

children **atRisk**

SPEAKING OUT +

DRIVING CHANGE

FOR CHILDREN

A photograph of two young children, a girl and a boy, sitting on the floor and looking at a book. The girl is on the left, wearing a white and blue striped shirt, and the boy is on the right, wearing a blue plaid shirt. They are both looking down at the book, which features a snowman illustration. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in the room.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Driving Change for Every Child Texas-Wide

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

DR. BOB SANBORN

Since 1989, CHILDREN AT RISK has helped children overcome the challenges of growing up. We know that kids are at risk for many different reasons, including poverty, abuse and neglect, discrimination, lack of quality education, or healthcare access. That's why our work focuses on understanding the root causes of childhood poverty and inequity and advocating for better public policies so more all Texas families have the tools and supports they need to thrive. During the

2021 Texas legislative session, CHILDREN AT RISK supported 17 child-forward bills into law. Today, more Texans have access to high-quality, affordable child care, voluntary pre-K, prenatal and maternal health coverage, and nutrition assistance thanks in part to our advocacy efforts.

We also know it takes more than one organization to make sure every child has the opportunity to succeed. CHILDREN AT RISK is committed to working with others who share our goals of improving the lives of Texas kids through our Texas Family Leadership Council (TXFLC). Our work in action, the TXFLC supports child-serving organizations and community leaders in every corner of Texas. Together, we share information, identify opportunities for collaboration, raise awareness of the needs of families in our state, develop actionable solutions, and present a unified voice for children. By working together, we're improving the odds for children in Texas.

Like the unprecedented year before it, 2021 was once again a time of reckoning, deep reflection, and innovation. CHILDREN AT RISK continued to learn, grow, and invest in our racial equity efforts. We proudly welcomed Sharon Watkins Jones to lead CHILDREN AT RISK's internal equity work and serve as our Director of the Texas Racial Equity Collaborative (TREC). TREC launched in 2020 to collaborate with community partners to share data on how race plays into child well-being in Texas, lead initiatives that address structural racism and its impact on children, and support culturally responsive programs and services. We are committed to this work because we know it's the only way to build a brighter future for all Texas kids.

CHILDREN AT RISK is excited to continue the fight for Texas kids in 2022. From our longstanding research and advocacy efforts to our work with other organizations through new initiatives like TREC and TXFLC, we're committed to making a difference for all children in the Lone Star State. We hope you'll support us by joining our [mailing list](#), attending one of our upcoming [events](#), or supporting us with a [meaningful gift](#) today! For Children!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Sanborn', written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bob Sanborn, EdD.

President & CEO, CHILDREN AT RISK

ADVOCACY



CHILDREN AT RISK ADVOCATES DRIVE MAJOR CHANGE FOR TEXAS CHILDREN!

In 2021, CHILDREN AT RISK advocates and partners made significant gains for children and families in the state of Texas. The 87th Texas Legislative Session was one of the most successful sessions for advancing policies for children in recent years. The C@R legislative team monitored thousands of bills, registered support for bills 93 times, provided written testimony 23 times, and provided oral testimony 20 times.

Through our extensive advocacy efforts, collaborations with legislators, and partnerships with fellow advocates and child-serving nonprofits, CHILDREN AT RISK ultimately helped 17 bills pass into law.

Early Childhood & K-12 Education

- **HB 2607** (Talarico et al./Lucio) will require subsidy providers to participate in the state's previously voluntary quality rating and improvement system, Texas Rising Star. With an appropriate phase-in period and increased access to supports and coaching, HB 2607 will improve the quality of care available to the more than 136,000 children currently enrolled in a subsidized program.
- **HB 1792** (Button et al./Zaffirini) streamlines the evaluation of child care providers participating in the Texas Rising Star system.
- **HB 619** (S.Thompson et al./Alvarado) requires the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to collect additional data and develop a strategic plan to support a sustainable child care workforce.

