



CHILDREN'S COMMISSION

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE
SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS

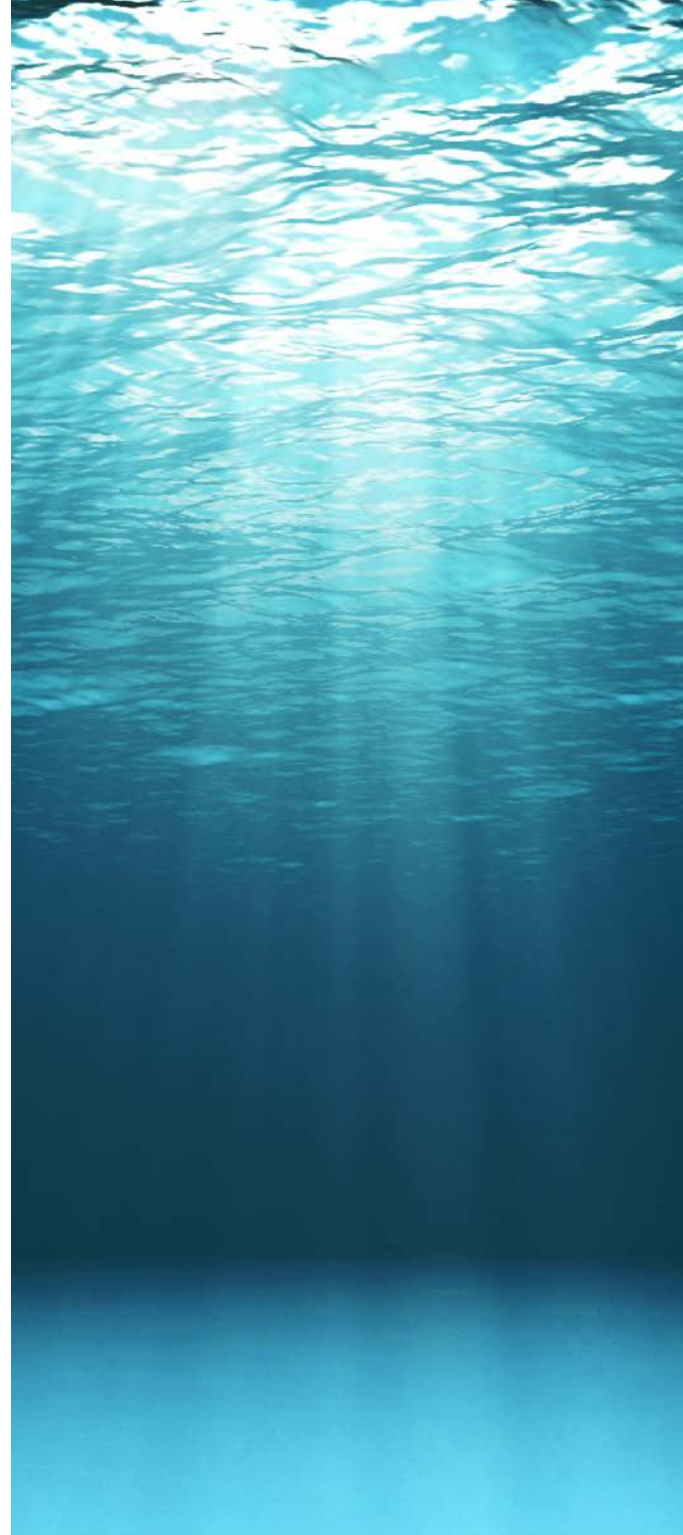


CONTENTS

October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022

Letter from Leadership	5
Letter from the Executive Director	6
Collaboration	7
Grants	12
Systems Improvement	17
Legal Practice & Process	25
Training	31
Data	37

“OUR MISSION IS TO STRENGTHEN COURTS FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES IN THE TEXAS CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM AND THEREBY IMPROVE THE SAFETY, PERMANENCY, AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN.”



Letter from Leadership

It has been over a year since we were appointed as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth, and Families (Children's Commission). Partnering with many experts from around the state, providing a forum for critical conversations about challenging topics, and producing resources for judges, attorneys, and stakeholders has reinforced the value the Children's Commission brings to the judiciary and the child welfare system writ large.

This was an exciting and productive year for the Children's Commission and this report includes highlights from Fiscal Year 2022 (October 2021 to September 2022). Many meetings, trainings, and events returned to an in-person format as relationships, both new and enduring, were strengthened and benefited from sharing ideas and innovations. For example, the Children's Commission and Judicial Commission on Mental Health partnered to host the first joint Round Table meeting with an emphasis on children experiencing a mental health crisis. Several child-serving systems overlap in the area of children's mental health and this partnership between the two commissions provided a unique opportunity to gather state and local leaders, including those with lived experience with these systems, to chart a path forward together.

The Children's Commission produced multiple reports and resources this year, including several emanating from the 87th Legislature on issues such as Residential Treatment Centers and the Department's use of a Forensic Assessment Center Network to assist with medical consultation on cases of suspected child abuse and neglect. The Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children was updated and disseminated. A Coloring Book to assist younger children with understanding the attorney-client relationship was also created and distributed this year.

These are just a few key accomplishments from Fiscal Year 2022. Each year brings a new dimension to the breadth and depth of the Children's Commission work. We look forward to a continued emphasis on strengthening the judicial and legal response in child welfare cases so that children and families in Texas can experience positive outcomes.



Debra H. Lehrmann

Justice Debra H. Lehrmann



Rebeca Aizpuru Huddle

Justice Rebeca Aizpuru Huddle

Letter from the Executive Director

The theme of this year's annual report is strength through transitions. Fiscal Year 2022 was a year filled with many transitions within the child welfare system. Many aspects of the system transitioned from virtual or hybrid operations to in person. Numerous changes from the 87th Legislative Session were implemented, and judges, attorneys, CASAs, caseworkers, families, and stakeholders transitioned to new statutory frameworks. Several regions in Texas continued the transition into Community Based Care. Each of these changes brings opportunities for growth and improvement.

Perhaps most critical for the Children's Commission is a maintained focus on the transitions facing children and families who experience the child welfare system. Whether the transition is from foster care to reunification or other permanency outcome, moving from one school to another seamlessly, or aging out of care and transitioning to adulthood, each of these life experiences often require both strength and support. Judges and attorneys can implement best practices to encourage safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families experiencing such transitions in the child welfare system.

The Children's Commission remains steadfast in our mission to strengthen courts serving children, youth, and families as they navigate these transitions. We hope that you will enjoy reviewing this report and learning about our projects, resources, and collaborative efforts. We are grateful for the support of the Supreme Court of Texas and for our invaluable partnerships with experts and leaders throughout our State.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Bernstein". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jamie Bernstein

Collaboration



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ADMINISTER THE COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) FUNDS TO ASSESS CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS OF THE COURTS, PROVIDE A FORUM FOR MEANINGFUL COLLABORATION, ENCOURAGE CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT, AND PROMOTE BEST CHILD WELFARE AND COURT PRACTICES TO IMPROVE THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.

