



**Office of Disability
Prevention for Children
Report for Fiscal Year 2021-
2022**

**As Required by
Human Resources Code, Section
112.051**

**Texas Health and Human Services
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TEXAS
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Executive Summary

There are an estimated 485,000 children with intellectual or developmental disabilities in the state of Texas.¹ Texas Human Resources Code, Section [112.041](#) directs the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Office of Disability Prevention for Children (ODPC) to work on preventing developmental disabilities while also seeking to minimize the losses developmental disabilities may cause, especially in infants and young children. ODPC strives to prevent developmental disabilities in infants and children from conception to age 12 through provider and public education, partnerships with other state agencies and stakeholders, and evaluating state efforts to prevent developmental disabilities. Through collaboration with stakeholders and other programs, data analysis, and a review of existing research, ODPC selected four areas of focus:

- Prevention of disabilities caused by maternal health issues during pregnancy
- Prevention of disabilities caused by childhood injuries
- Early identification and diagnosis of disabilities to ensure early intervention and services
- Promotion of mental health wellness for children with an intellectual or developmental disability

In 2019, House Bill 2783, 86th Legislature, Regular Session, established the Pediatric Acute-Onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome (PANS) Advisory Council to advise HHSC and the Legislature on research, diagnosis, treatment, and education related to PANS. In 2020, ODPC became the designated Health and Human Services (HHS) program to directly collaborate with the PANS Advisory Council.

During the reporting period, ODPC staff attended conferences and meetings and facilitated training and webinars to promote disability awareness education and community collaboration. Program staff and community volunteers also prepared and distributed more than a quarter million pieces of prevention education materials to schools, service providers, families, and other stakeholders throughout the state.

¹ *9.1 IDD in Texas: Estimated Prevalence*, 2019 HHS Texas Statewide Behavioral Health Strategic Plan Update and the Foundation for the IDD Strategic Plan, p. 82.

Introduction

Texas Human Resources Code, Section [112.051](#) requires that ODPC submit a biennial report to the Legislature detailing the findings of the office, the results of the program, and any recommendations for improvements in the delivery of developmental disability prevention services. This report is due to the Legislature by February 1 of each odd-numbered year. The first report was submitted in February 2019 and established a framework for future ODPC initiatives.

The report is submitted in compliance with the Texas Human Resources Code Section 112.051 and is prepared by ODPC. It details ODPC's activities in each of the program's focus areas for fiscal years 2021 and 2022. The report also includes a review of HHS and Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) programs that impact disability prevention throughout the state.

Background

ODPC is governed by Texas Human Resources Code Section 112.041-112.051 and is the successor to the former Texas Office for the Prevention of Developmental Disabilities. Senate Bill 200, 84th Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, abolished the former office and its executive committee and transferred the duties to the HHSC, effective September 1, 2017.

ODPC works to prevent developmental disabilities and seeks to minimize the losses developmental disabilities cause, especially in infants and young children.

For the purposes of ODPC, a developmental disability is defined as a severe, chronic disability that²:

- Is associated with a mental or physical impairment or a combination of both.
- Manifests before a person reaches the age of 22.
- Will likely continue indefinitely.
- Requires special interdisciplinary or generic care, treatment, or other lifelong or extended services.
- Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more major life activities. Life activities include:
 - ▶ Self-care;
 - ▶ Receptive and expressive language;
 - ▶ Learning;
 - ▶ Mobility;
 - ▶ Self-direction;
 - ▶ Capacity for independent living; and
 - ▶ Economic sufficiency.

While ODPC's largest focus is on primary prevention, stakeholders and partners have identified several secondary- and tertiary-level issues on which ODPC also focuses its efforts.

Primary prevention is the prevention of the onset of a disability. ODPC's primary prevention efforts aim to reduce the incidence of disability. This could include wearing a seatbelt to prevent brain injury during a motor vehicle accident or

² Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities. (n.d.). [What is a Developmental Disability? - TCDD \(texas.gov\)](http://www.tcdd.texas.gov)

abstaining from drinking alcohol during pregnancy to prevent fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

Secondary prevention is the detection of the disability in its earliest stages and intervening to slow or stop its progression. This could include detecting a developmental delay through developmental screening and seeking help immediately, so the child can get the support needed to develop the skills and functions typically seen at that age.

