

Abilene Christian University

## Digital Commons @ ACU

---

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

---

5-2023

# Impact of Community-Based Care Model on Child Welfare Professionals: A Study of Workload, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intent

Kerri Taylor  
klt19b@acu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Family Law Commons](#), [Legislation Commons](#), [Social Policy Commons](#), [Social Statistics Commons](#), [Social Welfare Commons](#), and the [Social Work Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Taylor, Kerri, "Impact of Community-Based Care Model on Child Welfare Professionals: A Study of Workload, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intent" (2023). Digital Commons @ ACU, *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 613.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Electronic Theses and Dissertations at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU.

## ABSTRACT

Much of the research on child welfare workers is in a traditional service model. However, there is a lack of empirical studies regarding childcare workers in a community-based care model. This study examines whether transitioning to the community-based model has positively impacted workers' perspectives regarding turnover intention, job satisfaction, and workload manageability. A cross-sectional survey design was used with convenient sampling from a Texas Department of Family Protective Service Region that transitioned to the CBC model. The single source continuum contractor employed a sample of 125 potential respondents in the selected region. A total of 43 permanency workers responded to the survey. Respondents who worked under the legacy system represent 32.56% (i.e., legacy  $n = 14$ ; CBC  $n = 43$ ). The study found no difference in turnover intention between the two models. However, workload improved under the CBC model with a statistically significant decrease in perceived job satisfaction. The study's results were mixed, and further research is necessary to understand the influences and challenges of transitioning to the CBC service delivery model.

Impact of Community-Based Care Model on Child Welfare Professionals: A Study of  
Workload, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intent

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Social Work

Abilene Christian University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in Social Work

By

Kerri Taylor

May 2023

This thesis, directed and approved by the committee for the thesis candidate Kerri Taylor, has been accepted by the Office of Graduate Programs of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Science in Social Work



Assistant Provost for Residential Graduate Programs

Date

May 15, 2023

---

Thesis Committee

Kyeonghee Jang

Kyeonghee Jang (May 15, 2023 15:41 EDT)

Kyeonghee Jang Ph.D., Chair



Thomas Winter Ed.D



Stephanie Duncan LCSW

This study is dedicated to all nontraditional students who decided to make a change. To anyone who has doubted their ability to succeed and make a difference in the world.

Amazement lies beyond the roadblock of fear.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to Dr. Jang for your encouragement and optimism. Your patience and persistence made this process a success. Thank you for having multiple meetings with me to discuss my hypotheses, data, and findings— without you, I would not have been able to cross the finish line. To my mom and dad, there are no words to express my deep gratitude and appreciation for seeing my potential for success. Through the darkness, you were my light; through my fears, you were my strength. There is no exaggeration when I say I would never have made it without you two in my corner. Thank you to my brothers and sisters for being my first best friends. Thank you for always being just a phone call away and bringing joy, laughter, and encouragement into my life.

© Copyright by Kerri Taylor (2023)

All Rights Reserved

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	LIST OF TABLES .....	iv
I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	Problem Statement .....	1
	Background .....	1
	Existing Knowledge About the Problem and Research Gap .....	2
	The Present Study .....	3
II.	LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
	Method of Literature Review: Search Strategies .....	5
	Landscape of Child Welfare in the United States .....	6
	Prevalence and Incidents of Child Maltreatment .....	7
	Definitions .....	7
	Complexities in Data Collection .....	8
	Texas Foster Care.....	10
	Reporting and Intakes.....	10
	Legal Process of Removal.....	11
	DFPS Legislative Changes.....	16
	Texas Child Welfare: Two-Model System .....	21
	Legacy System .....	21
	Outcomes and Challenges .....	22