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Children's Commission Members Fiscal Year 2022

Supreme Court of Texas

Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht
Justice Debra H. Lehrmann
Justice Jeffrey S. Boyd

Justice John P. Devine
Justice Jimmy D. Blacklock
Justice Brett Busby

Justice Jane N. Bland
Justice Rebeca Aizpuru Huddle
Justice Evan A. Young

Jurists in Residence

Hon. Rob Hofmann,
Senior Jurist in Residence
Hon. Piper McCraw,
Jurist in Residence

Special Advisors

Sheila Craig,
Equity Advisor
Hon. Michael Massengale,
Senior Judicial Advisor

Commissioners

Justice Debra H. Lehrmann, Chair
Justice Rebeca Aizpuru Huddle,
Deputy Chair
Hon. Harriet O'Neill,
Chair Emeritus
Hon. Eva Guzman,
Chair Emeritus
Hon. Gary Coley,
Vice Chair
Hon. Rosie Alvarado
Karla Baker
Erica Bañuelos
Col. Sonya Batchelor
Corey Benbow

Paula Bibbs-Samuels
Dr. Gary Blau
Hon. Susan Brown
Hon. Darlene Byrne
Hon. Julie Countiss
Deneen Dryden
Elizabeth Farley, ex officio
Hon. Roy Ferguson
Heather Fleming, ex officio
Madelyn Fletcher, ex officio
Sandra Hachem
Anne Heiligenstein
Hon. Randall Hufstetler
Hon. Rhonda Hunter

Rep. Stephanie Klick, ex officio
Hon. Laura Loera
Hon. Selina Mireles
Katie Olse
Hon. Robbie Partida-Kipness
Sasha Rasco
Hon. Frank Rynd
Hon. Michael Schneider
Hon. Randy Shelton
Luanne Southern
Vicki Spriggs
Terese Stevenson
Hon. Thomas Stuckey
Sen. Royce West, ex officio

**Please note that throughout this report, title and membership reflect member roles at the time of participation.*



Children's Commission Staff, L-R: Dylan Moench, Willette Sedwick, Renée Castillo-De La Cruz, Andrea Vicencio, Monica Mahoney, Jessica Arguijo, Jamie Bernstein, Milbrey Raney, Chelsea Martinez, Aimee Corbin, Jocelyn Fowler, Tiffany Edwards, Patrick Passmore

Children's Commission Meeting Dates In Fiscal Year 2022

- February 25, 2022; [Notebook](#)
- May 13, 2022; [Notebook](#)
- September 30, 2022; [Notebook](#)

Staff

Jamie Bernstein
Executive Director

Milbrey Raney
Assistant Director

Jessica Arguijo
Communications Manager

Renée Castillo-De La Cruz
Staff Attorney

Aimee Corbin
Staff Attorney

Tiffany Edwards
Executive Assistant

Jocelyn Fowler
Staff Attorney

Monica Mahoney
Program Specialist

Chelsea Martinez
Executive Assistant

Dylan Moench
Legal Representation Director

Patrick Passmore
Finance Manager

Willette Sedwick
Accountant

Andrea Vicencio
Program Specialist

All-Committee Webcast on FY2023 Strategies & Budget

The four Children's Commission standing committees (Systems Improvement, Legal Practice & Process, Training, and Data) met on September 13, 2022 for an All-Committee Zoom webcast. During the webcast, Children's Commission staff shared the proposed FY2023 Strategies and Budget. Committee members had the opportunity to provide feedback via survey. Subsequently, the FY2023 Strategies and Budget were presented to and approved by the Children's Commission on September 30, 2022.

Committee Members

Hon. Rosie Alvarado	Margaret Halpin
Hon. Mark Atkinson	Tracy Harting
Ross Baxter	Dr. Jangmin Kim
Tymothy Belseth	Brenda Kinsler
Dr. Gary Blau	Elizabeth Kromrei
Mark Briggs	Sharibeth Niehaus
Sarah Bryant	Ann Palmer
Denise Campbell	Hon. Robbie Partida-Kipness
Hon. Julie Countiss	Sophie Phillips
Sarah Crockett	Kellie Price
Hon. Anne Darring	Mary Christine Reed
Teal De La Garza	Hon. Robin Sage
Lori Duke	Hon. Peter Sakai
Barbara Elias-Perciful	Hon. Michael Schneider
Hon. Angela Ellis	Hon. Tracey Scown
Nathan Ezell	Hon. Ian Spechler
Dr. Monica Faulkner	Vicki Spriggs
Hon. Denise Fortenberry	Hon. Thomas Stuckey
Hon. Richard Garcia	Diane Sumoski
Hon. Delia Gonzales	Janet VanderZanden
Monique Gonzalez	Charlotte Velasco
Hon. Angela Graves-Harrington	Hon. Carlos Villalon
Hon. Yahara L. Gutierrez	Hon. Elizabeth Watkins

Collaborative Council Meeting

The annual Collaborative Council meeting was held on November 9, 2021 on Zoom. Council members shared their upcoming priority areas of focus and initiatives for 2022. Bi-monthly collaborative calls for 2022 commenced on January 12 and took place every other week throughout the year. Bi-monthly collaborative calls invite members of the Collaborative Council, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), Office of Court Administration (OCA), and various stakeholders from across the state to share updates and discuss emerging issues with each other.

Collaborative Council

Mikey Betancourt	Knox Kimberly
Andrew Brown	Brian Klas
Dania Carter	Norman Ladd
Irene Clements	Dr. Tracy Levins
Sarah Crockett	Stephanie Madrigal
Teal De La Garza	Gabriella McDonald
De Shaun Ealoms	Dr. Jill McLeigh
Barbara Elias-Perciful	Kate Murphy
Mike Foster	Judy Powell
Will Francis	Mary Christine Reed
Fedora Galasso	Tanya Rollins
Dr. Linda Garcia	Danielle Schaefer
Barbra Grimmer	Johana Scot
Sandra Hachem	Andrea Sparks
Julia Hatcher	Theresa Thomas
Félix Herrera	Kenneth Thompson
Tina Hosaka	Ruth Thornton
Kerrie Judice	Justin Wood
Bruce Kendrick	

Grants

Each fiscal year, the Children's Commission solicits project proposals for grant funding from non-profit organizations, community service organizations, other Texas agencies, and counties that align with one or more of the Commission's five strategic goals and aim to improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of children.

In FY2022, the Children's Commission awarded a total of \$798,138 in grant funding to provide judicial training, conduct research and data analysis, support and produce resources to increase the understanding of the child welfare legal process, and improve the efficiency of court hearings. Additional information about each of the projects completed with Commission grant funding is included throughout this report.

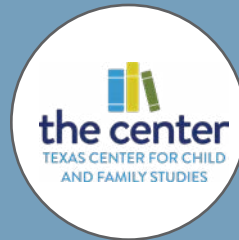
Fiscal Year 2022 Grantees



Office of Court
Administration (OCA)
\$316,386



Texas Court Appointed
Special Advocates (CASA)
\$25,000



Texas Center of Child and
Family Studies (The Center)
\$109,269



Texas Center for
the Judiciary (TCJ)
\$135,418



Texas Legal Services
Center (TLSC)
\$160,000



Texas Network of
Youth Services (TNOYS)
\$52,064



*Senior Jurist in Residence
Judge Rob Hofmann
452nd District Court*



*Jurist in Residence
Judge Piper McCraw
469th District Court*

Jurists In Residence

The Jurists in Residence (JIRs) develop relationships with retired and sitting judges, and act as consultants, trainers, and speakers to provide expert and seasoned judicial advice on child welfare matters affecting courts and the legal system. Judge Rob Hofmann of the 452nd District Court in Mason County serves as Senior Jurist in Residence and Judge Piper McCraw of the 469th District Court in Collin County serves as Jurist in Residence. Both JIRs participated in multiple Children's Commission meetings regarding Emergency Orders issued by the Supreme Court of Texas, proposed legislation, policy and rules, Community Based Care, prevention and early intervention, placement capacity, and other issues.

Between October 1, 2021 and September 30, 2022, a few examples of JIR activities include:

- Facilitated the Children's Commission Senate Bill 1575 Workgroup
- Attended the Public Private Partnership meetings
- Attended the Rural Justice Collaborative Advisory Council meetings
- Presented at, facilitated, and attended the Children's Commission Child Welfare Judges Conference
- Continued work as board member for National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and attended their Board meetings
- Presented at and attended the Texas Center for the Judiciary Family Justice Conference
- Presented at and served as faculty for the Children's Commission Reasonable Efforts Judicial Academy
- Chaired the Systems Improvement Committee meetings
- Chaired the Training Committee meetings
- Presented at, facilitated, and served as faculty in the Children's Commission Trial Skills Training
- Facilitated and attended the Children's Commission Forensic Assessment Center Network Round Table
- Participated in stakeholder collaborative calls



Children's Commission Legal Representation Director Dylan Moench testifies at the Texas Senate Special Committee on Child Protective Services hearing.

