We thank Methodist Healthcare Ministries and the Annie E. Casey Foundation for their generous and continued support of the Texas KIDS COUNT Project. The findings and conclusions in this report, however, are solely those of the center, as are any errors or omissions.

UNLESS SOMEONE LIKE YOU CARES A WHOLE AWFUL LOT, NOTHING IS GOING TO GET BETTER. IT’S NOT.

– DR SEUSS
finding the details you need to tell your story can sometimes be difficult.
The center and the Texas KIDS COUNT Project are built around the idea of using data to tell the story of our community to bring about positive change. We seek to bring awareness to problems children face and highlight the policy solutions that can make kids' lives better and Texas stronger. We want to provide conversation starters for policymakers, families at the dinner table, and colleagues at the workplace. We hope you use the data in this report to start conversations of your own—conversations about our choices and their outcomes.

This year's report comes following some harsh choices about what we are willing to do for Texas kids. After a $5.3 billion dollar cut to education, a 66 percent cut to the Family Planning Program, and cuts to child abuse prevention, Medicaid and CHIP provider rates, and children with special health care needs—to name a few—children were not our top priority. It's time we learn from our past choices, positive and negative, so that we can shape a different story for our future. If we keep kids as our number one priority, the story about how we turned things around to build a better Texas can be an inspiration for generations to come.

My daughter Ava is 5 years old. She loves for me to tell her stories, and her favorites are the stories about her world, her friends, her school, and her home. And if I veer off course, she is quick to correct me and keep me true to the realities of her world. Fortunately, I don't think we ever really lose that sense of curiosity and drive to know more about our world as we grow up. It's just that

get ahead, he moved to Denton merely so he could afford to send his three children to North Texas State Teachers College. While my grandfather paid part of the cost of college, the state made it affordable. The dollars the state put into those three kids were a good investment. My mother became a public school teacher. One uncle became a Methodist Minister. One became an Air Force Pilot.

Today Texas isn't making the same sorts of investments in kids. Yet we know that ensuring opportunity for families is the only path to a working democracy and a vibrant economy. We must invest in education—from early childhood education all the way through graduate and professional education, to ensure opportunity.

Our report addresses education and much more. We try to present a comprehensive look at child well-being in Texas. We hope it helps inform Texans about the consequences of our choices.

I am a fifth-generation Texan on both sides of my family tree. Texas soil has nourished my family in many ways. Let me give you one example. On my mother's side, my grandfather was a small businessman in the Texas panhandle. Knowing that college was the way for his three children to

all parents to be able to provide themselves and their children with a self-sufficient, healthy, middle-class life. But the responsibility is ours to make certain all parents have the opportunity to provide this life for their children.

At the center, we believe that opportunity should not be an accident of circumstance or geography. We believe that we have to make public policy choices that allow opportunity to flourish everywhere and for everyone. As we say, we all do better when we all do better.

For those of us working to improve the lives of low- and moderate-income Texans, we know that we can’t talk about the well-being of children without first talking about the responsibility of parents. I am passionate about the well-being of children because of my own experiences as a teen parent. We want

We know that the choices we make today will shape our state for years to come—the state in which our children will grow up. If we want a Texas that offers opportunity for all of us, we must come together to create that future now.

Each time we choose to create opportunities that make our state a better place for all of us, we make a difference in the lives of those who have the least among us and move ourselves one step closer to living in a better Texas.
SMART CHOICES ARE BASED ON GOOD DATA

THE KIDS COUNT DATA CENTER IS AN INTERACTIVE TOOL TO FIND GOOD DATA FOR INFORMED CHOICES.

HTTP://DATACENTER.KIDSCOUNT.ORG

All of the indicators the Texas KIDS COUNT project tracks, including those not published in this report, as well as data from the National KIDS COUNT project are housed on the Data Center. To reach Texas’ state and county-level data, go to http://datacenter.kidscount.org. From there you can:

- Rank states, Texas counties, the 50 largest cities in the U.S., and Congressional Districts on key indicators of child wellbeing;
- Create a customized data profile for your county;
- Generate your own customized maps and trend lines that show how Texas children are faring and use them in presentations and publications;
- Feature maps and graphs on your own website or blog that are automatically updated when new data is uploaded; and
- View and share data quickly and easily anytime and anywhere with the enhanced mobile site for smart phones.

