



# Kinship Quarterly

Strengthening Families

Oct 2020

IN THIS ISSUE: PRE-K & TELEHEALTH

**Welcome to the final Kinship Quarterly for 2020. In this issue you will hear from our new Education Specialist, Felicia Penn, regarding the Pre-K program and ECI explores Telehealth.**

Pre-Kindergarten (also known as Pre-K or PK) is a classroom-based preschool program for children below the age of five. Prekindergarten plays an important role in early childhood education. It is the most important year. Pre-K is a foundational year because, for most children it provides their initial exposure to school and sets the tone for their educational career. The learning experiences of the early years provide a foundation that guides the growth of children in all aspects of development. Children are able to develop certain feelings perceptions and ideas about school. It's a great opportunity to

get kids off on the right foot and influence the rest of a child's educational progress.



Each child ages 3, 4, or 5 who is in the DFPS conservatorship must receive early childhood education services through:

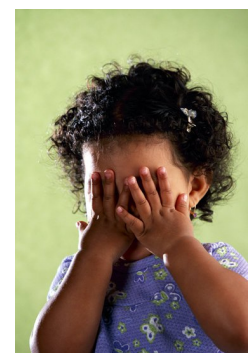
- A pre-kindergarten program offered through the public school;
- An early childhood education program offered through Head Start, if available in the

local community of the caregiver; or

- A home environment

If a program is not available in the local community or not appropriate for the child, the caregiver notifies the caseworker, who must document the information in the case file.

If the caregiver for the child wishes to enroll the child in a private early childhood education program or a pre-kindergarten paid for by the caregiver, the caregiver must get approval from the child's caseworker.



In situations which require a Pre-K Verification form to prove eligibility, the caregiver needs to request the form. They may request the form by emailing the PreK mailbox

[Prekverificationltr@dfps.state.tx.us](mailto:Prekverificationltr@dfps.state.tx.us)

Include child’s full name for enrollment and date of birth.

**Laws that Support Educational Stability**

<https://tea.texas.gov/FosterCareStudentSuccess/laws>

CPS regional education specialists help students in substitute care, and are a resource to CPS staff, caregivers, and community stakeholders.

Region	Specialist Name	Phone
1	Pauline Taylor	(806) 472-5095
	<a href="mailto:Pauline.Taylor@dfps.state.tx.us">Pauline.Taylor@dfps.state.tx.us</a>	(806) 788-4961
2	Debbie Welborn	(940) 864-1123
	<a href="mailto:debra.welborn@dfps.state.tx.us">debra.welborn@dfps.state.tx.us</a>	(325) 340-2873
3E	Carolyn J. Marshall	(214) 236-5015
3W	Norma Eaves	(817) 605-4666
	<a href="mailto:Norma.Eaves@dfps.state.tx.us">Norma.Eaves@dfps.state.tx.us</a>	(817) 879-1929
4	Kathy Thurman	(903) 440-3339
	<a href="mailto:Kathy.Thurman@dfps.state.tx.us">Kathy.Thurman@dfps.state.tx.us</a>	
5	Lisa McKnight	(936) 569-5329
	<a href="mailto:Lisa.McKnight@dfps.state.tx.us">Lisa.McKnight@dfps.state.tx.us</a>	(936) 205-7996
6A - Harris County	Felicia Bennett Chambers	(713) 767-2589
6B - All other counties	Cari Schroeder	(936) 525-2110
	<a href="mailto:Cari.Schroeder@dfps.state.tx.us">Cari.Schroeder@dfps.state.tx.us</a>	(936) 689-4895
7	Tammy Lee	(512) 834-3831
	<a href="mailto:Tammy.Lee@dfps.state.tx.us">Tammy.Lee@dfps.state.tx.us</a>	(512) 581-8132
8	Makada Ward	(210) 337-3262
	<a href="mailto:Makada.Ward@dfps.state.tx.us">Makada.Ward@dfps.state.tx.us</a>	(210) 213-3524
9 & 10	Perla Pena	(915) 929-9678
	<a href="mailto:Perla.Pena@dfps.state.tx.us">Perla.Pena@dfps.state.tx.us</a>	
11	Mitzi Puentes	(956) 257-6255
	<a href="mailto:Mitzi.Puentes2@dfps.state.tx.us">Mitzi.Puentes2@dfps.state.tx.us</a>	
12 State Office	Felicia Penn	(737) 249-8357
	<a href="mailto:Felicia.Penn@dfps.state.tx.us">Felicia.Penn@dfps.state.tx.us</a>	

# Good to Know

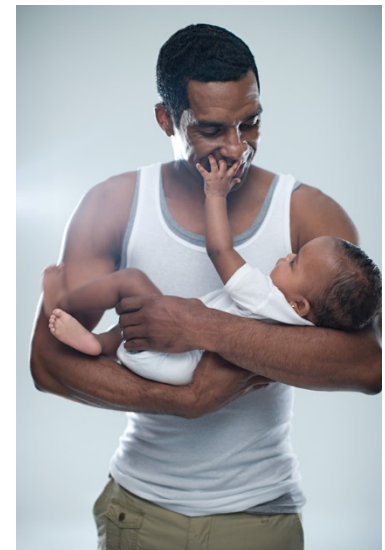
The Texas Health and Human Services Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) program serves children birth to 36 months with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. ECI is now providing children and their families services through telehealth.



