

Child Maltreatment Prevention in Texas

Scope of Problem

In Texas in 2015

171 child fatalities due to abuse/neglect

66,721 confirmed cases of child maltreatment

Reported Family Struggles

Unmet Basic Needs



Parents and staff reported that it was difficult to focus on teaching and learning parenting skills when parents struggle with basic needs, such as **job-seeking, housing, utilities & childcare.**

Serious Life Stressors



Parents commonly experience **exhaustion, depression, frustration, low self-esteem.** Some also struggle with **substance abuse and family violence.**

Communication & Parenting Skills



Staff reported that many adults need skills to **communicate, discipline and treat each other and their children better.** Parents agreed that learning new tools offered them and their children "a boost to go in the right direction."

Social Support System



Staff members stated the difference between families who are doing well and those who are struggling is whether "they have a **social network of friends, family and supporters** that help them through the rough periods."

Current Efforts

5,529 families served in the child abuse/neglect prevention programs including HOPES*

99.7% of HOPES children remained safe**

Recommended Actions

Offer Non-Punitive Supports



At-risk families need **family counseling, crisis intervention, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence intervention, and day care.** CPS should enhance family based services and couple those services with case management by a community-based provider.

Fund Prevention & Treatment



For families who experience substance abuse, a history of trauma, or a mental health condition, more intensive services, such as substance abuse treatment **where parents can remain with their children** are needed. Preventing the onset of these conditions is even better.

Universal Screening & Support



Create a strong foundation for every family, with **universal screening for trauma and other risk factors** in primary healthcare settings. Provide postpartum visits for all parents of newborns. Make enhanced prenatal care, home visiting, and parent education a normal service for all.

Change Social Norms



Being a parent is hard. Asking for help is hard. Stigmas about parenting and getting help should be addressed through social marketing campaigns in order to **normalize the struggles inherent in parenting.**

Programs and policies should support families so that all children grow up in **safe, stable, and nurturing** homes.

Everyone in the community has a role in strengthening families and preventing child maltreatment.

The focus should not solely be on parenting skills, but on **treatment and prevention of substance use, family violence, unmanaged mental health issues and multi-generational trauma.**

Find out more at: txicfw.socialwork.utexas.edu

The quotes and family struggles are from findings detailed in the FY2015 HOPES Evaluation. Statistics are from the Texas DFPS 2015 Annual Report and Data Book. The views expressed are solely those of the TXICFW research team.

*Child abuse/neglect programs include Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Services, Community-Based Family Services, HOPES, Helping Through Intervention and Prevention, and Texas Families: Together and Safe. ** Children remain safe is the percent of participating parents who have not been confirmed as perpetrators of abuse or neglect.