Visit http://datacenter.kidscount.org/Help.aspx to view an instructional video and answers to frequently asked questions about the Data Center.
### HIGHLIGHTING BEXAR COUNTY

The Texas KIDS COUNT Project maintains over 50 indicators on the KIDS COUNT Data Center for the state and all 254 counties in Texas. This snapshot of Bexar County provides a glimpse of the data available on the Data Center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATORS</th>
<th>COUNTY TREND</th>
<th>COUNTY RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Children in Poverty</td>
<td>2000: 22.7%</td>
<td>2010: 24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>2000: 3.5%</td>
<td>2011: 7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Children Enrolled in Medicaid</td>
<td>2000: 19.6%</td>
<td>2010: 33.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Children Receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps)</td>
<td>2000: 10.9%</td>
<td>2010: 29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Births to Women Receiving Late or No Prenatal Care</td>
<td>2005: 27.0%</td>
<td>2008: 26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of All Births That Were to Teens Ages 13-19 (Out of All Live Births)</td>
<td>1998: 16.8%</td>
<td>2008: 14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public School Enrollment (for School Year)</td>
<td>2001–02: 269,646</td>
<td>2010–11: 330,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of 3 &amp; 4-Year Olds Enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten</td>
<td>2000–01: 17.7%</td>
<td>2010–11: 30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attrition in Public High Schools</td>
<td>2001: 42%</td>
<td>2011: 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed Victims of Child Abuse (Rate per 1,000 Children)</td>
<td>2000: 9.0</td>
<td>2011: 13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in Foster Care (Rate per 1,000 Children)</td>
<td>2001: 5.7</td>
<td>2011: 7.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To view your county's data, go to http://datacenter.kidscount.org/tx
MORE KIDS, MORE DIVERSITY, MORE RESPONSIBILITY

96% OF TEXAS KIDS ARE CITIZENS


TEXAS ADDED 1M KIDS!

If children are the heart of every family, then Texas has a powerful and steady heartbeat. The number of kids in Texas grew by nearly one million (17 percent) in the last decade, reaching more than 6.86 million. But as our numbers grow, so do our needs. Texas’ growing child population will always be an asset, as long as we educate them and provide them opportunities to contribute to our economy. We need to implement policies that will enable our kids to grow into healthy, educated adults, which means anticipating growth and embracing the opportunities inherent in our diversity.

TEXAS ACCOUNTED FOR HALF OF U.S. CHILD POPULATION GROWTH BETWEEN 2000-2010

MORE RESPONSIBILITY
MORE KIDS
MORE DIVERSITY

TEXAS GROWING DIVERSITY BETWEEN 2000 AND 2010

HISPANIC +39% to 3.3M
WHITE -7% to 2.3M
BLACK +11% to 810K
ASIAN +66% to 230K

POPULATION CHANGE (AGES 0 TO 17)

DECREASE Lost between -25% to -5%
LITTLE CHANGE -5% to 5%
INCREASE 5% to more than 25% gain

MORAL: AS TEXAS GROWS, SO MUST OUR PERSPECTIVES.
ENTERING THE WORLD HEALTHY IS NO GUARANTEE

Texas’ population is growing rapidly in large part because of our high birth rate. In 2008, 405,242 babies were born in Texas—the 2nd highest birth rate in the country (behind only Utah).8

Early, consistent, quality prenatal care is paramount for the health of mom and baby. Babies born to women who receive prenatal care are less likely to be born too small or to die before their first birthday.9 The moms are also more likely to be in better health and to access pediatric care for their baby.10 For many women, prenatal care is their first entry into the health care system. An important step to improving maternal and infant outcomes is to connect women to the health care system throughout their lifetimes. That way, if and when they decide to have children, they will be healthier to begin with, and will be better prepared to access prenatal care.