	<i>M.D. V. Abbott</i> .....	26
	Single-Source Continuum Contractors and Community-Based Care .....	27
	Change to CBC in Texas .....	28
	Challenging Transition.....	30
	DFPS Regions .....	31
	Impact of the Shift in the Service Delivery Model .....	32
	Workload of Child Welfare Professionals .....	33
	Turnover Intentions of Child Welfare Professionals.....	35
	Job Satisfaction of Child Welfare Professionals .....	37
	Conclusion: Implications of Literature Review for a New Research .....	37
III.	METHODOLOGY .....	39
	Research Design.....	39
	Population and Sampling .....	40
	Instrumentation .....	41
	Workload.....	42
	Job Satisfaction .....	44
	Turnover Intent.....	45
	Demographic and Professional Characteristics.....	46
	Ethical Considerations .....	47
	Privacy and Confidentiality.....	47
	IRB Application .....	47
	Data Collection.....	48
	Statistical Analysis .....	48

IV.	FINDINGS .....	50
	Participants.....	50
	Descriptive Statistics of Major Variables.....	51
	Reliability Testing.....	53
	Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention .....	53
	Workload Manageability.....	54
	Hypothesis Testing.....	55
	Change Due to System Transition.....	56
	Factors of Turnover Intention .....	57
V.	DISCUSSION .....	60
	Discussion of Major Findings .....	60
	Implications of Findings.....	61
	Implications for Practice .....	62
	Implications for Policy .....	63
	Implications for Future Research .....	66
	Conclusions.....	67
	REFERENCES.....	69
	APPENDIX A: IRB Approval Letter.....	79
	APPENDIX B: Survey Invitation Letter.....	80
	APPENDIX C: Survey Informed Consent.....	82

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Sample ( $N = 43$ ).....	51
Table 2: Professional Information.....	52
Table 3: Descriptive and Internal Consistency of Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention .....	53
Table 4: Descriptive and Internal Consistency: Workload Manageability .....	55
Table 5: Paired Sample $t$ -test: Job Satisfaction, Workload Manageability, and Turnover Intention .....	56
Table 6: Multiple Linear Regression Models of Turnover Intention .....	59

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Child welfare services in Texas have undergone a significant transformation in recent years, shifting from traditional institutional care models to a community-based care model. The impact of this change on children's well-being has been the subject of considerable research. However, information is scarce regarding how this shift has affected the work environment for child welfare professionals. This study assesses the impact of community-based care model on child welfare professionals' workload, turnover intent, and job satisfaction from the perspective of permanency case workers working in the community-based care model (CBC).

#### **Problem Statement**

This research sought to address the perspectives of CBC providers in a Texas Department of Family Protective Service (DFPS) region implementing the CBC model and a change in service delivery has positively affected their work environment. This research can inform policy and practice to improve the well-being of both children and child welfare professionals in Texas.

#### **Background**

The field of social work is credited for bringing to light and addressing the occurrence of child maltreatment. In 1874, social worker Mary Ellon Wilson established the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (PCC) (Klika & Conte, 2017). Since its inception nearly 150 years ago, the goal of protecting children in the

United States has evolved to the establishment of child welfare agencies which oversee the removal, care, and reunification of children and their families. Klika and Conte (2017) report that by 1969 there were an estimated 60,000 reported cases of child maltreatment. Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families reported 407,000 children in foster care in 2020 (Office of the Administration for Children & Families, 2021). Placing children into substitute, or out-of-home care, requires governmental oversight and fiscal responsibility.

The foster care system in Texas has been implementing reforms and additional oversights to agencies authorized to care for abused and neglected children (Kilmer, 2022). One of those efforts was the development of Single Source Continuum Contractors (SSCC), private agencies that are often nonprofit that provide community-based care. DFPS contracts with these providers and oversees the provision of foster care and case management services within the system.

### **Existing Knowledge About the Problem and Research Gap**

The design of the child welfare system is to safeguard children from unsafe and abusive situations and assist families in stabilizing and reunification. However, evaluations of the child welfare system in Texas demonstrate that it has failed. In 2015, Texas's foster care system was declared unconstitutional for putting children at unreasonable risk of harm. In response, the court appointed two experts to work with the DFPS on reform and oversight. This lawsuit led to significant legislative changes, including the implementation of the Community-Based Care Model, through Texas House Bill 5 (H.B., 2013, p. 5). The change is intended to improve child outcomes in the state's foster care system by providing care to children and families through partnerships

with private-sector organizations and local communities. In addition, a transition from the traditional service model to the CBC model was initiated in response to ongoing concerns about the state's legacy foster care system. The literature and court documentation report shows that the legacy system faced high caseloads for caseworkers, high turnover rates of workers, a shortage of placements for children, and poor outcomes of care (*M.D. v. Abbott, 2015*).

