



FPS Family Based privatization puts children at risk

Family Based Safety Services Privatization - the background

In March 2018, Region 10- El Paso and surrounding counties- became the first area of the state to undergo privatization of Family Based Safety Services (FBSS). This makes FBSS in Region 10 the only program and area where control of case management has been turned over from CPS to private contractors. When CPS makes a determination that a family is in need of services, programs, or support, a referral is made to HomeSafe, which is a subcontractor for Pathways. HomeSafe is then tasked with directing families to appropriate services to address the issues identified by CPS, and ensuring families are participating to improve the safety and well being of children in the home.

DFPS contractor fails to meet 5 out of 6 performance measures

The first DFPS evaluation of FBSS privatization, published in December 2018, documents the failure of the Family Services Contractor (FSC) to meet the needs of children and families in Region 10. Specifically, *"HomeSAFE did not meet the FY18 target for rate of successful closure (Outcome 1), time to closure (Outcome 2a) or the quality service measures (Outcomes 3, 6 and 7)."*

Additionally, FPS conducted site reviews to monitor the FSC, HomeSafe, and ensure contract compliance. The December 2018 report reveals numerous issues- *"DFPS has identified practice issues around: (1) assessing and addressing safety, especially around substance abuse; (2) timely and effectively engaging families; and (3) providing timely and appropriate services."*

Inadequate training leads to families' unmet needs

The challenges of working with the population of families that need Family Based Services present a real challenge, and demands a qualified and experienced workforce. The evaluation from December 2018 states, *"The difficulties and learning curve HomeSAFE case managers face is parallel to that of DFPS or others learning to engage and serve a high risk population."*

The training period for HomeSafe employees is roughly half of the training period for DFPS employees. This lack of training has created barriers for families in need of services, and is directly linked to HomeSafe not engaging families or providing appropriate services.

Stop the expansion of privatized case management

Agency leaders have called for more time to evaluate contractor performance, but have continued to push further expansion of this privatized model, with Nueces County slated as the next area to undergo this experiment. Given the results in Region 10, it's clear there are too many risks associated with privatization to warrant expansion to Nueces County or any other region. Without being able to judge recidivism rates and other key performance measures of the FSC, and the fact that families in Region 10 are not having their needs met, lawmakers should not expose more Texas families to this dangerous experiment.