



BOLD  
STEPS  
TOWARD  
*Brighter*  
FUTURES

*"As gatekeepers for families in crisis, courts must make life-altering decisions that require knowledge of multiple complex issues.... Too often, courts lack the technology, training, and resources needed to make good decisions."*

*The Supreme Court of Texas, November 2007*

**Texas Loves Children, Inc.**  
Helping Protect Abused Children from Further Harm



## The Problem

# Children at Risk

In 2011 in Texas alone, almost 66,000 children were confirmed as victims of abuse and neglect. Over 46,000 were immersed in the legal system, depending on the courts to protect them. The most important decisions about abused and neglected children's lives are made in court. What happens in court determines whether or not these vulnerable children will be at risk of further harm.

Child abuse cases are very complex and highly specialized, involving many issues not taught in law schools, such as psychological disorders and the dynamics of abuse, neglect, family violence, and addiction. These defenseless children deserve that every resource possible be in the hands of those making critical decisions about their lives.

The system for handling civil child abuse cases, however, is overburdened and underfunded. The dedicated judges and attorneys handling these cases face many obstacles, such as mounting caseloads, overburdened courts, and a severe lack of resources commonly available in other areas of law. Yet children's lives depend on the court case outcomes.

This is also the only field of law where the victim may have to continue to live with the perpetrator. The difference between living in safety or living in terror depends on the expertise the legal professionals have or can access. Psychological, medical, and legal resources and a way for judges and attorneys to communicate with colleagues, mentors, and experts make a world of difference.

Every child deserves a safe home. Your help is an important step toward making this happen for abused children.

## Improving Children's Lives

### Texas Loves Children, Inc. "TLC"

#### TLC's Mission

TLC is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve case outcomes for abused and neglected children by enhancing the quality of legal services they receive.

**The most important decisions about an abused or neglected child's future are made in court.**

TLC exists to help ensure that those decisions are the best possible for the child.



## Abused Children Rely on the Courts to Protect Them

## Dire Consequences from One Mistake

### A Horrific Example:

Lauren, an emaciated little girl, was found locked in a dark, lice-infested closet. She was covered with feces and sores, her arms as thin as broomsticks. She weighed only 25 pounds—at 8 years old. Lauren had been imprisoned in this closet for years. She had been repeatedly sexually assaulted so severely that her extensive injuries required surgery.

**This tragedy would have never happened but for an attorney's mistake.** Because of a legal error, Lauren's birth mother and stepfather were able to reclaim her when she was 18 months old from the loving adoptive couple who had cared for her since birth. Thus, her torture began.

*Atkinson v. State of Texas*

## The High Price of Abuse

If you were abused as a child, you would be:

1100% more likely to be arrested for juvenile crime

310% more likely to be arrested for violent crime

380% more likely to develop drug addiction

250% more likely to commit suicide

25% of foster children become homeless.

95% of teenage prostitutes were previously sexually abused.

# 1 in 5 Abused Children Are Confirmed As Re-abused within 5 Years

## TLC's Innovation

TLC received the **2010 Award for Excellence in Social Innovation**, given by the Dallas Center for Nonprofit Management, for TLC's Online Legal Resource and Communication Center. This prestigious award is given to the organization that best provides:

*"a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, and sustainable ... and demonstrates significant positive change around a specific social issue."*

Read on to learn about this innovative solution.



Photo courtesy of SMU Magazine

**Barbara Elias-Perciful, J.D.**

Founder and President  
Texas Loves Children, Inc.

Director  
Texas Lawyers for Children

Recipient  
ABA 2009 Child Advocacy Award

## You Can Help TLC Prevent Further Harm



# Bold Steps Toward Brighter Futures

## The Solution

## Sharing Expertise & Best Practices

### TLC'S Online Legal Resource & Communication Center

More than 1,800 Texas judges and attorneys trust the services of TLC's innovative, internet-based center. This online center is the **only one of its kind in the nation**. Located at [www.TexasLawyersforChildren.org](http://www.TexasLawyersforChildren.org), it provides critical information and communication tools **all in one place, at no charge**.

TLC's interactive center has created an unprecedented online community of legal professionals willing and now able to share ideas, strategies, and practice tips with each other statewide.