Children's Commission External Presentations

In FY2022, the Children's Commission staff gave the following presentations:

- Texas Municipal Courts Education Center, Webcast, "Identifying Abuse," October 7, 2021
- Travis County Court Appointed Family Advocates, "Child Welfare Legislative Update," October 22, 2021
- Texas Alliance of Child & Family Services, Child Care Administrators Conference, "Texas Permanency Outcomes Project (TXPOP): Putting Children and Families at the Center of Decision-Making," November 8, 2021
- Texas Center for the Judiciary, Family Justice Conference, "Child Welfare Legislative Update," January 13, 2022
- Kerrville Ad Litem Seminar, "Child Welfare Legislative Update," February 24, 2022
- Denton County Bar CPS Ad Litem Seminar, "Child Welfare Legislative Update," March 4, 2022
- Texas Senate Special Committee on Child Protective Services, Invited Testimony, May 16, 2022
- Texas Municipal Courts Education Center, Juvenile Case Manager Conference, "Practical Tools to Identify Abuse & Neglect," June 8, 2022
- Iowa Judicial Academy, "Reasonable Efforts," September 22, 2022



Judges participating in breakout discussion.



Office of Court Administration

Visiting Judge Support

The Texas Family Code authorizes presiding judges of the administrative judicial regions to appoint associate judges with expertise related to child abuse and neglect to preside in child welfare cases.

In FY2022, over 180 child welfare cases were heard by visiting associate judges contracted with OCA to sit by assignment when active Child Protection Court (CPC) associate judges were absent from the bench for reasons that are enumerated in statute. Without funding for visiting associate judges to provide docket coverage, these cases would have been reset until the sitting associate judge was available, resulting in case processing delay. The grant funds allowed for coverage by judges who have extensive knowledge of CPS proceedings and statutory timelines and a clear understanding of the complexity of such cases, thus promoting timely permanency.

Resource Letters for Judges and Attorneys Handling Child Welfare Cases

The Children’s Commission regularly publishes resource letters for judges and attorneys about emerging, relevant, and changing policy, laws, practice, and training opportunities that are of interest to judges, attorneys, and stakeholders handling child welfare cases. The Children’s Commission’s distribution list for the resource letters has grown to more than 4,000 Texas attorneys, judges, court staff, and stakeholders.

Between October 1, 2021 and September 30, 2022, a few examples of resource letter topics include:

- Preserving Family Connections through Kinship Care
- October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- Trial Skills Training Opportunity
- New Publications: Attorney Ad Litem Coloring Book and Updated Child Protection Law Bench Book
- Spotlight on Adoption in November
- November is Native American Heritage Month
- New Publication: Dual Status Task Force Final Report
- Spotlight on Child Sexual Exploitation in January
- Normalcy Matters: A Guide to Supporting Children & Youth in Texas Foster Care
- TBLS Now Accepting Applications for Board Certification in Child Welfare Law for 2022; Update on CWLS Certification
- April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month
- New Education Resources: Updated Foster Care and Student Success Guide and New Top 10 “Things to Know” Lists
- Now Available: 2022 Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Child Welfare Cases
- May is National Foster Care Month
- Scholarship Opportunities for Child Welfare Judges and Attorneys to Summer Conferences
- June is National Reunification Month
- Extra Pandemic Funds Available until August 31, 2022 for Current and Aged Out Foster Youth
- Resources for the 2022-2023 School Year
- Enhancing the Experience of Children & Youth in Court: How Judges and Attorneys Can Prepare and Support Youth Attending Court
- The Importance of Kinship Care
- Effective Now: Changes to Policy 2400 of the Child Protective Services Handbook

Systems Improvement



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THE SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE FOCUSES ON EXECUTING INNOVATIVE PROJECTS AIMED AT ENSURING EQUITY, FAIRNESS, AND JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES, PROMOTING JUDICIAL LEADERSHIP IN COURTS AND COMMUNITIES, AND EXPANDING COURT AND CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM CAPACITY TO SUPPORT CONTINUOUS, SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT.

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Round Table Discussion on Children's Mental Health

On June 24, 2022, the Children's Commission and the Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health (JCMH) held the first joint commission Round Table Discussion on Current Issues in Children's Mental Health. Leadership from both commissions participated in the discussion, including Supreme Court of Texas Justice Debra Lehrmann, Chair of the Children's Commission; Texas Court of Criminal Appeals Judge Barbara Hervey, Co-Chair of the Judicial Commission on Mental Health; and Supreme Court of Texas Justice Rebeca Huddle, Deputy Chair of the Children's Commission and Deputy Liaison to the Judicial Commission on Mental Health. Invited guests included young adults and parents with lived experience; judges hearing both juvenile and child welfare cases; leaders from state agencies (DFPS, Health and Human Services Commission, and the Texas Juvenile Justice Department [TJJD]); as well as attorneys, service providers, and advocates.

The Round Table discussion centered on children experiencing a mental health crisis, including increased numbers of children without placement in foster care and commitments to TJJD due to unmet mental health needs. Participants discussed gaps for systems-involved children and youth, current initiatives to fill those gaps, and recommendations for short- and long-term solutions. A [Round Table Report on Current Issues in Children's Mental Health](#) was released on September 30, 2022 outlining the discussion held during the Round Table and recommendations developed by participants. The recommendations generated fall into the following categories: Expanding Awareness, Training and Tools, Systems Collaboration, and Access to Services.

Pictured:

Top: JCMH JIR Judge John J. Specia, Jr. (ret.) moderated the Round Table discussion.

Middle: JCMH Executive Director Kristi Taylor, Deputy Chair of the Children's Commission and Deputy Liaison to the Judicial Commission on Mental Health Justice Rebeca Huddle, Children's Commission Executive Director Jamie Bernstein.

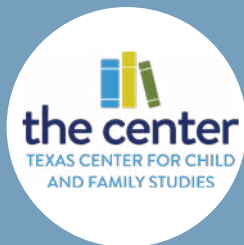
Bottom: Round Table participants.



Statewide Collaborative On Trauma-Informed Care

In FY2022, the Children’s Commission partnered with the Center to support implementation of trauma-informed court practices at several project court sites, referred to as the Trauma-Informed Court Project. The Trauma-Informed Court Project worked throughout the year with six court sites; these were led by Judge Carol Chaney (Waller County Court at Law); Judge Linda Dunson (309th Family District Court); Judge Angela Graves-Harrington (246th Family District Court); Judge Rhonda Hunter (303rd Family District Court); Judge Andrea James (2nd Region Child Protection Court No. 2); and Judge Cheryl Vaughan (Child Protection Court Eighth Region North). Each project site judge selected a core team to support the court’s project. In collaboration with the project support team, each team selected a specific project to implement trauma-informed practices such as implementing phased services plans, building collaboration and shared learning through community trainings, and addressing courthouse environment by creating improved guidance for parents and children about the court and child welfare case processes.

An initial cohort convening was held in Spring 2022 providing an opportunity for team members to receive training on trauma and trauma-informed concepts and begin the team planning process. The project planning team hosted a second cohort convening on September 23, 2022. The convening provided the opportunity for each court team to share progress on their selected projects. The Trauma-Informed Court Project will continue for a second year to further support the court sites as they implement their projects, collect data, and expand a trauma-informed court approach to their court process and community.



Texas Center for Child and Family Studies

Trauma-informed Courts

This project was designed as a partnership between the Children’s Commission and the Center to support the implementation of trauma-informed and trauma-responsive practices that promote child and family felt safety within the Texas court system. Ultimately, the goal of the project is to support improved permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families. Project goals included supporting development and implementation of customized trauma-informed court projects, facilitating shared learning by convening the cohort of court teams, and documenting implementation successes and challenges to build a body of information that can be used to expand trauma-informed and trauma-responsive court practices across the state.

