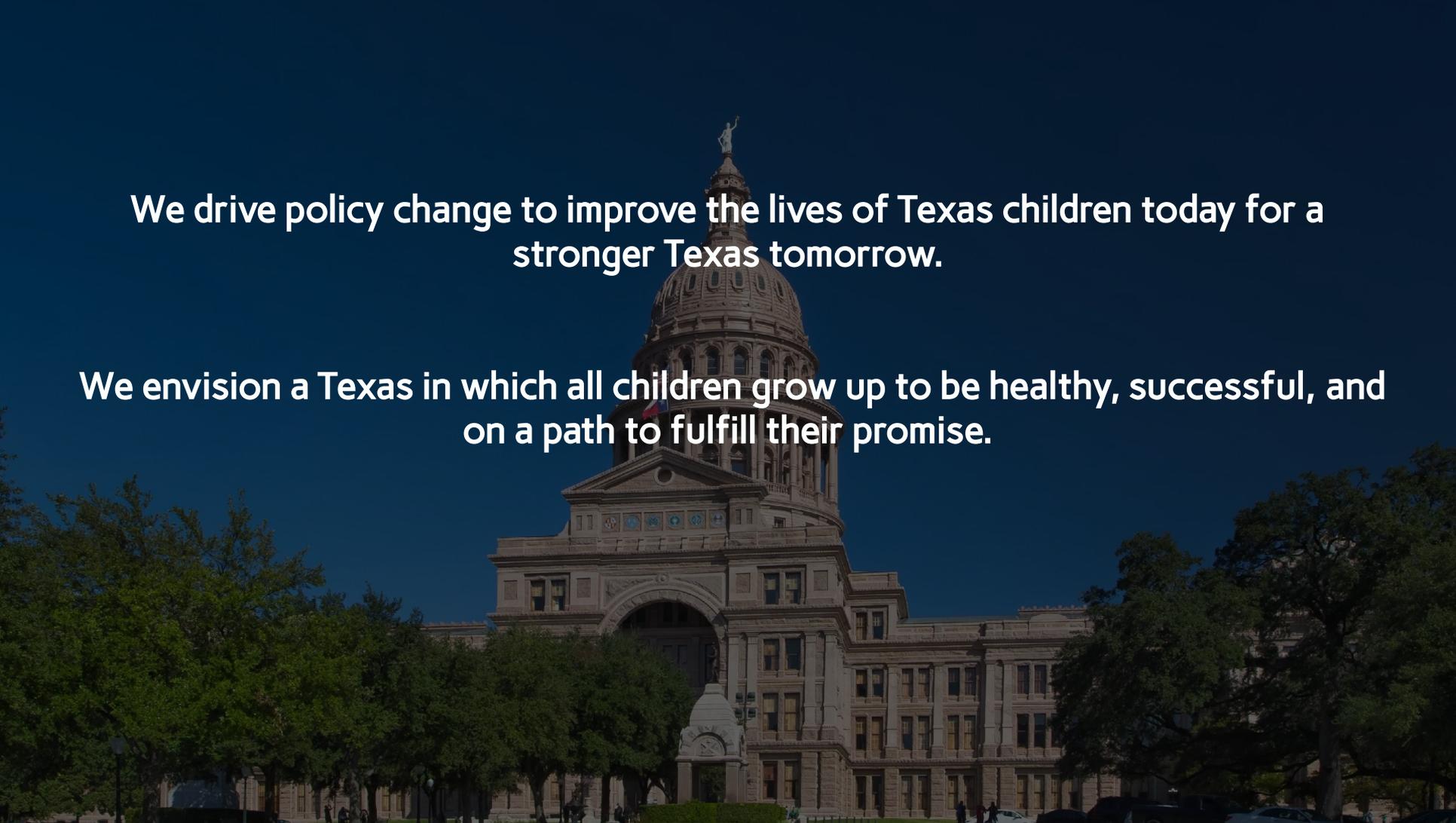




# How Texas Kids Fared in the 2019 Legislative Session

June 24, 2019

The background of the image is a photograph of the Texas State Capitol building in Austin, Texas. The building is a grand, classical-style structure with a prominent central dome topped by a statue. The facade features numerous windows and classical columns. In the foreground, there are several large, leafy green trees. The sky is a clear, deep blue. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

**We drive policy change to improve the lives of Texas children today for a stronger Texas tomorrow.**

**We envision a Texas in which all children grow up to be healthy, successful, and on a path to fulfill their promise.**

# Welcome and Thank You!

## Agenda:

- Big picture: How did the Lege do? How did our team contribute?
- Five issue areas: Progress, disappointments, and next steps
  - Early Childhood
  - Maternal and Child Health
  - Children's Mental Health
  - Child Protection
  - Youth Justice
- Questions?

