SAFETY
SAFETY

Child Abuse, Violence, and Instability

Children are a vulnerable population, and sadly, many kids in Texas are not safe even in their own homes. Each year, tens of thousands of young Texans are confirmed to be victims of abuse and neglect; in 2014, there were more confirmed cases of abuse and neglect in Tarrant County than any other jurisdiction in the state.1 This child maltreatment results in long-term negative outcomes for kids and society. Abused children often experience poor academic performance, increased involvement with the criminal justice system, emotional and behavioral problems, and an increased likelihood of abusing others.2

With high caseloads and limited resources, the state’s child welfare program is heavily burdened in responding to allegations, working with families, and providing safe placements to children. Unfortunately, removal from the home does not always guarantee a child’s future well-being, and youth in foster care are repeatedly identified as a particularly vulnerable population. Additionally, older children and children who spend more than 12 to 18 months in foster care are unlikely to achieve a permanent placement.3 Over 1,600 children were living in foster care in Tarrant County in 2014 with total paid foster expenditures exceeding $21 million.4,5

Abuse and violence need not be committed directly against a child in order to have serious consequences. Exposure to violence is a traumatic stressor for children, and research shows that living with domestic violence in conjunction with other adverse childhood experiences is associated with a host of negative health and behavioral outcomes such as depression, alcoholism, and poor physical health.6 Each year, approximately one-third of completed CPS investigations involve an indicator of family violence.7

A variety of other factors and life events can impact a child’s well-being and result in negative outcomes. For example, having a parent in prison is associated with emotional trauma, family instability, and financial hardship.8 Over 150,000 adult men and women were incarcerated at any given time in county and state correctional facilities in Texas in 2014, and over 10,000 of these individuals were convicted in Tarrant County.9 National research estimates that about 75% of incarcerated women are mothers with an average of 2.4 dependent children and approximately 60% of incarcerated men are fathers with an average of 2 dependent children.10 When a parent is incarcerated, their children are often cared for by another parent or family member, but a significant number of children also land in foster care. Mothers are the most common caregiver for the child of an incarcerated father, but grandparents are the most likely caregivers for children of incarcerated mothers.11 Additionally, 1 in 10 incarcerated mothers report that their children are in the care of a foster home or agency.12

Parenting skills, steady employment, adequate housing, access to care, and community support are all protective factors which have the potential to mitigate risks of maltreatment.13 It is crucial for stakeholders to work together to develop clear policies and adequate resources in order to provide children with a safe and stable environment.
### Tarrant County Confirmed Victims of Abuse & Neglect by Race/Ethnicity, 2014

- White: 9%
- Hispanic: 27%
- Black: 30%
- Other: 34%

### Tarrant County Children in the Care of Child Protective Services, 2014

- DFPS Legal Responsibility: 2,104
- Removals: 673
- Substitute Care: 1,992
- Foster Care: 1,661

### 2014 Foster Family Daily Reimbursement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Level</th>
<th>Reimbursed Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>$23.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>$40.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized</td>
<td>$51.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intense</td>
<td>$92.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Average Length of Time in Months for Children Leaving DFPS Custody by Type of Exit, 2014

- Family Reunification
- Relative Care (w/PCA*)
- Relative Care (w/o PCA)
- Adoption (Relative)
- Adoption (Non-Relative)
- Long Term Care (Emancipation)
- Long Term Care (Other)

* The Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) Program provides a monthly subsidy to relatives and fictive kin that take legal custody of children who cannot reunify and for whom adoption has been ruled out.

### Family Violence Incidents Reported by Police Departments in Tarrant County, 2014

- Tarrant County: 12,875
- Fort Worth Police Department: 6,269
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INVEST IN WHAT WORKS

The best prevention starts with aligning resources, coordinating efforts and engineering a safe and healthy environment to strengthen families and communities at risk.

• Training parents and educators to prevent abuse and respond appropriately when children are maltreated;

• Educating first responders and medical providers to identify abused children before serious or fatal abuse takes place;

• Supporting counseling services that provide a continuum of care from prevention to early intervention, with the goal of preserving the family.

AN EXPERT’S PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Wayne Carson, Chief Executive Officer, ACH Child and Family Services

In September 2014 North Texas’ Our Community Our Kids (OCOK) became the first urban Foster Care Redesign in Texas. Redesign is a Texas Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS) initiative to improve foster care through a regional control approach allowing DFPS to manage the contracts with Single Source Continuum Contractors (SSCC) that are responsible for the child-placing agencies within their respective regions. The goals of Foster Care Redesign are to keep children and youth closer to home, connected to their communities and siblings, improve the quality of care and outcomes for children in care, and reduce the number of times children are moved between foster homes.

OCOK has been successful in implementing Redesign.

Eighty-three percent of OCOK children placed in care were within 50 miles of their homes and 79% of children were placed in a family setting compared to the state’s benchmark or 62.5% and 71.5% respectively. Additionally, OCOK has increased the number of foster children they are able to place, streamlined medical services ensuring children have quick access to care, and now provide counseling and rehabilitation services in their homes.

Technology, program innovations, and local partnerships are the key to improving services for children; a regional approach through Redesign makes that possible. OCOK’s work is just a beginning to a clearer path to achieving meaningful change in the foster care system.

Dr. Wayne Carson
Chief Executive Officer
ACH Child and Family Services

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is defined as exploitation of an individual for sexual or labor purposes through the use of force, fraud or coercion. Essentially, human trafficking is the commodification of human beings and is one of the most lucrative criminal industries in the world. The International Labour Organization estimates that this industry accounts for $150 billion in annual profits, $99 billion of those profits stem from commercial sexual exploitation.