Despite ample literature on Texas's child welfare system's legacy system, there is a lack of thorough examination of how the change has affected the child welfare workers. State investigations highlighted specific areas contributing to the system's failures, including turnover rates, placement instability, and high caseloads (Texas Health and Human Services, 2021). However, more research must be conducted to evaluate whether the new CBC model effectively addresses these issues since its implementation in Texas.

The present study investigates how the transition to the CBC model has impacted the perspective of permanency workers. The research evaluates workers' viewpoints on turnover intention, job satisfaction, and workload manageability. As the CBC model is a relatively new approach to child welfare in the state, more research is required to determine whether it has an effect on permanency workers and their capacity to provide secure safe, and consistent care for foster children.

### **The Present Study**

This study examines how the change to the CBC model affected the perspectives of permanency case workers on areas that influence their ability to perform job duties effectively and in the best interest of foster children. The study answers the following research question: Has the implementation of the CBC model positively impacted

turnover intention, job satisfaction, and workload manageability issues as perceived by permanency workers compared to the legacy model? This study contributes to the social work knowledge base by informing the practice of states and agencies that evaluate the CBC model's ability to address the common occurrences of turnover rate, high workload demands, and job satisfaction in child welfare.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review explores the historical implications of the Texas foster care system. In addition, it reviews theoretical and empirical backgrounds and relevant court cases regarding the state's legislative changes and the evolution of child welfare in the state.

#### **Method of Literature Review: Search Strategies**

A methodical approach to locate relevant literature for this study utilizes various search engines, databases, and journals, as well as legal literature, legislation, court documents, and current policies and procedures. To achieve this, a search was conducted using sources such as Google Scholar, Sage, HeinOnline, Journal of Family Social Work, Texas Family Code, and Casetext.

An initial search was performed on the impact of legal changes on foster families in Texas. The search was limited to peer-reviewed English articles relevant to social work, child welfare, and family law. The search was not restricted by date to include historical context. A combination of various search terms using legal terminology, databases, and subject terms were applied to develop the search criteria terms based on educational and practical experience. The original search criteria included terms such as *foster family, perspective, licensing process, policy, placement, kinship*, and more. During the initial review it was observed that the primary focus of legislation and court



documentation centered on DFPS, permanency workers, their role in care, and its influence on child outcomes.

After conducting a comprehensive review of the legal landscape and historical context of child welfare in the state, a modification to the search criteria was warranted. The new focus excluded the effect of foster families and sought out literature relevant to child welfare workers, the working environment, and child outcomes. The search terms were expanded to include *placement, stability, normalcy, turnover, record keeping, employee satisfaction, caseload, workload, child outcomes*, and other related terms. The material selected for the review included peer-reviewed articles, court documents, and legislation passed at the state and federal levels.

The literature review takes a macro perspective on the prevalence and incidents of child maltreatment, focusing on the Texas foster care system. The review examines the intake process, and investigation of child abuse claims. Finally, Texas's traditional DFPS child welfare system and the community-based care model are reviewed.

### **Landscape of Child Welfare in the United States**

Child welfare services in the United States date back to the late 1800s when social reformers such as Jane Addams, Lillian Wald, and Mary Ellon Wilson began advocating for protecting children living in poverty and dangerous or abusive situations (Pagano, 1999). Throughout the 20th century, child welfare services continued to evolve with the establishment of state-level child welfare agencies. In addition, laws required reporting child abuse and neglect, and the development of foster care programs provided temporary care for children who were removed from their homes. However, the problem of child maltreatment has not subsided since the creation of child welfare and protective agencies.

In fact, over the years, the systems put in place to protect children have a history of placing children in unsafe conditions.