Normalcy

In partnership with the Children’s Commission, Texas CASA released [*Normalcy Matters: A Guide to Supporting Children & Youth in Texas Foster Care*](#) on February 2, 2022. The guide and companion video were developed to provide education about normalcy, including the importance of normalcy and how judges, attorneys, stakeholders, and others can support normalcy for children and youth who experience the Texas child welfare system.



Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates Videos on Roles in a Child Welfare Case

Texas CASA is developing a set of materials to explain the different legal roles in a child welfare case. These will include: the Judge, Attorney ad Litem, CASA/ GAL, Parent’s Attorney, and DFPS Attorney. These roles will be described in both written materials and videos in English and in Spanish. These materials were drafted in FY2022 and will be available in FY2023.

Equity Workgroup

In FY2022, the Equity Workgroup, chaired by the Commission’s Equity Advisor Sheila Craig, adopted a mission statement to direct its work. In January 2022, a Texas team, including Sheila Craig, Judge Aurora Martinez Jones of the 126th District Court, OCA Specialty and Children’s Courts Program Manager Anissa Johnson, OCA Senior Data Analyst Jeff Cox, and Commission Staff Attorney Jocelyn Fowler, was accepted into the CBCC’s Race Equity Workshop series. The Texas team attended all meetings which provided overviews on reviewing disproportionality and disparity data and opportunities for state teams to share ideas. The Equity Workgroup partnered with the newly expanded DFPS Office Addressing Disproportionality and Disparities and focused on strengthening collaboration among all stakeholders. Additionally, during FY2022, Equity Workgroup members remained actively engaged in the Casey Family Programs Race Equity Collaborative.

Judicial Workgroup on Capacity

In response to the growing numbers of children without placement (often referred to as CWOP), the Commission initiated a Judicial Workgroup on Capacity. Beginning in June 2021, the workgroup meets on a regular basis to provide a forum for judges from jurisdictions throughout the state to brainstorm effective approaches to identifying placement options for children without placement. In the long term, this group may provide a forum to discuss how judges can appropriately participate in developing foster care capacity in their communities. Although the workgroup did not meet between July and August, bi-monthly meetings resumed in September 2022.



Child Abuse Prevention Proclamation Ceremony at the Texas Capitol, L-R: Gail Gonzalez (Operations Support Manager, DFPS), Jamie Bernstein (Executive Director, Children's Commission), Sarah Abrahams (Deputy Associate Commissioner, DFPS PEI), Sarah Crockett (Director of Public Policy, Texas CASA), Jaime Masters (Commissioner, DFPS), Dr. Linda Garcia (Senior Vice-President, 2INgage), Andrea Sparks (Director Public Relations, Buckner International)

Prevention and Early Intervention

During FY2022, DFPS' Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) division, OCA, and the Children's Commission launched an Early Intervention Court Liaison pilot in Galveston, Bell, and Lubbock Counties. The Court Liaisons act as special assistants to the court, serve to identify and connect early childhood and family support programs to the local CPCs and community, and offer a judicial perspective within community stakeholder meetings.

The Commission supported implementation of House Bill 3041 (87th Regular Legislative Session) which requires DFPS to provide family focused preservation services to children and families where children are at imminent risk of being removed from their home and placed in conservatorship due to a continuing danger. The Family Preservation Services pilots will operate under direct court supervision and DFPS is directed to utilize federal Title IV-E funds for services. The Commission participated in Steering Committee meetings with DFPS and convened judges in the pilot areas to discuss the legal framework and implementation.

Commission staff participated in PEI's Prevention Framework Workgroup which is comprised of statewide stakeholders with a goal of developing a prevention framework to guide communities throughout Texas.

Kinship Issues

On December 6, 2021, the Children's Commission attended a Kinship Care Convening that was hosted by Casey Family Programs and included DFPS leadership and staff as well as the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services. At the convening, experts from Florida provided an overview of how that state developed a successful kinship care program. As a direct outgrowth from the Convening, Commission staff participated in a Kinship Steering Committee as well as two related workgroups, Kin as First and Best Out of Home Placement and Supporting Kinship Placements.

Foster Care and Education

During FY2022, the Children’s Commission, in partnership with DFPS, Texas Education Agency (TEA), and several other agencies and organizations, released a *Top 10 Things to Know* series to address the educational needs of students in foster care who are placed in RTCs. This series was created by subject matter experts in foster care and education. There were three lists in the series: one for [providers](#), one for [educators](#), and one for [legal professionals](#) – each developed to raise awareness and provide a basic introduction to the educational considerations for each intended audience. Each list included a high-level quick reference sheet as well as a more detailed explanation with additional information.

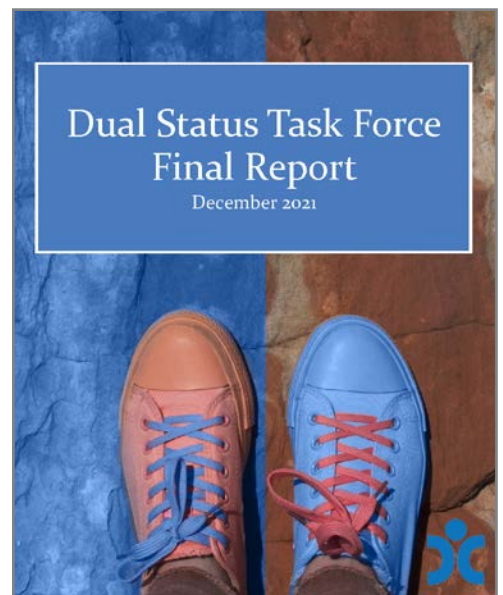
Additionally, TEA, in collaboration with DFPS and the Children’s Commission, updated the [Foster Care & Student Success Resource Guide](#). The 2022 version of the guide contained updated resources and materials and included new chapters on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Trauma-Informed Education. This updated guide is a resource tool for use by educators, child welfare stakeholders, and the legal community.

The Foster Care & Education Committee also continued developing projects for the workgroups in the following priority areas: caregiver supports; data and information sharing; and ESSA.

Dual Status Task Force

The [Dual Status Task Force Final Report](#) was released in December 2021 and captured recommendations that were formulated over an eighteen-month time period, beginning in July 2019. The report contains various recommendations for agency coordination, data, definitions, legal representation and advocacy, judicial practices, and training that highlight the unique needs of this population of youth.

The Child Protection Court dual status pilot is underway in the Child Protection Court of the Rio Grande Valley West, the Child Protection Court of Taylor County, and the Child Protection Court of the Hill Country. Researchers at the University of Texas at San Antonio distributed a survey in April 2022 to the participating stakeholders to assess the impact of the dual status initiative in each jurisdiction.