**C@R DIRECTOR OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION,
KIM KOFRON, TESTIFIES
IN SUPPORT OF HB 2607.**





**C@R STAFF ATTORNEY,
CAROLINE ROBERTS,
TESTIFIES IN SUPPORT
OF HB 390.**

- **SB 1555** (Zaffirini/Raney) brings much-needed financial relief to providers and incentivizes high-quality care by increasing state reimbursement rates.
- **SB 560** (Lucio/Guerra et al.) requires the state to develop a strategic plan to improve access to high-quality bilingual education.
- **SB 179** (Lucio/Huberty et al.) ensures school counselors spend most of their workday supporting and counseling students and protecting them from being overburdened with administrative and other non-counseling-related tasks.
- **HB 3643** (King et al./Taylor) establishes the Texas Commission on Virtual Education to develop and make recommendations on virtual education for public schools. The bill also provides for funding virtual education under the newly-established Foundation School Program.
- **SB 2081** (Menéndez/Talarico) limits the size of public prekindergarten classes.

Child Safety & Opportunity Youth

- **HB 390** (S.Thompson et al./Huffman) requires hotels and motels to train employees on human trafficking prevention and reporting. The businesses must also post signs in areas visible to employees that provide reporting information.
- **HB 1540** (S.Thompson et al./Huffman) is the Attorney General's human trafficking omnibus bill. This bill provides extra protections for children in residential treatment centers. It increases the penalty for soliciting sex from a Class A misdemeanor on the first offense to a state jail felony, among other anti-human trafficking provisions.

- **HB 2633** (A. Johnson et al./Huffman) establishes a human trafficking grant program that provides resources for youth and young adult victims of human trafficking, including housing and long-term support.
- **SB 315** (Huffman et al./Hunter et al.) prohibits sexually oriented businesses from employing individuals under 21.
- **SB 452** (West/Rose) revises state standards for evidence-based prevention programs to ensure Texas provides the best possible programming and services to prevent child abuse or neglect.

Health & Nutrition

- **HB 133** (Rose et al./Kolkhorst) extends the eligibility of mothers on Medicaid from two months to six months. While the original bill called for an extension of up to 12 months, this is still an improvement.
- **HB 290** (Cortez et al./Kolkhorst), which prevents eligible children from mistakenly getting kicked off of Medicaid, rose from the dead and was amended to **HB 2658** (Frank/Kolkhorst), which made its way to the Governor's desk.
- DSHS is required to provide a biannual immunization report. For years that include the declaration of a public health disaster, **SB 1353** (Miles/Guerra) will require this report to include information regarding the accessibility of vaccinations based on age, race, and location to determine disparities in immunization. The report must also estimate the economic benefits of reducing these disparities and include legislative recommendations to minimize them, leading to a more equitable distribution of vaccines in a public health disaster.
- **SB 224** (Perry et al./Walle et al.) simplifies the process of renewing SNAP benefits for ages 60 and older. This change will benefit the many Texas children who live with or are cared for by grandparents or senior relatives.



HIGH SCHOOL INTERN,

BRANDON HAWKINS,

JOINS C@R AT THE CAPITAL.



BRANDON WITH REP. ANA-MARIA

RAMOS AFTER TESTIFYING

IN SUPPORT OF HB 1144 AT A

PUBLIC EDUCATION HEARING.

Texas missed opportunities to tackle systemic racism and address childhood racial disparities. Numerous bills were filed to reinstate and provide appropriate funding for the Office of Minority Health Statistics and Engagement. None made it far in the legislative process. **SB 399** (Lucio) would have assessed state agencies' efforts to reduce racial disparities via the Sunset Advisory Commission if passed, and **HB 710** (Coleman)/ **SB 108** (West) would have given legislators a tool to evaluate the impact of pending legislation on childhood racial disparities if passed. We hope to see Texas leaders make racial equity a greater priority in future sessions. Texas will never reach its full economic potential unless ALL Texas children are equipped with the tools and resources they need to thrive.

While the regular session brought landmark change for Texas children and families, the work never stops. Over the course of three special sessions, CHILDREN AT RISK advocates continued to push good legislation for children and stand up against policies that could cause them harm. On the Federal stage, CHILDREN AT RISK worked alongside advocacy organizations nationwide to pass the **American Rescue Plan** (March 2021), bringing \$4.4 billion in relief funds to Texas to meet the needs of families with young children, early childhood educators, and child care providers.