### Complete Online Child Abuse Law Library

TLC's online center includes an extremely comprehensive, topically organized, easily searchable library focusing on legal, medical, and psychological information pertinent to child abuse and neglect cases. All materials that are added to the online center are either reviewed by or written by TLC's experienced team of highly specialized attorneys. Having access to streamlined research, with the best and most current information at their fingertips, allows professionals to achieve the best results for children.

### Communication Services

TLC offers web-based document vaults, discussion boards, email networks, and urgent legal news alerts. This revolutionary networking capability enables professionals across Texas to communicate with each other. This has created a new era of sharing best practices that was never before possible. Now that judges and attorneys have a way to communicate with their respective peers privately, they are provided with immediate access to the expertise of hundreds of colleagues statewide.

### Expert Exchange

Attorneys have unprecedented **FREE** access to prominent national experts in medicine and psychology. The children's county-funded cases do not have budgets adequate to provide this much-needed level of expertise. Instant answers are given to what can become critical, life and death questions.

### Pro Bono Attorney Network

Attorneys across the state can volunteer to help children in their respective specialties. The Texas Young Lawyers Association is partnering with TLC to recruit attorneys to represent foster children in the permanent care of the state who otherwise would have no legal advocates.

### Training

TLC features national experts in its live training events on critical issues in child abuse cases for judges, attorneys, psychologists, and CPS caseworkers. TLC has created the ability to offer online training via the Online Center.



"Your resources were invaluable to me as I volunteered to represent some children. I could not have done my job without your website, your seminar, and your [attorney] listserv. Thank you very much!"





# TLC's Online Legal Resource & Communication Center

*Providing Expertise to Help Those Helping Children*

www.TexasLawyersforChildren.org



Complete Law Library  
on Child Abuse  
**Topically Searchable**



Colleague Connection  
Online Community,  
Discussion Boards,  
Mentors, & Email Networks



Instant Access  
to Medical &  
Psychological  
Experts



Pro Bono  
Attorney  
Network



Civil & Criminal  
Case Resources

## How TLC Helps

### Quotes from TLC's Past Surveys of Judges & Attorneys

- ♥ "I found the site very helpful in **arming me with the information** I needed....**regarding the best interests of the child**....we were **able to implement safeguards which were protective of a little girl.**"
- ♥ "Being able to post a question to a legal **community who is experienced** and familiar with [Family Law as it pertains to CPS] and **get feedback within minutes is invaluable.**"
- ♥ "On several occasions I have **had questions regarding appropriateness of psychotropic medications prescribed for children**, which I researched through the TLC site."
- ♥ "The TLC Website helped me identify topics that I had not yet thought about--so that I **could effectively represent my client and protect her**....TLC has made a difference in my practice and my client's life."



# Revolutionary Results

"TLC is revolutionizing how child abuse cases are handled in Texas. I know of no other program that provides such needed and critical support to the lawyers, judges, and advocates at work to improve case outcomes in the child protection system."

Fairy D. Rutland, Commissioner,  
Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families

## The Impact

### **TLC's work helps the most vulnerable children in Texas.**

The 1800+ judges and attorneys who use our services estimate that they help over 89,000 children in a year.

### **Judges have chosen TLC to aid in statewide court improvement to achieve the best outcomes for children.**

The Texas Association of Child Protection Judges selected TLC's communication tools as its vehicle for improving the standards of practice in children's cases.

### **"TLC's online resource center continues to be a catalyst for systemic change and improvement in how child abuse and neglect cases are handled in the courts."**

F. Scott McCown, Executive Director, Center for Public Policy Priorities and Retired District Judge

### **Legal professionals are better equipped to protect children.**

"At my fingertips were cases, briefs, articles, and practice tips...and, most importantly, examples and advice about how to best protect the child from further abuse."

Jeanne Huey, Attorney

### **Texas now has a way to harness top expertise and share it statewide.**

"It is where I start when I have a question because I usually find the answer there."

### **Immediate response to large-scale needs is now possible.**

TLC is poised to notify the legal community, disseminate information quickly, and rally statewide resources to deal with large-scale problems.

### **TLC's online center serves as a national model.**

"I wish every state could have such a comprehensive resource." Howard Davidson, J.D., Director, American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law. TLC has replicated its unparalleled online center for California and Alabama and will soon be doing so for Florida.

