



TEXPROTECTS LEGISLATIVE AGENDA | 84TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PRIORITIES

- ❖ Maintain and expand the State’s investment in family support “home visiting” programs, which provide education, support, and assistance to vulnerable families with young children in their most important years of life
- ❖ Improve the coordination of prevention services that focus on improving the well-being of children related to child abuse and neglect, health, behavioral, education and other co-occurring social issues by supporting the consolidation of prevention programs into one division under the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.
- ❖ Prevent abusive head trauma and other child abuse and neglect related fatalities via hospital-based parent education focused on infant crying (such as Period of Purple Crying) by securing funding to reach 50% of all Texas birthing hospitals annually.
- ❖ Utilize Social Impact Financing to take evidence-based prevention programs to scale
- ❖ Define “reasonable discipline” as it relates to corporal punishment in statute

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

Reduce child fatalities and improve the protection of children by increasing the recruitment and retention of quality caseworkers by:

- ❖ Increasing frontline caseworkers’ compensation (average of \$10,000/year via differential pay based on cost of living differences, other factors) to attract the most qualified workers and ensure CPS is competitive with similar professions.
- ❖ Reducing caseworkers caseloads by adding additional employees, capping new hire caseloads the first six months, exempting trainees from the FTE cap (hire ahead program), reducing the supervisor to caseworker ratio, and including supervisors in the interviewing, hiring, training and unit placement process of new caseworkers.

TexProtects’ mission is to reduce and prevent child abuse and neglect through research, education, and advocacy. TexProtects effects change by organizing its members to advocate for increased investments in evidence-based child abuse prevention programs, CPS reforms, and treatment programs to heal abuse victims.

Additionally:

- ❖ Ensure caseworkers have access to prior abuse reports on the same family to make critical removal/service provisions by increasing the length of time certain child abuse reports are retained
- ❖ Determine where critical child abuse fatality prevention resources must be targeted by first ensuring Texas data reports of child abuse fatalities is inclusive of 1) Child abuse deaths directly due to abuse and 2) Child fatalities where abuse was substantiated but did not conclusively cause the death
- ❖ Require educational support for foster youth including a dedicated liaison at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas Education Agency and other institutions
- ❖ Increase the minimum penalty for injury to a child where death or permanent disfigurement occurs from five years to ten years
- ❖ Improve communication via data sharing between Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL) and CPS for foster care investigations of abuse and neglect in order to protect children in potentially dangerous or unsafe placements