CHILDREN AT RISK continues to lead on impactful policy issues for children, families, and Texas's future workforce. Our job isn't done until all children in Texas can grow up healthy and supported with equitable opportunities to achieve great things for themselves and our state.

**COR VICE PRESIDENT & DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS,
MANDI KIMBALL, PRESENTS ON RECENT LEGISLATIVE WINS FOR KIDS
DURING A SESSION DEBRIEF.**

The State of Texas Children

Children living in poverty have many needs. Helping our kids thrive means moving beyond silos and addressing the needs of the whole child, and families.

children atRisk

RESEARCH



CHILDREN AT RISK RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS DRIVES DECISION MAKERS.

From our renowned *Growing Up in Houston* publication to collaboration on academic journals and innovative data visualizations, CHILDREN AT RISK continued to help Texas policymakers and community leaders understand the needs of children. We were honored to be a go-to resource for Texas legislators for high-quality data and actionable information.

Members of CHILDREN AT RISK's research team were able to provide child advocates with information on topics that include: education inequalities and resilience post-Covid 19, access to healthy school meals, chronic absenteeism, growing child care deserts, youth suicide and mental wellbeing, and much, much more. The work of our data scientists, issue experts, and researchers on the ground contributed to key decisions made in the State Capitol, City Hall, philanthropic circles, and beyond. Below are just a few highlights from the year.

CHILDREN AT RISK School Rankings Adapt To Reflect Education Challenges Post-Pandemic

COVID-19 changed our public education landscape nearly overnight. Thousands of Texas schools and almost 5.5 million students faced a school year like never before. Texas was one of the few states to administer standardized tests to students during the 2020-2021 school year. The June 2021 State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) results showed that the number of students NOT meeting grade-level standards increased across almost every grade level and subject area.

The CHILDREN AT RISK data team evaluated more than 8,000 Texas public schools and their performance during the 2020-21 school year.

- 27% of Texas public schools experienced a decrease in academic performance between 2018-19 and 2020-21.

New study ranks Texas public schools on pandemic resiliency

WUST 101.5 | By Oliver C. Martinez
Published November 13, 2021 at 7:00 PM CST

▶ LISTEN - 4:02



C@R PANDEMIC

SCHOOL RANKINGS

FEATURED ON THE

TEXAS STANDARD.

- Only 19% of schools serving predominantly economically disadvantaged students received our “Pandemic Resilient” distinction across the state (almost 40% of schools in Texas serve primarily economically disadvantaged students).
- Across Texas, 64% of campuses had a decrease in total enrollment from academic year 2018-19 to 2020-21, and 4% of campuses had a significant decline in enrollment (31% or more decrease from the previous year – that’s one standard deviation below the average aggregate change of all campuses evaluated).
- The Rio Grande Valley continued to lead the state in serving students from low-income backgrounds. Of the 602 schools CHILDREN AT RISK rated Pandemic Resilient in 2021, 233 were located in the Rio Grande Valley.

CHILDREN AT RISK Publishes Special Issues Of The Journal Of Applied Research On Children & The Journal Of Family Strengths.

Even before the pandemic, youth suicide reached crisis levels across the United States. Over the last two decades, the rate of death by suicide for youth aged 10-24 has increased by over 50%. Suicide has become the second leading cause of death for this age group. Although no group is immune to its impact, evidence suggests racial and sexual identity play a role in the risk of self-harm, suicide ideation, and death. Volume 20, Issue 2 of CHILDREN AT RISK’s *Journal of Family Strengths*, Suicide Risks Among Children and Youth explored this evidence.

Marika Dawkins, Ph.D. Associate Professor with the Department of Criminal Justice at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Edinburg Campus, and Jaya Davis, Ph.D. with the University of Texas at Arlington Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice serve as Guest editors on the headline-making issue. *The Journal of Family Strengths* is an open-access, double-blind peer-reviewed online journal compiled by CHILDREN AT RISK, the Texas Juvenile Crime Preventer Center – Prairie View A&M University, and the Texas Medical College Library. The journal publishes family-focused research to inform best practices for providing services that support families.