Federal and state laws and funding shape the legislative landscape of child welfare. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) is the primary federal legislation that defines child maltreatment. Each state has specific definitions that guide regional protection responses and reports based on the CAPTA's outline of child maltreatment (Klika & Conte, 2017). The states also legislate family laws, determining which agencies and courts can intervene to protect children's lives. Additionally, states establish requirements for providers who license homes and facilities that house children after removal.

## **Prevalence and Incidents of Child Maltreatment**

### **Definitions**

From the federal perspective, CAPTA defines *child abuse* as “any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caregiver that results in the death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation, or an act or failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm” (The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, 2018). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) simplifies CAPTA's definition: “Child maltreatment is any act or series of acts of commission or omission by a parent or other caregiver that results in harm, the potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Program Activities Guide, 2015). An individual in the commission of an act of child abuse is acting directly to cause harm to a child. The omission is the failure to work in the child's best interest. Frequently

omission is linked to acts of neglect or neglectful supervision of the child or is regarded as a failure to protect the child (Day et al., 2021).

It is important, when collecting data on maltreatment, to differentiate between the prevalence and incidence of the issue. Prevalence refers to the overall rate of child maltreatment in a population, while incidence measures the frequency of its occurrence. Both terms assess how the issue is distributed among the population. Prevalence measures the total number of cases over a certain period and how widespread the issue has become, including new and old cases. Conversely, incidence specifically measures the rate of new cases being reported, focusing on the manifestation of the issue (Kim & Drake, 2019).

### **Complexities in Data Collection**

Understanding the prevalence and incidents of child maltreatment is an important part in understanding the complexities and intricacies of measuring abuse. The complexity in measurement is because the data gathered is limited to reported cases, including ongoing cases of abuse and knowledge of past abuses obtained through retrospective means. For example, retrospective knowledge is often obtained through responses to studies, such as the Adverse Childhood Experiences study, or ACE scores, which examines the relationship between childhood trauma and its impact on adult psychodynamics (Felittie et al., 2019). In addition, researchers use empirical administrative data collected at the state, local, and national levels to investigate the prevalence and incidence of child maltreatment. One issue is the legal differences in defining and categorizing abuse.

Understanding the complexities of defining and measuring child maltreatment puts the prevalence and incidents of child abuse reporting into context. The methodology used in obtaining data, the specific nature of the samples collected, and the operational definitions used vary in prevalence studies. It should be understood that these factors greatly influence the statistics presented. The challenge of collecting data to study the prevalence and incidence of child abuse is the variability in how each state defines and categorizes child abuse. For example, certain states may permit physical discipline of children, while others do not.

The distinction between physical discipline and abuse often hinges on whether injury to the child occurs. According to the American Professional Society Abused Children (APSAC) Handbook on Child Maltreatment, “injury” serves as a critical threshold in most states, with non-injurious incidents typically not considered physical abuse unless there are complicating factors such as lack of parental control with an infant (Jonson-Reid et al., 2017). This example of variability in state laws is just one of several factors that can influence how data on child maltreatment is collected and interpreted.

Studying the prevalence and incidents of child maltreatment from a national perspective is complicated by additional factors. For example, state legislation varies in its definition of child maltreatment and how referrals are solicited. How states respond to maltreatment allegations can also vary. It should be noted that state policy is designed for child protective agencies and not statistics data but an evolving and ever-changing set of rules and guidelines that are driven by a range of statistical and outcome driven data (Klika & Conte, 2017). Therefore, studies addressing this issue from a national

perspective need to account for the multitude of variables to establish the validity and reliability of the research and representation of collected data sets.

### **Texas Foster Care**

Considering the complexities of studying the prevalence and incidents of child maltreatment from the national perspective, it is vital to understand the role of state child welfare agencies in responding to and addressing these issues. In Texas, creating the DFPS was a significant step toward improving the delivery of child welfare services. As the primary agency responsible for investigating and responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect, DFPS plays a crucial role in protecting the well-being of children in the state. Since its inception, DFPS has faced ongoing challenges related to funding and staffing, as well as the complex issues that come with providing care to families and children within the state.