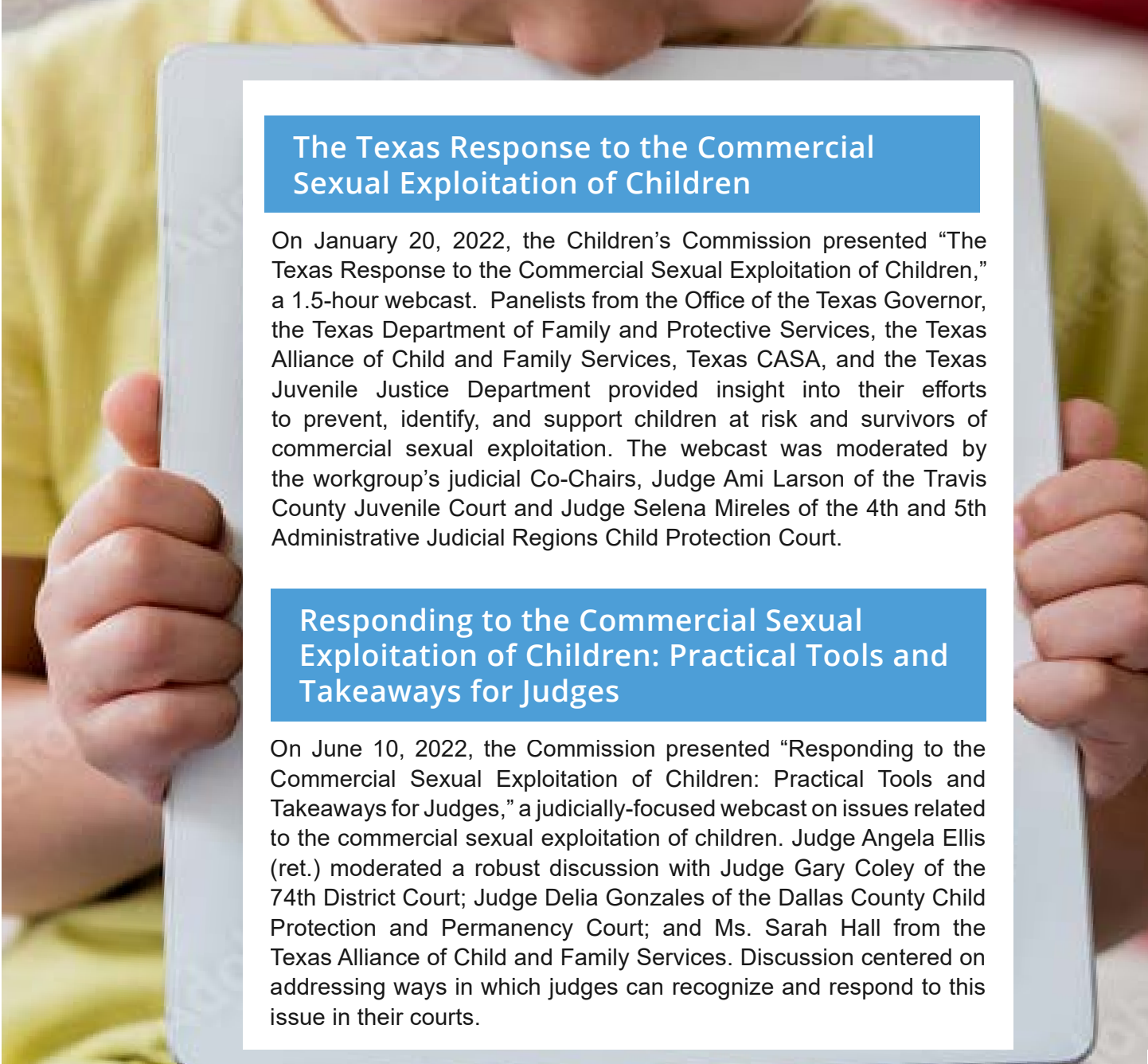


Tribal/State Collaboration

The Commission remains committed to strengthening Tribal-State partnerships and collaborating with Tribal partners to educate about the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). Commission staff participate in the ICWA Constituency Group monthly calls organized by the Capacity Building Center for Courts (CBCC). Additionally, Commission staff meet regularly with the Tribal liaison from DFPS State Office and Tribal partners, including building connections with ICWA Tribal liaisons from Tribes based outside Texas.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Judicial Workgroup

In FY2022, the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Judicial Workgroup focused on developing training opportunities for child welfare professionals and the legal community to educate and spread awareness on the identification, treatment efforts, and recovery process for children exposed to commercial sexual exploitation and the child welfare system.

A child in a yellow shirt is holding a tablet. The tablet screen displays two sections of text. The top section has a blue header with white text: "The Texas Response to the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children". Below this is a paragraph of black text. The bottom section also has a blue header with white text: "Responding to the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Practical Tools and Takeaways for Judges". Below this is another paragraph of black text.

The Texas Response to the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

On January 20, 2022, the Children’s Commission presented “The Texas Response to the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children,” a 1.5-hour webcast. Panelists from the Office of the Texas Governor, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services, Texas CASA, and the Texas Juvenile Justice Department provided insight into their efforts to prevent, identify, and support children at risk and survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. The webcast was moderated by the workgroup’s judicial Co-Chairs, Judge Ami Larson of the Travis County Juvenile Court and Judge Selena Mireles of the 4th and 5th Administrative Judicial Regions Child Protection Court.

Responding to the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Practical Tools and Takeaways for Judges

On June 10, 2022, the Commission presented “Responding to the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: Practical Tools and Takeaways for Judges,” a judicially-focused webcast on issues related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Judge Angela Ellis (ret.) moderated a robust discussion with Judge Gary Coley of the 74th District Court; Judge Delia Gonzales of the Dallas County Child Protection and Permanency Court; and Ms. Sarah Hall from the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services. Discussion centered on addressing ways in which judges can recognize and respond to this issue in their courts.

Senate Bill 1575: Residential Treatment Centers and Qualified Residential Treatment Programs

The Children’s Commission partnered with DFPS to develop a plan for implementation of Senate Bill (SB) 1575, including the creation of a workgroup to examine the oversight of and best practices related to residential treatment center (RTC) placements, including placements in qualified residential treatment programs (QRTPs). The workgroup charge was to consider topics and changes to current practices to ensure the appropriate use of and to improve the transition into and out of RTC placements, including:

- statutorily required judicial review of RTC placements;
- fiscal implications of additional judicial review for RTC placements;
- methods for improving the state’s practices regarding the duration of RTC placements, including best practices for transition planning and involving family and other relevant participants in preparing the child for a subsequent placement;
- proposed statutory changes regarding appropriate judicial findings, evidence required to be submitted by DFPS, and recommendations for information to be gathered from the child’s attorney or guardian ad litem; and
- model court orders determined to be appropriate for the legal requirements for a particular placement.

The Senate Bill 1575 Workgroup met for a total of four times over a twelve-month period. The workgroup decided to organize its work into two subgroups: RTC Best Practices and Legal. The subgroup met on a monthly basis beginning in November 2021. On September 30, 2022, the Children’s Commission submitted the [Senate Bill 1575 Report](#) to the Legislature.

Senate Bill 1578: Forensic Assessment Center Network

Over 15 years ago, DFPS established the Forensic Assessment Center Network (FACN) to allow for specialized pediatricians to be available for consultation on cases of suspected child abuse and neglect. During the 87th Texas Regular Legislative Session, SB 1578 added Texas Family Code § 261.3017 which required DFPS and the Children’s Commission to evaluate DFPS’ use of the network and develop joint recommendations for improvement.

On April 4, 2022, the Children’s Commission offered a “Listening Session” for parents to share their experiences and concerns about DFPS’ use of the FACN. The purpose of the Listening Session was to create a parent-driven discussion to elicit suggestions to improve the communication and process between the FACN, DFPS, and families. On April 11, 2022, the Commission hosted a Round Table on the Use of the FACN moderated by Senior JIR Judge Rob Hofmann. The five-hour discussion attended by forty-five participants included representatives from DFPS, parent advocates, Child Abuse Pediatricians, other pediatric specialists, parents with experience with the FACN, judges, and attorneys who represent parents, children, or DFPS. The Commission worked closely with DFPS to complete a [Forensic Assessment Center Network Report](#) outlining recommendations to the Legislature on September 1, 2022.

