

COMMON CHILD WELFARE ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Below is a non-exhaustive list of common acronyms and abbreviations you may encounter in your child welfare practice.

Acronym	Explanation	Comments
AAL	Attorney ad litem	An attorney who provides services for the purposes of a specific legal action only, including representation of a child, and who owes to their client the duties of undivided loyalty, confidentiality, and competent representation.
AC	Administrative Closure	Administrative Closure occurs when DFPS intervention is unwarranted based on information that comes to light after the case is assigned for investigation.
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution	A method of settling conflict outside of litigation, (e.g., mediation).
AFCARS	Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System	An application that collects case-level information on all children in foster care for whom state child welfare agencies have responsibility for placement, care, or supervision, and on children who are adopted under the auspices of the state's public child welfare agency.
AJR	Administrative Judicial Region	The state of Texas is divided into nine administrative judicial regions. Each region has a presiding judge who is appointed by the Governor to serve a four-year term.
APPLA	Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	A permanent legal arrangement for a child designed to promote stability and permanency in a child's life; refers to permanent placements other than a reunification with a parent, adoption, or permanent managing conservatorship to a relative.
ASFA	Adoption and Safe Families Act	The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (Public Law 105-89) was enacted by the United States Congress to improve the safety of children, promote adoption and other permanent homes for children who needed them, and support families. According to the Children's Bureau, ASFA also required child protection agencies to provide more timely assessment and intervention services to children and families involved with child welfare. Additionally, ASFA paved the way for the legal sanction of concurrent planning (simultaneously identifying and working on a secondary goal, such as guardianship, with a

		relative) by requiring that agencies make reasonable efforts to find permanent families for children in foster care should reunification fail.
AR	Alternative Response	A type of service provided to some families who were the subject of an investigation of child abuse and neglect allegations without including a substantiation of the allegations or an entry of perpetrators into the Central Registry. Includes services and support to help families resolve safety issues and reduce future involvement with DFPS.
ARD	Admission, Review, and Dismissal	The process by which a student's parents and school staff meet at least annually to: 1) decide whether a student has an eligible disability; 2) determine what special education and related services will be provided; and 3) develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs	The BIA is a United States federal agency within the Department of the Interior which renders services to indigenous Americans in federally recognized tribes (directly or through contracts, grants, or compacts) to approximately 1.9 million Native Americans and Alaska Natives.
CANS	Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths	A tool developed for children's services to support decision making, including level of care and service planning, to facilitate quality improvement initiatives, and to allow for the monitoring of outcomes. services.
CAPTA	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act	CAPTA is a federal law that was originally enacted on January 31, 1974 (P.L. 93-247) and amended several times. According to the Children's Bureau, CAPTA provides federal funding and guidance to states in support of prevention, assessment, investigation, prosecution, and treatment activities and also provides grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations, including Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations, for demonstration programs and projects.

CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocate; Website	A specially screened and trained volunteer, appointed by the court, who conducts an independent investigation of child abuse, neglect, or other dependency matters, and submits a formal report proffering advisory recommendations as to the best interests of a child. In some jurisdictions, volunteers without formal legal training, such as CASAs, are appointed to represent abused and neglected children and serve in the capacity of a Guardian ad litem (GAL).
CCEJ	Court of Exclusive, Continuing Jurisdiction	Upon rendition of a final order in a Suit Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship (SAPCR), a court acquires continuing, exclusive jurisdiction over all subsequent matters regarding the child unless otherwise provided by the Family Code.
CFRT	Texas Child Fatality Review Team; Webpage	A multidisciplinary, multi-agency group, mandated by state law which oversees and assists the work of local review teams in Texas, and works to develop a statewide understanding of the scope and magnitude of childhood mortality.
CFSR	Child and Family Services Review	A Federal-State collaborative effort designed to help ensure that quality services are provided to children and families through State child welfare systems.
CIP	Court Improvement Program; Webpage	The highest court of each State and territory participating in the Court Improvement Program (CIP) receives a grant from the Children's Bureau to complete a detailed self-assessment and develop and implement recommendations to enhance the court's role in achieving stable, permanent homes for children in foster care. In Texas, the Children's Commission is the recipient of CIP funds.
COS	Circle of Support	A meeting held soon after a youth who has been removed from the home reaches age 16. Primary purpose is to develop a transition plan for the youth and to connect youth to supportive and caring adults who can help the youth when the youth leaves foster care.
COS	Court Ordered Services	Also referred to as a Motion to Participate (MTP) or Order to Participate (OTP). This is a type of CPS case during which services are ordered by the court for the

