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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FOSTER CARE

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### **What is Child Protective Services (CPS)?**

Child Protective Services (CPS) is unit within the state agency, the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). CPS investigates reports of child abuse and neglect and works to strengthen and stabilize families so that they can safely care for their children at home. When that is not possible, CPS works with the courts and communities to find permanent homes or other places for children to live.

### **What is foster care?**

Children live in foster care when other family is not available or is not an option. Foster families are reimbursed for the costs of caring for children. Together, CPS and foster parents arrange all the child's educational, medical, dental, and therapeutic services. Some children with emotional or other needs that are difficult to address in a foster home may live in specialized group homes, residential treatment centers, or other facilities.

### **What is Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC)?**

Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) is a legal term in Texas used in child custody cases. It means that a judge appoints a person to be legally responsible for a child without adopting the child. The court can give PMC to someone other than a parent, including DFPS, a relative, a close family friend, or a foster parent. PMC can only be given by a judge. The judge decides the rights and responsibilities, depending upon the specific situation. When someone other than a parent is named as "permanent managing conservator," he or she is given certain rights and duties about caring for the child.

### **What is Temporary Managing Conservatorship (TMC)?**

Temporary Managing Conservatorship means that a judge appoints someone other than the parent, such as DFPS to be legally responsible for the child on a temporary basis and for whom DFPS's goal is reunification of the child with the child's parent.

### **What is substitute care?**

Substitute care means the placement of a child who is in the conservatorship of the DFPS outside the child's home. The term includes foster care, institutional care, adoption, placement with a relative of the child, or commitment to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Texas Family Code Sec. 236.001

**What other help is available for families receiving assistance from DFPS?**

Community partnership programs may provide additional support to children involved with CPS. Rainbow Rooms are resource rooms that may supply car seats, clothing, shoes, underwear, baby formula, school supplies, and safety and hygiene items to children entering foster or relative care as well as children receiving CPS services at home. A local non-profit, Partnerships for Children, [www.partnershipsforchildren.org](http://www.partnershipsforchildren.org), manages the Travis County Rainbow Room. For additional information on resources and supports for Travis County children in CPS care, visit **Foster Community** of Central Texas, [fostercommunity.org](http://fostercommunity.org).

**How do I report suspected child abuse/neglect?**

Call 1-800-252-5400 and or go to its secure website – [www.TxAbuseHotline.org](http://www.TxAbuseHotline.org). The 800-number hotline also accepts reports of violations of childcare standards as well as reports of abuse in facilities operated by other state agencies or community providers that serve adults and children with mental illness or intellectual disabilities.

The Statewide Intake (SWI) program assigns a priority to all reports of maltreatment that meet the legal definitions of abuse, neglect or exploitation. SWI bases the priority of the report on the safety of the alleged victim and sends each report to the appropriate DFPS program, such as Adult Protective Services, Child Protective Services, or Child Care Licensing to investigate. SWI also notifies law enforcement agencies in cases that involve children. SWI operates around-the-clock every day of the year, including nights and holidays.

**Contact information**

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