Before the Crisis. Before the Hotline. Before the Investigation.

That's where Prevention Begins.

Priorities for the 90th Legislative Session

At TexProtects, we believe early support prevents family crises, allowing children to thrive and communities to prosper. Because healthy, safe and stable families raise healthy, safe and stable children, strong families will always be the cornerstone of a strong Texas.

Protecting Critical Investments

Strong state investments are essential to keeping families safe, stable and connected to the resources they need to thrive. Across Texas, state agencies provide critical resources that prevent family crises, strengthen household stability and help communities respond to the needs of children. Texas should protect and sustain these vital supports, including but not limited to:

- ⇒ **Restoring funding to Family Support Services:** Avoid funding reductions to Family Support Services and the community-based programs that prevent child maltreatment, strengthen families, support healthy child development, and help children remain safely with their families.
- ⇒ **Protecting access to essential resources:** Preserve access to programs that help families meet basic needs and maintain stability.

Thriving Families

Families are strongest when they can easily access the resources needed to stay safely together. When parents are temporarily unable to provide care, relative caregivers must have adequate support to maintain family stability. Texas must prioritize policies that strengthen the family-centered supports required to keep children safe and stable, including but not limited to:

- ⇒ **Reducing administrative barriers:** Streamlining application processes so families can efficiently access services while reducing the workload on state employees.
- ⇒ **Supporting kinship caregivers:** Expanding resources and support for kinship caregivers caring for children outside of formal state custody.
- ⇒ **Strengthening family-centered treatment:** Increasing investments in substance use models that allow parents to recover while keeping children safely with them.

Thriving Children

While the earliest years of life form the foundation for lifelong development, supporting children at every age is essential to building a strong Texas. When families can easily access essential healthcare, early learning and parenting resources, children enter school prepared and protected as they grow. Texas should prioritize policies that strengthen early childhood behavioral support, protect children at every age from digital and physical harm and improve educational outcomes, including but not limited to:

- ⇒ **Prioritizing early childhood behavioral support:** Establishing statewide leadership and resources focused on early childhood behavioral health for children ages 1-5.
- ⇒ **Measuring and scaling proven programs:** Evaluating and expanding proven and effective early childhood programs that demonstrably prevent child maltreatment and improve child development, school readiness and educational outcomes.

- ⇒ **Enhancing digital safety:** Advancing policies that protect children from online exploitation, abuse and other digital harms.
- ⇒ **Strengthening student protections:** Improving support and safeguards for students during investigations into improper educator misconduct.

Thriving Communities

Communities know their own needs best, and they require flexible support to build effective, responsive networks for families. To build healthy communities, Texas should prioritize policies that strengthen local service systems and support the workforce that serves children and families, including but not limited to:

- ⇒ **Expanding family support access:** Broadening eligibility for proven and effective home visiting programs to reach more families across Texas.
- ⇒ **Investing in early childhood workforce:** Promoting strategies that support and retain early childhood professionals, including child care workers, home visitors and early intervention specialists, who guide healthy child development.
- ⇒ **Modernizing community resource systems:** Strengthening existing community infrastructure so families can easily locate and navigate local services.
- ⇒ **Incentivizing private investment in family strengthening:** Fostering solutions that encourage business investment in community-based organizations serving families

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