		family, without DFPS having temporary managing conservatorship of the child.
CBC	Community Based Care	A newer model of serving children and families through partnerships with private Single Source Continuum Contractors (SSCCs) in designated catchment areas across the State.
CPA	Child Placing Agency	CPAs are licensed by DFPS and required to conform to minimum standards. They verify and oversee non-agency foster placements.
CPC	Child Protection Court	CPCs are courts that specialize in child protection cases. As of July 2021, there are 30 CPCs in Texas which cover 147 counties total.
CPI	Child Protective Investigations	A division of Texas DFPS that examines reports of child abuse or neglect and determines if there are any threats to the safety of the children in the home and whether parents are willing and able to adequately manage those threats to keep the children safe.
CPS	Child Protective Services; Website	A division of Texas DFPS that provides services to children and families in their own homes; places children in foster care; provides services to help youth in foster care make the transition to adulthood; and places children in adoptive homes.
CPCMS	Child Protection Case Management System	CPCMS is the data management system used by Child Protection Courts (CPCs).
CPU	Centralized Placement Unit	CPU reviews a child's information, tracks placement vacancies, and determines least restrictive placement option that best meets needs of child when a child is in the custody of DFPS.
CRCG	Community Resource Coordination Group	CRCGs are a collaboration of local public and private agencies, organizations, and families which work together to meet the needs of individuals which no one agency can meet. According to HHS, CRCGs identify services gaps, break down barriers, and find ways to improve the health of their community.
CSCAL	Child Safety Check Alert List	This is an automated program operated by the Texas Department of Public Safety as part of the Texas Crime Information Center to assist DFPS in locating families that move before CPS begins or finishes an investigation or that move during the provision of services by CPS.

CVS	Conservatorship	“Conservatorship” is defined as the legal care, custody, and control of a child given by court order. CVS also stands for the unit and type of caseworker who is involved with a child when the DFPS has custody of that child.
CWB	Child Welfare Board	These Boards are developed and funded in some Texas counties to help meet needs of children and youth in foster care by using county funding to support DFPS’ efforts.
CWOP	Child Without Placement	CWOP is used to describe a child’s status as not having a licensed placement (for example, residing in a location supervised by DFPS or an SSCC such as in a hotel).
DFPS/ TDFPS	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services; Website	A state agency charged with protecting children, adults who are elderly or have disabilities living at home or in state facilities, and licensing group day-care homes, day-care centers, and registered family homes.
DPS	Texas Department of Public Safety; Website	A state agency created to provide public safety services by enforcing laws, administering regulatory programs, managing records, educating the public, and managing emergencies, both directly and through interaction with other agencies.
DSHS	Texas Department of State Health Services; Website	The Texas Department of State Health Services promotes optimal health for individuals and communities while providing effective health, mental health, and substance abuse services to Texans.
ESSA	Every Child Succeeds Act	ESSA is a federal education law passed in December 2015. ESSA contains several educational stability provisions related to the education of children and youth in foster care that mirror the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. ESSA also requires designated points of contact in education and child welfare systems, assurances that schools will coordinate with child welfare to develop transportation plans for children in foster care, and beginning in December 2018, disaggregated data on children and youth in foster care will be included in the reporting requirements.

FACN	Forensic Assessment Center Network; Resource guide	The FACN is a coordinated group of physicians from six medical schools in Texas who are experts in child and adult abuse and neglect. The goal of the network is to ensure that medical professionals with expertise in maltreatment are more readily available to offer their advice and expertise to DFPS caseworkers. This network fills gaps when no local medical experts are available and helps DFPS staff make better decisions about child and adult safety.
FBSS	Family-Based Safety Services	A type of service provided to some families who were the subject of an investigation of child abuse and neglect allegations. Also known as Family Preservation, FBSS includes services to families to prevent removal of the child from the home. Participation in FBSS by a family may be voluntary or court ordered.
FCRB	Foster Care Review Board	FCRBs are panels of screened and trained volunteers preferably appointed by juvenile or family courts to regularly review cases of children in substitute placement such as foster care, examine efforts to identify a permanent placement for each child, and proffer advisory recommendations to the court.
FC	Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act	According to the Children's Bureau, the 2008 Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (P.L. 110–351) amended the Social Security Act to improve outcomes for children in foster care, connect and support relative caregivers, and offer incentives for adoption. Fostering Connections enhanced services for youth aging out of care and created new programs to help children and youth in or at risk of entering foster care to reconnect with family members
FFPSA	Family First Prevention Services Act	The Family First Prevention Services Act was signed into law as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act on February 9, 2018. This act reforms the federal child welfare financing streams (Title IV-E and Title IV-B of the Social Security Act) to provide services to families who are at risk of entering the child welfare system. The bill aims to prevent children from entering foster care by allowing federal reimbursement for mental health services, substance use treatment, and in-home parenting skill training. It also seeks to improve the well-being of children already in foster by incentivizing states to reduce placement of children in congregate care.