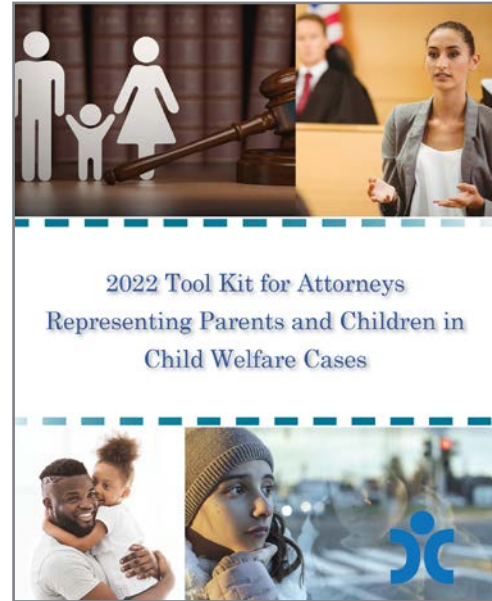
Legal Practice & Process



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THE LEGAL PRACTICE & PROCESS COMMITTEE FOCUSES ON
ASSISTING TRIAL AND APPELLATE COURTS, JUDGES, AND
LEGAL ADVOCATES TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN, YOUTH,
AND FAMILIES INVOLVED WITH CHILD WELFARE EXPERIENCE
A LEGAL SYSTEM IN WHICH THEY HAVE ACCESS TO JUSTICE
AND THEIR RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED.
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2022 Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Child Welfare Cases

The [*2022 Tool Kit for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Child Welfare Cases*](#) was completed in March 2022. Printed copies of the tool kit were made available at the State Bar of Texas Child Protection Law Section Advanced Child Protection Law Course; the Special Education, Child Welfare, and the Juvenile Justice System Course; the Texas Family Defenders Association CLE; and the State Bar of Texas Advanced Family Law Course's Child Abuse & Neglect Workshop. All 500 printed copies of the tool kit were distributed in FY2022. The tool kit is also available for free on the Children's Commission website and on the LawBox app.



McLennan County Parent Advocacy Program

On February 23, 2022, the Parent Advocacy Program was launched in McLennan County with support from Casey Family Programs and the Children's Commission with the goal of keeping families together and preventing children from entering into foster care. The program aims to help families understand the legal process, their rights, and how the child welfare system works in addition to connecting them with services in their community. The program addresses issues like custody, paternity, housing, and benefits; application to the program is available to any parent with an open CPS investigation.



Office of Court Administration

Virtual Court Equipment Update

The Children's Commission provided funding to update the technology used in the courtroom to conduct virtual/hybrid hearings for pilots in six CPCs. The six courts were selected by the Commission and OCA based on results of a survey of the CPCs about their current and anticipated use of virtual/hybrid hearings. While no two courtrooms are the same, the Program Manager at OCA worked with each court individually to determine the equipment needed. In general, this equipment included a motion sensing conference camera, improved courtroom display, microphones, and speakers.

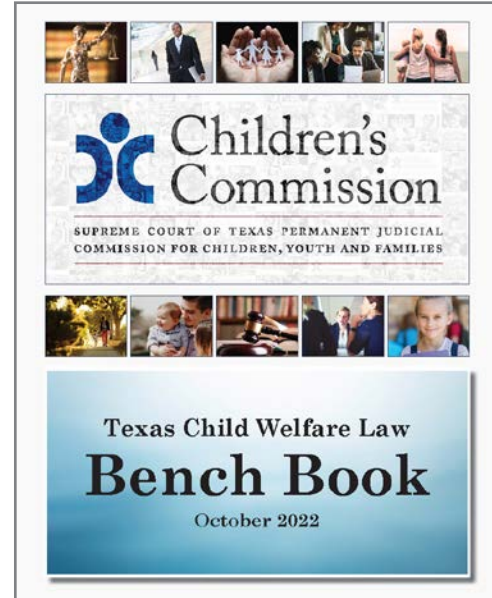
Coloring Book

The Children's Commission Legal Representation Committee created a Coloring Book designed to help children ages 6-12 understand the role of an attorney ad litem for a child and the attorney-client relationship. [*Sam and the Search for Spots- How Your Layer Can Help You*](#) was developed by a workgroup comprised of board-certified child welfare law experts and youth formerly in foster care. The goal of the coloring book is to facilitate discussion and understanding between children, caregivers, and attorneys about what differentiates an attorney from other people in the child's case and how the attorney can help the child client. The book is available as a free download on the Children's Commission website in both English and Spanish.



Texas Child Protection Law Bench Book

The [Texas Child Welfare Law Bench Book](#) was revised in October 2021 to include updates throughout from the 87th Regular Legislative Session and new chapters on FFPSA and domestic violence. Additionally, a new Bench Card on remote hearings was created. The online version of the Texas Child Welfare Law Bench Book is available as a free, downloadable PDF for print and also as an interactive resource through the LawBox app.

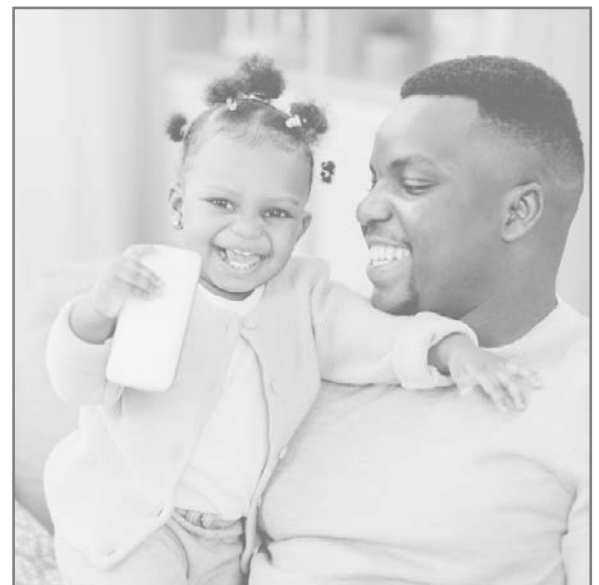


Texas Board of Legal Specialization Child Welfare Board Certification Exam

The 2021 Child Welfare Board Certification Exam was administered by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization on October 19, 2021. Nineteen attorneys sat for the exam and 7 passed the exam to become board certified. The Children's Commission continues to reimburse exam fees upon request for attorneys who pass the exam and become certified as detailed on the Commission's website.

Fathers' Rights Pamphlet

The Children's Commission Legal Representation Committee completed a resource pamphlet entitled [Fathers' Rights in CPS Cases: What You Need to Know](#). Modeled after the Commission's [What Does a Parent's Attorney Do?](#) pamphlet, the resource uses accessible language to inform fathers of their basic rights in child welfare legal proceedings and explains the different legal statuses for fathers. The pamphlet is available for PDF download on the Commission website.





Texas Legal Services Center

Family Helpline

With Children’s Commission funding, the Family Helpline fills the niche of providing legal information regarding child welfare to parents and families who do not have access to court-appointed attorneys, and where free or affordable legal representation is not readily available.

In FY2022, calls to the Helpline included questions about DFPS cases (closed and active) as well as questions about child safety that did not yet involve Child Protective Services (CPS). The Family Helpline discussed 101 different legal issues with callers over the course of the year. The top trending issues discussed were Child Protective Investigations, conservatorship, parent visitation, neglect, modifications, Safety Plans/ Parent Child Safety Placements, substance use and abuse, CPS closed case issues, hiring legal counsel, child’s best interests, reporting abuse/neglect, and domestic violence.

This year, the Family Helpline completed a total of 1,702 calls, providing legal information that affected 1,816 adults and 2,841 children. Of those calls, 1,415 were from first-time callers, and 287 were from repeat callers who had follow up questions. The calls originated from 146 different counties in Texas, as well as out of state callers with a question about Texas law. Approximately 55% of callers had an open CPS case; the largest case type was Investigations, making up 50% of open CPS cases, followed by (in descending order) Temporary Managing Conservatorship, Family Based Safety Services, unknown stage, PMC, Court Ordered Services, and Alternative Response. Approximately 27% of callers had questions about a closed CPS case, and 17% of callers had questions about preventing child abuse or neglect.

Mediation

The Mediation Workgroup participated in a discussion with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to help identify points of interest for data collection on mediation in the second phase of the NCSC's study of virtual court practices. Several members of the workgroup volunteered to participate in the second phase of the study, which will begin data collection in December 2022. The workgroup provided additional feedback on the final proposed mediation survey created by NCSC and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) language necessary for participation in the study.