Tertiary prevention includes interventions implemented to mitigate a disability's negative impact and prevent secondary conditions. This could include therapies and treatments that support a child's development and health needs or adaptive aids that empower a child to find ways to work around their disability.

ODPC operates with two full-time staff and community volunteers. The program spent fiscal years 2021 and 2022 implementing established goals and evaluating the state of disability prevention in Texas. The activities and goals of ODPC are guided by the duties assigned in statute.³ ODPC has selected four areas of focus through collaboration with stakeholders and other HHS system programs, as well as analysis and review of existing research and data.

The areas of focus are:

- Prevention of disabilities caused by maternal health issues during pregnancy;
- Prevention of disabilities caused by childhood injuries;
- Early identification and diagnosis of disabilities to ensure early intervention and services; and
- Promotion of mental health wellness for children with an intellectual or developmental disability.

³ Texas Human Resources Code Section 112.044.

Areas of Focus

In November 2017, following the program's inception, ODPC brought together a group of over 40 stakeholders to discuss ODPC's vision for the future. The group included state agency staff from programs throughout the HHSC, Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and DFPS; representatives from disability or child health-related nonprofits; and other interested individuals. Stakeholders provided insightful feedback after ODPC staff presented the duties, definitions, and expected trajectory of the program. The four focus areas were selected based on stakeholder feedback and input from subject matter experts.

Focus Area: Preventing Disabilities Caused by Maternal Health Issues During Pregnancy

ODPC addresses the prevention of disabilities caused by maternal health issues during pregnancy by working with the DSHS Division of Maternal and Child Health, the HHSC Office of Mental Health Coordination, and other internal and external programs. During the reporting period (fiscal year 2021 and fiscal year 2022), the ODPC program staff conducted conference presentations and statewide webinars related to maternal and child health and the prevention of substance use during pregnancy.

A mother's health before and during pregnancy has a substantial impact on how her baby develops neurologically and physiologically. A mother's nutrition, exposure to toxins, or infections all have the potential to cause birth defects and permanent intellectual or developmental disabilities. Preconception care and prenatal care are crucial elements of both the mother and her baby's health and decrease the likelihood of a baby being born with a preventable disability. Proper preconception and prenatal care can help a mother maintain a healthy pregnancy, ultimately helping her baby's development.

ODPC also addresses the prevention of disabilities caused by prenatal alcohol or substance exposure. Prenatal exposure to alcohol, tobacco, and other substances can cause birth defects and permanent intellectual or developmental disabilities. Although any of these substances can be harmful to a developing fetus, alcohol has the strongest impact. Prenatal alcohol exposure can result in fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). A child who has FASD may have physical birth defects, cognitive

deficits, and neurological issues. These effects can result in a child being unable to live independently, poor school performance, or trouble with law enforcement.⁴

FASD is an umbrella term used to describe the range of neurological and behavioral effects caused by prenatal alcohol exposure. It refers to specific conditions such as:

- Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), the most severe end of the FASD spectrum;
- Partial FAS;
- Alcohol-related neurodevelopmental disorder;
- Alcohol-related birth defects; and
- Neurobehavioral disorder associated with prenatal alcohol exposure.

Only about 10 percent of individuals with FASD display the facial abnormalities characteristic of FAS.⁵ While brain damage cannot be seen with the naked eye, the effects can be seen through the behaviors of the individual.

Many of the programs that impact the prevention of prenatal substance exposure also impact the prevention of other disabilities that result from maternal health issues or behaviors during pregnancy.

Focus Area: Preventing Disabilities Caused by Childhood Injuries

Injury is the leading cause of death in children in the United States, and millions of children suffer injuries requiring treatment in the emergency department.⁶ According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), childhood injury is among the most under-recognized public health problem facing the country.⁷

To promote education and public awareness regarding the prevention of unintentional injuries in children, ODPC partners with other agency programs (see page 10 for details), including Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services and the Office of Acquired Brain Injuries (OABI), as well as national, state, and local agencies to

⁴ Bell, E., Pietro, N. D., Chudley, A. E., Reynolds, J. N., & Racine, E. (2015). It's a Shame! Stigma Against Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Examining the Ethical Implications for Public Health Practices and Policies. *Public Health Ethics*,9(1), 65-77.
doi:10.1093/phe/phv012