Any form of commercial sexual exploitation of a child, regardless of force, fraud or coercion is considered to be sex trafficking and the most vulnerable children in our community are at high risk of becoming victims of this heinous crime.

Even with the growing awareness of domestic minor sex trafficking, reliable data is difficult to come by, and arrest practices, referral processes, and crime reports are difficult to access. The response of state systems to this issue is complicated and policymakers must continue to work toward solutions. Although federal law recognizes children engaged in commercial sex acts as victims of crime, many of these children continue to be apprehended by law enforcement and the justice system remains the primary opportunity for many of these youth to access necessary services.
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KEY INDICATORS AMONG VICTIMS OF CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factors for Child Sex Trafficking</th>
<th>Health Risks Associated with Child Sex Trafficking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Running Away</td>
<td>Physical Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>Sexually Transmitted Infections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dysfunctional Family Environment</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental/Caregiver Substance Abuse</td>
<td>Dental or Oral Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Sexual, Emotional, Physical Abuse</td>
<td>Musculoskeletal Trauma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Neglect and/or Maltreatment</td>
<td>Untreated Chronic Conditions (asthma, diabetes, skin conditions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Trauma</td>
<td>Other Infectious Diseases such as Hepatitis and Tuberculosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with the Juvenile Justice System</td>
<td>Gynecological Health Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with the Foster Care System</td>
<td>Including Pelvic Inflammatory Disease</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RISK FACTORS FOR CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING BY THE NUMBERS

In 2012, Tarrant County referred 223 minors to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department for status-related charges.30

223

STATUS OFFENSES INCLUDE31

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Away From Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curfew Violation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure To Attend School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2014, Fort Worth Independent School District served 2,007 homeless children through their Student Support Services.33

2,007

Breakdown of Students Served by FWISD’s Student Support Services in 201434

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2012, there were 3,323 referrals to Texas Juvenile Probation Department under the runaway status offense.32

3,323
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Human Trafficking Related Incidents Reported by Texas Law Enforcement to the Human Trafficking Reporting System, January 2007 - August 2014

Juvenile Justice

In the eyes of the criminal justice system, a child in Texas becomes an adult at the age of 17. Children younger than 10 do not face prosecution for offenses, and youth who are 10-16 years of age fall within the jurisdiction of juvenile courts and the management of local juvenile probation departments. In Tarrant County, when youth have allegedly engaged in delinquent behavior, they are referred to Tarrant County Juvenile Services.

The number of referrals in Tarrant County has consistently decreased over the past several years, and 2,477 juveniles were referred in 2014. The majority of referrals are for non-violent offenses, and as is the case in many other jurisdictions, the rate of contact with African American youth is disproportionate to the local population. African American youth make up less than 20% of the Tarrant County juvenile population but represent approximately 40% of local referrals. This phenomenon is seen across the state of Texas and local stakeholders are working with the Center for the Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities to address this issue.

A recent study which calculated expected recidivism rates and compared them with actual recidivism rates among juveniles in Texas counties gives additional cause for concern; Tarrant County had an anticipated re-arrest rate of 36% but an actual re-arrest rate of 46%.

Research shows that the cost of juvenile incarceration is high, with each juvenile offender in a state facility costing $134,000 each year. The state of Texas has made numerous reforms to its juvenile justice system over the past decade, emphasizing a preference for community-based alternatives to state operated facilities. Diversion of low-risk youth away from the juvenile justice system has been identified as a promising practice and this is occurring in Tarrant County with high frequency. Over one-third of all local referrals were diverted, and over 90% of diverted youth were identified as low-risk for re-offending based on a risk and need assessment tool.
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2010-2014 Referrals to the Tarrant County Juvenile Justice System System\textsuperscript{42}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>CINS\textsuperscript{*}</th>
<th>VIOLATION OF PROBATION</th>
<th>CLASS A &amp; B MISDEMEANOR</th>
<th>FELONY (NON-VIOLENT)</th>
<th>FELONY (VIOLENT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{*}Conduct In Need of Supervision

Referrals by Ethnicity in Tarrant County, 2014\textsuperscript{43}

COUNTY COMPARISON

JUVENILE ESTIMATED & ACTUAL RE-ARREST RATES BY COUNTY, 2015\textsuperscript{44}
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INVEST IN WHAT WORKS

• Provide a positive academic environment, where students can excel and build fundamental skills to be successful when they return to their home campuses;
• Promote self-sufficiency and self-discipline as a healthy alternative to academic misconduct and criminal activity;
• Involve the youth’s family during the education and treatment process.

AN EXPERT’S PERSPECTIVE

Todd Landry, CEO, Lena Pope

Lena Pope provides the Second Opportunity for Success® Program formerly known as the First Offender Program for youth that have found themselves involved with the juvenile justice system with no previous record of law violation. In Second Opportunity for Success®, youth and families learn valuable skills to improve their relationships, school performance, and behavior.

For seven weeks, youth and their families attend small groups. During small group sessions, the students learn topics based on proven methods of preventing youth criminal behavior.

Once this foundation has been set the students enter a three month probationary period where they are given support through a Family Specialist. The Family Specialist will discuss the progress or regression the student may be experiencing, and offers guidance to the student and their family. After the probationary period has expired, the student has the opportunity to have their charges dropped if they did not commit another crime.

This program has seen great success. Last year 95% of youth who completed the program did not have another criminal violation for six months. Second Opportunity for Success® has been recognized nationally for its ability to prevent future criminal behavior in youth.