# How Did the Legislature Do?

## **Kudos to state leaders for:**

- Huge victory on full-day pre-k funding as part of large school funding increase
- Big victory on student mental health support in schools
- Significant steps on child care safety, Medicaid managed care, and ECI

# How Did the Legislature Do?

## But, the Legislature also:

- Accomplished very little for kids in foster care or families involved with CPS
- Accomplished nothing to address the state's worst-in-the nation uninsured rate for kids, women of childbearing age, and the overall population
  - Including failing to pass the first recommendation from the Maternal Mortality Task Force

# How Did Texans Care for Children Contribute?

**Together with legislators and our partners and supporters, we helped craft, champion, and advance successful bills for kids, including:**

- HB 3: Full-day pre-k funding
- HB 18 & HB 19: Student mental health support in school
- HB 25: Transportation to prenatal care and postpartum appointments
- HB 475: Support for pregnant and parenting youth in foster care
- HB 4414 (as an amendment): Creates a state plan for student mental health
- SB 11: Safe and supportive school practices
- SB 708: Collects data on child care safety and child-caregiver ratios
- SB 952: Improves nutrition and active play opportunities in child care
- SB 1390 (as an amendment) & HB 3980: Promotes suicide prevention for youth & other Texans
- \$31 million increase in Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) funding

A young child with curly hair is looking directly at the camera with a curious expression. The child is wearing a grey and white striped turtleneck sweater. The background is a brightly lit playroom with colorful toys and decorations, including a large pink and white floral decoration and a blue and white toy structure. The overall scene is warm and inviting.

# Early Childhood

# Early Childhood: Policy Progress

## HB 3 and Early Grade Success:

- Full-day funding for pre-k for four-year-olds (maintaining the same eligibility requirements)
- Quality pre-k standards
- Data collection on class size
- Encourages partnerships
- K-3 reading standards, literacy plans

# Early Childhood: Policy Progress

## Child Care:

- SB 568, SB 569, SB 706: Safety bills focused on state oversight of more informal providers
- SB 708: Collects data on child care safety and child-caregiver ratios
- SB 952: Improves nutrition and active play opportunities in child care
- HB 680: Improves data collection and transparency in TWC's subsidized child care program

# Early Childhood: Policy Progress

## Early Childhood Intervention (ECI):

- \$31 million increase for babies/toddlers with disabilities
  - The biggest infusion of state funds to ECI in over a decade
- But, HHSC had requested boost of \$72.6 million to ensure the viability of the program

# Early Childhood: Policy Disappointments

- ECI: Legislature did not approve full funding request or bills to strengthen ECI
- Child care: Less discussion about the quality of early learning environments than “safety”
- Census: No funding to ensure an accurate count of young children in the 2020 Census

# Early Childhood: Policy Next Steps

## Pre-K:

- Ensure successful implementation of HB 3 and monitor data collected
- Establish reliable funding source for HB 3 investment
- Improve quality of pre-k, including manageable class sizes and student-teacher ratios
- Support the recruitment and enrollment of more eligible three-year olds in public pre-k
- Better serve students of limited English proficiency
- Replace suspensions with more effective strategies

# Early Childhood: Policy Next Steps

## Child Care:

- Go beyond safety: Ensure ALL working parents have access to high-quality child care
- Monitor data collected on child care safety and child-caregiver ratios
- Help ensure all young Texas children are counted in the 2020 Census

## ECI:

- Ensure funding is adequate to sustain programs and effectively serve children

A healthcare professional, wearing a white double-breasted coat with dark buttons, is examining a baby lying on a white surface. The baby is wearing a white diaper and has dark hair. The professional's hands are positioned near the baby's hands, possibly checking for reflexes or pulse. The background shows a clinical setting with a desk and various items.