AND TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE . . .

A new state rule excludes family planning clinics from our Medicaid Women’s Health Program that have any affiliation with an abortion provider, even if financially and legally separate. This rule violates federal law. If enacted, Texas will lose the federal funds that pay 90 percent of the costs to serve around 130,000 Texans each month. This comes on top of a 66 percent funding cut ($73 million) for the Department of State Health Services’ Family Planning Program which already eliminated basic prevention and birth control for at least 150,000 women. The Legislative Budget Board estimates that these cuts alone will lead to over 20,000 additional low-income pregnancies, costing Texas Medicaid about $100 million in 2012-13.11-12

Texas’ choices should prioritize fiscal and physical health. Ending 80 percent of Texas’ family planning programs does neither.

STRUGGLING FROM THE START13

39% OF BABIES WERE BORNTOMOTHERS WHO RECEIVED LATE OR NO PRENATAL CARE

1 OF EVERY 7 BABIES WERE BORNTOPRETERM

UP 13% PERCENTAGE OF BABIES WEIGHING LESS THAN 5.5 POUNDS UP 13% SINCE 2000

2,478 BABIES DIED BEFORE THEIR FIRST BIRTHDAY

WOMEN’S HEALTH PROGRAM SAVED TEXAS MEDICAID OVER $45 MILLION A YEAR IN 2009-2011

THE PERCENTAGE OF BIRTHS TO TEENS DECLINED BETWEEN 1998 AND 200814

(BIRTHS TO TEENS 13-19 AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL LIVE BIRTHS)

1998 16.1%

2008 13.6%

ALTHOUGH BIRTHS TO TEENS HAVE DECLINED:15

THE PERCENTAGE OF THOSE BORN TO SINGLE TEEN MOMS HAS INCREASED

AND MORE THAN 1 IN 5 WERE BORNTOTEENS WHO ALREADY HAD A BABY

1998 68%

2008 83%

2008 22%
In times of crisis, we rally around our family because they give us support and strength. Families know that when one member is not doing well, the whole family is affected. But that doesn’t just hold for the traditional nuclear family. We’ve rallied around each other as a nation (9/11), and at the state (Hurricane Katrina) and local levels (2011 wildfires) in times of crisis. We came together—as a family—to help those in need get back on their feet because it was the right thing to do for them, and for the whole community.

For a community, poverty is as much a crisis as a one-time disaster. The effects are just as powerful and devastating. But unlike a one-time disaster, poverty is ongoing. It’s also something we can change. We have made specific choices over the last several decades to fight poverty for our oldest residents. Our choices to secure their physical (Medicare) and financial (Social Security) health has cut poverty for people over 65 by more than half.16

CHILD POVERTY RISES AND FALLS WITH ADULT UNEMPLOYMENT20

MORE THAN HALF A MILLION TEXAS WORKERS EARN MINIMUM WAGE OR LESS, TYING MISSISSIPPI FOR THE WORST RATE (NEARLY 10%) OF LOW-WAGE HOURLY WORKERS IN THE COUNTRY19

Opportunity matters: When Black and Hispanic Texans are twice as likely to leave school before getting a high school degree21 and 1.5 to 3 times more likely to be unemployed2 (i.e., lose their job through no fault of their own), it’s no surprise that child poverty is higher too. We can do a better job of structuring our opportunity systems (e.g., dropout prevention, workforce training) to the needs of individual communities, because economic opportunity is the best antidote to child poverty.
But we haven’t made as strong a commitment to reducing child poverty, even though children living in poverty are at a high risk for cognitive, emotional, educational, and health problems that last into adulthood.\textsuperscript{17} Today, more than one of every four Texas kids live in poverty, a 24 percent increase since 2000.\textsuperscript{18} Unfortunately, as the child poverty rate rose, we made choices that make it even harder for kids and families to get their financial footing by cutting those programs designed to support Texans in times of crisis.

