)-TX  
Nurse-Family Partnership  
Prevent Child Abuse Texas  
Relief Nursery of North Texas  
TCU Institute of Child Development  
Texans Care for Children  
Texas Alliance of Child & Family Services  
Texas Association of Family and Conciliation Courts  
Texas CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates  
Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards  
Texas Foster Family Association  
Texas Home Visitation Consortium  
Texas Loves Children  
Texas Network of Youth Services  
TexProtects, Texas Association for the Protection of Children  
Transition Resource Action Center  
United Ways of Texas  
YWCA of Major Metropolitan Dallas