Texas Network of Youth Services

Young Adult Leadership Council

With FY2022 Commission grant funding, Texas Network of Youth Services onboarded a new Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) cohort of 12 young people. YALC members attended two trainings where they learned how to facilitate and plan listening session activities. They conducted three planning sessions where they contributed to the creation of listening session questions that were comprised of five themes to discuss the changes that can be made in the court system. These sessions provided the YALC members with the knowledge and confidence necessary to carry out the Listening Sessions in preparation for the Commission Video Project. Additionally, YALC members provided feedback to the Commission's Tool Kit Committee for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Child Welfare Cases to revamp sections of the tool kit to make them more youth-informed and specific to the needs of youth and young adults in the foster care system. This input is expected to have measurable impacts on the youth in Texas who are in care and the attorneys who serve them.

Through this grant, YALC members also had the opportunity to partner with several organizations through external speaking engagements, including the University of Texas School of Law Children's Rights Clinic and the State Bar of Texas Child Protection Law Section.

Training



.....
THE TRAINING COMMITTEE FOCUSES ON OVERSEEING AND
DEVELOPING JUDICIAL AND LEGAL TRAINING EFFORTS AT
ALL LEVELS OF PRACTICE THAT IDENTIFY AND PROMOTE
BEST PRACTICES TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES AND ESTABLISH
AND MAINTAIN A WELL-INFORMED JUDICIARY AND BAR.
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Texas Center for the Judiciary

Child Welfare Judges Conference

The Children’s Commission partnered with TCJ to host the 2021 Child Welfare Judges Conference on October 25-27, 2021. The conference was presented virtually and included an optional half-day pre-conference training entitled “Judicial Impact on Well-being Issues for Children in Care.” This pre-conference was designed primarily for judges who were on the bench less than a year and general jurisdiction judges but was open to all conference attendees. Additionally, the Commission planned a child welfare track at TCJ’s 2022 Family Justice Conference. Finally, TCJ and the Commission began the planning process for the 2022 Child Welfare Judges Conference.

Child Welfare Judges Conference

The Child Welfare Judges Conference (CWJC) is the Commission’s largest annual judicial training and is hosted in partnership with TCJ. The conference was held virtually on October 25- 27, 2021 through TCJ’s online platform.

The 2021 CWJC included a pre-conference which focused on essentials of child welfare cases. Two judicial panels provided a “Legal Overview from Prevention Services through Final Orders and Beyond.” Legal nuts and bolts were addressed as well as the importance of being trauma-informed, viewing families through an equity lens, including youth and family voice, making individualized reasonable efforts determinations, and being data-informed.

Other topics on the conference agenda included those designed with and presented by DFPS staff: a DFPS leadership panel, updates on the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), and a presentation on statewide data. The data were presented by the DFPS Director of Data and Systems Improvement, and they focused on removals, experience in care (including children without placement), and achievement of permanency. During regional breakouts, judges convened with DFPS Regional Directors, DFPS Regional Systems Improvement Specialists, and Single Source Continuum Contractor representatives in regions which have community based care. The conference also included a panel on “Learning from Older Youth” and a panel on “Addressing Kinship Issues,” both of which included perspectives from individuals with lived experience.

The 2021 CWJC featured 40 speakers, including several interactive panels. The virtual conference was attended live by 132 judges and was archived on TCJ’s website for a year following the date of the event.

Family Justice Conference

The annual Family Justice Conference was held on January 13-14, 2022, and Commission partnered with TCJ to provide three speakers for an afternoon breakout track on child welfare-related CLE. This year, the Commission created presentations for each of the topics that were requested by TCJ's Curriculum Committee:

- “Trauma Informed Courts” (presented by Judge Rosie Alvarado of the 438th Civil District Court in Bexar County);
- “CPS for the non-CPS Judge” (presented by Senior JIR Rob Hofmann); and
- “Child Welfare Legislative Update” (presented by Children’s Commission Executive Director Jamie Bernstein).

A total of 106 attendees participated across all three child welfare breakout sessions. The audience was primarily comprised of general jurisdiction judges, many of whom practice family law and hear child welfare cases at least occasionally.

State Bar of Texas Taping with TexasBarCLE

In partnership with the Commission, TexasBarCLE presented a live, one-hour webcast entitled “Building Better Youth Outcomes: The Importance of Being Trauma Informed” on March 10, 2022. Chief Justice Darlene Byrne of the 3rd Court of Appeals reviewed the new trauma-informed training requirements added for attorneys ad litem in Texas Family Code § 107.004 during the 87th Regular Legislative Session. This course is available on the TexasBarCLE Online Classroom and was approved for 1 hour of CLE credit and 1 hour of ethics credit.

Prior webcasts produced by the Commission in partnership with TexasBarCLE are archived and available at the same discounted rates provided for the live webcasts in the Child Welfare Practice Area of the TexasBarCLE’s Online Classroom.



Senior JIR Judge Rob Hofmann

Reasonable Efforts Judicial Academy

On January 27-28, 2022 the Commission facilitated a virtual statewide judicial training in partnership with the national CBCC referred to as the Reasonable Efforts Judicial Academy. The curriculum contained federal and state black letter law on reasonable efforts as well as a presentation by Senior JIR Judge Rob Hofmann on “The Art of Making Reasonable Efforts Findings.” The academy offered many opportunities for discussion and four simulations where judges practiced making reasonable efforts rulings in different fact patterns representing various stages of a child welfare case. Commission staff presented or played roles in the simulations, along with several members of the Texas judiciary who were previously trained by the CBCC. Twenty-two judges from across the state participated, including 16 CPC associate judges.

Scholarships

The Children's Commission administers various judicial and attorney scholarship opportunities throughout the fiscal year. For all scholarships, the Children's Commission determines scholarship criteria and deploys an application process that includes pre- and post-conference evaluations to identify the knowledge gained and new or updated practices which attendees plan to implement. The surveys also inquire about topics of interest to inform planning for future trainings. All attorney applicants must represent DFPS or take appointments on a child welfare docket, be in good standing with the State Bar of Texas and with their primary judge, and commit to completing a post-event survey from the Commission. A total of \$72,500 was allocated for scholarship recipients.

**American Bar
Association
2022 National
Conference
\$12,500**

The American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law hosted the Access to Justice for Children and Families Conference on April 5-6, 2022 and the National Parent Representation Conference on April 7-8, 2022 in Tyson's Corner, Virginia. The Commission awarded scholarships to 10 attorneys across the state in the form of reimbursement of up to \$1,250 for the conference registration fee and eligible conference-related travel expenses to attend one of the conferences.

**Advanced Child
Protection Law
Conference
\$10,000**

The Commission offered registration scholarships for attorneys to attend the 4th Annual Advanced Child Protection Law Course, hosted by TexasBarCLE and the Child Protection Law Section of the State Bar of Texas on March 24-25, 2022 in Houston, Texas and via webcast replay on April 26-27, 2022. The Commission allocated \$10,000 to cover registration costs to attend and awarded 47 scholarships total: 18 to attend the live event in Houston and 29 to view the webcast replay.

**National
Association of
Counsel for
Children Annual
Conference
\$10,000**

The National Association of Counsel for Children's 45th National Child Welfare Law Conference was held in a dual-format this year: in-person on August 22-24, 2022 in Baltimore, Maryland and virtually on September 21-23, 2022. The Commission allocated \$10,000 to provide scholarships to Texas judges and attorneys to attend the annual conference in Baltimore. Seven scholarships were awarded to cover registration costs and assist with conference-related travel expenses.



National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Conferences

\$27,500

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges 85th Annual Conference took place on July 17-20, 2022 in Reno, Nevada. The Commission awarded 13 scholarships to Texas judges handling civil child welfare cases in the amount of \$2,100 each to cover registration and eligible travel-related expenses.