⁵ Bell, E., Pietro, N. D., Chudley, A. E., Reynolds, J. N., & Racine, E. (2015). It's a Shame! Stigma Against Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Examining the Ethical Implications for Public Health Practices and Policies. *Public Health Ethics*,9(1), 65-77.
doi:10.1093/phe/phv012

⁶ SafeKids Worldwide. (n.d.) <https://www.safekids.org/why-it-matters>
⁷ CDC. (n.d.) [National Action Plan for Child Injury Prevention | Child Safety and Injury Prevention| CDC Injury Center](#)

provide prevention and education services aimed at parents and caregivers. Topics include allergies, bicycle/scooter safety, brain injury prevention, burn prevention, child passenger safety, drowning prevention, fall prevention, playground safety, poisoning prevention, road traffic safety, and sports safety.

Focus Area: Promoting Early Identification and Diagnosis of Disabilities to Ensure Early Intervention and Services

To address disabilities that are not preventable, ODPC promotes early identification and diagnosis of disabilities to ensure early intervention and services. Early intervention can make a significant difference in the lives of children who may have a disability or have been diagnosed with a developmental disability. Connecting children with services early can build the foundation they need to develop their cognitive, behavioral, and physical skills as they grow. Early intervention can also dramatically reduce the cost of services later in a child's life. However, early intervention is not possible without early identification. Families, medical providers, and other child-serving professionals have a primary role in tracking the development of a child to determine if they are falling behind.

The first five years of a child's life are a crucial time for development, which is why these years are often when developmental disabilities are identified and diagnosed. Many tools exist to help parents, medical providers, childcare professionals, educators, and others track the developmental milestones of a child.⁸ Developmental milestones are behaviors and abilities that a typically developing child should be exhibiting at a certain age. Milestones can involve physical skills, coordination, social habits, communication, and speech.

While some disabilities may have more obvious physical or biological traits, others require the monitoring of health conditions and presenting behaviors to ensure appropriate treatment. An example is PANS, a condition defined by the sudden onset of obsessive-compulsive symptoms and/or severe eating restrictions, along with at least two other cognitive, behavioral, or neurological symptoms. Examples of other symptoms include anxiety, depression, tics, personality changes, a decline

⁸ See the ODPC website for a list of these resources: [Early Identification and Diagnosis of IDD \(texas.gov\)](#). You can also visit cdc.gov/milestones to learn more about age-specific milestones and find additional resources.

in school performance, and sensory sensitivities. Symptoms typically begin during childhood but may begin at any age.⁹

ODPC is assisting the PANS Advisory Council as it addresses research, diagnosis, treatment, and education related to PANS throughout the state.

Focus Area: Promoting Mental Health Wellness for Children with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability

ODPC also promotes mental health wellness in children with intellectual or developmental disabilities through education and community collaboration with partners such as the HHSC Office of Mental Health Coordination, the Texas Center for Disabilities Studies at The University of Texas at Austin, and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health.

When a person has both a developmental disability and a mental health condition, this is often referred to as “co-occurring disorders” or sometimes called “dual diagnoses.” The co-occurrence of mental health conditions or substance use affects at least one-third of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs).¹⁰ Unfortunately, there are many challenges facing children with co-occurring IDD and mental health conditions.

One major challenge is the misinformation that circulates about this topic. Myths about whether a child with IDD can engage in behavioral health treatment or can even experience a behavioral health issue prevent children from receiving needed services. The truth is, children with IDD can experience mental illness, substance use disorders, and trauma just like their typically developing peers. Children with IDD benefit greatly from behavioral health therapy and treatment. However, mental health providers do not always feel adequately trained to work with children with IDD. In addition, there is a shortage of mental health professionals in many communities in Texas.