When it comes to Texas’ children, it’s time to get back to basics. That means investing in the things that helped give us our start—like a strong public education, access to doctors before we get sick, and healthy food on the table. We can make the smart choices to protect the health and well-being of Texas kids and help families build economic security. It doesn’t get any more basic than that.

**WHEN YOU COUNT WORK-SUPPORTS, MANY CHILDREN PROTECTED FROM POVERTY NATIONALLY**

The Official Poverty Measure is based solely on income and doesn’t take into account programs that help kids. Though still considered experimental, the Supplemental Poverty Measure’s rate for children is lower because it shows the success of nutrition and housing assistance, the Earned Income Tax Credit, child care subsidies, and child health insurance programs in lifting children and families out of poverty.\textsuperscript{24}

**ALTHOUGH SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME PROVIDED SOME BUFFER, TEXAS’ RECENT TANF POLICIES HARMFUL TO KIDS**\textsuperscript{25}

Beginning in 1996, the number of kids receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF, aka cash assistance) declined due to policies attempting to help parents find work combined with strict time restrictions for benefits. In 2003, the goal of reducing the rolls in Texas, rather than moving families to work, became the focus when full-family sanctions pushed droves of kids off assistance.\textsuperscript{26} Although many TANF kids ended up receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) because they have been evaluated as disabled, SSI cannot fully absorb the more than two-thirds loss from TANF since 2003.\textsuperscript{27}
The health and well-being of our entire state is improved when all of our children have access to quality, affordable health care—yours, mine, and kids we’ve yet to meet. We all know that whether rich or poor, Black or White, every Texas child deserves to be healthy and have access to the care they need. Yet 1.2 million kids in this state lack the access to care they need to grow healthy and strong.

Over the past decade, a veritable policy tug-of-war has occurred between choices that expanded and improved access to health care and policies that reduced access. The good news is that the percentage of uninsured kids is significantly lower than it was just a few years ago. Texas provided additional resources for the eligibility system (e.g. more eligibility staff, better training, IT improvements) and reduced barriers to enrollment (e.g., allowing applications and renewal by mail) in our public health insurance programs.

Unfortunately, the 2011 Legislature made substantial cuts to Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which threaten that progress. Facing a $27 billion revenue shortfall, our legislators chose to reduce health and human services spending by $10 billion for the next two years—pledging to restore $5 billion of that funding in January 2013—rather than raising new revenues or using the state’s rainy day fund. Even if the 2013 Legislature makes good on that pledge, the remaining cuts are projected to significantly affect access to care for low-income Texas children and affect the health of our whole community.

**IT’S TIME TO DECIDE: WHAT WILL WE DO?**

Will we undermine children’s health by prioritizing short-term political gains over long-term solutions to our health care problems? Or will we choose to protect and promote the health of our entire state and help struggling families with modest incomes afford health care? If we build on our recent successes (e.g., reducing the uninsured rate and health reform’s protections of kids’ access to care), we can continue to make real progress that matters to real people.

---

**ACCESS TO COVERAGE A BIG FACTOR IN HOW HEALTHY OUR KIDS ARE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coverage Type</th>
<th>Percentage of Children Considered Healthy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uninsured</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Insurance</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Insurance</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our Policy Choices Have a Direct Impact on Kids’ Health

As private insurance coverage declines in Texas, Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) fill the gap and even help reduce the child uninsured rate.\(^3^2\)

Better, but a Long Way to Go

16.9% of Texas kids uninsured in 2009, down from 20.8% in 2006.\(^3^3\)

Texas’ Public Policy Decisions Affect Whether Low-Income Kids Become Enrolled and Stay Enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP.\(^3^4\)

Many middle-income families can’t afford health insurance.

With the number of uninsured middle-income kids up by 9%, keeping health reform intact will be critical to providing access to health insurance for those families.\(^3^5\)

Our policy choices have a direct impact on kids’ health.

