CHILD WELLBEING DASHBOARD

INTRODUCTION

TexProtects, in partnership with the nationally-recognized nonprofit research organization Child Trends, explored scientific literature to identify a list of metrics known to provide a comprehensive picture of child wellbeing. Using evidence-informed models such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Essentials for Childhood and the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers' Data Guidebook, TexProtects curated and developed an interactive dashboard containing 27 indicators that depict the current state of child wellbeing in Texas and the United States overall. These metrics span two overarching domains and five child welfare themes – economic stability, healthy beginnings, safe and stable caregiver relationships, safety/permanency, and systems to support healing – essential for promoting positive early childhood outcomes, with an emphasis on leading indicators that forecast poor outcomes early in a child's life.

TexProtects prioritized indicators that aligned with the five child welfare themes and the following criteria:

Relevance – Metrics address important issues that affect the health and wellbeing of young children and their families

Data Availability – Data available at the state-level can be assessed for long-term trends and compared to performance of the US overall

Data Quality – Data for the metrics are complete and accurate

The dashboard incorporates the latest available data from a multitude of national and state level sources, such as the US Children's Bureau, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, National Survey of Children's Health, and State of Babies Yearbook.[1] Data included are from publicly available sources, with TexProtects' conducting further data analyses for four of the metrics.

Dashboard users can find two levels of analyses to put data into context:

Texas to US Comparison – Difference in performance between Texas and the US overall

Longitudinal Trend –Texas' performance from a baseline year to most-recent year

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[1] See appendix for a complete list of data metrics included in the dashboard and their respective sources.

Data years vary by indicator based on the data sources. With the exception of three metrics, the baseline year was at least five years, but no more than 12 years, prior to the most-recent data year. Baseline data years ranged from 2010 to 2019. The most up-to-date data years ranged from 2019 to 2022.

DASHBOARD SUMMARY

While Texas performs as well as, or in some cases better than, the national average, these data reveal major gaps in the Texas child welfare system. We think there are several key metrics across the child welfare continuum worth highlighting. These data underscore the importance of increasing services and support available to families early in a child's life in order to prevent the occurrence of child maltreatment, which can lead to negative outcomes over the course of a lifetime.

SAFE AND STRONG FOUNDATION

Economic Stability
19.6 percent of Texas children are living in poverty, compared to the national average of 16.9 percent. Similarly, a larger share of children in Texas (18.9 percent) experience food insecurity in comparison to children across the US (16.1 percent). Texas families are more likely to face high housing cost burden (32 percent) when compared to the US overall (30 percent).

Healthy Beginnings
A larger share of Texas mothers (9.8 percent) receive late or no prenatal care than mothers in the US overall (6.4 percent). Furthermore, Texas children are less likely to have a medical home than the US average (45.6 percent versus 48.3 percent, respectively).

Safe and Stable Caregiver Relationships
Fewer Texas children (27.4 percent) experience high quality parent child interactions compared to US overall (38.6 percent). Less than 2 percent of high priority families in Texas have access to proven home visiting programs, compared to the national average of 3.3 percent.

EMPOWER HEALING

Safety/Permanency
Just one-third of Texas children exit the state's care to reunite with their families, in comparison to nearly half of children across the US (47 percent). A smaller share of children in Texas (29 percent) find a permanent placement within 12 months of removal compared to the national average (35.2 percent).

Systems to Support Healing
A larger share of caregivers in Texas (30.1 percent) lack access to emotional support for parenting when compared to the US overall (23.8 percent). Additionally, six in ten

Texas adults with any mental illness did not receive treatment, in comparison to the national average of 54.7 percent. Similarly, children aged 3-17 with a mental health/behavioral condition in Texas are less likely (43.6 percent) to receive treatment or counseling than the national average (51.6 percent). More children in Texas (18.2 percent) do not have access to a trusted adult compared to the US overall (14.1 percent). Further exacerbating the issue, Texas has a smaller mental health workforce in comparison to overall US mental health workforce capacity (760:1 versus 350:1, respectively).

LOOKING AHEAD

The Child Wellbeing Dashboard lays the foundation for a data-driven platform that will be used to assess the state of child wellbeing in Texas. TexProtects aims to further develop the dashboard and expand its capacities, with a particular interest in elevating prevention-focused outcomes and solutions. Entering phase two of our work, TexProtects invites feedback regarding the dashboard from individuals and organizations involved in child welfare advocacy efforts.