Advanced Family Law Child Abuse and Neglect Workshop

\$10,000

This year's Child Abuse and Neglect one-day Workshop was held on August 10, 2022 in San Antonio, Texas. The Commission allocated \$10,000 and offered registration scholarships at \$100 each for 100 attorneys to attend the live one-day workshop or for any of the subsequent replays. Eighty-one scholarships were awarded in total: 38 to the live event in San Antonio; 38 to the virtual webcast replay; 2 to the Dallas video replay; 2 to the Houston video replay; and 1 to the South Padre video replay.

Texas District and County Attorney Association Training

\$2,500

During FY2022, the Commission awarded 9 reimbursement scholarships for new attorneys currently representing DFPS to attend Texas District and County Attorney Association's "Fundamentals of Child Welfare Law" online course. Produced in partnership with the Commission, the six-part online course was designed for less-experienced child welfare prosecutors and covers the fundamental skills needed to represent DFPS, from pretrial to final outcomes of a child welfare case.

Webcasts

Child Welfare Case Primer: Statutory Hearings and Current Issues

On March 8, 2022, the Children’s Commission presented “Child Welfare Case Primer: Statutory Hearings and Current Issues.” Senior JIR Rob Hofmann provided a summary of a child welfare case from investigations through various final outcomes. The 75-minute webcast featured a review of statutory requirements, recent legislative changes, and current issues such as dual status youth and placement. Best practices and practical tips for achieving positive permanency for children and engaging families and youth in the court process were also provided. The recorded webcast was approved for 1.25 hours of MCLE and 1.25 hours of Family Violence training credit. The video replay and accompanying PowerPoint presentation are available on the Commission’s website.

Overview of Qualified Residential Treatment Program Legal Requirements

On May 17, 2022, the Children’s Commission presented “Overview of Qualified Residential Treatment Program Legal Requirements.” Executive Director Jamie Bernstein, DFPS QRTP Lead Texas Flowers-Moffett, and DFPS QRTP Specialist Tiffani Tillman provided an overview of the QRTP model, placement process, and required legal findings that must be made for QRTP placements. The 90-minute webcast included a sample case scenario to provide practical tools followed by breakouts for peer discussion and Q&A. The webcast was approved for 1.50 hours of MCLE. The archived video provides 1.0 hour of MCLE, and all related materials are available on the Commission’s website.

Trial Skills Training

The Spring 2022 Trial Skills Training (TST) was presented on March 30, 2022, and April 6-7, 2022, via Zoom. This was the Commission’s third virtual iteration of the training. Nineteen attorneys completed the full three-day, interactive Zoom offering consisting of up to 17.75 hours of MCLE, including 1.25 hours of ethics. Additionally, participants were assigned three pre-recorded lectures in preparation for the training that qualified for 2.5 self-study hours of MCLE.

The Fall 2022 TST was presented on August 24, 2022 via Zoom and on August 31-September 1, 2022 in person in San Marcos. This was the Commission’s 14th iteration of Trial Skills Training and the first iteration of the training which incorporated both virtual and in-person components. Twenty-one attorneys completed the full three-day intensive offering which consisted of 17.75 hours of MCLE, including 1.50 hours of ethics. Two optional bonus pre-recorded lectures entitled “How to Create a CPS Trial Notebook” and “Basics for Jury Selection” qualified for up to the allotted annual 3.0 hours of self-study MCLE credit.

Data



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THE DATA COMMITTEE FOCUSES ON OPERATIONALIZING
DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING THROUGH CONTINUOUS
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND AN ANALYSIS OF PUBLICLY
AVAILABLE CHILD WELFARE AND COURT DATA TO IDENTIFY
LEGAL PROCESSES AND PRACTICES THAT PRODUCE
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IMPROVEMENT.
.....



Office of Court Administration

Notice & Engagement

The Notice and Engagement tool in CPCMS involves using non-confidential case data to provide email notice to users about upcoming child welfare hearings. The number of Notice and Engagement system users continues to increase. During FY2022, 165 new users signed up through the Notification and Engagement system to receive hearing notifications, bringing the total number of users to 2,075. Hearing notifications were sent for 10,226 hearings with a total of 27,816 notifications sent.

Child Protection Management System

Funded by the Children's Commission and created by the Office of Court Administration, CPCMS is a case management system unique to CPCs. OCA provides project management, programming, and testing services for CPCMS. OCA staffs a CPCMS Advisory Council of CPC judges, OCA staff, and Children's Commission staff to identify and discuss various enhancements and issues.

In FY2022, four software releases were conducted which included fifteen enhancements that improved court efficiency with the planning and scheduling of hearings relating to due process and timeliness, case data management, and functionality used in monitoring and promoting the well-being and positive outcomes of youth in the child welfare system. Additionally, a juvenile justice section was implemented into CPCMS to allow data collection for a pilot of three CPCs hearing juvenile justice cases for dual status youth.

Data Collection and Information Sharing

In FY2022, OCA hired a full-time Senior Data Analyst to conduct research on court data trends in referrals, investigations, and removals from January 2019 to May 2022. The analysis looks at data prior to and after the height of the pandemic which saw a switch to virtual hearings from in-person hearings and the effects of implementation of recent legislative changes to the Texas Family Code.

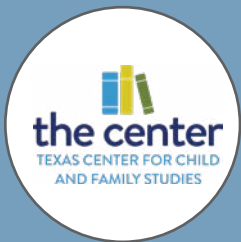
Data used for the study included a high-level statewide overview from all CPCs in Texas, five of which were then selected for an in-depth review of CPC trends using CPCMS data, and supplemental publicly available data from DFPS.

A report documenting the results was completed in September 2022 and will be used to inform best practice recommendations for judges and stakeholders. The Senior Data Analyst will prepare and deliver these suggested best practices to judges and stakeholders to support continuous quality improvement.

CPCMS and IMPACT System Integration

The CPCMS and IMPACT Integration Workgroup identified the need to develop an MOU to share a sample data set to test the data matching criteria to determine whether data sharing and integration between the CPCMS and IMPACT systems could be successful. Negotiations over the MOU were put on pause when DFPS announced an overhaul of its data requests procedure. The overhaul included creating a new web-based, self-managed process for requesting data for research, policy, or custom analysis requests.

After the overhaul was complete and the new web-based procedures were in place, the CPCMS and IMPACT integration workgroup met with DFPS to discuss the appropriate pathway for requesting the data set and identifying the proper data fields necessary to test the matching criteria. It was agreed that the web portal was not the appropriate avenue for requesting the data set and that a Data Use Agreement (DUA) rather than an MOU would be more appropriate. DFPS has submitted a proposed DUA to OCA and it is currently under review. Once both parties have signed the DUA, the data sample can be shared, and the matching criteria can be tested.



Texas Center for Child and Family Studies

Permanent Managing Conservatorship Courts

In FY2022, the Center supported the Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) court project evaluations. The surveys, focus groups, and interviews recommended by the workgroup were conducted in October and early November 2021 and the *Raising the Bar: Examining Court Practices and Wellbeing Among Children and Youth in the Permanent Managing Conservatorship of the State* report was released on December 29, 2021. The report revealed that stakeholders were aligned on how they conceptualize well-being for children and youth in the PMC of DFPS. The report further found that PMC courts currently operating in Texas are using approaches and practices that target the dimensions of well-being articulated by stakeholders. The findings from the study suggest that PMC courts are a promising approach for improving well-being among children in youth in PMC.

Permanent Managing Conservatorship Model Evaluation

The PMC Model Evaluation Workgroup developed a plan to use surveys, focus groups, and interviews to obtain data regarding the PMC Court from the CASA programs in Harris and Dallas Counties and attorneys practicing in the PMC courts in both jurisdictions. Going forward, the workgroup aims to conduct a study that compares two groups: children whose cases were placed on the PMC's court docket upon entering PMC and children whose cases remained in a non-PMC court.



SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS PERMANENT JUDICIAL
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Children's Commission
201 W. 14th Street
Austin, TX 78701
texaschildrenscommission.gov