# Maternal and Child Health

# Maternal and Child Health: Policy Progress

## Maternal/Infant health:

- HB 25: Improves transportation to prenatal care and postpartum appointments
- HB 1111 (as amendment to SB 748): Implements pregnancy medical home pilot program, pilot for care coordination, and pilot to promote telehealth with moms
- SB 750: HHSC to identify limited postpartum care package in Healthy Texas Women

# Maternal and Child Health: Policy Progress

## Medicaid Managed Care:

- SB 1096: Improves medication access for kids with disabilities; streamlines some prior authorization processes (rules insurers have for what health services are covered and not covered)
- SB 1207: Creates external medical review process to resolve a Medicaid client's appeal after a health insurer denies or reduces doctor-ordered treatments

# Maternal and Child Health: Policy Progress

## Children's Health:

- SB 21: Raises the age of tobacco sales from age 18 to 21
- HB 72: Allows parents who adopt a child to opt into STAR Health Medicaid for a child with chronic health condition

# Maternal and Child Health: Policy Disappointments

- Did not pass bills to address the state's worst-in-the nation uninsured rate for
  - Kids
  - Women of childbearing age
  - The overall population
- Did not pass the first recommendation from the Texas Maternal Mortality Task Force (passed House)
- Did not pass the Children's Health Coverage bill (an amendment passed the House)
- Did not pass the most ambitious Medicaid managed care reforms

# Maternal and Child Health: Policy Next Steps

- State leaders must recognize our high uninsured rates for kids and adults and take meaningful steps to improve health insurance coverage
- Prevent eligible children from losing Medicaid insurance due to redundant red tape
- Monitor and stay engaged on SB 750 implementation (creation of postpartum benefit package in Healthy Texas Women)
  - What services are critical for new moms during the year after childbirth?

A young girl with curly hair, wearing a white shirt with a colorful floral pattern, is smiling slightly. The image is overlaid with a dark green gradient. The text "Children's Mental Health" is centered in white.

# Children's Mental Health

# Children's Mental Health: Policy Progress

## Mental Health in Schools - District and Campus Level:

- Educating school personnel and students on mental health, substance abuse, and suicide prevention (HB 18, SB 11)
- Requirements to have plans and procedures in place to:
  - Create safe and supportive school climates for all students (HB 18, SB 11)
  - Provide school-based services or referrals to students (HB 18, SB 11)
  - Assist students returning to school after hospitalization/residential treatment (HB 18)
  - Support students and staff following suicide deaths (HB 18, SB 11)

# Children's Mental Health: Policy Progress

## Mental Health in Schools - State Level:

- Model policies and guidance for districts (HB 18, SB 11)
- Regional training and technical assistance to schools on student mental health (HB 19)
- Regional and statewide inventories of student mental health and school climate resources (SB 11)
- State plan for addressing student mental health moving forward (SB 11)
- New funding for districts which can be used to support student mental health (SB 11, HB 3)
- Increased funding for Communities in Schools (HB 1)

# Children's Mental Health: Policy Progress

## Community-Based Mental Health:

- Creation of the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium to expand children's access to psychiatric care via medical schools (SB 11)
- Increased flexibility in mental health and substance use disorder services that MCOs can cover under Medicaid (SB 1177)
- Funding to increase the number of residential treatment center beds available to prevent parental relinquishment of custody to CPS (HB 1)
- Funding to eliminate LMHA waitlists for children...and adults, too! (HB 1)

# Children's Mental Health: Policy Progress

## Suicide Prevention:

- Statewide, multi-agency report on suicide that identifies:
  - Populations and regions at highest risk
  - Existing state laws, policies, programs, and data collection
  - Opportunities for state agencies and the Legislature to reduce suicide rates in Texas.

# Children's Mental Health: Policy Disappointments

## Funding for TEA & Districts to Address Student Mental Health:

- Final budget removed \$37 million TEA had requested for student mental health.

*Compare this to the Legislature's decisions to provide...*

- \$100 million dedicated to fund “school hardening” activities (SB 500)
- \$100 million dedicated to fund the child psychiatric consortium (HB 1)

# Children's Mental Health: Policy Disappointments

## Community-Based Mental Health:

- Bill to include a definition of “serious emotional disturbance for children” in the Texas Insurance Code died in House Calendars. (HB 501)
- Bill to include family peer support services as a billable benefit in the treatment of children and youth with serious emotional disturbance did not receive a hearing. (HB 2080)

# Children's Mental Health: Policy Disappointments

## Suicide Prevention:

- Language to dedicate \$2 million in funding to support community-based suicide prevention efforts was removed from HB 1 conference committee.
- Language requiring educators receive suicide prevention training at least once every five years was removed from SB 11 in conference committee.

