



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

**Children and Youth Missing from
DFPS Conservatorship
&
Human Trafficking Initiatives**

Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report

May 2020

Background

Pursuant to Texas Family Code § 264.017(b)(12) and (13) and Texas Family Code § 264.123, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is required to report annually:

- The number of children who are missing from the children's substitute care provider while in the managing conservatorship of the department;
- The number of children who were victims of trafficking under Chapter 20A, Penal Code, while in the managing conservatorship of the department;
- Whether a child who went missing was a victim of the offense of Trafficking in Persons;
- Whether the managing conservatorship of the department is temporary or permanent;
- The type of substitute care in which the child is placed; and
- The child's county of residence, sex, age, race, and ethnicity.

In Fiscal Year 2016, DFPS began investigating allegations of sex and labor trafficking committed by a person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare. Prior to Fiscal Year 2016, these allegations were categorized as another form of abuse and neglect (i.e. sexual abuse or neglectful supervision).

Children and Youth Missing while in DFPS Conservatorship

In Fiscal Year 2019, 51,417 children and youth were in DFPS conservatorship. Of these, 1,973 children and youth were reported missing during Fiscal Year 2019. In addition, 283 children and youth were already missing on the first day of the fiscal year.¹ In total, 2,122 unique children and youth were missing at some point during Fiscal Year 2019.²

Of the 2,122 children and youth who were missing at some point during Fiscal Year 2019:

- 1,837 (87%) were located as of August 31, 2019.
- 175 (8%) were still missing on August 31, 2019. Of these, 75 (43%) had gone missing during August 2019.
- 110 (5%) children and youth exited conservatorship while missing. 3 Of these:
 - 63 youth turned 18 while on missing status; and
 - 47 had legal responsibility terminated while on missing status before they turned 18.

Over the last three fiscal years, there has been a slight increase in the percentage of children and youth who have one or more missing episode during the fiscal year out of the population of children and youth in DFPS conservatorship at some point during the year (see **Table 1**). However, some of this increase is due to continued improvements to our internal tracking processes of missing children.

**Table 1:
Total Number of Children and Youth in DFPS Conservatorship who were Missing**

Category	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Number of children and youth in conservatorship at some point during fiscal year.	50,293	52,397	51,417
Number of children and youth in conservatorship who were missing at some point during fiscal year.	1,707	1,843	1,973
Percent of children and youth in conservatorship who were missing at some point during fiscal year.	3.4%	3.5%	3.8%

Reasons Given for Missing Event

When a child or youth is located from a missing event, they are interviewed and staff complete a Recovered Survey to capture reasons for the missing event, information about the child or youth’s experiences while missing, and whether or not they have been victimized during the missing episode. A total of 2,439 Recovered Surveys were completed when children and youth were recovered from missing events, and for 1,804 of these recoveries, the children and youth reported why they were missing from care in Fiscal Year 2019.⁴ The top seven reasons children and youth gave are listed below, and are similar to those given in previous years:

- Dislike of rules of placement (24%)
- Anger at CPS or the system (19%)
- Desire to be on one's own (18%)
- Desire to see family/relatives (15%)
- Frustration / anger with caregivers (15%)
- Desire new placement (13%)
- Desire to be with boyfriend or girlfriend (11%)

Demographics of Children and Youth Missing from DFPS Conservatorship

Of the children and youth who were newly reported as missing in Fiscal Year 2019, 66% were age 15-17 at the time of their first missing incident in the fiscal year (see Table 2).

Table 2
Ages of Children and Youth at the Time of the First FY 2019 Missing Event

Age	FY 2017 Number of Children	%	FY 2018 Number of Children	%	FY 2019 Number of Children	%
17	472	28%	481	26%	473	24%
16	437	26%	433	23%	470	24%
15	316	19%	354	19%	363	18%
14	198	12%	244	13%	249	13%
13	141	8%	145	8%	151	8%
12	55	3%	54	3%	67	3%
Less than 12*	88	5%	132	7%	200	10%
Total	1,707	100%	1,843	100%	1,973	100%

*The majority of these children were missing because parent(s) absconded with the children before the department could take possession.

The gender breakdown of those missing from care has remained relatively consistent (see Table 3).