**AUTHORS OF THE
JARC ISSUE ON
CLIMATE & CHILDREN
JOIN DR. BOB SANBORN
FOR A PRESS
ROUNDTABLE.**

This latest issue featured papers analyzing mental health and social services and articles examining the specific pressures and suicide risk factors experienced by youth of color and young members of the LGBTQ+ community. Dr. Darius Reed, an author featured in this issue said:

“This special issue can serve as a part of the public’s dialogue regarding research that reminds us that the family is critical in detecting and helping to prevent suicide and associated risk factors among children and youth. If they have the right resources.”

CHILDREN AT RISK’s *Journal of Applied Research on Children* also released a new issue. Volume 12, Issue 1: Environmental Justice and Climate examined how climate change and damage to the environment impact child wellbeing. Several articles in the issue explore the complex connections between climate change and children’s physical and mental health.

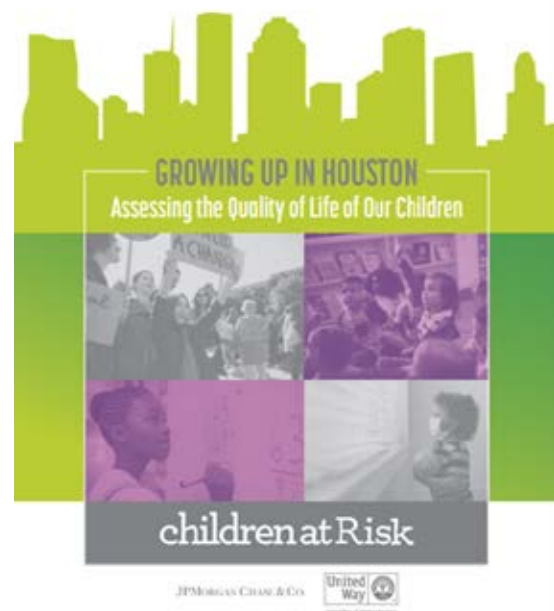
This interconnectedness allows leaders to take actions that address both problems simultaneously, according to Dr. Ruth Etzel, who served as guest editor of the issue, along with fellow climate change advocate Dr. Susan Pacheco.

“It turns out that taking action to protect Earth is giving us the greatest child health opportunity of the 21st century because many climate change strategies will also lead to child health improvements,” Dr. Etzel said.

The outsize impact of climate on their futures motivates many young people to join advocacy groups, like the Sunrise Movement—a nationwide organization of young advocates for environmental protections featured in the new issue. The founder of Puerto Rico Students for Climate Action and rising high school senior Ricardo Alvarado contributed to the issue.

“Listen to us, the youth,” said Alvarado. “We will live longer to get to see the end results of the irresponsible decisions made by people today.”