Due to the myths, a lack of awareness, and a need for more professional development on the topic, many children are misdiagnosed or not diagnosed at all. If a child is diagnosed, the available resources for children with IDD are likely to be

⁹ National Institutes of Health. (n.d.) [https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/13087/pediatric-acute-onset-neuropsychiatricsyndrome#:~:text=Pediatric%20acute%2Donset%20neuropsychiatric%20syndrome%20\(PANS\)%20is%20characterized%20by,\(also%20with%20sudden%20onset\)](https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/13087/pediatric-acute-onset-neuropsychiatricsyndrome#:~:text=Pediatric%20acute%2Donset%20neuropsychiatric%20syndrome%20(PANS)%20is%20characterized%20by,(also%20with%20sudden%20onset))

¹⁰ NADD. (n.d.). [Information on Dual Diagnosis. Retrieved from http://thenadd.org/resources/information-on-dual-diagnosis-2/](http://thenadd.org/resources/information-on-dual-diagnosis-2/)

limited and confusing. ODPC is working with community partners to ensure children with IDD who experience mental health issues receive quality care and support services.

Community Education and Outreach Activities

ODPC prevents disabilities through provider and public education, partnerships with other state agencies and stakeholders, and evaluating state efforts to prevent developmental disabilities. ODPC staff attended conferences and meetings and facilitated training and webinars to promote disability awareness education and community collaboration.

Prevention of Disabilities Caused by Maternal Health Issues During Pregnancy

Activities

During National FASD Awareness Month in September 2021 and 2022, ODPC published articles on preventing FASD in the HHS Connection newsletter, which was emailed to more than 35,000 agency employees across the state.¹¹ The articles were developed to bring attention to the topic of substance use during pregnancy, as well as the work the agency is doing by promoting awareness and education related to FASDs.

Statewide webinars addressing FASD prevention were conducted each September and included physicians and parents who discussed health issues associated with FASD as well as prevention strategies. A total of 794 parents, caregivers, providers, and other stakeholders attended the webinars.¹² A key message to participants was that a mother's exposure to alcohol in any amount from the time after conception through the third trimester of pregnancy is unsafe for a developing baby.

Other ODPC educational webinars were conducted during the reporting period to address the prevention of health issues during pregnancy, including presentations by HHSC Women's Health Coordination, Texas March of Dimes, and others.

Ongoing Strategies

ODPC will continue to support existing programs by educating program clients and providers about the relationship between a mother's health during pregnancy and her baby's chance of having a developmental disability. The program will also continue to collaborate with intra-agency partners and external groups focused on improving access to women's preventive, prenatal, and perinatal health care. The collaborative efforts will seek to meet a woman's healthcare needs, increasing her

¹¹ Office of Communications. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

¹² ODPC. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

ability to have a healthier pregnancy and baby. Partners include such programs as Healthy Texas Mothers and Babies, Texas Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and Healthy Texas Women.

Prevention of Disabilities Caused by Childhood Injuries

Activities

During the reporting period, ODPC staff hosted a series of eight statewide webinars addressing injury prevention in infants and children. The presentations were attended by 4,317 participants.¹³

ODPC is part of the Safe Kids Worldwide, which has local coalitions in Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Del Rio, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, Lubbock, San Angelo, San Antonio, and Temple. Program staff regularly partner with other coalition member organizations during ODPC conferences, webinars, and at various community events.

ODPC partnered with BlueCross BlueShield of Texas and Knowledge is Power Program Public Schools in Central Texas to include 2,100 pieces of ODPC program information in free school backpacks for elementary school children.¹⁴ This campaign, which was intended to provide valuable community resources to students and families, concluded on August 7, 2021.

On December 11, 2021, representatives from ODPC attended a holiday fair at Burnet Middle School in Austin, which was attended by approximately 400 parents with young children and toddlers. During the event, more than 1,000 pieces of ODPC education materials were distributed.

On August 6, 2022, ODPC partnered with the Austin Independent School District at the Parmer Events Center for the district's annual "Back to School Bash" event attended by 3,300 adults and children.¹⁵ ODPC staff distributed 2,300 pieces of program education and public awareness materials during the event.¹⁶

During the DFPS Annual Partners in Prevention Conference in Corpus Christi in September 2022, ODPC staff presented a session titled, "Accidents Happen: Injury Prevention and Safety in Infants and Children." Staff also operated a program

¹³ GoToWebinar. (2022) *Activity Report*.

¹⁴ ODPC. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

¹⁵ Austin Independent School District. (2022).

¹⁶ ODPC. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

exhibit table and distributed 1,200 pieces of educational disability prevention materials.¹⁷

ODPC further collaborated with Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services, OABI, and HHS Communications in the development of a brain injury prevention workbook for children. The workbook includes coloring pages and puzzles designed to teach young children about head safety.