## Visionary Leadership

### Advisory Council

Howard G. Baldwin, Jr., J.D.  
Commissioner, Texas Department of Family & Protective Services, Austin, Texas

Hon. Jean Boyd  
District Judge, 323rd District Court, Tarrant County  
Fort Worth, Texas

Charles G. Childress, J.D.  
Former Clinical Professor, Children's Rights Clinic  
University of Texas School of Law, Austin, Texas

Howard Davidson, J.D.  
Director, ABA Center on Children and the Law  
Washington, D.C.

C. Ed Davis, J.D., Ph.D.  
Former Deputy Director for Legal Services, TDFPS  
Austin, Texas

Nancy R. DeWees, J.D., LMSW-ACP, LPC  
Former Program Administrator, Tarrant County CPS  
& Regional Placement, Fort Worth, Texas

Nancy Kellogg, M.D.  
Medical Director, ChildSafe  
San Antonio, Texas

Delane Kinney, Ph.D.  
Director of Psychological Services, Salesmanship  
Club Youth & Family Centers, Dallas, Texas

Hon. Patricia Macias  
District Judge, 388th District Court, El Paso County  
Member, Texas Supreme Court's Commission on  
Children, Youth and Families, El Paso, Texas

David Montague, J.D.  
Former Assistant District Attorney, Tarrant County  
Fort Worth, Texas

Frederick C. Moss, J.D., LL.M.  
Professor Emeritus of Law, Dedman School of Law  
Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas

John E.B. Myers, J.D.  
Professor of Law, McGeorge School of Law, University  
of the Pacific, Sacramento, California

Fairy Davenport Rutland, J.D.  
Vice Chair, State Bar Committee on Child Abuse and  
Neglect; Member, Texas Supreme Court's  
Commission on Children, Youth and Families  
Austin, Texas

John J. Sampson, LL.B.  
Co-Author, Sampson & Tindall, Tex. Fam. Code Ann.  
Professor, University of Texas School of Law  
Austin, Texas

Hon. Cheryl Lee Shannon  
District Judge, 305th District Court, Dallas County  
Member, Texas Supreme Court's Commission on  
Children, Youth and Families, Dallas, Texas

Hon. John J. Specia, Jr. (Ret.)  
District Judge, 225th District Court, Bexar County  
Member, Texas Supreme Court's Commission on  
Children, Youth and Families, San Antonio, Texas

# How You Can Help Improve the Lives of Children



## TLC's Team Working for Children

TLC's Director, Barbara Elias-Perciful, J.D., received the American Bar Association's 2009 Child Advocacy Award. She leads a team of 4 attorneys with over 75 years of combined experience in the field. She is the former Chair of the State Bar's Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect and is a member of the Collaborative Council for the Texas Supreme Court Children's Commission.

The TLC model is cost-effective. TLC's budget, spread over the number of children served, is about \$7 per child per year—less than 1/3 of the cost of one day of foster care for a child.

## Major Sponsors

Amon G. Carter Foundation

The Meadows Foundation

The Rees-Jones Foundation

RGK Foundation

Hoblitzelle Foundation

## Contact Us

3131 Turtle Creek Blvd.  
Suite 1018  
Dallas, Texas 75219

214-219-5TLC (5852)  
800-993-5TLC (5852)  
Fax: 214-219-5851

[www.TexasLovesChildren.org](http://www.TexasLovesChildren.org)

[TexasLovesChildren@yahoo.com](mailto:TexasLovesChildren@yahoo.com)

## Donate!

There is no other organization doing what we do. TLC depends on donations from private foundations, individuals, and government grants for support. TLC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, so donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. TLC accepts checks and can process credit card donations online at [www.TexasLovesChildren.org](http://www.TexasLovesChildren.org).

## Spread the News!

Every judge and attorney in Texas who handles a case involving a child can benefit from using TLC's services. With a huge state to cover, TLC needs your help in ensuring that they know about our free services.

## Help Us Recruit Pro Bono Attorneys!

Attorneys can volunteer by registering online at [www.TexasLawyersforChildren.org](http://www.TexasLawyersforChildren.org) to provide pro bono assistance in their areas of specialty, such as trial skills mentoring, mediation, or appellate law. They can also advocate for youth in the permanent care of the state.



