



# Year In Review

## 2020 MILESTONES

- ✓ We joined with public and philanthropic partners to develop a **TACFS COVID response program**, downgranting funding, offering needed trainings, and providing concrete resources to help organizations meet immediate needs during the ongoing pandemic.
- ✓ TACFS launched an **Equity and Access member initiative** to explore and address disproportionality in the child welfare system. It's critical that organizational leaders reflect and understand the communities we serve.
- ✓ The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health established a policy fellowship within TACFS to further our work related to **children's mental health**.
- ✓ The Office of the Governor awarded the Texas Center for Child and Family Studies (the Center) a grant to **help nonprofits support survivors of child sex trafficking**.
- ✓ TACFS carried out in-depth training and integration work for the **Texas Permanency Outcomes Project**, a partnership with the University of Texas at Austin's Texas Institute for Child and Family Well Being that helps foster care agencies connect children to their birth families regardless of their permanency outcome.

## Dear TACFS Members and Friends,

None of us will forget 2020 and the unprecedented challenges it has presented for our child welfare system. Still, as the year winds down, the commitment of child welfare professionals in Texas has never been stronger or more apparent, and I could not be more grateful for the opportunity to work with our members.

TACFS members have adjusted to the pandemic's harsh realities with abundant professionalism and an endless commitment to Texas children. We have written a new playbook to protect children and now our caregivers, staff, and families during a time of social distancing. For many on the front lines of delivering care, working from home was not an option.

Our members have not only maintained services, but often improved them. During an economic tailspin, critical resources were raised. Child-serving organizations have worked together and with community partners to expand care, increase trainings and professional development, and share best practices — all in an environment of often-duplicative regulation. At a time when so much was shut down, TACFS members continued to show up and serve.

We celebrate your resilience, but we know this season also brought loss. We grieve with you the family members, friends, caregivers, and dedicated workers that are no longer with us. During a very difficult time, our members have been there to support each other.

I cannot thank you enough for your inspiring work and your steadfast partnership throughout 2020. Looking forward, we have every reason to be optimistic. While 2021 will bring its own obstacles, there is no doubt the members of our Alliance will be ready to provide high-quality care for Texas children and youth.



Katie Olse  
CEO, TACFS

## GUIDED BY OUR VALUES



### ADVOCACY

Working with key agency and legislative officials, TACFS amplified the unique needs of child-serving organizations. We are continuing to advocate for an investment in child, youth and family services across the continuum, to increase access to mental health and substance use services, and to provide insight and guidance on CBC, FFPISA, and federal lawsuit implementation.



### COLLABORATION

Our members helped each other adapt to the fast-changing demands of the pandemic by sharing resources and information on evolving practices. TACFS teamed with public and philanthropic partners to get needed resources and supplies to organizations and those they serve and to advance system-wide improvements.



### EDUCATION, TRAINING, RESEARCH

TACFS has prioritized professional development for member organizations and launched our Center for Online Learning. We converted our annual conference to a fully digital platform so professionals could safely connect and learn. We embarked on and completed original research and system analysis.

# Looking Ahead to 2021

We are looking forward to the upcoming year. While the pandemic will continue to affect services and programs, there is light at the end of the tunnel as vaccines become available. The new year also presents new opportunities for programs and collaborations geared toward providing high-quality care to children, youth and families. These are some of our key areas of focus as we head toward 2021 and the promise it holds.



## LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

The Texas Legislature will meet for 140 days beginning January 12. TACFS will work with legislators and advocates to support families before a crisis hits through prevention and early intervention services, invest in high-quality care for children and youth with complex needs, provide the funding needed to support the child-serving workforce, develop services for family preservation, prioritize mental and behavioral health services, and improve access to post-adoption services.



## COVID-19 VACCINE

The arrival of numerous COVID-19 vaccines brings with it renewed hope for the end of the pandemic. However, distributing the vaccine throughout the state will be a complex and lengthy process. TACFS will work with our members and state officials to see that child welfare professionals and caregivers are among priority populations for receiving the vaccine, which will allow us to more fully serve children and youth.



## TRAINING AND RESEARCH

TACFS seeks to remain on the cutting edge of research and data analysis so that we are proactive rather than reactive. This work will inform our technical assistance, consultation, and the full-scale launch of our training division to help organizations working across the continuum of care. We are building services to support our members' work, from providing trainings on trauma-informed care, to building knowledge and community services for survivors of child sex trafficking, to helping organizations become credentialed to address the behavioral health needs of children in foster care.



## PARTNERSHIPS

It's important that we fully maximize partnerships that further the work of youth services in communities. These partnerships will create opportunities for youth to have the education, career opportunities, housing, and health care they need after transitioning from the child welfare system to independent living. The continued work of efforts such as the Building Bridges Initiative and the Texas Permanency Outcomes Project will help build collaborations resulting in the sharing of best practices.



## COMMUNITY-BASED CARE AND SERVICES

We are focused on equipping and empowering child- and youth-serving organizations to meet the unique needs of their communities. TACFS will be reinforcing the need to grow and support prevention and family preservation services to keep families strong and kids at home. We will continue to support Community-Based Care in current areas and help ready communities where it is not yet implemented. We will also work to support the growth of community services for victims of child sex trafficking.