FGC	Family Group Conference	FGCs are a type of Family Group Decision Making. During a FGC, the child's family joins with relatives, friends, and community members to develop a plan for the child and family. These are generally held after a child is removed but may also be used before removal when the family receives FBSS.
FGDM	Family Group Decision Making	FGDM is a collaborative approach to service planning and decision-making, which involves the child or youth and their family joining CPS staff to develop a service plan for the child.
FPOS	Family Plan of Service	A plan designed to help parents access assistance from sources other than CPS and to develop the sufficient capacity to protect their children from abuse or neglect.
FSNA	Family Strengths and Needs Assessment	A tool developed to identify and create collaborative agreements about what the Family Plan of Service should address and determines strengths that may help with child safety.
FTM	Family Team Meeting	A type of Family Group Decision Making that is generally held before a child is removed from the home, but also may be held during other stages of services, such as when a family receives FBSS or when a child is in DFPS conservatorship.
GAL	Guardian ad litem	A person appointed by a judge to represent the best interests of an allegedly abused or neglected child. In many counties the GAL is a CASA. An attorney may also serve as GAL or in the dual role of AAL and GAL for a child.
GRO	General Residential Operation	A residential child-care operation that provides childcare for 13 or more children or young adults.
HHSC	Health and Human Services Commission	HHSC is a state agency which oversees operations of the health and human services system.
HSEGH	Health, Social, Educational and Genetic History	The HSEGH report provides the child's information to prospective adoptive families.

ICPC	Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children	The federal ICPC, originally enacted in 1960, provides a legal framework for the timely placement of children across state lines, the suitability of prospective families, and the provision of needed support services. The compact (1) applies to the interstate placement of children in the foster care system and children placed across state lines for adoption; (2) requires the development of time frames for completion of the approval process; (3) establishes clear rulemaking authority, (4) provides enforcement mechanisms; (5) clarifies state responsibility; and (6) ensures states' ability to purchase home studies from licensed agencies to expedite the process.
ICWA	Indian Child Welfare Act	The Indian Child Welfare Act, adopted by Congress in 1978, applies to child custody proceedings in state courts involving "Indian" children -- children of Native American ancestry.
IEP	Individualized Education Program	An IEP is a plan for each child who qualifies for special education and related services that is developed, reviewed, and revised by the ARD committee, of which parents are active members. It includes the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, participation in state and district-wide assessments, transition services, annual goals, special factors, special education, related services, supplementary aids and services, extended school year services, and least restrictive educational setting.
IMPACT	Information Management Protecting Adults & Children in Texas	According to DFPS, IMPACT is the main application DFPS uses to record case information about the children and adults the agency protects. DFPS uses IMPACT to document all stages of service of a case, including when someone reports abuse, neglect, or exploitation and when those cases are investigated.
IV-E	Title IV-E	Title IV-E of the Social Security Act provides a federal funding stream to states for costs related to the provision of foster care, including costs related to legal representation of DFPS, parents, and children.
JMC	Joint Managing Conservatorship	JMC sets out shared rights and duties of a parent by two parties, ordinarily the parents, even if the exclusive right to make certain decisions are awarded to one party. Tex. Fam. Code § 101.016 . In DFPS cases, it is possible for a parent or a relative to share JMC of a child in the conservatorship of the Department.

LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Webpage	The Child Welfare Information Gateway webpage includes information about serving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, including resources for LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care and resources offering support and guidance for LGBTQ youth and their families.
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	An MOU is an agreement between two parties in the form of a legal document. It is not fully binding in the way that a contract is, but it expresses an interest in performing a service or taking part in an activity.
MSA	Mediated Settlement Agreement	A MSA is a binding, irrevocable, written agreement that results from a successful mediation. It may resolve all or part of the issues of controversy in the case and must be signed by each party to the agreement and their attorney, if applicable. Tex. Fam. Code § 153.0071(c)-(e) . A court is bound to accept the terms of the MSA unless the court makes certain findings listed in Tex. Fam. Code § 153.0071(e-1) .
NCJFCJ	National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Website	The mission of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges is to provide all judges, courts, and related agencies involved with juvenile, family, and domestic violence cases with the knowledge and skills to improve the lives of the families and children who seek justice.
NCSC	National Center for State Courts; Website	The mission of NCSC is to improve the administration of justice through leadership and service to state courts, and courts around the world.
OAG	Office of the Attorney General; Website	The OAG is a Texas state agency that serves as legal counsel to all boards and agencies of state government; issues legal opinions when requested by the Texas Governor, heads of state agencies, and other officials and agencies as provided by Texas statutes; sits as an ex-officio member of state committees and commissions; and defends challenges to state laws and suits against both state agencies and individual employees of the State.
OCA	Office of Court Administration; Website	The mission of OCA is to provide resources and information for the efficient administration of the Judicial Branch of Texas.

PAL	Preparation for Adult Living	<p>A program within CPS to provide support and services to help youth prepare for independent adult living upon departure from DFPS care and support. According to DFPS, PAL policy requires that youth 16 and older who are in substitute care and likely to remain in care until at least age 18, and who can qualify for services up to their 21st birthday receive services to prepare them for adult living. With funding availability, regions may serve any youth 14 or older on whom Child Protective Services has an open case.</p>
PC	Permanency Conference	<p>A Permanency Conference is held when it is not possible or appropriate to hold a Family Group Conference and is held for a child or youth in DFPS conservatorship for the purposes of developing or reviewing the child's or youth's permanency plan; developing or reviewing the family service plan; resolving barriers to achieving a permanent living arrangement, as appropriate; and developing and reviewing the transition plan for youth age 14 and 15. Family Group Decision Making strategies are used, to the extent possible and appropriate to the situation.</p>
PJMC	Permanent Joint Managing Conservatorship	<p>PJMC is a legal term under Tex. Fam. Code § 101.016 used in child custody cases to indicate the long-term sharing of the rights and duties of a parent by two parties, ordinarily the parents, even if the exclusive right to make certain decisions may be awarded to one party</p>
PCSP	Parental-Child Safety Placement; Resource guide	<p>A Parental Child Safety Placement (PCSP) is a temporary, short-term, out-of-home placement a parent can agree to when DFPS staff determine that the child cannot safely stay with a parent. This may also include a placement necessary to protect a victim from a sibling perpetrator. DFPS staff may offer the parents the option of placing the child out of the home rather than DFPS petitioning for court-ordered removal of the child.</p>
PMC	Permanent Managing Conservatorship	<p>Placement of a child in the permanent conservatorship of an entity or person, by court order, (e.g., Texas DFPS or relative) with no intention of returning the child to the parent's custody. PMC is a term used solely in the context of child welfare law and is used to designate a managing conservator other than a parent. The designation of a non-parent as sole or joint managing conservator may be used in lieu of the term PMC.</p>

Q RTP	Qualified Residential Treatment Program	A childcare institution that has a treatment model as defined by the Family's First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). Both accreditation of the facility and court review of the placement are required to qualify for federal IV-E matching payments after a child's placement in a Q RTP by the court.
RO	Ruled Out	This is one of the possible dispositions given in a DFPS investigation of child abuse and neglect. For an investigation to be designated as Ruled Out, the information gathered during the investigation supports a reasonable conclusion that: 1) the alleged abuse did not occur; 2) the alleged perpetrator is 9 years old or younger; or 3) the alleged abuse or neglect did occur but there is sufficient evidence to reasonably conclude that the named alleged perpetrator is not responsible.
RTB	Reason to Believe	RTB is one of the possible dispositions given in a DFPS investigation of child abuse and neglect. For an investigation to be designated as Reason to Believe, the information gathered during the investigation supports a reasonable conclusion that the alleged abuse or neglect did occur and the alleged perpetrator is responsible for it.
RTC	Residential Treatment Center	According to Texas HHS, an RTC provides therapeutic, residential care for children and adolescents to address needs such as mental illness, substance use or other behavioral health problems. Children and adolescents live in an RTC for a short period of time as they work to meet their treatment goals.
SACWIS	Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System	The SACWIS is a comprehensive automated case management tool that meets the needs of all staff (including social workers and their supervisors, whether employed by the State, county, or contracted private providers) involved in foster care and adoptions assistance case management. In Texas, the SACWIS system is IMPACT.
SAPCR	Suit Affecting Parent-Child Relationship	A SAPCR refers to any lawsuit that affects the parent-child relationship, such as conservatorship of a child that has allegedly been abused or neglected by a parent or guardian.

