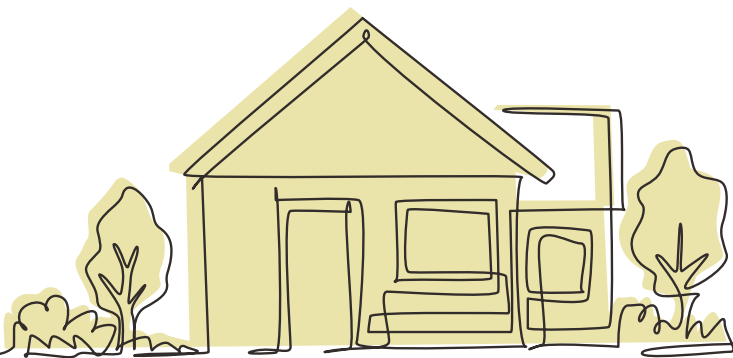


STRENGTHENING FAMILIES ACROSS THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

TAFCS strongly supported a clear investment in policy and funding that supports keeping families safe, strong, and together.



SB 24 (Kolkhorst) transfers the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) program from DFPS to a broader Family Services division at HHSC. PEI programs were sustained and expanded to serve more at-risk families.

Kinship families were prioritized in HB 1, receiving additional resources to provide funds for concrete needs and to reimburse licensure costs for families. Pending federal direction, the Legislature also directed agencies to expedite the development and adoption of rules to facilitate an improved verification process, ultimately resulting in more resources for kin and improved state reimbursement.

A broad expansion for Heart Galleries was funded in **HB 1**, a community-driven program that aims to identify loving, forever homes for kids and youth lingering in the system.

MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR TEXAS' MOST VULNERABLE YOUTH

The Legislature invested a historic amount* of funding into mental and behavioral health programs across the state to increase providers, access, and services.

DFPS and HHSC received more than \$31 million in **HB 1** to expand programs like crisis stabilization, youth mobile crisis outreach, and psychiatric youth treatment.

SB 26 (Kolkhorst) Creates the Mental Health Innovation Grant Program that will be open to agencies that provide services to children, families, and children in or at risk of placement in foster care to develop evidence-based programs.

HB 400 (Klick) establishes several grant programs to increase adult and pediatric psychiatric care, and for institutions of higher education that recruit, train, and retain more mental health professionals.



FOCUS ONGOING OVERSIGHT AND REGULATION ON CHILDREN'S SAFETY AND NEEDS

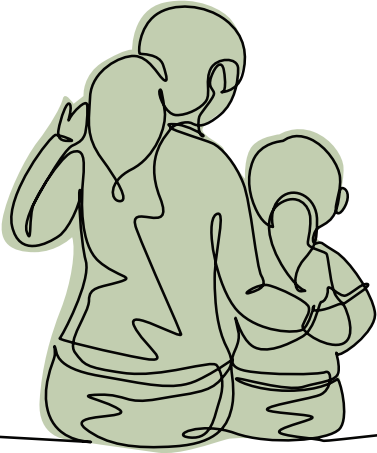
TACFS advocated for policies that supported a transparent, efficient, and accountable child welfare system.

SB 593 (Sparks) was a TACFS priority. This bill requires a third-party assessment of minimum standards, contract provisions, and rules governing the provision of foster care and adoptive services. This legislation is the first step to improving licensing and regulatory functions.

SB 1447 (Miles) requires DFPS to develop an improved training program that would increase the quality of investigations.

SB 1849 (Kolkhorst) creates a multi-agency offense database. Along with **SB 1469 (Bettencourt)** which would require an affidavit of prospective, these bills will ensure greater transparency in the hiring process.

HB 4233 (Zweiner) provides guidance on training for runaway prevention for each foster and adoptive parent. This training is intended only for youth 10 and older and can be included as part of existing licensing training or offered in lieu of required training that is not relevant based on the age of the child.



BUILD AND SUSTAIN HIGH QUALITY PLACEMENTS AND SERVICES

As providers across the state have been focused on quality and innovation to improve outcomes for children and families, the state has made historic investments to continue to fund these important changes.

For the first time in more than 35 years, the Legislature has fully approved and funded the modernization of **Texas' Foster Care Rate Methodology** in the budget. This was a key multi-Session initiative for the TACFS network – it's a big deal! Not only did the state receive funding to make changes necessary to implement new methodology, it received funds for provider implementation grants, and funding to pay rates using the new methodology beginning in 2025, they also received funds for sustained supplemental rates and additional funds to act as a “bridge” to rate modernization. These funds will allow our network to focus on the individual needs of children, promote better outcomes, and support high quality settings.

SB 1379 (Parker) establishes a Foster Youth Financial Pilot to assist foster youth in achieving financial security and independence as they transition to independent living. The pilot would assist these youth in opening savings and checking accounts.

SB 1930 (Kolkhorst) requires Judges, Guardians ad Litem, and Attorneys ad Litem to review placements residential settings. This language represents multiple stakeholders supporting high-quality placements for kids in less-restrictive settings.



Learn more funding details in our Budget Breakdown coming soon in the TACFS Legislative Toolkit.