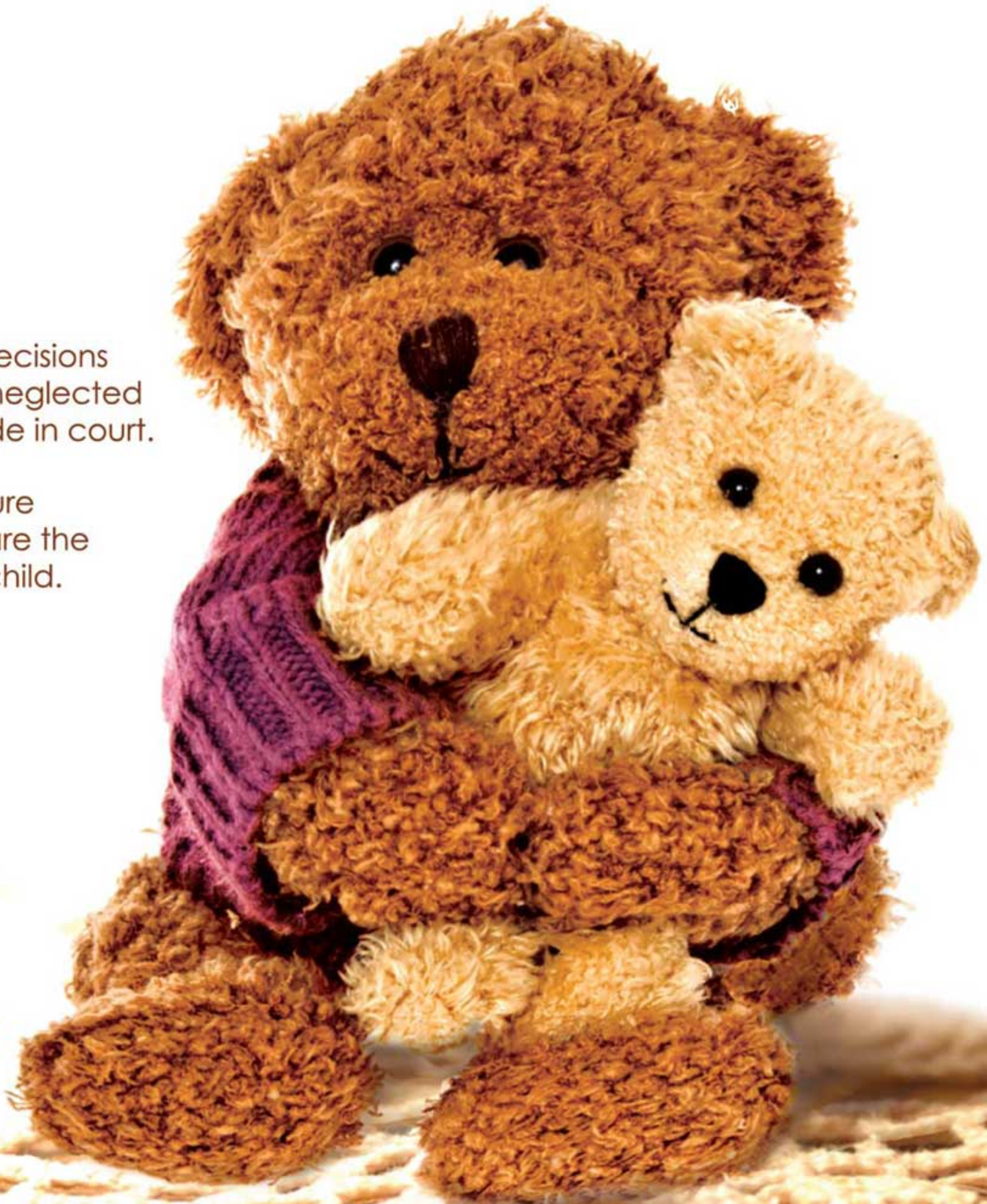


Although We Cannot End All Child Abuse,

Together, We Can Help Protect Abused Children from Further Harm

The most important decisions about an abused or neglected child's future are made in court.

TLC exists to help ensure that those decisions are the best possible for the child.



Texas Loves Children, Inc.

*Helping Protect Abused Children from Further Harm*

[www.TexasLovesChildren.org](http://www.TexasLovesChildren.org) 800-993-5TLC (5852) 214-219-5TLC [TexasLovesChildren@yahoo.com](mailto:TexasLovesChildren@yahoo.com)

The children depicted in this publication were not taken from actual child abuse cases.  
This brochure was designed by artist Rosita Alvarez [www.YourReflectioninArt.com](http://www.YourReflectioninArt.com) with cover design by Michael Garrett.