

COMMON ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Explanation	Comments
AAL	Attorney ad litem	An attorney who provides services for the purposes of the legal action only, including representation of a child, and who owes to the person the duties of undivided loyalty, confidentiality, and competent representation.
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution	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 that 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 in an attempt to correct problems that were inherent in the foster care system that deterred the adoption of children with special needs. Many of these problems had stemmed from an earlier bill, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, although they had not been anticipated when the law was passed. The biggest change to the law was how ASFA Amended Title IV-E of the Social Security Act regarding funding.
ARD	Admission, Review, and Dismissal	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 individual education program.
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs	Bureau of the U.S. Department of the Interior, which currently provides services (directly or through contracts, grants or compacts) to approximately 1.9 million Native Americans and Alaska Natives.
CAPTA	Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act	Federal legislation addressing child abuse and neglect.

CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocate	A specially screened and trained volunteer, appointed by the court, which 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, serving in the capacity of a Guardian ad litem. http://www.casaforchildren.org
CCEJ	Court of Exclusive, Continuing Jurisdiction	Upon rendition of a final order in a SAPCR, a court acquires continuing, exclusive jurisdiction over all subsequent matters regarding the child, unless otherwise provided by Tex. Fam. Code Chapter 155 .
CFRT	Texas Child Fatality Review Team	A multidisciplinary, multi-agency group, mandated by state law that 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. http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mch/Child_Fatality_Review.shtm
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	Strengthening Texas courts to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for abused and neglected children is the work of the Court Improvement Program. http://www.texaschildrenscommission.gov
COS	Circle of Support	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	Type of CPS case during which services are ordered by the court for the family, but DFPS does not have temporary managing conservatorship of the child.
CPA	Child Placing Agency	Licensed by DFPS and required to conform to minimum standards, verify and oversee non-agency foster placements.
CPC	Child Protection Court	Courts that specialize in child protection cases.
CPS	Child Protective Services	A division of Texas DFPS that investigates reports of abuse and neglect of children. It also: 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. http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_protection/about_child_protective_services

CPU	Centralized Placement Unit	Reviews child's information, tracks placement vacancies, and determines least restrictive placement option that best meets needs of child.
CRCG	Community Resource Coordination Group	Collaboration of local public and private agencies, organizations, and families to work together to meet the needs of individuals which no one agency can meet.
CSCAL	Child Safety Check Alert List	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	Legal care, custody and control of a child given by court order.
CWB	Child Welfare Board	Board developed and funded in some Texas counties to help meet needs of children and youth in foster care.
DFPS/ TDFPS	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services	A state agency that is 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. http://www.dfps.state.tx.us
DPS	Texas DFPS of Public Safety	An agency of this state created to provide public safety services to those people in the state of Texas by enforcing laws, administering regulatory programs, managing records, educating the public and managing emergencies, both directly and through interaction with other agencies. http://www.txdps.state.tx.us
DSHS	Texas DFPS of State Health Services	The Texas DFPS of State Health Services promotes optimal health for individuals and communities while providing effective health, mental health and substance abuse services to Texans. http://www.dshs.state.tx.us
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. Includes services to families to prevent removal of the child from the home.
FCRB	Foster Care Review Board	A panel 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.

FGC	Family Group Conference	A type of Family Group Decision Making. During a family group conference, the child's family joins with relatives, friends, and community members to develop a plan for the child and family. Generally held after a child is removed, but may also be used before removal when the family receives FBSS.
FGDM	Family Group Decision Making	A collaborative approach to service planning and decision making, which involves the child or youth and his or her family to join CPS staff in developing a service plan.
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 states 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 the CASA
GRO	General Residential Operation	A residential child-care operation that provides child care for 13 or more children or young adults.
HHSC	Health and Human Services Commission	State agency which oversees operations of the health and human services system, including DFPS.
HSEGH	Health, Social, Educational and Genetic History	Child's information provided in report to prospective adoptive families.
ICPC	Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children	Provides a solid legal framework for ensuring the timely placement of children across state lines, the suitability of prospective families, and the provision of needed support services. The proposed compact: (1) narrows the applicability of the compact 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 (ICWA), which was adopted by Congress in 1978, applies to child custody proceedings in state courts involving "Indian" children--children of Native American ancestry. The provisions of ICWA represent a dramatic departure from the procedural and substantive laws that most states have enacted to govern child custody proceedings.