As private insurance coverage declines in Texas, Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) fill the gap and even help reduce the child uninsured rate.\(^3^2\)

Better, but a long way to go.

16.9% of Texas kids uninsured in 2009, down from 20.8% in 2006.\(^3^3\)

Texas’ public policy decisions affect whether low-income kids become enrolled and stay enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP.\(^3^4\)

Many middle-income families can’t afford health insurance.

With the number of uninsured middle-income kids up by 9%, keeping health reform intact will be critical to providing access to health insurance for those families.\(^3^5\)
Texas kids suffer from two seemingly inconsistent nutrition problems: hunger and obesity. But in fact, these problems are two sides of the same coin. Families in poverty often rely on cheap, high-calorie foods because they cannot afford healthier alternatives. Child hunger and obesity are worse in Texas than most other states, with more than half of our kids in poverty considered overweight or obese (5th worst state) and more than one in four living in households that were uncertain of having enough food or how they would pay for it (tied for worst state rate).

The federal nutrition safety net protects kids from going hungry and promotes healthy food choices by providing money to states for anti-hunger programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps), WIC, and the School Breakfast/School Lunch program. These programs often provide the only nutritious food some children receive each day.

State-level policy choices determine the reach and benefits of our food assistance programs. Kids’ nutrition benefitted from several positive choices during 2011, such as expanded access to school breakfast and summer food programs, and easier SNAP enrollment. These gains were tempered by extensive school funding cuts, including eliminating middle school P.E. grants and reducing funding for Fitnessgram, which provides data to schools to help them assess overall student fitness. And nutrition programs face continued risks at the state and federal levels, such as possible across-the-board funding cuts and increased eligibility restrictions. Eliminating child hunger and obesity is a choice. Let’s choose a Texas that is fit, healthy, and ready to lead.
KIDS CHANGE

DESPITE OPPORTUNITY, LOW PARTICIPATION\textsuperscript{44,45}

- Texas had highest percentage of schools offering a school breakfast program.
- But less than 2/3 of eligible kids participated in the school breakfast program.
- And only 1 in 6 eligible kids participated in the summer food program.

NO CHILD SHOULD EXPERIENCE HUNGER, AND YET . . .

1 in 4 Texas children live in homes where parents do not know where their next meal will come from or how they will afford it\textsuperscript{47}

PERCENTAGE OF TEXAS KIDS ENROLLED IN SNAP INCREASED\textsuperscript{46}

- 2000: 9.2%
- 2010: 26.4%

APPLICATION

Texas children live in homes where parents do not know where their next meal will come from or how they will afford it.

2001
SNAP requirements are simplified & funding appropriated to support fresh produce programs at food banks.

2005
Expanded free lunch program auto-enrollment for kids on SNAP.

2007-2009
Funding increased for SNAP enrollment staff in response to eligibility system crisis.

2011
Finger imaging for SNAP eliminated; more school districts required to sponsor summer food program; cut funding for P.E. and FitnessGram programs.

FUTURE
Long-term solutions must attack the root causes of poverty and continue strengthening nutrition safety net.

STATE OF TEXAS CHILDREN 2012 13
We can all agree that for Texas to succeed, our kids need a quality education that prepares them for the 21st century. Every child deserves the chance to become a doctor, artist, astronaut, or achieve any other dream. Texas public schools nurtured the dreams of over 4.9 million kids during 2010-11, an increase of nearly 86,000 kids from 2009-10. That’s like adding a brand new district the size of Fort Worth ISD in one year. Of those 4.9 million students, 59 percent (2.9 million) are considered economically disadvantaged (up from 52 percent in 2001-02). Because family income is related to academic success, the increase in low-income Texas students means that providing quality education becomes more difficult and more important.