*Telehealth is the delivery of early intervention services using distance technology when the ECI provider and child and caregiver are not in the same physical location.* Telehealth services can be provided when in-person visits pose a health risk, travel is difficult, or locations are difficult to access. By using videoconferencing technology, the ECI provider uses the coaching approach to show parents how to help their child learn new skills, answer questions, and watch the parents practice the activities. Telehealth works well with the ECI coaching approach and helps parents improve their skills in fostering their child’s communication by focusing intervention on caregiver-child interaction.

Research has shown therapies delivered through telehealth may be as effective as those delivered in person. The American Physical Therapy Association, American Occupational Therapy Association, and American Speech-Language-Hearing Association all support telehealth. Telehealth helps parents gain confidence in helping their child, because they are the ones trying different activities “hands on” with their child.

Each ECI contractor may offer different services through telehealth. Check with your local agency to learn more about options available to families in your area. To find the local ECI program visit the [ECI Program Search](#) page or call the Health and Human Services Commission Ombudsman office at (877) 787-8999 (choose option 3).



## HOLIDAY SAFETY



### **HALLOWEEN**

- DECORATE COSTUMES AND BAGS WITH REFLECTIVE TAPE OR STICKERS AND, IF POSSIBLE, CHOOSE LIGHT COLORS. USE NON-TOXIC FACE PAINT AND MAKEUP WHENEVER POSSIBLE.
- HAVE KIDS USE GLOW STICKS OR FLASHLIGHTS TO HELP THEM SEE AND BE SEEN BY DRIVERS.

### **THANKSGIVING**

- KEEP HOT FOOD OUT OF THE REACH OF LITTLE HANDS, BE SURE THAT POT HANDLES AND OTHER DISHES AREN'T CLOSE TO THE EDGE OF THE COUNTER OR TABLE WHERE THEY COULD BE PULLED DOWN BY CURIOUS KIDS.

### **CHRISTMAS**

- AVOID BUYING TOYS THAT HAVE SMALL PARTS AND MAY POSE A CHOKING DANGER. LOOK FOR QUALITY IN DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, AND FOLLOW AGE AND SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS ON LABELS.
- IF YOU BUY A BICYCLE FOR A CHILD, BUY A HELMET TOO AND MAKE SURE THE CHILD WEARS IT.
- MISTLETOE, HOLLY, & POINSETTIAS, ARE COMMONLY USED AS DECORATIONS AND ARE CONSIDERED POTENTIALLY POISONOUS. KEEP OUT OF THE REACH OF KIDS.

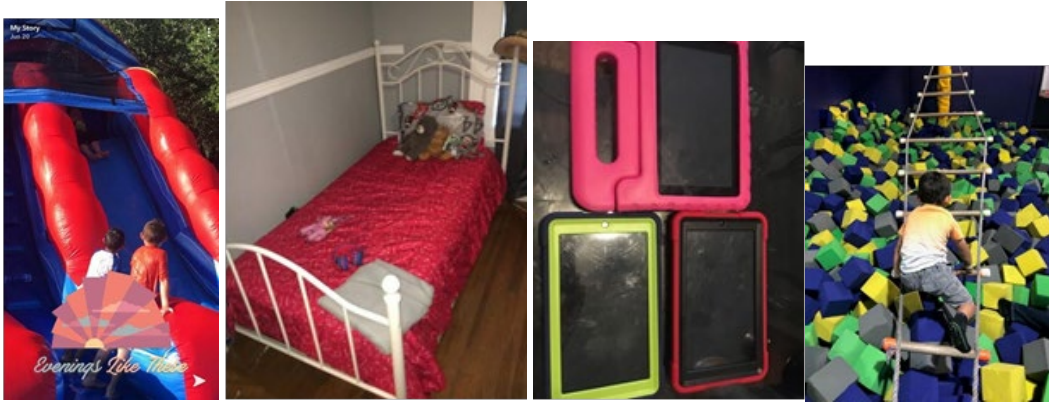
## RESOURCES



- [Unemployment Benefits](#)
- [Holiday assistance for Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving](#)
- [Meals for Students](#)
- [Rent and Housing Assistance Programs](#)
- [Utility Assistance](#)
- [Your Texas Benefits](#)
- [State of Texas Financial Aid Programs](#)
- [2-1-1 Texas](#)
- [Texas Kinship Caregivers Facebook Page](#)
- [Kinship Manual](#)
- [PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION \(PEI\) PROGRAM LOCATOR](#)

## Kinship Quarterly Strengthening Families

It's hard to believe that 2020 has come and is almost gone. As the year ends, it's always a good opportunity to take a moment and look back, with pride, at the accomplishments of the Kinship Program. Although COVID, unfortunately, prevented us from having such events as the Kinship Festivals, and Back to School Events, we have many other things to celebrate. With increased support from the Kinship Program, more and more families are caring for relative children. The Kinship Monthly reimbursement helps families pay for beds, school supplies and even those extras that helps create wonderful childhood memories.



Attending a Kinship Support Group has gotten easier. You can now get more support or connect with other caregivers, online. Many of our support groups are shifting to a virtual platform. Please speak with your Kinship Development Worker to help you find a group to join.

The Kinship Program will continue to make significant strides in the years ahead. If you would like to be personally involved, please consider becoming a Kinship Advocate and apply for membership on the Kinship Collaboration Group. For more information, please contact Anna Mcartor at (512) 925-5871.



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