

children at Risk

The 86th Texas Legislative Session: Prioritizing Children

Build Strong Families and Spend Public Dollars More Efficiently

Educate and Engage Parents:

- Fund prevention and early intervention programs that empower families, support children's academic success, and reduce risk-factors.
- Establish a task force to examine and increase access to evidence-based parent education and quality engagement programs in Texas and improve inter-agency coordination at the state level.

Invest in Quality Public Education to Ensure All Children Are Ready for College and Careers

Increase Access to Quality Early Education to Ensure All Children Are Ready for Kindergarten:

- Improve coordination, transparency, and efficiency within and among Texas' early childhood education programs.
- Increase subsidized child care programs statewide, particularly in underserved communities.
- Prioritize professional development aimed at improving the quality of the workforce to maximize state spending.

Pre-Kindergarten:

- Provide school districts with formula funding for full-day, voluntary Pre-K to improve kindergarten through 3rd grade academic outcomes.

School Finance:

- Appropriately allocate funding in a meaningful way that supports all public school students including but not limited to early education, economically disadvantaged students, and dual-language learners.
- Allocate funding to school districts that implement an extended school year to compensate for the additional costs incurred.

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CHILDREN AT RISK
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Invest in Programs and Strategies that Improve Children’s Physical, Mental and Social Development

Recess:

- Require school districts to adopt and implement a local school recess policy customized to local needs.

Mental Health:

- Increase access to school-based behavioral telemedicine so more districts and students receive mental health services.
- Provide trauma-training for teachers so that children’s mental health needs can be identified, interventions can be made earlier, and school violence can be better prevented.
- Fund an accountable school-behavioral health grant to increase access to mental/behavioral services at school.

Maternal Health:

- Implement and appropriate funding for the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force’s recommendations, which include 12-month health coverage for postpartum mothers.

Prevent Human Trafficking and Protect Survivors

End Demand:

- Reform Texas’ prostitution law to create the Texas Model, a first-in-the-nation framework that provides services to arrested victims/prostituted individuals and makes sex-buying a state jail felony on the first offense.
- Allow commercial lessees to void their leases if the landlord or property owner rents to an unlicensed massage establishment within the same commercial vicinity.

Improve Data on Human Trafficking:

- Fund a Center on Human Trafficking operated by CHILDREN AT RISK to study the impact of legislation and tactics statewide and identify gaps.

Protect Survivors:

- Enable victims to permanently seal prostitution, misdemeanor theft, and certain drug convictions if they were trafficked when the crimes occurred and cooperated with law enforcement after their last offense.
- Train school district leadership on human trafficking to motivate leadership to increase teacher and administrator trainings without sacrificing local control.

**During the 86th Texas Legislative Session,
CHILDREN AT RISK will also prioritize legislation that impacts low-income
families in Texas and Hurricane Harvey recovery.**

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