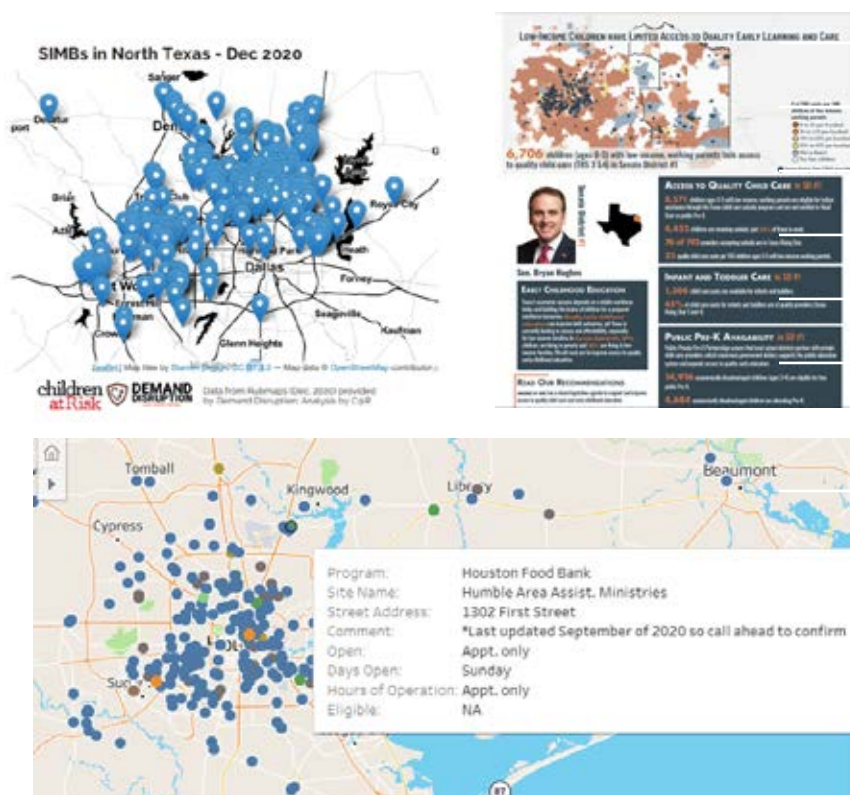
The Journal of Applied Research on Children is also an open-access, peer-reviewed digital publication that provides applicable research to the public, child advocates, and policymakers on timely children’s issues. Learn more about CHILDREN AT RISK’s academic research at childrenatrisk.org/research/academic-journals/.



2021 EDITION OF C@R'S GROWING UP

IN HOUSTON: ASSESSING THE

QUALITY OF LIFE OF OUR CHILDREN.



**C@R DATA MAPS
& LEGISLATIVE MATERIALS.**

TOP LEFT:

SUSPECTED ILLEGAL

MESSAGE BUSINESSES

TOP RIGHT:

CHILD CARE DESERT

SENATE DISTRICT PROFILE

BOTTOM:

HOUSTON FREE OR

LOW-COST MEALS MAP

CHILDREN AT RISK Data Maps Make An Impact

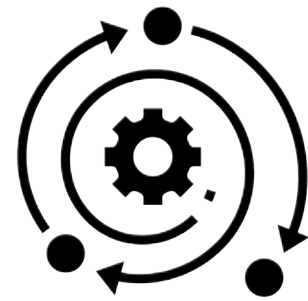
The goal with all of CHILDREN AT RISK's research efforts is to drive positive change for children. We know the best way to make that happen is to present our data and information in clear and compelling ways. Our Legislative one-pagers and district profiles were created to do just that and were highly impactful during session hearings and meetings with legislators and staff.

What is Next?

Moving into 2022, CHILDREN AT RISK is excited to share the results of numerous research projects and collaborations established in 2021. With generous support from Mattress Firm, CHILDREN AT RISK began a statewide study on sleep insecurity and its role in child development, education, health, and racial equity. The team co-hosted data tours and listening sessions in Houston, North Texas, Austin, San Antonio, West Texas, and the Rio Grande Valley to get feedback on our initial data analysis and hear from organizations directly serving children. Our final sleep study is expected to be released in March of 2022.

Our Early Childhood Education team has also been hard at work evaluating and working to understand better the challenges facing the early childhood workforce. The team conducted a statewide survey of child care providers and focus group sessions with a special lens on racial equity. This research has already influenced CHILDREN AT RISK's national advocacy strategy. We look forward to sharing our full research findings in May of 2022.

COLLABORATION



CHILDREN AT RISK PARTNERSHIPS FILL GAPS & BUILD CONNECTIONS STATEWIDE.

Together is always better! Because we support the needs of the whole-child, CHILDREN AT RISK partners with community leaders across issues and areas of expertise. With our state-wide scope we rely on relationships with regional leaders to support our research and data collection, provide local insights, and amplify our advocacy efforts through collective action. Below are just a few of the coalitions or collaboratives CHILDREN AT RISK leads or co-manages.

The Texas Family Leadership Counsel (TXFLC)

Spurred by the pandemic, CHILDREN AT RISK launched the TXFLC in April 2020 to respond to the statewide need for accessible information, coordinated support, and collective policy action. Made up of direct service organizations, education professionals, healthcare providers, community advocates, and more, the TXFLC is a powerful and diverse group that encourages cross-sectoral collaboration spanning the entire state.