Table 3
Gender of Missing Children and Youth

Gender	Number of Children	%
Female	1053	53%
Male	919	47%
Unknown	1	< 1%
Total	1,973	100%

Race/Ethnicity for children and youth missing have remained consistent across fiscal years (see last column of **Table 4**).

Table 4
Race/Ethnicity Children and Youth Missing

Race/ Ethnicity	FY 2017 Number of Children	%	FY 2018 Number of Children	%	FY 2019 Number of Children	%	FY 2019 % of All Children and Youth in Care
African American	393	23%	465	25%	476	24%	21%
Anglo	476	28%	524	28%	557	28%	30%
Hispanic	746	44%	767	42%	829	42%	42%
Native American	2	<1%	1	<1%	2	<1%	<1%
Other	77	5%	64	3%	81	4%	7%
Unknown	13	1%	22	1%	28	1%	<1%
Total	1,707	100%	1,843	100%	1,973	100%	100%

As in prior fiscal years, the living arrangements from which children and youth are missing from DFPS conservatorship most frequently in Fiscal Year 2019 are Residential Treatment Centers and Emergency Shelters (see **Table 5**).

Table 5
Living Arrangements for Children and Youth at the Time of the Missing Event

Substitute Care Type	FY 2017 Number of Children	%	FY 2018 Number of Children	%	FY 2019 Number of Children	%
Residential Treatment Centers	325	19%	433	23%	466	24%
Emergency Shelter	331	19%	342	19%	377	19%
Therapeutic Foster Care	315	18%	285	15%	283	14%
Kinship Home	201	12%	211	11%	223	11%
Missing at Time of Removal*	-	-	-	-	191	10%
Basic Child Care Operations	131	8%	145	8%	129	7%
Own Home	66	4%	78	4%	82	4%
Foster Care: Child Care Services	35	2%	61	3%	67	3%
Unauthorized Placement	71	4%	90	5%	50	3%
Other Foster Care	82	5%	60	3%	48	2%
DFPS Supervision	36	2%	21	1%	19	1%
Other	18	1%	11	1%	14	1%
Unknown	96	6%	106	6%	24	1%
Total	1,707	100%	1,843	100%	1,973	100%

*This category was added this fiscal year and does not have data for previous years.

Most children and youth who were missing continue to be under Temporary Managing Conservatorship (TMC), followed by Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) with termination of parental rights, then PMC without termination of parental rights (see **Table 6**). Most children and youth in DFPS conservatorship are under TMC.

Table 6
Legal Status of Missing Children and Youth at the Time of the Missing Event

Legal Status	FY 2017 Number of Children	%	FY 2018 Number of Children	%	FY 2019 Number of Children	%
Temporary Managing Conservatorship	822	48%	903	49%	936	47%
Permanent Managing Conservatorship with Termination	515	30%	561	30%	603	31%
Permanent Managing Conservatorship Without Termination	335	20%	352	19%	377	19%
Other Legal Basis	5	<1%	6	<1%	2	<1%
Care, Custody, and Control	2	<1%	5	<1%	9	<1%
Not Recorded ⁵	28	2%	16	1%	46	2%
Total	1,707	100%	1,843	100%	1,973	100%

Children and Youth Trafficked while in Conservatorship

Of the 1,837 children and youth who were recovered in Fiscal Year 2019, 109 (5.9%) were victimized while missing, 46 (2.5%) experienced sex trafficking victimization. (see **Table 7**).

Table 7
Overview of Texas Children and Youth in DFPS Conservatorship

FY 2019	Number
Total number in DFPS Conservatorship at some point in FY 2019	51,417
Total number missing from DFPS Conservatorship	2,122
Total number recovered during FY 2019	1,837
Number victimized during missing episode	109
Number victimized - sex trafficking	46
Number victimized - labor trafficking	0

One hundred and nine children and youth were victimized while they were on missing status in Fiscal Year 2019, with some experiencing multiple types of victimization (see **Table 8**).

Table 8
Children and Youth Victimized During Missing Event

Category	FY 2017 Number of Children	FY 2018 Number of Children	FY 2019 Number of Children
Number Sex Trafficked	35	52	46
Number Labor Trafficked	1	2	0
Number Sexually Abused	34	68	72
Number Physically Abused	4	23	19
Total Number Victimized*	62	105	109

*Numbers do not sum to total as youth may have experienced multiple types of victimization

Tables 9, 10 and 11 provide the age, gender, and race/ethnicity of the 46 children and youth who experienced sex trafficking victimization during a missing event in Fiscal Year 2019.