IEP	Individualized Education Program	A plan for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by a committee, of which parents are active members. 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 environment.
IMPACT	Information Management Protecting Adults & Children in Texas	A statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) system used by the Texas DFPS to aid in the investigation and assessment of alleged child and adult abuse or neglect cases.
IV-E	Title IV-E	Title IV-E of the Social Security Act which provides federal funding stream to states for costs related to the provision of foster care.
JMC	Joint Managing Conservatorship	The 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. Tex. Fam. Code § 101.016.
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth	The American Bar Association Opening Doors Project started 6 years ago to provide the legal and child welfare community tools, resources and support for improving outcomes for LGBTQ young people in foster care. http://www.americanbar.org/groups/child_law/what_we_do/projects/openingdoors.html
MOU	Memo of Understanding	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 is stronger and more formal than a traditional gentleman's agreement. Sometimes, a memorandum of understanding is used as a synonym for a letter of intent, particularly in private law. A letter of intent expresses an interest in performing a service or taking part in an activity, but does not legally obligate either party.
NCSC	National Center for State Courts	The mission of NCSC is to improve the administration of justice through leadership and service to state courts, and courts around the world. http://www.ncsc.org/
OAG	Office of the Attorney General	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. http://www.oag.state.tx.us

OCA	Office of Court Administration	The mission of OCA is to provide Resources and Information for the Efficient Administration of the Judicial Branch of Texas. http://www.txcourts.gov/oca.aspx
PAL	Preparation for Adult Living	A program within CPS to provide support and services to help youth prepare for independent adult living upon departure from DFPS care and support.
PC	Permanency Conference	Held when it is not possible or appropriate to hold a Family Group Conference. Used to develop a youth's permanency plan and the family's service plan.
PJMC	Permanent Joint Managing Conservatorship	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; granted by final decree. Tex. Fam. Code § 101.016 .
PMC	Permanent Managing Conservatorship	Placement of a child in the permanent conservatorship of an entity or person, by court order, (e.g. Texas DFPS, relative) with no intention of returning the child to the parent's custody.
RO	Ruled Out	One of the possible dispositions given in a DFPS investigation of child abuse and neglect. 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; 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	One of the possible dispositions given in a DFPS investigation of child abuse and neglect. Based on the preponderance of information gathered during the investigation, the caseworker concludes that the alleged abuse or neglect did occur and the alleged perpetrator is responsible for it.
RTC	Residential Treatment Center	Placement of a child in treatment where the child lives at the facility providing the treatment services
SACWIS	Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS)	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.
SAPCR	Suit Affecting Parent-Child Relationship	A law suit, filed in child protective courts, 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 that may allow for a child who is present in the U.S. without legal immigration status and who has been abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent.

SPA	Regional Support Program Administrator	Persons assigned to a region for the support of Texas DFPS programs.
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.
TFC	Texas Family Code	The laws and statutes that govern Texas family law including child protection
TJMC	Temporary Joint Managing Conservatorship	When temporary managing conservatorship is granted to DFPS and the parent(s) or other person.
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	Held soon after a youth who has been removed from the home reaches age 16.
TRCP	Texas Rules of Civil Procedure	Rules to obtain a just, fair, equitable and impartial adjudication of the rights of litigants under established principles of substantive law. http://www.supreme.courts.state.tx.us/Rules/TRCP/RCP_all.pdf
UTC	Unable to Complete	One of the possible dispositions given in a DFPS investigation of child abuse and neglect. The caseworker could not gather enough information because the caseworker could not locate a principal or a principal was uncooperative.
UTD	Unable to Determine	One of the possible dispositions given in a DFPS investigation of child abuse and neglect. 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
MDNG	A case reason for Medical Neglect
NSUP	A case reason for Non-Support
PHAB	A case reason for Physical Abuse
PHNG	A case reason for Physical Neglect
RAPR	A case reason for Refusal to Accept Parental Responsibility
SXAB	A case reason for Sexual Abuse
EMAB	A case reason for Mental or Emotional Injury
ABAN	A case reason for Abandonment
NSUP	A case reason for Neglectful Supervision