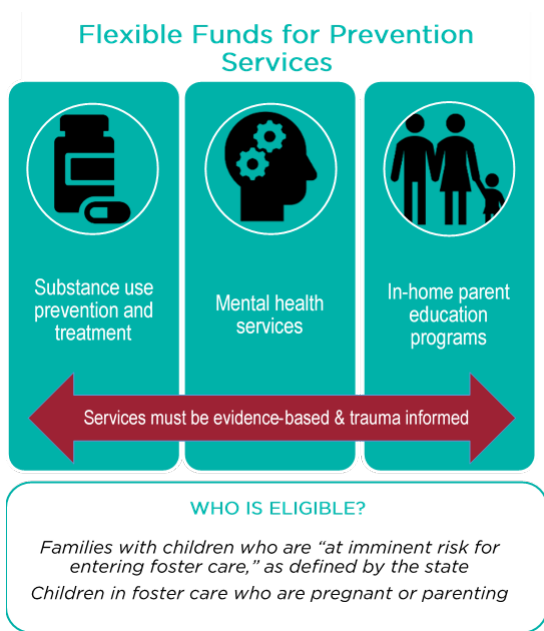




Family First Prevention Services Act

Separating a child from their biological family is traumatic and can leave lasting negative impacts. The federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) creates the opportunity to strengthen families and prevent removals. For the first time, Title IV-E dollars can be used to fund smart community-based early interventions to address the key drivers of abuse and neglect so that families can stay together safely and children can thrive.



Family First Prevention Services Act

In 2018, FFPSA was signed into law as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act. This bill reforms the federal child welfare financing streams, Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, to allow flexible investment in prevention and improving care for children already in the foster care system.

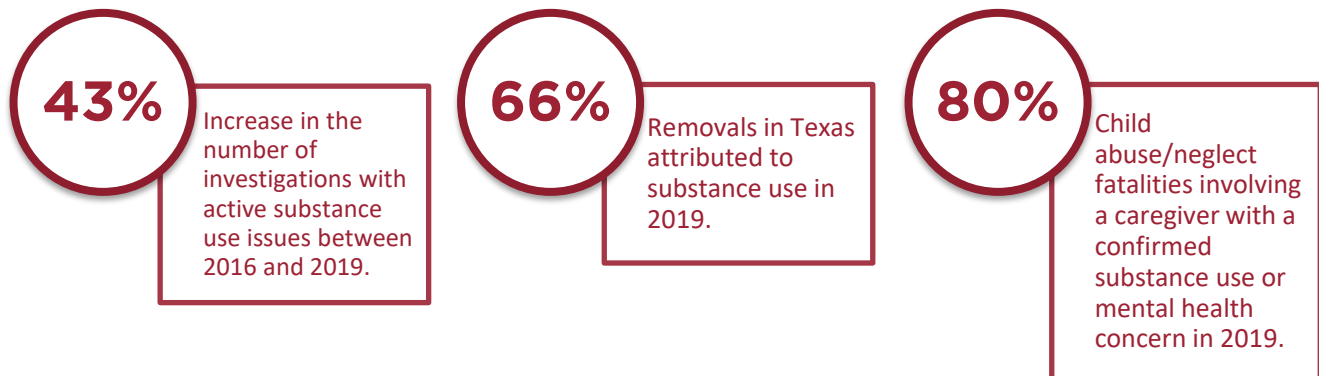
Family First Transition Act

In December 2019, the Family First Transition Act (FFTA) was enacted to help states address the start-up challenges to implementing FFPSA. Texas has been allotted \$50.3 million of FFTA funds to help implement the provisions of FFPSA and intends to utilize \$33.9 million of these funds on prevention efforts, according to the [FFPSA Strategic Plan](#) released by the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) in September 2020.

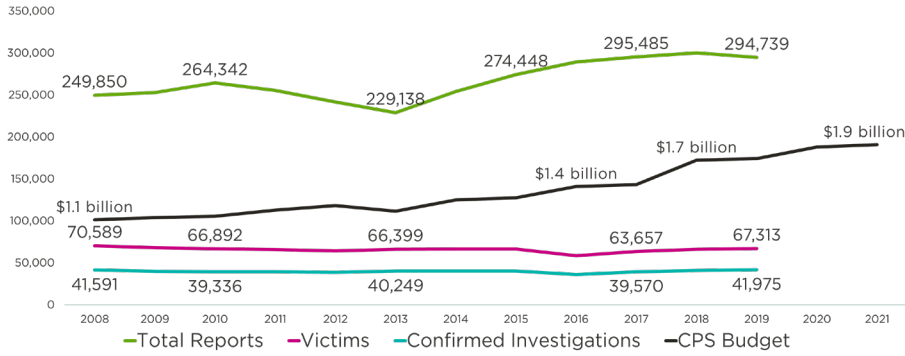
Crafting a Texas Solution

Beginning October 1, 2021, DFPS will be eligible for a 50% match of their expenditures on prevention. Although the Department's plan does outline how the state could use FFTA funds in hand, it does not require or suggest additional appropriations from the 87th Legislature to receive the federal match that FFPSA affords. It does little to set up a framework for how to take advantage of this potentially transformational federal funding on an ongoing basis; therefore, there will still need to be planning and investment by the Legislature in this and future sessions to effectively leverage this funding opportunity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only negatively impacted Texas' budget, it has caused families to face an unprecedented amount of stress, financial difficulties, and social isolation. Increasing rates of substance use, unemployment, mental health challenges, and family violence all point toward increased risk for child abuse and neglect. Texas cannot afford the cost of business as usual.

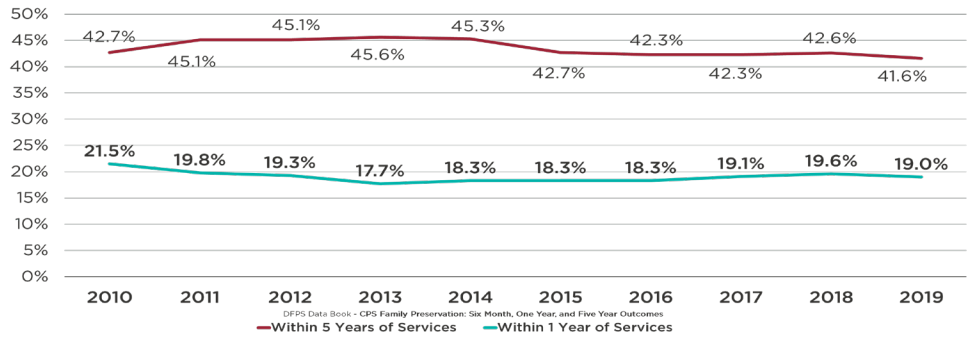


It's Time To Do More of What Works and Less of What Doesn't



Despite adding an additional \$800 million to the Child Protective Services (CPS) budget since 2008, there has been no meaningful decrease in child abuse and neglect in Texas.

Over 19% of families have another substantiated case of child maltreatment one year after ending services. The five-year recurrence rate jumps to almost 43%.



Preventing just 3% of removals would save the state \$20 million.

Recommendations

Prevent entries into foster care by supporting families and increasing access to in-home parenting programs, substance use services, and behavioral health service opportunities under the federal Family First Prevention Services Act.



1. Appropriate at least \$26 million of the \$33.9 million available Family First Transition Act dollars on services to prevent removals.
2. With available FFTA funds, strengthen investment in Recommendation #2 from DFPS, to pilot FFPSA Coordination through Prevention and Early Intervention community grants. This will allow at least 2,400 more families to access services this biennium while prioritizing flexibility and leadership at the local level.

For More Information

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