# Children's Mental Health: Policy Next Steps

## Mental Health in Schools:

- Ensure effective implementation of the student mental health bills by TEA, Texas School Safety Center, education service centers, and school districts
- Encourage districts to use new funding available in SB 11 and HB 3 to support strategies that address student mental health and create safe and supportive school environments
- Ensure implementation of student mental health bills aligns with and leverages other TEA efforts (federal Project AWARE grant; special education reforms)

# Children's Mental Health: Policy Next Steps

## Community-Based Mental Health:

Ensure children's services align with "system of care" principles:

- Families as decision makers and integral part of child's "treatment" team
- Building upon child and family strengths
- Coordinating care among agencies to address individualized needs
- Providing trauma-informed, culturally and linguistically competent care
- Keeping kids at home - inpatient/residential treatment as last resort

# Children's Mental Health: Policy Next Steps

## **Suicide Prevention:**

- Ensure suicide prevention bills are implemented according to best practices
- Encourage regular training of school personnel on suicide prevention
- State funding to support community-based suicide prevention efforts



# Child Protection

# Child Protection: Policy Progress

## Keeping Families Safely Together and Preventing Entries into Foster Care:

- HB 475: Information for pregnant and parenting youth in foster care if not served by HIP
- SB 355: Develop a strategic plan for implementing the Family First Prevention Services Act
- Funding increase: Substance use prevention and treatment for pregnant women and mothers
- Small increase in funding for DFPS prevention programs

# Child Protection: Policy Progress

## Ensuring Children Are Healing and Thriving in Foster Care:

- SB 781: Intended to raise the bar for Residential Treatment Centers (RTCs) by changing how RTCs are proposed, developed, and operated
- Modest steps to support older foster youth

# Child Protection: Policy Disappointments

## Keeping Families Safely Together and Preventing Entries into Foster Care:

- Did not pass other bills to support pregnant and parenting youth in foster care
- Little progress on preparing for implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act

# Child Protection: Policy Disappointments

## Ensuring Children Are Healing and Thriving in Foster Care:

- Concerned about proposals that would make it harder to remove kids from unsafe situations (which fortunately did not pass)
- Foster care caseloads
- Did not pass SB 480 to implement the state Workgroup recommendations on supporting youth in the transition from foster care to adulthood
- Did not pass any of the bills to expand trauma-informed care in the child welfare system

# Child Protection: Policy Next Steps

## **Recommit to:**

- Supporting families so more kids can stay safely at home & out of foster care
- Ensuring youth in foster care are safe, supported, and prepared for a healthy adulthood

## **Be prepared for:**

- Implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act in 2021
- Final orders from the federal courts regarding the foster care lawsuit
- New DFPS Commissioner

## **Monitor:**

- The rollout of Community Based Care



# Youth Justice

# Youth Justice: Policy Progress

## **School discipline including suspensions:**

- HB 65: Collects more data on suspensions
- HB 692: Prohibits out-of-school suspensions of students experiencing homelessness
- HB 811: Requires districts to consider if a child is in foster care or experiencing homelessness when it makes school discipline decisions

## **School police officers:**

- HB 878 (passed as amendment): Requires all school districts (not just big ones) to ensure that school police officers are trained to work with youth

# Youth Justice: Policy Disappointments

- Did not pass “raise the age” legislation to make the juvenile justice system the default for 17-year-olds
- Did not move towards closing TJJD lock-ups and moving youth to local programs and facilities
- Passed SB 2432: Step backwards towards zero tolerance. Requires students to be placed in a DAEP for harassment of a school employee, including making obscene comments to annoy or embarrass staff

# Youth Justice Policy: Next Steps

- Build momentum for keeping youth out of the adult system and closing unsafe, ineffective state facilities
- Ensure young Texans who get in trouble have access to strong diversion programs and treatment services so they can stay at home and in school
- Reduce suspensions so kids can stay in school learning
- Monitor use of threat assessments on students exhibiting challenging behaviors per SB 11

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

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- 

## David Feigen

Early Education Policy Associate  
[dfeigen@txchildren.org](mailto:dfeigen@txchildren.org)

## Kate Murphy

Senior Child Welfare Policy Associate  
[kmurphy@txchildren.org](mailto:kmurphy@txchildren.org)

## Adriana Kohler

Senior Health Policy Associate  
[akohler@txchildren.org](mailto:akohler@txchildren.org)

## Stephanie Rubin

CEO  
[srubin@txchildren.org](mailto:srubin@txchildren.org)

## Josette Saxton

Director of Mental Health Policy  
[jsaxton@txchildren.org](mailto:jsaxton@txchildren.org)



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