

Working Together to Support Children & Families

Delivering quality information and resources to Texas Community Organizations and Caregivers in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

In these times of uncertainty and rapid changes, Texas families are struggling to adjust to life with quarantine mandates, social isolation, school closures and loss of resources. It is critical that communities are aware of the child protection risks rapidly emerging so we can work together to support children and families that may need support.

Regardless of their situation, many parents are facing every day parenting challenges in addition to financial, emotional, and psychological stress. In these environments the risk of child maltreatment is heightened. Not only in Texas, but nationwide, media outlets have begun citing correlations between the COVID-19 public health crisis and emerging [child abuse cases](#) and [deaths](#).

“Ensuring information, support and resources are getting to families across Texas is critical to prevent more cases of child maltreatment in our communities.

The risks are mounting and asking for help in this time of crisis can be hard.”

-Sasha Rasco, Associate Commissioner of Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI),
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

PEI funds over 160 community-based organizations across Texas to provide parenting supports and education to families before there is a crisis or a need for child protection to intervene. You can find a list of all DFPS’s prevention programs [here](#). Parents can search for a provider in their community through this search as well as other resources that may help [here](#). Right now, these organizations are moving to virtual home-visits, counseling sessions, and parenting supports to continue meeting families’ needs. They are also organizing the delivery of basic needs to families such as diapers, formula, grocery gift cards and toys to occupy children in order to help immediately. These are your local resources to mobilize for parent support.

What can we do to prevent child maltreatment during COVID-19 uncertainties?

Stabilize yourself and your family

If you need assistance finding food, paying house bills or other essential services dial 211 to speak to someone locally or visit 211.org to find services electronically.

If your employment has been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19), apply for benefits either online at any time using Unemployment Benefits Services or by calling TWC’s Tele-Center at 1-800-939-6631 from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Central Time Mon-Fri



Ensuring that Youth, Parents and Caregivers in your community have access to the *best remote support services* is Critical

Youth Supports

[Texas Youth Helpline](#) is a service of the Texas Youth Helpline which provides prevention services to youths, parents, siblings, and other family members who are in need of a caring voice and sympathetic ear. Call 1-800-989-6884, text 512-872-5777, or [chat online](#).

Youth Support Line: call 310-855-4673 or text TEEN to 839863. Learn more and find resources [here](#).

Parent & Caregiver Supports

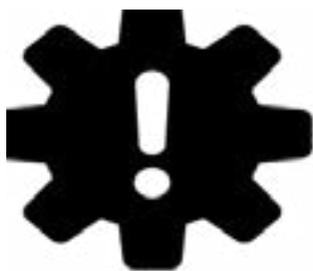
Parents can call 1-855-4A PARENT (1-855-427-2736) if you are needing guidance to ease emotional and psychological stress. [The National Parent Helpline](#), the organization facilitating the helpline, has 24/7 support as well as parent resources. You can call the number above to get advice from the parenting experts for a family member in a non-threatening situation.

DFPS's Prevention and Early Intervention division also has helpful tips for parents at [HelpandHope.org](#).

Offer social support to a struggling parent by offering to listen. Sometimes that is all it takes.

BE ALERT

Look out for signs of child abuse and neglect and report any concerns to authorities. With schools closed, a critical safety net for vulnerable children has been lost. Educators and other school staff, who represent the largest professional resource for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect in Texas, are no longer seeing children on a daily basis.



1. If you suspect child abuse, neglect or exploitation call the Texas Department for Family Protective Services: 1-800-252-5400 or report online [here](#).
2. Call your local law enforcement agency or 9-1-1 immediately if you have an emergency or life-threatening situation.

For the indefinite future keeping families healthy from the virus has created a different kind of crisis in our communities. We must work together to avoid a public health crisis turning into a child abuse crisis. Texas communities are strong, even in isolation. Let us do what we can to protect all children and families.