The TXFLC brings these stakeholders to the table to identify the most pressing needs for our youth, develop a collective call to action, and present a joint advocacy front. This collaborative group is committed to ensuring the collective efforts to support Texas families are effective and building the momentum necessary to support Texas's most vulnerable children.

TXFLC MEMBERS ASK TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY COMMISSONER MIKE MORATH ABOUT THE STATE OF TEXAS PUBLIC EDUCATION.



The TXFLC has grown to 60 engaged members and over a hundred participants statewide. TXFLC members and working groups supported 13 virtual summits in 2021, leveraging their connections, perspectives, and networks to offer quality programming for more than 1,300 attendees.

The TXFLC demonstrated significant influence with media outlets and legislators alike. TXFLC leaders participated in 30 press conferences, joined policymakers at 3 advocacy days, and sent 15,800+ messages to state and federal leaders.

Texas Racial Equity Collaborative (TREC)

The Texas Racial Equity Collaborative (TREC) is a consortium of individuals representing various organizations working together to combat racial disparities in all sectors of Texas life by raising awareness among the public and advocating for community and legislative solutions. CHILDREN AT RISK formed TREC in 2020 in response to the racial inequities exposed by the COVID 19 pandemic and the nationwide calls for more equal and just treatment for Black and Brown people within our society.

In February of 2021, TREC sponsored CHILDREN AT RISK and TXFLC's first-ever State of Black Children Summit, which explored the challenges that Black children in Texas face and how we can empower them and shape the conversation for policies that can improve their lives. More than one hundred attendees learned about innovative advocacy strategies they could use to push for a more equitable policy agenda across the state.

Following this, TREC hosted CHILDREN AT RISK's first-ever Racial Equity Advocacy Day. TREC members and various Texas state legislators came together to advocate for laws and policies that do not simply acknowledge racial disparities but begin to turn the tides towards a more equal and just society.

To further cement our commitment to advancing social transformation, CHILDREN AT RISK hired a new director for

TREC HOSTS FIRST STATE OF BLACK CHILDREN IN TEXAS SUMMIT.



TREC DIRECTOR, SHARON WATKINS JONES, HOSTS PANEL AT C@R'S 2021 IMMIGRATION SUMMIT.





**TREC HOSTS FIRST
RACIAL EQUITY RAPID
ROUNDTABLE FOCUSED
ON COVID-19
EDUCATION POLICIES.**

TREC, Sharon Watkins Jones, to guide our work in building strong internal and external racial equity policies and best practices. TREC also sponsored several CHILDREN AT RISK events this year that focused on advancing racial equity. This included our annual Education Summit, which focused on the re-segregation of American schools, and our yearly STEM Summit focused on racial equity.

Finally, this year TREC launched its Racial Equity Rapid Roundtables, a monthly discussion of racial inequities experienced by Texas children and their families. Each month, speakers discuss pervasive issues and trends that negatively affect children and families of color disproportionately. Topics that have been explored include food insecurity and returning to school in a pandemic.

Texas Prenatal to Three Collaborative (TX-PN3)

The Texas Prenatal to Three Collaborative (TX-PN3) is an initiative co-lead by CHILDREN AT RISK, TexProtects, and Texans Care for Children. With funding from the Pritzker Children's Initiative and support from the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers, we work together to develop a strategic state legislative agenda to enhance efforts across the state to assure Texas infants, toddlers, and their families get off to the strongest start.

**TX-PN3 MEMBERS
TESTIFY AT HISTORIC
HOUSE COMMITTEE
HEARING DEDICATED
TO EARLY CHILDHOOD.**



Over 100 organizations statewide participate in the collaborative and work to ensure all Texas children are born healthy and have equitable access to health and early learning supports in their homes and their communities. The goal is to create early childhood systems that are aligned, coordinated, and well-funded to ensure young children and their families are healthy and thriving.

