

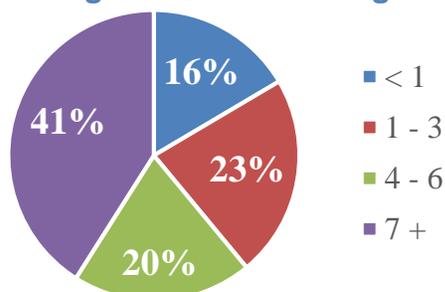
## TEXPROTECTS PRIORITY Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect

### LEGISLATIVE ACTION

- Support funding for evidence-based Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Services at DFPS – prioritize services using geographical risk assessments
- Maintain State General Revenue for the Texas Home Visiting (THVP) Program and Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP)
- Increase funding for NFP and THVP to support targeted services to 50% of highest-risk population
- Support project HOPES – Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support in more communities and leverage community partnerships and engagement
- Support independent evaluations of other PEI prevention services yet to be evaluated for effectiveness
- Support data collection and analysis to reduce child abuse fatalities as well as reduce the number of children re-abused and re-traumatized
- Enhance the operations of the Child Fatality Review Team Committee and Local Teams

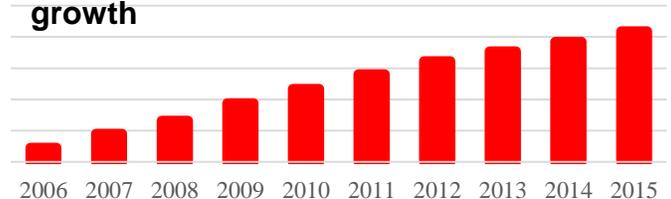
### WHY INVEST IN PREVENTION?

**60%** of **66,721** Child Abuse Victims in 2015 were **Under Age 6** - **40%** Under Age 3



The average cost per prevention program is **26X less expensive<sup>1</sup>** than serving a child once they have entered the CPS system. In 2015 alone, Texas spent **\$14.1 Billion** on the aftereffects of abuse, **\$1.4 Billion** the CPS system – just **6%** of which was spent on prevention programs – just **half** of which was [primary prevention for ages 0-5.](#)

Over the past 10 years, **2,091** child abuse **deaths** have occurred in Texas - a rate more than **2.5X** our **child population growth**



### MORE INFORMATION

Child abuse and neglect is a public health crisis across the nation and the story is no different in Texas. In 2015 alone, 290,471 children were alleged victims (23% of which are confirmed victims – 66,721) of child abuse and we know that over [50% of child abuse goes unreported.](#) Applying this rate means that **half a million Texas children** are alleged victims of child abuse and neglect each year, although half will go unreported but will still suffer the consequences - emphasizing the need for greater community awareness and support around preventing, recognizing and reporting abuse.

When child abuse is confirmed, **70% of all cases** are due to **neglectful supervision** and in 2015 approximately **40%** of all child abuse **victims were under the age of 3 and nearly 60% under age 6.** Intervening with children in their earliest years is a crucial time for their overall growth and

<sup>1</sup> Average cost of evidence-based prevention program, home visiting, is approximately \$8,000/ child vs \$210,712 / abuse victim

development. Experiencing a loving, nurturing, stimulating and safe home environment free from abuse and other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are the most critical components to a child's well-being, future growth and success.

By making investments to support families with young children (ages 0-5) on the everyday challenges associated with parenting, Texas can bend the child abuse and neglect curve. However, Texas should continue to invest in programs that have demonstrated effectiveness and evaluate other programs under the PEI division – by an independent party – that have yet to be evaluated for effectiveness. The evidence-based prevention programs that have demonstrated significant impact – **up to 50% reductions at preventing child maltreatment-which** target children 0-5 should be scaled up to reach critical mass of our highest risk families.

### **SUPPORTING HOME VISITING (SB 1)**

One of these proven methods to preventing child abuse and neglect is family support **home visiting**. Through mentorship and coaching of trained nurses, parent educators, family support providers or other early childhood professionals, parents are able to learn new skills we often take for granted – while in the safety and familiarity of their home. Through the **Nurse-Family Partnership** (established by the 79<sup>th</sup> Legislature) and **Texas Home Visiting Programs** (established by the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature) by adding all funding federal, state, local and private funding sources, Texas has the **capacity to serve just 20% of our most vulnerable families** who are likely to accept services – only **3%** of which are State funded.

### **GEOGRAPHICAL TARGETED PREVENTION**

By strategically scaling up investments in these programs, along with other proven models like abusive head trauma prevention (Period of Purple Crying) and project **HOPES (Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support)**, Texas needs to serve at least 50% of the most at-risk population in order to reach the tipping point where child abuse begins to decline (112,500 families). By utilizing current geographical risk assessments to target areas in Texas at the

greatest risk for child abuse based on historical incident prevalence and risk indicators related to child maltreatment (such as teen pregnancy, domestic violence, substance abuse), Texas can focus limited resources for the highest return-on investment in saving lives and taxpayer dollars.

### **PREVENTING FATALITIES AND RECURRENCE**

**20% of all children who are confirmed victims of abuse will be re-abused within 5 years.** This is more than double the recurrence rate from 10 years ago further demonstrating the dire need for improved CPS decision making. Texas needs to expand the collection, analysis and **use** of data to reduce recurrence of abuse as well as child abuse related fatalities. “Child abuse fatalities” also needs to be more clearly, consistently, and accurately defined, including “near deaths”, so that a public health approach can be implemented to prevent another tragic fatality. Through the strategic implementation of these recommendations and those brought forth by the **Prevention Advisory Committee** (est. by DFPS in '16 from the statutorily created “Protect Our Kids Child Abuse Fatality Prevention Commission) **Texas has an unprecedented opportunity to build a community committed to preventing child abuse and neglect and building future strong families who succeed and thrive.**

### **KEY LEGISLATION IN THE 85<sup>TH</sup> FOR CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION EFFORTS:**

- ❖ General Appropriations Act – Senate Bill 1 by Senator Jane Nelson
- ❖ The Child Protection Act – House Bill 1549 by Representative Cindy Burkett
- ❖ Omnibus CPS Reform – Senate Bill 11 by Senator Charles Schwertner
- ❖ Anti-Victimization / Sexual Abuse Prevention – House Bill 1342 by Representative Tan Parker

**For Questions Please Contact:**  
Pamela McPeters, Director of Public Policy  
[pamela@texprotects.org](mailto:pamela@texprotects.org)  
469-399-6900