



## 88<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session

### TexProtects 88th Legislative Priorities

#### Increasing Access to Home Visitation for Pregnant Women and Families with Newborns

The state has a historic opportunity in the 88<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session to increase funding for prenatal and postpartum home visitation programs. Access to voluntary home visitation programs for pregnant women and families with newborns yields 44% fewer CPS investigations by 2 years of age and 39% fewer CPS investigations at 5 years. Given that there were 166,187 completed CPS investigations in FY 2022, that would mean the reduction in investigations in the coming years would be between 64,813-73,122.

In the current DFPS budget, less than 5% is spent on prevention, in comparison to spending on Child Protective Services. Unfortunately, this trend has held steady for several years. We must increase investment in supportive services to help families get access to the services and supports they need at the right time. **The 88<sup>th</sup> legislature can increase access to proven support strategies that protect children by fully funding the Prevention and Early Intervention Exceptional Item Request for \$87,902,716 million to expand prevention and community well-being services.** This Exceptional Item request - *Strengthen Services for Prevention Services* - would strengthen community based, primary child abuse prevention programs for children prenatal to age 5 through Healthy Outcomes Through Prevention and Early Support (Project HOPES) and other evidence-based prevention strategies. The HOPES program is a flexible community grant that funds a wide variety of innovative initiatives and supports for families with children 0-5 years of age. The HOPES program allows for the most flexibility in funding prevention programs across the state, including home visiting programs. By increasing funding to the HOPES program, the state can help fund programs that connect families to the resources and referrals they need at a critical time. Access to home visitation services is a proven child maltreatment prevention measure and helps to keep families out of the child welfare system.

The cost of not investing in prevention services is clear. When combined with economic and social costs, the total estimated lifetime impact associated with child maltreatment at \$454 billion in Texas. However, the return on investment for Prevention and Early Intervention programs ranges from \$1.26 to \$5.70 in child welfare and juvenile justice costs, depending on the intervention, providing potential cost savings in child welfare, juvenile justice, and Medicaid costs into adulthood.<sup>i</sup>

It is critical that pregnant women, new moms, and families of young children are connected to the resources and referrals they need at the right time. Prenatal and postpartum home visitation programs, like those funded through HOPES and Texas Home Visiting, provide services and education to new moms while ensuring connection to community resources. Access to home visitation services is also a proven child maltreatment prevention measure and helps to keep families out of the child welfare system. By full funding this Exceptional Item, an additional 15,000-20,000 families could be served each year with community-based, child abuse prevention programs.

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<sup>i</sup> [https://www.dfps.texas.gov/About\\_DFPS/Reports\\_and\\_Presentations/Rider\\_Reports/documents/2022/2022-12-01\\_Rider\\_20\\_Report%20.pdf](https://www.dfps.texas.gov/About_DFPS/Reports_and_Presentations/Rider_Reports/documents/2022/2022-12-01_Rider_20_Report%20.pdf)