Demographics of Children & Youth Sex Trafficked During a Missing Event in FY2019

Table 9
Age

Age	Number of Children	%
17	14	30%
16	15	33%
15	9	20%
14	3	7%
13	4	9%
12	0	0%
11	1	2%
Total	46	100%

Table 10
Gender

Gender	Number of Children	%
Female	45	98%
Male	1	2%
Total	46	100%

Table 11
Race/Ethnicity

Race/ Ethnicity	Number of Children	%
African American	12	26%
Anglo	14	30%
Hispanic	13	28%
Native American	0	0%
Other	3	7%
Unknown	4	9%
Total	46	100%

Reports and Investigations of Sex and Labor Trafficking

DFPS investigates allegations of sex trafficking and labor trafficking when the alleged perpetrator is traditionally responsible for a child or youth’s care, custody, or welfare such as a family member, or an adult living in the home of an alleged minor victim. Reports of child trafficking not under DFPS’s investigative jurisdiction are processed as Information & Referrals and sent both to local law enforcement, and the Texas Department of Public Safety. Tables 12 and 13 provide data on reports of sex or labor trafficking received in Fiscal Year 2019. ⁶

Table 12
Sex Trafficking Reports

Category	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Reports Received with Sex Trafficking as an Allegation	1,034	731	732
Alleged Victims of Sex Trafficking*	1,238	803	859
Reports with a Sex Trafficking Allegation Investigated	286	462	549
Reports with a Sex Trafficking Allegation sent to Alternative Response	2	0	2

*One report can contain allegations for multiple victims.

Table 13
Labor Trafficking Reports

Category	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Reports Received with Labor Trafficking as an Allegation	72	79	102
Alleged Victims of Labor Trafficking*	95	101	125
Reports with a Labor Trafficking Allegation Investigated	27	31	64
Reports with a Labor Trafficking Allegation sent to Alternative Response	6	7	3

*One report can contain allegations for multiple victims.

Tables 14 and 18 provide the outcomes of allegations of sex and labor trafficking for investigations that closed during Fiscal Year 2019. These allegations could be the result of a report or could have been added during an investigation of other abuse/neglect allegations.⁷ Tables 15-17 and 19-21 provide the demographics for confirmed victims of sex and labor trafficking.

Table 14
Sex Trafficking Investigations

Category	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Investigations with one or more Allegation of Sex Trafficking	468	515	544
Investigations with a Disposition of “Reason to Believe” for one or more Sex Trafficking Allegations	21	31	29
Unique Victims of Sex Trafficking Allegations with a “Reason to Believe” Disposition	21	33	29

Demographics of Confirmed Victims of Sex Trafficking Investigations in FY 2019

Table 15
Age

Age	Number of Children	%
17	4	14%
16	5	17%
15	8	28%
14	3	10%
13	2	7%
12	1	3%
Under 12	6	21%
Total	29	100%

Table 16
Gender

Gender	Number of Children	%
Female	27	93%
Male	2	7%
Total	29	100%

Table 17
Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Children	%
African American	8	28%
Anglo	7	24%
Hispanic	14	48%
Native American	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Unknown	0	0%
Total	29	100%

Table 18
Labor Trafficking Investigations

Category	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Investigations with one or more Allegation of Labor Trafficking	45	44	63
Investigations with a Disposition of "Reason to Believe" for one or more Labor Trafficking Allegations	2	2	4
Unique Victims of Labor Trafficking Allegations with a "Reason to Believe" Disposition*	2	2	11

*Of the 11 confirmed victims of labor trafficking in Fiscal Year 2019, 9 were from the same investigation.