Ongoing Strategies

ODPC will continue to seek opportunities to present to or train families and professionals on preventing injuries in children.

Early Identification and Diagnosis of Disabilities to Ensure Early Intervention and Services

Activities

In June 2022, ODPC staff exhibited program educational and public awareness materials at the annual Texas WIC Nutrition and Breastfeeding Conference. More than 750 pieces of ODPC prevention materials were distributed to conference attendees.¹⁸

ODPC staff exhibited at the Texas Nurse Practitioners Conference in September 2022 and distributed 480 pieces of program materials aimed at healthcare professionals who work directly with women of childbearing years.¹⁹

On August 2, 2022, ODPC partnered with the Epilepsy Foundation of Central and South Texas based in San Antonio to provide a seizure first aid certification training to 619 attendees.²⁰

During the annual Texas School Nurses Conference in September 2022, ODPC staff operated a program exhibit table and distributed 800 pieces of educational disability prevention materials to school nurses who work directly with school-aged children and their families.²¹

¹⁷ ODPC. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

¹⁸ ODPC. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

¹⁹ ODPC. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

²⁰ ODPC. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

²¹ ODPC. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

Ongoing Strategies

ODPC continues to support and facilitate collaboration to ensure early identification and diagnosis of disabilities in children. The HHSC Early Childhood Intervention and WIC programs provide direct services to ODPC's target population. As ODPC expands outreach efforts, supporting ECI, WIC, Blind Children's Vocational and Discovery and Development Program, and related programs will remain a priority. ODPC will promote training and continuing education on the topics of developmental screening and early identification and will continue to seek opportunities to improve the early identification of childhood disabilities within the HHS system.

Promotion of Mental Health Wellness for Children with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability

Activities

During the annual Texas Child Care Administrators Conference in September 2022, ODPC staff presented a session titled, "Addressing the Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences in Children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities." Staff also operated a program exhibit table and distributed more than 1,000 pieces of educational disability prevention materials.²²

ODPC partnered with The University of Texas at Austin Center for Disability Studies and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health to host virtual "Road to Recovery" training each quarter in fiscal year 2022. The four-day training classes were attended by 125 providers, family members, and other stakeholders from throughout the state who provide direct care and other services to children with IDD. Participants learned skills and values to support children's safety, well-being, and recovery through trauma-informed practices. A total of 596.5 continuing education credits were distributed to attendees.²³

Ongoing Strategies

ODPC will continue to work with its partners to seek out resources, best practices, and available educational opportunities regarding co-occurring IDD and mental health conditions in children. ODPC will also continue to support the Road to Recovery training throughout the state. Attending and participating in workgroup

²² ODPC. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

²³ ODPC. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

and coalition meetings will ensure ODPC remains current on available services for children with IDD who experience mental health concerns and how these services might interact. Continuing to raise awareness through speaking engagements will remain a priority for ODPC.

Annual Office of Disability Prevention for Children Statewide Conference

In March of each year, in honor of National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, the Office of Disability Prevention for Children offers a free four-day conference to discuss and learn strategies for implementing change and preventing developmental disabilities in children. The conference is intended for anyone working to prevent intellectual and developmental disabilities in children. Combined, a total 2,684 healthcare professionals, educators, government employees, providers, families, caregivers, and other stakeholders attended the two conferences.²⁴ State and national prevention professionals shared information about current trends, initiatives, and practical information for attendees. A total of 6,739 certificates of attendance and continuing education credits were distributed during the events²⁵

Monthly Prevention Webinars

ODPC educational statewide webinars were regularly conducted during the reporting period to address the program's four focus areas related to the prevention of intellectual and developmental disabilities. Prior to each webinar, approximately 21,200 registration notices were distributed to internal and external agency stakeholders.²⁶ A total of 7,423 parents, caregivers, providers, and other stakeholders attended 15 webinars.²⁷

Community Volunteers and Interns

The ODPC multi-regional community volunteer program was initiated in 2020 and quickly expanded to more than 60 volunteers and unpaid interns throughout the state working virtually from their homes to assist the program manager with administrative support duties and public awareness initiatives. Since its inception in 2020, program volunteers and interns donated 1,764.5 hours to the agency.²⁸ The

²⁴ GoToWebinar. (2022) *Activity Report*.