Pre-kindergarten is designed to prepare kids for kindergarten and is targeted to, among others, economically disadvantaged kids. But the effects of pre-k last beyond kindergarten. Economically disadvantaged third graders who had participated in pre-k were more likely to pass their TAKS tests than those who did not. And

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE PRE-K ADVANTAGE</th>
<th>NO PRE-K PRE-K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PASSED TAKS 3RD GRADE READING</td>
<td>83% 88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASSED TAKS 3RD GRADE MATH</td>
<td>79% 85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED KIDS WHO WENT TO PRE-K WERE MORE LIKELY TO PASS THEIR 3RD GRADE TAKS TESTS

| INCREASE IN 4-YR-OLDS IN PRE-K DUE, IN PART, TO PRE-K EXPANSION GRANTS |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2000-01 | 2010-11 |
| 38% (123,927) | 52% (200,181) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAKS ACHIEVEMENT GAP SHRINKING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% PASSING TAKS MATH (ALL GRADES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% PASSING TAKS READING (ALL GRADES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2003 | 2011
across grades, the gap between economically disadvantaged and not economically disadvantaged students is shrinking.\textsuperscript{52} Because passing the TAKS affects grade promotion and graduation, the stakes are especially high. Simply receiving a high school degree decreases your chance of living in poverty by half.\textsuperscript{53}

When more investment was needed to meet the educational needs of Texas’ growing and diversifying population, legislators chose to cut $4 billion in basic school funding and $1.3 billion in education grants, including full-day pre-kindergarten and dropout prevention grants.\textsuperscript{54} In response to these cuts, Texas schools are employing an estimated 32,000 fewer employees\textsuperscript{55}—and more layoffs and program cuts are expected when the 2013 fiscal year cuts go into effect.

Our future success depends on the investment we make in educating our kids now. For Texas to stay a great place to do business, we have to make smart choices about educating our future workforce. We must fully fund public education, prepare for growth, and build on the success of programs that help kids succeed. That is the only viable long-term plan for success.

\textbf{CUTS TO DROPOUT PREVENTION MAY ENDANGER A POSITIVE TREND}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\pie{40\%}{\text{CLASS OF 2001}}\pie{27\%}{\text{CLASS OF 2011}}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS CLASSIFIED AS ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED INCREASED\textsuperscript{62}}

\textbf{MORE THAN EVER, TEXAS SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS NEED SUPPORT AS NEED CONTINUES TO GROW}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\pie{52\%}{\text{2001-02}}\pie{59\%}{\text{2010-11}}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS CLASSIFIED AS ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED INCREASED\textsuperscript{62}}

\textbf{TEXAS DROPOUTS MAKE ONLY 36 CENTS FOR EVERY DOLLAR EARNED BY COLLEGE GRADUATES\textsuperscript{61} VS.}

\textbf{TEXAS’ EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENT}

\textbf{PER-PUPIL SPENDING—BEFORE THE CUTS\textsuperscript{63}}

\textbf{THE 2011 LEGISLATURE UNDERFUNDED PUBLIC EDUCATION BY}

\textbf{5 3 BILLION FOR THE 2012-13 BIENNIAL\textsuperscript{64}}

\textbf{INCLUDING THE ELIMINATION OF}

\textbf{PRE-K EXPANSION HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION GRANTS}
STATE BUDGET & CHILD WELFARE: PENNY WISE AND POUND FOOLISH

Home should be a place where every child feels safe. Our policy decisions in recent years reflected a renewed commitment to protecting abused and neglected children and helping support a safe home environment. Policymakers made significant reforms and provided additional money to the Texas Child Protective Services (CPS) agency during the 2005, 2007, and 2009 legislative sessions. These reforms lost momentum during the 2011 legislative session when policymakers chose to slash funding for essential services instead of using our Rainy Day Fund savings or raising revenue to help overcome the $27 billion deficit.

