



The State of Texas Families BEFORE COVID-19

Early life experiences within a home set either a strong or unstable foundation for a child’s future biology, behavior and health—so one of the best ways to ensure healthy futures for children is to be sure families are strong. However, many Texas families are struggling to access the right supports at the right time to prevent crisis and ensure children have a healthy beginning. We know that when families are unwell, children are impacted. Texas has a long way to go. Compared to other states, Texas is ranked in the bottom third across multiple domains that affect families with children under age 3.

PARENT’S ABILITY TO WORK



ACCESS TO NEEDED SERVICES



NURTURING AND RESPONSIVE CHILD-PARENT RELATIONSHIPS



OPTIMAL CHILD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT



PARENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING



SUFFICIENT HOUSEHOLD RESOURCES



HEALTHY AND EQUITABLE BIRTHS



**For these rankings, #1 is the best and #50 is the worst.*

The Impact of COVID-19 on Families

COVID-19 has added social isolation, lack of access to services, unemployment, increased mental health challenges, substance use, and family violence to the mix of stressors for families. Without a dramatic shift in our state to family support and prevention programs, the impact of COVID-19 on child development and child safety will be devastating. We must not ask our children to pay the price for problems we have the power to prevent. Protecting children means connecting families to community supports BEFORE a crisis.



Recommendations that Support Families BEFORE a crisis



1. Strengthen the Texas Information and Referral Network (211) to create efficiencies and provide quality information and referrals for parents and families to better ensure that families can access the right services at the right time to prevent crises that might result in trauma for their children.
2. Protect and invest in community-based, primary child abuse prevention programs for children prenatal to age 5 when development matters most, and the highest ROI is realized through (HOPES) Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support and (NFP) Nurse-Family Partnership.
3. Prevent entries into foster care by supporting relatives and increasing access to in-home parenting programs, substance use services, and behavioral health service opportunities under the federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA).
4. Expand access to short term, nurse visitation for newborns (Family Connects) to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity, reduce child abuse, and increase efficiency in resource and referral systems for families.
5. Strengthen ECI funding to ensure that contractors can enroll and serve all eligible children in their community.

For More Information

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