



Resources for Understanding the Child Welfare System in Texas

Texas Child Welfare Funders (TCWF) is a group of private funders that provides a statewide forum for funders to collectively understand the landscape of child welfare and identify ways to partner and invest with one another to benefit children, youth, and families.

Over the past several years, the child welfare system in Texas has experienced significant change, most notably a push toward a Community-Based Care model of service delivery. The guiding motivation behind this reform is for better outcomes for children and youth who go through the foster care system. An even more aspirational goal is preventing children from experiencing substitute care altogether.

TCWF exists to focus primarily on issues related directly to the child welfare system, which the resources provided here reflect. TCWF recognizes that 'child wellbeing' services are essential to preventing children from touching or entering the child welfare system, and these services are essential to accomplishing positive outcomes for children within and adjacent to the foster care system. Nonetheless, the topic of child wellbeing is expansive. TCWF's work sometimes includes or overlaps with child wellbeing topics, and TCWF Steering Committee members participate in a national child wellbeing learning group, hosted by Casey Family Programs. But, to focus its impact, TCWF limits its primary work to the child welfare system.

If you have questions about the material presented here or wish to suggest additional or updated resources, please contact TCWF Steering Committee Secretary [Christine Gendron](#). We welcome your participation in TCWF.

Fundamentals of the Child Welfare System:

TexProtects offers [multiple flow chart resources](#) illustrating how the child protective system works in Texas:

- [How an Investigation is performed](#)
- [How the Alternative Response process works](#)
- [How Family-Based Safety Services works](#)
- [How a case moves from Removal to Permanency](#)

Community-Based Care:

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services [“Community-Based Care” webpage](#) provides an overview of CBC, as well as information on catchment areas and implementation timelines and links to recent CBC-related reports.

Texas CASA published [A Guide to Community-Based Care in Texas](#) titled “Transforming Together” that provides background and insight on CBC for those wanting to understand it better.

Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA):

Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services and The Center for Child and Family Studies partnered with Casey Family Programs, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to release [a statewide capacity assessment](#) relevant to the federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). The report provides information and recommendations regarding how Texas can prepare for FFPSA implementation.

Disproportionality and Racial Equity:

The National Center for Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) offers a free webinar addressing [The Over-representation of Marginalized Communities in Child Welfare](#).

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services website includes a webpage with information about [Disproportionality in Child Protective Services](#). The webpage links to others with more detailed information, including a page with data answering the question “[How Big is the Problem in CPS](#)” and a page that addresses “[What’s DFPS doing about Disproportionality?](#)”

Educational Needs of Children and Youth in Foster Care:

The Texas Children’s Commission established an Education Committee to identify contributing factors and potential solutions to address the poor educational outcomes of children and youth in foster care. The result of this statewide collaboration was the creation of the [Texas Blueprint: Transforming Education Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care](#).

Juvenile Justice/Dual-Status (i.e., youth involved in both systems):

In 2018 the Texas Judicial Council adopted a Juvenile Justice Committee recommendation for the Children’s Commission to convene a task force to study and report on issues relating to youth with involvement in the child welfare and juvenile

justice systems. The group's recommendations are captured in its [Dual Status Task Force Final Report](#).

Normalcy:

The Texas Children's Commission published a report titled "[Normalcy for Children and Youth in Foster Care](#)" that defines normalcy and discusses why it's important.

Transitioning Youth:

The Texas Foster Youth Justice Project, a program of Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, offers [A Guide for Those "Aging Out" of Foster Care in Texas](#). The guide outlines youth rights, benefits and resources, and more.

Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services (TACFS) and The Center for Child and Family Studies published a white paper titled [Aging Out of Foster Care in Texas: Proposed Solutions and Collaborations](#). The white paper outlines the research and context around current and continuing struggles experienced by those who age out of foster care and shares information about initiatives aimed at supporting their transition to early adulthood, as well as recommendations for improving outcomes for youth who age out.

Trauma-Informed Care:

The Texas Children's Commission convened stakeholders across systems to develop a [Blueprint for Building a Trauma-Informed Child Welfare System in Texas](#). The Blueprint was informed by a report that the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute completed for the Children's Commission to increase understanding regarding the needs of children in foster care with mental health conditions and regarding trauma-informed care.

Child Sex Trafficking (CST) and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CSEY):

Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) and Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services (TACFS) partnered to assess the landscape of service capacity and gaps in regard to serving young victims of CST and/or CSEY. Their findings are documented in a report titled "[Serving Commercially Sexually-Exploited Youth in Texas: A Statewide Service Assessment](#)."

Youth Homelessness:

Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) and Texas Appleseed collaborated to publish a report titled "[Young, Alone, and Homeless in the Lone Star State](#)" that details the intersections between the issue of youth homelessness and Texas' child-serving systems, including the child welfare system.