

Child Protection Priorities: 81st Legislative Session

The Child Protection Roundtable

July 18, 2008

Prevention Priorities:

- 1. Increased prevention program investment** weighted by program effectiveness and highest ROI (return on investment), when available; for all forms of abuse, across the lifeline continuum for each risk level before abuse occurs.
 - *Costs of abuse as well as the indirect or long-term costs, suggests that child abuse and neglect costs the nation \$293 million each day, or approximately \$107 billion each year.¹*
- 2. Appropriation of funds for effective in-home visitation programs**, including sustained funding for the Nurse-Family Partnership implementation.
 - *Home visitation is the most innovative and holistic prevention program used in educating and supporting the at-risk family, while making a wide range of community and professional services available to the family².*
 - *The Nurse-Family Partnership home visiting program has shown consistent improvements in maternal and child health for mothers and children in three randomized controlled trials over three decades.*
- 3. Maintaining funding for STAR/CYD (Services to At-Risk Youth)/ (Community Youth Development)** with additional funding for **rigorous evaluation of effectiveness and ROI** for these programs and all state-funded programs lacking evaluation of efficacy and ROI.

CPS Priorities:

In order to provide the safest care and highest well-being outcomes for children:

- 1. Increase worker compensation** to increase the pool of high-quality workers and provide pay comparable to teachers.
 - *Research has shown that the lowest turnover, highest paid and highest functioning child welfare organizations have the least recurrence of child maltreatment³*
- 2. Institute “hire ahead” training** to ensure caseworker availability and eliminate vacancy gaps in casework from worker turnover.
 - *Real vacancy rates range from 10% to 30% across the state and perpetual vacancies of approximately 20%.⁴ Real vacancy includes workers in training whom are unable to carry cases. When these approved FTE positions are filled with the hire-ahead, the caseloads are reduced.*

Substitute Care Priorities:

- 1. Foster Care Rate Increase** for all provider types to: make rates whole at 100% of allowable costs; fund the cost of inflation; and fund the cost of new licensing standards.
 - *Rate increase links directly to building and meeting capacity needs*
 - *Rate increase links directly to improving the quality of services to children*

Cross Group Priority (CPS, Substitute Care and Prevention):

1. Provide systems of wraparound funding and remove barriers to integrated funding at state and local levels.

¹ (2008) Prevent Child Abuse America

² Ibid.

³ (2006) National Center for Crime and Delinquency “Human Services Workforce Initiative: Relationship between staff turnover, Child Welfare System Functioning and Recurrent Child Abuse” for Cornerstone for Kids.

⁴ (2008) Texas Department of Family Protective Services Data Request specifically for TexProtects.

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CPS and Substitute Care Priority:

1. **Design and Invest in a technology integration system** for more effective data sharing between public and private providers, law enforcement, judges, courts, state agencies and other key system stakeholders to minimize duplication of services, provide equal access to case information and promote cooperation and efficiencies among stakeholders.

The Following 26 Organizations have endorsed these issues as equal top legislative and funding priorities for the 2009 Legislative Session:

Arrow Child and Family Ministries
Caring Family Network
Casey Family Programs
Center for Public Policy Priorities
Child Abuse Prevention Center
Dallas Association for Parent Education
Dallas Children's Advocacy Center
Greater Texas Community Partners
Healthy Family Initiatives - Houston
Medical Director, Pediatrics, Baylor College
of Medicine (individual)
National Association of Social Workers
(NASW)-TX
Nurse-Family Partnership
Prevent Child Abuse Texas
Relief Nursery of North Texas
Texas Association of Family and
Conciliation Courts
TCU Institute of Child Development
TexProtects, Texas Association for the
Protection of Children
Texans Care for Children
Texas CASA
Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards
Texas Foster Family Association
Texas Home Visitation Consortium
Texas Loves Children
Texas Network of Youth Services
Transition Resource Action Center (TRAC)
United Ways of Texas
YWCA Dallas