²⁵ ODPC. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

²⁶ GovDelivery Activity Report. (2022)

²⁷ GoToWebinar. (2022) *Activity Report*.

²⁸ ODPC. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

volunteers and interns provided program staff with additional support in working toward program goals and objectives.

Educational Materials

ODPC and HHS Communications developed child disability prevention educational materials in English and Spanish. The materials included a program brochure, accordion wallet card, educational materials order card, pregnancy tip flier, injury prevention card, alcohol and pregnancy prevention card, early identification and diagnosis card, and intellectual and developmental disabilities/mental health card.

Since the program's mailout initiative began in fiscal year 2021, program staff, volunteers, and interns prepared more than a quarter million pieces of educational materials that were distributed to more than 10,000 elementary, middle, and high school special education departments, medical facilities, and other organizations across the state.²⁹

Social Media Public Awareness Initiatives

During the reporting period, ODPC staff and volunteers created and submitted social media content that was regularly posted on the agency's social media platforms, which have an estimated following of 274,154 people.³⁰ The postings primarily contained information about program events and national and state prevention awareness observances.

Statewide Prevention Resource Guide

In fiscal year 2022, program staff and community volunteers created an IDD prevention resource guide for parents, caregivers, providers, and other stakeholders seeking information and services. The guide is posted on the program's webpage at PreventChildDisability.org and contains a comprehensive list of regional, state, and national resources.

²⁹ ODPC. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

³⁰ HHSC Office of Communications. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission

Collaborative Efforts

Programs within and outside of the HHS system are also working to prevent developmental disabilities in children, and ODPC continues to develop collaborations to strengthen and enhance those efforts while promoting the program's goals and objectives. The collaborations not only provide an opportunity to share valuable information regarding related policies, best practices, and innovative prevention methods, but they often result in initiatives that address the prevention of IDD in children. ODPC staff participates in the following coalitions, committee, and workgroups.

Adolescent Health Workgroup

ODPC staff participates in the quarterly DSHS Maternal Child Health Adolescent Health workgroup. The focus of the workgroup is for public health professionals to share resources and programming to increase the capacity of professionals to support one another in the group's endeavors to impact the health of youth and young adults in Texas. The workgroup addresses topics pertinent to the group such as mental health initiatives and youth mortality rates.

Cross-Systems Trauma-Informed Care Initiative

The HHSC Cross-Systems Trauma-Informed Care Initiative works to develop a coordinated statewide approach for building a person-centered, trauma-informed behavioral health and human services system and providing quality support, services, and care to Texans. During the reporting period, the ODPC program manager attended regular workgroup meetings.

Early Childhood Intervention/Child Find Self-Assessment Workgroup

The federal Office of Special Education Programs developed a voluntary Child Find Self-Assessment (CFSA) as a tool for state Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C programs to assess their child find system for identifying, locating, and evaluating all infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities. As part of the CFSA for the Texas Part C, the HHS Early Childhood Intervention program created a workgroup to review feedback and information gathered, evaluate best practices, and recommend actions to improve child find efforts statewide. ODPC staff actively participated in the CFSA workgroup, providing input and feedback.

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities/Mental Health School Legislation Workgroup

During the reporting period, the ODPC program manager facilitated the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities/Mental Health School Legislation Workgroup, which included representatives from the HHSC Office of Mental Health Coordination and The University of Texas at Austin Center for Disability Studies. House Bill 19, 86th Legislature, Regular Session, 2019, requires local mental health authorities (LMHA) to employ a non-physician mental health professional to serve as a mental health and substance use resource for school districts located in the region served by a regional education service center and in which the LMHA provides services. The workgroup strategized plans to incorporate the two-day Road to Recovery training into the plan to address trauma in school children with IDD. HHSC Office of Mental Health Coordination incorporated the legislative directives into LMHA contracts in fiscal year 2021.

Kids Living Well Coalition

As a member of the Kids Living Well Coalition at Austin-Travis County Integral Care, an LMHA agency, the ODPC program manager participated in several initiatives during the reporting period, including developing a five-year plan to promote mental health wellness in children. Additional examples include maintaining and expanding approaches to support child and youth wellness in early childhood settings and increasing screening for adverse childhood experiences and parental mental illness in locations such as primary health care providers and at access points for benefits programs such as the WIC program.