65,948 FAR TOO MANY CONFIRMED VICTIMS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

WHEN KIDS ARE REMOVED FROM THEIR HOMES, A SMALLER PERCENTAGE WERE PLACED IN FOSTER CARE

2000 84%
DOWN TO 69%
2011

THANKS TO INCREASED FOCUS ON PLACING KIDS WITH RELATIVES

FIFTY PERCENT OF CONFIRMED VICTIMS RECEIVE CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES. OF THOSE, APPROXIMATELY 70% ARE PROVIDED FAMILY-BASED SERVICES IN THEIR HOMES.

EVEN WITH MORE KIDS PLACED WITH RELATIVES, 30,347 CHILDREN LIVED IN FOSTER CARE AT SOME POINT DURING 2011
The Legislature did not fund expected caseload growth for family services and cut funding for statewide intake staff, adoption services, and child abuse and neglect prevention programs.\textsuperscript{67} CPS will continue to implement its scheduled reforms to the foster care system, but will be challenged to provide necessary and mandated services within a more limited budget.\textsuperscript{68}

In an ideal world, we would not need child protective services. Unfortunately, when children and families fall through society’s cracks, CPS is the service of last resort—shielding children from further harm. Without significant additional state investments, CPS will be forced to selectively spend their ever-dwindling resources on mandated expenses (i.e., foster care), even if keeping a child safe at home is better for the child and cheaper for the state. With another deficit looming for the 2014-15 budget, Texas can’t afford to be penny wise and pound foolish.

**BECAUSE WE UNDERFUNDED IN-HOME SERVICES TO SAVE MONEY, WE MAY SEE A SHIFT BACK TO PUTTING KIDS IN FOSTER CARE IN 2012-2013—WHICH, IRONICALLY, COSTS MUCH MORE MONEY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOSTER CARE</th>
<th>IN-HOME &amp; REUNIFICATION SERVICES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$12,567</td>
<td>$481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LEAVING STATE CUSTODY**\textsuperscript{75}

1% OTHER

9% AGED OUT

40% CUSTODY GIVEN TO RELATIVES

17% NON-RELATIVE ADOPTION

33% FAMILY REUNIFICATION

**MORE THAN 16,000 CHILDREN EXITED STATE CUSTODY**\textsuperscript{74} IN 2011

90% HAD LEGALLY PERMANENT PLACEMENTS, LEGALLY PERMANENT PLACEMENTS INCLUDE REUNIFICATION WITH FAMILY, CUSTODY GIVEN TO A RELATIVE\textsuperscript{76}, OR NON-RELATIVE ADOPTION.

WHEN CHILDREN LEAVE STATE CUSTODY, THE PREFERRED OPTION IS TO SAFELY RETURN THE CHILD HOME. THE NEXT BEST ALTERNATIVE IS TO FIND ANOTHER FAMILY WHO WILL TAKE CUSTODY AND PROVIDE A PERMANENT HOME, WITH PREFERENCE GIVEN TO A CHILD’S RELATIVES.\textsuperscript{77} CPS TRIES TO AVOID CHILDREN EXITING BY AGING OUT WHEN THEY TURN 18 OR AN “OTHER” TYPE OF EXIT\textsuperscript{78} BECAUSE IN MOST CASES, THESE CHILDREN EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANT DIFFICULTIES TRANSITIONING TO LIVING ON THEIR OWN.
Every child should have the chance to fulfill his or her full potential. That means seeing a doctor when they need one, having access to nutritious food, feeling safe at home, and obtaining a high quality education. But positive or negative outcomes for kids don’t just happen. They are the inevitable results of effective or failed policy choices.

Our policy choices reflect our priorities and what we choose to invest in for the future. But you cannot expect returns on investments you do not make. After devastating cuts last legislative session, our future returns may be quite small.

Who keeps kids healthy? Who keeps kids safe? Who helps educate our kids? We do . . . With our voice. Talk to your families, friends, neighbors, and leaders about how our choices matter. Because Texas KIDS COUNT.
ENDNOTES


3. See note 2.

4. The child population declined in 147 of Texas’ 254 counties. CPPP analysis of 2000 Decennial Census data, Summary File 3 and 2010 Decennial Census Redistricting data.

