



Kinship Quarterly

Strengthening Families

Oct 2018

IN THIS ISSUE:

Compulsory Attendance Laws

ECI 101

The final newsletter for 2018 focuses on school Attendance and basic information for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI). We will also take a look back at the Kinship Program.

School Attendance

Texas compulsory attendance and truancy laws require students six years old as of September 1st of the school year to attend school until the student's 19th birthday, unless they graduate earlier. In addition, laws regarding attendance and course credit require a student to attend class 90% of the time in order to get credit for a course, although if they have attended 75% they may be able to take steps to get the credit.

Why school attendance matters

The average school year is 180 days. Missing even as few as ten days (if the absences are unexcused) in a six month period can cause a child and parents to be referred to truancy court. Check your school district's policy on attendance requirements.

- Starting in kindergarten, too many school absences may cause children to start to fall behind and puts children at risk of underperforming in critical core subjects in middle and high school. Kindergarten and first grade students missing more than nine days of school have a harder time learning how to read. Children in foster care are particularly vulnerable to falling behind their peer group in reading and mathematics due to their changes in their school and potentially undiagnosed learning disabilities.
- Regular school attendance is a habit that begins in preschool and helps children do well in high school, college, and at work.

What families can do

- Students need to be in school **on time, every day, all day.**
- Set school attendance as a priority. Talk to your child on the importance of regular school attendance and what it takes to be ready for the school day.
- Get in the habit of age-appropriate and consistent bed times. Check with your healthcare provider for sleep guidelines.
- Do not let your student stay home unless they are truly sick. Unexplained stomach and headaches can be indicators of childhood stress.

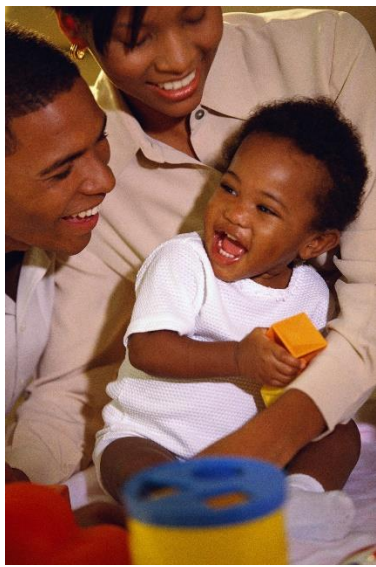
- When possible, schedule doctor appointments and extended trips outside of regular school hours.
- Certain types of absences can be considered excused absences if the child is in DFPS conservatorship. Excused absences are for activities required by a service plan, court order, or an activity not able to be scheduled for after school hours. Student may not be penalized for the absence under truancy procedures, but the requirement to attend 90% of a course to get course credit still applies. School must allow reasonable time to make up missed schoolwork. Caregivers and caseworkers can access the Excused Absence Form at: https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/State_Care/documents/Excused_Absence_Letter.docx
- Contact your student's caseworker and teacher to set up a conference if unexcused absences and truancy are concerns.

Education Specialists

Education Specialists serve as advocates between local school districts, CPS staff and you the caregiver. Contact the specialist in your area if you need help navigating the school's system or if you have questions regarding education.

Region	Name	Telephone
1 and 2	Debbie Welborn	(940) 864-1123
3 E	Beverly Rowden	(817) 792-5273
3 W	Norma Eaves	(817) 605-4666
4	Donna Steffey	(903) 797-0357
5	Leisa Stewart	(409) 730-2444
6 (a) (Harris County only)	Felicia Bennett Chambers	(713) 293-1878
6 (b) (Outlying counties)	Letitia Thomas	281-847-7074
7	Erica Brewington	(512) 834-3831
8	Felicia Penn	(210) 337-3262
9/10	Rosa Masilang	(915) 521-3862
11	David Johnson	(361) 816-4143

DID YOU KNOW



Services Provided by Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)

- Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) program is a state-wide comprehensive system of services that provides early intervention for infants and toddlers age birth to 36 months of age who have developmental delays, disabilities or a medical condition likely to lead to a developmental delay.

ECI and Infant and Toddler Development

- ECI helps babies and toddlers learn skills that typically develop during the first three years of life. ECI services address enrolled children's growth across all developmental domains such as:
 - Cognitive (thinking, learning, solving problems).
 - Language (talking, listening, understanding).
 - Fine and gross motor skills (reaching, grabbing, rolling, walking, sitting).
 - Social/emotional development (interacting with others, controlling emotions, feeling secure).
 - Self-help skills (eating, dressing).