SIJS	Special Immigrant Juvenile Status	SIJS is an immigration classification which allows immigrant children in the state child welfare system who cannot reunify with their parents due to abuse, abandonment, or neglect, and who meet certain other criteria, to obtain lawful permanent immigration status.
SMC	Sole Managing Conservator	An individual named by court order with the exclusive rights and duties of a parent to a child.
SPA	Regional Support Program Administrator	According to the CPS Policy Handbook, CPS Service Program Administrators (SPAs) supervise program staff members who provide services and support to CPS staff and children and youth in substitute care. Their programs include, but are not limited to, education, developmental disabilities, and well-being.
SSCC	Single Source Continuum Contractor	An SSCC is a non-profit or governmental entity with child welfare as primary mission that contracts with DFPS to oversee delivery of services through the state's community-based care foster care program.
TBRI [®]	Trust-Based Relational Intervention	Developed by Texas Christian University's Institute of Child Development, TBRI employs evidence-based principles and practices to accelerate healing and speed to permanency for children in foster care.
TCIC	Texas Crime Identification Center	TCIC provides immediate access 24/7 to law enforcement agencies throughout Texas to data regarding the stolen status of property and the wanted, missing, sex offender, or protective order status of persons.
TEA	Texas Education Agency	TEA is the state agency dedicated to elementary and secondary education.
TFC	Texas Family Code	The laws and statutes that govern Texas family law are contained in the TFC, including laws related to child welfare.
THECB	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board	The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's mission is to provide leadership and coordination for Texas higher education and to promote access, affordability, quality, success, and cost efficiency through 60x30TX, resulting in a globally competitive workforce that positions Texas as an international leader.
TJMC	Temporary Joint Managing Conservatorship	TJMC occurs when temporary managing conservatorship is granted to DFPS and the parent(s) or other person in a SAPCR where the state agency is a party to the lawsuit.

TMC	Temporary Managing Conservatorship	The awarding of conservatorship of a child to Texas DFPS. This may include children remaining in their home with orders from the court for particular requirements to ensure the safety of the child, or the removal of a child from the family for safety and well-being purposes.
TPM	Transition Plan Meeting	According to DFPS, a Transition Plan Meeting is held soon after a youth who has been removed from the home reaches age 14. A TPM tends to be a shorter and more DFPS-driven conference with fewer participants than a Circle of Support. A TPM is used as an alternative to the COS when youth do not desire a COS, or a COS cannot be convened.
TRCP	Texas Rules of Civil Procedure	The TRCP govern all civil lawsuits filed in Texas. They are designed to “obtain a just, fair, equitable and impartial adjudication of the rights of litigants under established principles of substantive law” and to provide for efficient disposition of cases.
UTC	Unable to Complete	For an investigation to be designated as UTC, the information gathered during the investigation supports a reasonable conclusion that the caseworker could not gather enough information because the caseworker could not locate a principal or a principal was uncooperative.
UTD	Unable to Determine	For an investigation to be designated as UTD, the information gathered during the investigation supports a reasonable conclusion that the allegation does not meet the criteria for unable to complete, but: 1) the information gathered is not enough to determine whether the abuse or neglect occurred; or 2) there is enough information to determine that abuse or neglect occurred, but there is not enough information to determine if the alleged perpetrator is responsible.

Abbreviation	Definitions
ABAN	A case determination of Abandonment
EMAB	A case determination of Mental or Emotional Injury
MDNG	A case determination of Medical Neglect
NSUP	A case determination of Non-Support
NSUP	A case determination of Neglectful Supervision
PHAB	A case determination of Physical Abuse
PHNG	A case determination of Physical Neglect
RAPR	A case determination of Refusal to Assume Parental Responsibility
SXAB	A case determination of Sexual Abuse
SXTR	A case determination of Sex Trafficking