5. See note 2.


7. At publication, 2008 was the most current for finalized county-level vital statistics, Texas Department of State Health Services.


11. CITATION FOR WOMEN ON WHP. MODIFY TOTAL WOMEN AFFECTED NUMBER DEPENDING ON WHAT FINAL NUMBER CHOSEN.


13. 2008 birth and death data, Texas Department of State Health Services.


15. See note 12.


25. SSI data from the Social Security Administration. TANF data from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.


28. See note 12.

29. See note 12.

30. See note 12.


33. Small Area Health Insurance Estimates, ages 0-18, all income levels, U.S. Census Bureau.


39. To follow possible federal budget cuts to nutrition programs, see www.frac.org.

40. April 2010 WIC Enrollment, WIC-EBT Database, Texas Department of State Health Services.

41. Free and reduced-price lunch eligibility, September 2010 through May 2011, Texas Department of Agriculture.


43. 2007 National Survey of Children’s Health. Low-income: 100-199% of the federal poverty level (FPL); Middle-income: 200-399% FPL; High-income: >400% FPL.


45. 2011 Summer Food Program participation data, Texas Department of Agriculture.


47. See note 37.

48. CPPPP analysis of 2009-10 and 2010-11 school enrollment data, Texas Education Agency.

49. The Texas Education Agency defines economically disadvantaged as students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or eligible for other public assistance. http://bit.ly/AesJzW.

50. Public pre-k is offered to children who are English Language Learners, economically disadvantaged, homeless, currently or formerly in foster care, or have a parent servicing in the armed forces. http://bit.ly/kUoz3f.

51. Analysis by the Office of Representative Mike Villarreal of Texas Education Agency 2011 TAKS data.

52. CPPPP analysis of 2011 TAKS data, Texas Education Agency.


56. Analysis by the Office of Representative Mike Villarreal of Texas Education Agency 2011 TAKS data.

57. CPPPP analysis of 4-year-old pre-kindergarten enrollment, Texas Education Agency.

58. See note 52.


60. See note 21.

61. Annual median earnings for people ages 25+ with less than a high school degree vs. people with a bachelor’s degree only, 2010 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.


64. See note 54.


67. See note 66.


71. CPPPP analysis of data from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

72. Children ages 8-17 living in Foster Care. Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

73. 2011 Average annual per child spending (total spent on foster care/total kids in foster care). Note: not all kids receive services for a full year. Services for an entire year would be significantly higher. CPPPP analysis of data from 2012 CPS operating budget, Department of Family and Protective Services.

74. State custody includes kids in substitute care plus kids previously in substitute care now in trial visits.

75. CPPPP analysis of data from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

76. Custody given to a relative includes Relative Permanent Managing Conservatorship and Relative Adoption.

77. Relatives take custody either as a permanent managing conservator or an adoptive parent. Non-relatives take custody as an adoptive parent.

78. Other exits include running away, transferring to another agency (e.g., Juvenile Justice), or passing away.

WWW.STATEOFTEXASCHILDREN.ORG
We believe in Texas • We believe in the people of Texas—our friends and neighbors, our sons and daughters • ALL Texans • We stand for community • People from all walks of life • United • We stand for justice • Working to improve public policy • Advocating at the Capitol and on the Hill • We stand for telling the truth—respectfully but with courage • And we mean the whole truth based on hard facts and rigorous analysis • When 1 in 5 of us lives in poverty • 1 in 4 doesn’t have health care • And 1 in 5 children in this state is at risk of going hungry…Things have to change • And that’s why we’re here • Together we can make our state a better place for all of us • A place of opportunity and prosperity • Because we all do better when we all do better • We never shy away from the tough conversations • About affordable health care, strong schools and colleges, good jobs, and child well-being • We stand for economic and social opportunity for all Texans • Because Texans believe in opportunity • For over a quarter of a century, we’ve strived to do our best • Finding meaning in our work • Fighting for what’s right • Because we believe in a better Texas •

The center is committed to improving public policies to make a better Texas.