TexProtects is a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization dedicated to protecting Texas children from the trauma of abuse and neglect and empowering families to thrive through advocacy, research, partnerships, and public awareness. TexProtects accomplishes our mission solely through the generous support of philanthropic partners and private individual and corporate donors. TexProtects does not receive taxpayer dollars for, or as a result of, our work.

APPENDIX

Metric	Metric Description	Data Source
SAFE AND STRONG FOUNDATION		
Economic Stability		
Children living in poverty	Percent of children under age 18 in poverty (<100% FPL)	US Census Bureau
Children whose parents lack secure employment	Percent of children under age 18 whose parent(s) lack secure employment	Kids Count/US Census Bureau
Families with high housing cost burden	Percent of children under age 18 living in households with a high housing cost burden	Kids Count/US Census Bureau
Children who experience food insecurity	Percent of children under age 18 living in food insecure households	Feeding America/US Department of Agriculture
Family income spent on childcare	Cost of center based infant care as a percentage of state median income for married families	State of Babies
Healthy Beginnings		
Mothers with late or prenatal care	Percent of births where prenatal care began during the third trimester or not at all	State of Babies
Children who receive a developmental screening between 9 and 35 months	Percent of infants/toddlers (9-35 months) who received a developmental screening using a parent completed tool and parent reported	National Survey of Children's Health
Children with a medical home	Percent of children age 0-5 with a medical home	National Survey of Children's Health
Children whose mothers have excellent mental health	Percent of children age 0-5 whose mother reports excellent or very good mental and emotional health	National Survey of Children's Health
Safe and Stable Caregiver Relationships		
Children who have high quality parent child interactions	Percent of children age 0-5 read to every day	National Survey of Children's Health
High priority families who have access to proven home visiting programs that support families	Percent of high priority families (1+ priority criteria) served	National Home Visiting Resource Center
Children without established paternity on their birth certificate	Percent of births without paternity acknowledgement on birth certificate	CDC National Vital Statistics System, Natality public-use data
Families who lack access to high quality childcare	Percent of population that lives in a child care desert	Center for American Progress
Children age 0-5 confirmed as victim of child abuse and neglect	Number of confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect per 1,000 children age 0-5	Texas Deparment of Family and Protective Services/US Children's Bureau, Child Maltreatment
Children age 0-5 who die due to child abuse and neglect	Number of child abuse and neglect fatalities per 100,000 children age 0-5	Texas Deparment of Family and Protective Services/US Children's Bureau, Child Maltreatment

EMPOWER HEALING		
Safety/Permanency		
Children who are maltreated while in the state's care	Percent of children maltreated while in foster care	Texas Deparment of Family and Protective Services/US Children's Bureau, Child Welfare Outcomes
Children who find a permanent placement within 12 months of removal	Percent of children exiting to permanency within 12 months	Texas Deparment of Family and Protective Services/US Children's Bureau, Capacity Building Center for States
Children who experience subsequent maltreatment within 6 months of a prior episode	Percent of children with another substantiated report of child abuse and neglect within six months	US Children's Bureau, Child Welfare Outcomes
Youth who age out of care without permanency	Percent of exits from custody that are emancipation	Texas Deparment of Family and Protective Services/US Children's Bureau, Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System
Children who are placed with kin after removal	Percent of children in substitute care placed with k	Texas Deparment of Family and Protective Services/US Children's Bureau, Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System
Children who exit the state's care to reunite with their families	Percent of exits from custody that are reunification	Texas Deparment of Family and Protective Services/US Children's Bureau, Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System
Systems to Support Healing		
Adults with any mental illness who did not receive treatment	Percent of adults with any mental illness who did not receive treatment	Mental Health America/SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Survey on Drug Use and Health
Children age 3-17 with a mental health/behavioral condition who receive treatment or counseling	Percent of children age 3-17 with a mental/behavioral condition who receive treatment or counseling	National Survey of Children's Health
Children age 3-17 whose health insurance seldom or never covers behavioral health needs	Thinking specifically about this child's mental or behavioral health needs, how often does this child's health insurance offer benefits or cover services that meet those needs, age 3-17?	National Survey of Children's Health
Caregivers without access to emotional support for parenting	In the past 12 months, was there someone that you could turn to for data to day emotional support with parenting and raising children?	National Survey of Children's Health
Children without access to a trusted adult	Other than the adults who live at home, is there at least one other adult in this child's school, neighborhood, or community who knows the child well and who they can rely on for advice or guidance, age 6-17?	National Survey of Children's Health
Mental health workforce availability	Ratio of population to mental health providers	County Health Rankings