LifeSteps Coalition

The Central Texas LifeSteps Coalition's mission is to engage, inform, and empower the community to prevent and reduce substance use and other behavioral health disorders among youth, including young women of childbearing years. During the reporting period, ODPC staff collaborates on community event planning and educational materials distribution, which addresses the program focus area to prevent substance use among teens and young women of childbearing years.

Mental Health Treatment for People with IDDs Coordination Workgroup

The HHSC Mental Health Treatment for People with IDD's Collaboration workgroup, which is facilitated by the Office of Mental Health Coordination, discusses current challenges with access to mental health services for people with IDD, examines existing opportunities, and brainstorms options for coordination and enhancement of services. The workgroup is striving to create trauma-informed systems (which include local and state systems) that provide effective mental health services for children and adults with IDD. Once the new systems are developed and policies and best practices approved, ODPC will promote the information through a variety of methods, including program webinars, conference workshops, and other training events.

Office of Acquired Brain Injury

ODPC staff collaborates with OABI to promote brain injury prevention education and public awareness across Texas. Collaborative initiatives have included National Brain Injury Awareness Month events, including the Texas Brain Injury webinars and virtual conferences.

ODPC program staff regularly attends quarterly OABI and DSHS Maternal Child Health and Injury Prevention Unit quarterly collaborative meetings to discuss cross-program activities related to brain injury prevention and intervention initiatives.

Pediatric Acute-Onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome Advisory Council

The PANS Advisory Council advises HHSC and the Legislature on research, diagnosis, treatment, and education related to PANS. ODPC supports the PANS Advisory Council as it addresses research, diagnosis, treatment, and education related to PANS throughout the state. During the reporting period, ODPC staff assisted members to create two mandated annual legislative reports that were submitted to the Office of the Governor.

To recognize National PANS Awareness Day in September 2021 and September 2022, ODPC staff coordinated with advisory council members to offer free webinars, both titled, "Pediatric Acute-Onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome: An Often-Overlooked Condition in Children." A total of 681 parents, healthcare professionals, and other stakeholders attended the webinars.³¹

³¹ GoToWebinar. (2022) *Activity Report*

Person-Centered Practices Steering Committee

HHSC is incorporating person-centered practices (PCP) in all levels of service delivery, including in the ODPC program. The term “person-centered” means treating others with dignity and respect and empowering them to set and reach their personal goals.³²

The ODPC program manager is a member of the HHS PCP Steering Committee and a member of the Outward Face of the Agency Subcommittee. The subcommittee has developed a survey for department managers, created PCP posters for distribution in HHS offices, incorporated PCP verbiage into internal and external agency presentations, and is collaborating with HHS Communications to incorporate PCP in their publications and social media channels.

ODPC incorporates person-centered practices into program educational and public awareness planning, including webinars, social media postings, presentations, and training.

Safe Kids Austin Coalition

Safe Kids Austin, led by Dell Children’s Medical Center (Dell Children’s Ascension), is a coalition of more than 40 active members representing community, civic, and state organizations. The coalition focuses on reducing child injury primarily by promoting safety in vehicles, in and around water, and while walking and biking. Safe Kids Austin is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, the nation’s first nonprofit organization dedicated solely to the prevention of unintentional childhood injuries.³³

The ODPC program manager is a coalition member and part of the coalition’s data workgroup that meets to update and maintain relevant data related to drownings, head injuries, and accidental suffocations in children. The data is shared with the coalition workgroup and used to improve prevention planning and public awareness efforts.

³² Human Services Research Institute. (n.d.). *National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems*. <https://www.hsri.org/project/national-center-on-advancing-person-centered-practices-and-systems>

³³ Safe Kids Austin. (n.d.) Retrieved from: [Safe Kids Austin - Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas \(dellchildrens.net\)](https://www.dellchildrens.net/safe-kids-austin)

Texas Association for the Education of Young Children

Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TXEAYC) strives to improve early childhood education in Texas by supporting its members to be effective early childhood advocates. TXEAYC collaborates with other early childhood advocacy groups to promote sound public policies that improve quality and address the critical needs of young children and their families.

