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Child Protective Services

DFPS Adoption Initiatives

Fiscal Year 2024

Overview of Adoption Initiatives

DFPS continues to implement adoption strategies for children in foster care with the following goals in mind:

- Decreasing the length of time that children wait for adoption;
- Increasing adoptions for older children and youth;
- Increasing the number of kinship placements, verified kinship homes, and the number of positive permanency exits to family, to include relative adoption;
- Overcoming barriers to adoption.

To assist children eligible for adoption there are various initiatives involved.



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Strategies to Increase Kinship Adoptions

Updating Policy and Practice

- Update to policy to increase placement with kinship families for the purpose of maintaining kinship connections.
- DFPS continues to increase the use of the FINDRS program.
- Updating the home assessment process.
- Senate Bill 1896 during the 87th Legislative Session provisional license for kinship caregivers.



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Strategies to Increase Kinship Adoptions

Kinship Collaboration Group

- The kinship caregivers, with lived experience, provide a voice for improving kinship practices within CPS.
- Developed flyers to encourage other kinship families to get verified as a kinship foster home, join a kinship support group, find information on the DFPS Kinship Care Website, and join a Facebook group that posts resources across Texas.
- Review of policy and procedures.
- Helps to improve future kinship caregivers' involvement with Child Protective Services.



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Strategies to Increase Non-Relative Adoptions

The Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE)

- TARE features children's photos, profiles, videos, and a unique matching function.
- TARE is undergoing enhancement, which is projected for completion in 2025.
- TARE program specialists continue to work on the TARE forms & manual refresh.
- Texas children are also featured on AdoptUSKids, Adoption.com, and Children Awaiting Parents websites which are linked through TARE and provide additional exposure for our children and youth awaiting adoption..



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Strategies to Increase Non-Relative Adoptions

Expanding Heart Galleries

- Heart Gallery portraits and exhibits.
- Professional portraits are taken of the children.
- DFPS is collaborating with the newly formed Heart Galleries of Texas.



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Strategies to Increase Non-Relative Adoptions

Foster and Adoption Recruitment Materials

- The *Why Not You?* recruitment campaign materials were updated in 2020-2021.
- In 2022-2023, DFPS utilized CAPTA funds to purchase an abundance of foster/adoption recruitment items.
- FAD regions transitioning to Community Based Care are dispersing remaining materials to their local CASA and foster parent organizations so that recruitment can continue through these stakeholders.



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Strategies to Increase Non-Relative Adoptions

Other Foster/Adopt Community Partnerships

- Community stakeholders and organizations collaborate with DFPS and host adoption matching events to help recruit foster and adoptive homes. Local organizations enter into Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and assist with targeted recruitment in the areas where children reside and seek local permanent homes, foster placements, and respite care. Additional examples of these partnerships include the following:
 - Many regions partner with local television stations to feature children available for adoption on media spots like “Wednesday’s Child”.
 - Many regions partner with Wendy’s Wonderful Kids, of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, to recruit homes for children most at risk of aging out of foster care.
 - Community stakeholders and rotary clubs collaborate with DFPS and host adoption matching events to help recruit adoptive homes for children in DFPS care. This is usually for older youth or large sibling groups.



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Strategies to Successfully Move ALL eligible children to permanency through adoption

Operation PUSH (Placing Us in Safe Homes)

- Operation PUSH originally started in April 2005 and continues annually.
- The goal is to identify and eliminate barriers to completing adoptions and to assist in moving children to permanency.
- The PUSH initiative was updated this fiscal year to include a more specific look at barriers to achieving for children who are eligible for adoption.
- State Office Adoption Program Specialist
- Quarterly adoption management meetings.



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Strategies to Successfully Move ALL eligible children to permanency through adoption

Partnership with Texas Council on Adoptable Children (COAC)

- DFPS maintains a contract with the Texas Council on Adoptable Children (COAC), a statewide organization whose purpose is to connect, train, engage, and support adoptive families so that these families can be successful.
- COAC also helps adoptive families adjust to adoption and cope with any history of abuse and trauma to the child.
- The COAC State Board and regional branches provide support to these families.
- The State Board meets at least twice a year, but as many as four times a year with a liaison from DFPS to review current policies and provide feedback on the needs of adoptive families.
- COAC holds events to provide support and community for their adoptive families. During these events, COAC also provides specialized training for their adoptive children and parents.



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November is National Adoption Month

- TARE: We're posting NAD on our TARE website and social media. Social Media will include photos (as allowed) from adoption day events.
- Attending NAD: State Office staff/leadership attend events as time allows and/or as invited to lend support and show appreciation.
- TFFA: We've asked TFFA to post NAD on their website and social media.
- COAC: We've asked COAC to post NAD on their website and/or social media.
- COAC is hosting Family Photo events in San Antonio (Oct 28th), Austin (Nov 11th), Houston (Nov 11th), and Dallas (flexible scheduling).



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Thank you