Demographics of Confirmed Victims of Labor Trafficking Investigations in FY 2019

Table 19
Age

Age	Number of Children	%
17	1	9%
16	3	27%
15	3	27%
14	1	9%
13	1	9%
12	1	9%
Under 12	1	9%
Total	11	100%

Table 20
Gender

Gender	Number of Children	%
Female	3	27%
Male	8	73%
Total	11	100%

Table 21
Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Children	%
African American	1	9%
Anglo	6	55%
Hispanic	3	27%
Native American	0	0%
Other	1	9%
Unknown	0	0%
Total	11	100%

Additional Data

Placement Counties of Children and Youth at the Time of the First FY 2019 Missing Event (Highest to Lowest)

County	Number of Children Missing from Care	County	Number of Children Missing from Care	County	Number of Children Missing from Care
Harris	439	Brazoria	8	Jim Wells	<5
Bexar	169	Hays	8	Johnson	<5
Dallas	149	Matagorda	8	Karnes	<5
Travis	95	Webb	8	Kaufman	<5
Fort Bend	81	Austin	7	Kleberg	<5
Tarrant	56	Brown	7	Liberty	<5
Montgomery	55	Coryell	7	Llano	<5
Comal	47	Gregg	6	Medina	<5
Cameron	42	Wichita	6	Midland	<5
Taylor	29	Atascosa	5	Mills	<5
Kerr	27	Caldwell	5	Montague	<5
Denton	26	Grayson	5	Moore	<5
McLennan	26	Nacogdoches	5	Navarro	<5
Nueces	26	Bandera	<5	Oldham	<5
Hidalgo	24	Bastrop	<5	Orange	<5
Smith	24	Bee	<5	Palo Pinto	<5
Lubbock	20	Bosque	<5	Parker	<5
San Patricio	20	Burnet	<5	Polk	<5
El Paso	19	Cass	<5	Robertson	<5
Harrison	17	Chambers	<5	Rockwall	<5
Hunt	17	Childress	<5	Rusk	<5
Potter	17	Cooke	<5	Titus	<5
Williamson	16	Ector	<5	Tom Green	<5
Lampasas	15	Ellis	<5	Upshur	<5
Bell	14	Erath	<5	Uvalde	<5
Collin	14	Fannin	<5	Van Zandt	<5
Galveston	14	Fayette	<5	Victoria	<5
Walker	12	Guadalupe	<5	Ward	<5
Kendall	10	Henderson	<5	Washington	<5
Angelina	9	Hill	<5	Wise	<5
Brazos	9	Hockley	<5	Out of State	9
Jefferson	9	Hood	<5	Not Recorded or Unavailable ⁸	233

County	Number of Children Missing from Care	County	Number of Children Missing from Care	County	Number of Children Missing from Care
Randall	9	Jasper	<5	Total	1,973

¹ The demographic data on these youth were included in the data on first missing events in the previous year's report, so they will not be included in the demographics of first missing events in this report unless the youth had a new missing event within the fiscal year to avoid double counting them.

² 1,973 children and youth had a new missing event in Fiscal Year 2019. This includes 134 of the 283 youth who were still missing at the end of the previous fiscal year—who were recovered and had a new missing event that started in Fiscal Year 2019. However, the remaining 149 of the 283 youth who were still missing at the end of the previous fiscal year are not captured in the new missing event population as they did not have a subsequent missing event in Fiscal Year 2019. Therefore, the total number of unique children and youth missing during Fiscal Year 2019 is calculated as 1,973 youth with new events + 149 youth missing at the start of the year who did not also have a new missing event = 2,122.

³ DFPS continues to search for any youth missing from conservatorship until the department no longer has legal authority.

⁴ The number of recoveries is greater than the number of unique youth who were missing because some youth may have multiple missing events within the fiscal year.

⁵ In Fiscal Year 2019, 43 of the 46 missing children and youth with no recorded legal status were missing at the time of removal.

⁶ Trafficking reports are presented in a different way than in prior reports. Previously, we included reports where sex or labor trafficking was the primary allegation. Primary allegation is the highest priority allegation in a report and is assigned by the intake worker. In this year's report, we expanded our definition to include reports where sex or labor trafficking is an allegation, primary or not.

⁷ The numbers of reports investigated in tables 9 and 10 do not match the numbers of investigations in tables 11 and 12 because the reports were received within Fiscal Year 2019 and the resulting investigation may not have been completed and closed before the end of the fiscal year. Additionally, the investigations closed during Fiscal Year 2019 could have been the result of a report received in the prior fiscal year.

⁸ The placement county for children who went missing at the time of removal is included in "not recorded or unavailable".