During the annual TXEAYC Virtual Conference in 2020 and 2021, the ODPC program manager presented the following sessions: “Preventing Trauma in Children with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities” in October 2020 and “Understanding and Addressing Stigma Associated with Prenatal Substance Use” in February 2021. The latter presentation was co-presented with a parent of a child with FASD who also represented the North Texas FASD Network. The TXEAYC conferences are attended by more than 1,200 early childhood educators from across the state each year.³⁴

Texas Parent to Parent

Texas Parent to Parent provides support, information, and education for families of children and adults with disabilities, chronic and mental health conditions, and other health care needs. ODPC staff regularly refers parents to the organization for information and support services. In July 2022, ODPC staff exhibited at the annual Statewide Parent to Parent Conference. More than 500 pieces of ODPC program educational materials were distributed to parents and other stakeholders.³⁵

Transition to Adulthood Learning Collaborative

The Transition to Adulthood Learning Collaborative, formerly the Texas Title V Transition Workgroup, meets quarterly to share knowledge, policy updates, implementation strategies, and best practices. Providers, youth and young adults, parents, caregivers, health care plans, hospital and university systems, and local community organizations are invited to participate. ODPC staff attends the quarterly meetings to share information and discuss cross-program activities.

³⁴ TXEAYC. (2022)

³⁵ HHSC Office of Communications. (2022). Texas Health and Human Services Commission

Travis County Underage Drinking Prevention Taskforce

The Travis County Underage Drinking Prevention Task Force works to identify the link between underage drinking with more highly visible social issues in addition to drinking and driving such as truancy, binge drinking, unplanned/unwanted sexual encounters, teen pregnancy, fetal alcohol syndrome, HIV exposure, gang/juvenile crime, poor academic performance, and alcohol poisoning. The task force is comprised of social service, law enforcement, and other agencies and individuals, including the Texas Department of Transportation, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Travis County Sheriff's Office, the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, Austin Police Department, area school districts, local colleges and universities, and health care providers. The ODPC program manager is a task force member and collaborated on materials distribution and project planning during the reporting period. The collaboration addresses the program's area of focus related to the prevention of disabilities caused by maternal health issues during pregnancy.

United Services for All Children

The Texas Education Agency coordinates the state United Services for Children coalition meetings and activities. United Services for Children is a nonprofit organization that provides pediatric therapy and early intervention services to children with developmental disabilities and delays and offers support services for their families. The focus is on children ages birth through 8 years old.³⁶ ODPC staff attends the quarterly coalition meetings and reports on program and agency initiatives.

³⁶ United Services for Children. (n.d.) Retrieved from: <https://unitedservicesforchildren.org/>

Recommendations for Existing Community Services

ODPC continues to support areas of improvement and stakeholder recommendations in the delivery of developmental disability prevention services, which include the following:

- Improving timely entry into prenatal care, which is the first line of defense in preventing developmental disabilities;
- Supporting evidence-based programs, such as substance abuse treatment, domestic violence services, and prevention services including home visiting, injury prevention, teen pregnancy prevention, family violence, and child abuse/neglect;
- Integrating training on the effects of adverse childhood experiences in children with developmental disabilities for all state employees who provide direct services; and
- Ensuring systems are in place to provide families of children with developmental disabilities with timely information about Medicaid interest lists during initial requests for services.

Conclusion

Since its inception five years ago, ODPC has worked with internal and external agency partners to promote community collaboration, sound public policies, and educational services across Texas to reduce and prevent IDD in children.

During the reporting period, ODPC raised awareness about the prevention of maternal health issues during pregnancy, injury prevention, early childhood intervention, and co-occurring IDD and mental health conditions through events, speaking engagements, and social media initiatives.

ODPC will continue to work in collaboration with providers, families, and other stakeholders to promote respect, foster understanding, and highlight the importance of prevention and early intervention initiatives in the lives of Texas children and families.

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
DFPS	Department of Family and Protective Services
DSHS	Department of State Health Services
FAS	Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
FASD	Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
HHS	Health and Human Services
HHSC	Health and Human Services Commission
IDD	Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
LMHA	Local Mental Health Authorities
OABI	Office of Acquired Brain Injury
ODPC	Office of Disability Prevention for Children
PANS	Pediatric Acute-Onset Neuropsychiatric Syndrome
PCP	Person-Centered Practices
TXEAYC	Texas Association for the Education of Young Children
WIC	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children