ECI Services

- ECI provides a variety of services through a diverse set of professionals. Examples of services include:
 - Hearing and vision educational services
 - Speech, occupational and physical therapy services
 - Nutrition services
 - Specialized skills training
 - Counseling
 - Assistive Technology
 - Case Management
- Caregivers are involved in every part of the ECI service from developing an annual Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), revising the IFSP to ensure it is responsive to their needs and actively participating in services with ECI professionals.

Eligibility for Services

- ECI determines **eligibility** for infants and toddlers living in Texas who are birth to 36 months of age based on one or more of the following criteria:
 - A medically diagnosed condition.
 - An auditory or visual impairment.
 - A developmental delay



How do I find ECI services in my community?

- ECI provides services in every Texas County through a variety of organizations such as Community Health Centers, private non-profits, independent school districts and Educational Service Centers. To find a local program in your area go to the [ECI Program Search](#).

Who can refer children to ECI?

- Anyone can make a **referral to ECI** who suspects a child may have a developmental delay. Professionals who provide services to families and children often refer children to ECI. When referring families to ECI, the best approach is to explain ECI services, make the referral together or inform the family a referral will be made on their behalf.

How can I find a list of medical diagnosis for ECI?

- Certain medical diagnoses that can lead to a developmental delay can qualify children for ECI. These can be found on the ECI website under **"Medical Diagnosis."**

Does ECI have publications I can share with families?

- ECI brochures are available to the public and can be ordered through the [ECI on-line ordering](#) system at no charge. The system is user-friendly and allows orders to be placed quickly and efficiently. Organizations or individuals can create their own "public ordering" account to order materials.
- Learn more about ECI from families who participated in ECI services by viewing ["Texas ECI: Family to Family" video](#)
- For more information about ECI services, please contact the ECI state office at 512-776-4300 or visit the [HHS Early Childhood Intervention website](#).

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) is a statewide program with Texas Health and Human Services for families with children birth to 36 months, with developmental delays or disabilities. For more information, visit hhs.texas.gov/eci

Fall Safety Tips

Halloween Safety

- A responsible adult should accompany young children while trick or treating.
- Teach your children to never enter a stranger's home or car.
- Tell your children not to eat any treats until they have been inspected by you.
- All costumes, wigs and accessories should be fire-resistant.
- Avoid masks, which can obstruct vision or cause a choking hazard.
- Use reflective tape on their costumes and bags, or give them glow sticks.

Thanksgiving Safety

- Never leave your food unattended while frying or grilling.
- Avoid dangling accessories or loose clothes around kitchen fires.
- Keep your child at a safe distance when cooking, and never hold on to them with one arm
- Be sure that pot handles and other dishes aren't close to the edge of the counter or table

Christmas Safety

- Buy toys that are age appropriate and meet safety requirements
- Clear away any bottles of alcohol and know that even small amounts of alcohol can poison young children.
- Keep candles away from Christmas trees and decorations. Make sure candles are out before going to bed.

Resources

(Holiday Edition)

- DFPS Kinship Care Facebook www.facebook.com/TexasKinshipCaregivers
- Salvation Army <http://www.salvationarmytexas.org/bright-en-the-holidays/>
- Angel Tree <https://www.salvationarmycarolinas.org/charlotte/get-help/christmas-assistance/christmas-assistance-children/>
- Austin and Travis County Christmas and free holiday programs https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/austin_christmas_and_free_holi.html
- Harris County and Houston free Christmas and holiday assistance https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/harris_county_free_christmas_an.html
- Dallas-area free Christmas, Thanksgiving and holiday programs https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/dallas_free_christmas_and_holi.html
- San Antonio free Christmas and holiday assistance https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/san_antonio_free_christmas_and.html
- Hidalgo County free Christmas and holiday assistance https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/hidalgo_county_free_christmas_an.html
- El Paso County Texas free Christmas and holiday assistance https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/el_paso_county_free_christmas_a.html
- Toys for Tots <https://www.toysfortots.org/>

Kinship 2018 Year in Review

Region 6



Back to School Bash



Unit Team Building



Admin Asst Day

Region 7



Easter Egg Roll

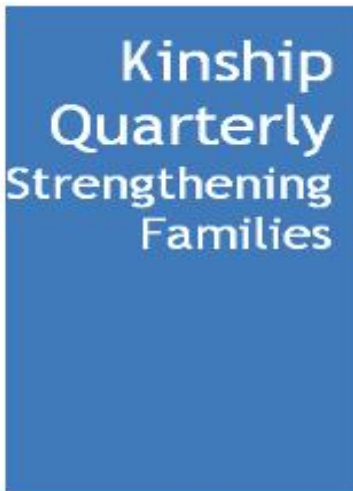


80's Unit Mtg

Region 8



1st Annual GPG Picnic



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services
Child Protective Services

Report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, the elderly, or people with disabilities at
(800) 252-5400 or www.txabusehotline.org.