TX-PN3 partners worked with legislators to pass four major early childhood education bills, including Prenatal to Three policies. These efforts led to the launch of a bi-partisan Early Learning Caucus and a first of its kind entirely early childhood dedicated House International Relations and Economic Development Committee hearing. This advocacy supports 300,000 Texas children to ensure access to effective and well-funded programs. By 2026, this strategic partnership aims to increase services to more than 400,000 infants, toddlers, and families.

CEASE (Cities Empowered Against Sexual Exploitation)

CEASE Texas is a project funded through the Office of the Texas Governor aimed at reducing demand for human trafficking and illicit exploitative commercial sex. Sex trafficking exists because there is a receptive market of buyers willing to purchase and exploit victims. If there are no buyers, there is no demand, and no demand means no victims. CEASE Texas is a collaborative effort to end the demand for commercial sex and human trafficking victims in eight key Texas regions: Houston, Georgetown, Austin, San Antonio, North Texas, Corpus Christi, San Angelo, and El Paso.

CEASE partners advocated on behalf of many pieces of legislation that became law following the 87th Texas Legislative session. This includes the landmark HB 1540 that makes Texas the first state in the nation to make purchasing sex a first-offense state jail felony. The legislation, and the anti-demand movement that inspired it, are driving a significant shift in how law enforcement agencies approach human trafficking.

**C@R DIRECTOR OF THE
CENTER TO END THE
TRAFFICKING & EXPLOITATION
OF CHILDREN, JARRET
GUAJARDO, PRESENTS FOR
CEASE PARTNERS IN EL PASO.**



2020 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The following financial statements were collected from CHILDREN AT RISK's 2020 Audit Report. CHILDREN AT RISK was audited by the independent auditor Blazek and Vetterling, which issued an unmodified opinion.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Revenue		Expenses	
Contributions	\$2,245,028	Research and Advocacy for Children	\$1,807,672
Special Events	\$283,019	Management and General	\$327,550
Contract and Program Fees	\$399,726	Fundraising	\$582,761
Investment Return	\$8,824		
Total	\$ 2,876,597	Total	\$2,717,983

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Liabilities		Net Assets	
	\$ 172,264	Without Donor Restrictions	\$ 509,355
		With Donor Restrictions	\$ 1,238,784
Total	\$ 172,264	Total Net Assets	\$ 1,748,139
		Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 1,920,403

2021 CORPORATE & FOUNDATION DONORS

\$500,000+

Pritzker Children's Initiative
Samuels Family Foundation
W. K. Kellogg Foundation

\$100,000 TO \$499,999

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Hunt Family Foundation
Kroger
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Rockwell Fund
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Wells Fargo Bank of Texas

\$10,000 TO \$24,999

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M.J. Sheridan of Texas, Inc.
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\$5,000 TO \$9,999

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Hand Surgery Specialists of Texas
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Marek Family Foundation
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SignatureCare Emergency Center
Strake Foundation
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\$1,000 TO \$4,999

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Benevity Community Impact
Boardwalk Pipeline Partners
Buckeye Partners LP
Dominican Sisters of Houston
Fash Foundation
Jarritos
Maurice Amado Foundation
Montrose Emergency Center, LLC
Morgan Stanley
Sundt Foundation
Title Girl
Vestal B. Sanders Foundation c/o Frost Bank
Gringo's Mexican Kitchen
Angel Resources, LLC
Siege Engineering
Frost Bank
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King & Spalding L.L.P.
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children at Risk

CHILDREN AT RISK's mission is to serve as a catalyst for change to improve the quality of life for children through strategic research, public policy analysis, education, collaboration, and advocacy.

CHILDREN AT RISK is a research and advocacy nonprofit leading the way in improving the quality of life for Texas's children. CHILDREN AT RISK considers the whole child by tracking issues in children's health, safety, education, and economic security. Committed to action beyond the data, CHILDREN AT RISK drives evidence-based change by speaking out on behalf of children. For more information, visit childrenatrisk.org.

CONNECT WITH US

email: info@childrenatrisk.org

phone: (713) 869-7740

mail: 2900 Wesleyan Suite 400, Houston, TX 77027

Follow us on social media @[@childrenatrisk](https://twitter.com/childrenatrisk)



CHILDREN AT RISK is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (EIN: 76-0360533).