Trauma in Texas
Support from communities and families is crucial

Many challenges faced by Texas families—poverty, food insecurity, and domestic violence—can manifest as trauma in a child's life. Trauma and toxic stress from abuse, neglect, or other adverse childhood experiences can impede a child's healthy development and lead to long term negative health consequences—but they don't have to. Children can be resilient, and community supports, positive relationships with parents and systems designed to recognize and address trauma can help mitigate the effects of adverse childhood experiences.

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

63,657
children were confirmed victims of child abuse in 2017

Experiences include:

*   physical or emotional abuse or neglect
*   living with or experiencing domestic violence, housing insecurity, poverty, or parental substance abuse
*   separation from a parent or death of a loved one

Children may experience these events as a discrete trauma or, for ongoing experiences, as toxic stress.

Girls, children living in poverty, and children of color experience higher rates of adverse childhood experiences.

IMPACT

*   An adverse childhood experience can negatively affect a child's cognitive development, academic success, and physical, emotional, and behavioral health.
*   If a child endures multiple adverse childhood experience, their risk of alcoholism, heart disease, suicide, and other health issues as an adult goes up.

24% OF TEXAS KIDS

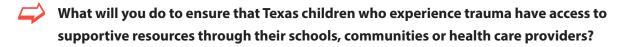have experienced **2 or more** adverse childhood experiences.

SOLUTIONS

*   **Train providers at schools**, child welfare organizations and health care facilities to recognize children who have experienced trauma and to find and provide supportive resources.
*   **Support child welfare program**s and other prevention and early intervention strategies that keep families together and out of poverty.
*   **Increase public funding** to support children in kinship care or foster care and the caseworkers who help them.

#TXVotes4Kids

1. When children experience trauma, dangerous levels of stress can impede healthy brain development.

   ⇨ **What will you do to ensure that Texas children who experience trauma have access to supportive resources through their schools, communities or health care providers?**

2. Separation from a parent, including separation through death, incarceration, foster care placement or deportation is a traumatic childhood experience.

   ⇨ **What will you do to help kids who have been separated from a parent?**

3. Families of mixed immigration status in Texas are particularly at risk of separation.

   ⇨ **How will you protect immigrant children and families under threat of separation?**

4. During the last legislative session, Texas' Child Protective Services agency received $150 million in emergency funding, but it is still struggling to serve hundreds of Texas children.

   ⇨ **What will you do to ensure Child Protective Services has the resources they need to protect Texas children?**

5. The first five years of a child's life are critical for brain development, and providing support at the family level is key to preventing trauma during this time.

   ⇨ **What will you do to promote strong families during a child's first five years?**

6. Children who live in poverty are particularly at risk for experiencing multiple adverse childhood experiences, and 22 percent (1.6 million) of Texas children live in poverty.

   ⇨ **What do you think the biggest drivers of poverty are, and how will you try to combat them?**

7. Communities across Texas have created their own supports for children who have experienced trauma.

   ⇨ **How will you encourage collaboration among schools, agencies, medical providers, community organizations, and families to address childhood trauma?**