### **Reporting and Intakes**

Individual states' approach to child maltreatment referral and policies around the response to reports of maltreatment is paramount in understanding the bridge between reports of abuse and substantiating factors that place children into the foster care system. For example, Texas is a universal mandatory report state. In a mandatory reporting state, every citizen has a legal obligation to report suspected maltreatment or knowledge of abuse to government agencies that investigate and respond to the report, like law enforcement agencies or the Texas DFPS (Brown & Stathatos, 2022). Within Texas DFPS, the Statewide Intake Department processes reports determining whether there is legal jurisdiction or authority to investigate claims of maltreatment (DFPS, 2020b, Section 2141).

In the 2021 fiscal year, DFPS Statewide Intake (SWI) department had received a total of 773,919 intakes, of which 262,420 were alleged victims of child abuse and neglect. The investigations confirmed of those allegations found reason to believe abuse had occurred in 68,517 cases, approximately 26% of the allegations (DFPS, 2021c, p. 3). This figure is slightly less than the DFPS Statewide Intake report from the previous year, which confirmed approximately 27% of the allegations as reason to believe abuse had occurred (DFPS, 2020b, p. 3). Over the last decade, nearly 50% of all reports of child maltreatment that have gone through Texas's abuse hotline were determined to be outside the jurisdiction of DFPS or insufficient evidence was found, which could be a result of mandatory reporting laws and has implications for the fiscal responsibility delegated to investigations (Brown & Stathatos, 2022).

### **Legal Process of Removal**

Upon receipt of a child abuse or neglect report, an investigation is initiated by the DFPS. If SWI finds reason to believe and determines that removal is in the child's best interest or emergency removal is necessary due to urgent circumstances, the child will be placed into state care. In cases of emergency removal, specific criteria must be met and documented in an affidavit.

1. There is an immediate danger to the physical health or safety of the child, or the child has been a victim of neglect or sexual abuse, and that continuation in the home would be contrary to the child's welfare.
2. There is no time, consistent with the physical health or safety of the child, for a full adversary hearing under Subchapter C; and

3. Reasonable efforts, consistent with the circumstances and providing for the child's safety, were made to prevent or eliminate the need for the child's removal. (Tex. Fm. Code Sex 262.101)

In Texas, a child who is removed under emergency circumstances must undergo an emergency removal hearing within 14 days of the removal. During this hearing, the judge will determine whether the child should remain in the custody of DFPS or be returned to parental custody. An adjudication hearing is held within 60 days to determine whether the child was abused or neglected. If the child is ordered to remain in DFPS custody, a permanency planning hearing will be held within 12 months of the adjudication hearing (Texans Care for Children, 2021). Over 12 months, status hearings take place to monitor the parents' progress in their family service plans and evaluate the well-being of the children. It is worth noting that the legal process of removal can be intricate and will differ depending on the unique circumstances of each case. DFPS and the courts are committed to prioritizing the child's safety and best interest throughout the process and will offer families a range of services to facilitate family reunification.

During the initial 12 months of placement into the care of DFPS, children are granted temporary managing conservatorship (TMC) status, which places them under the state's legal custody. According to data obtained through DFPS data books, there were 18,094 children with TMC status in Texas in 2020, a slight decrease from the previous year. This legal status designates DFPS as the child's guardian. It grants the state legal rights and responsibilities, including the authority to determine the child's primary residence and make medical and educational decisions for the child (*M.D. v. Abbott, 2015*). In addition, DFPS creates family service plans (FSPs) for families whose children

have TMC status. The FSP outlines specific goals and tasks the family must complete for their child/children (The Administration for Children and Families, 2022). The FSP is a collaborative process between the family, DFPS caseworkers, and other relevant parties, such as the child/children's attorney ad litem, child advocate, and the courts.

Development of the FSP starts with DFPS permanency caseworkers' assessment of the families' strengths and needs to determine services. Caseworkers then schedule a meeting with the family to review the FSP and discuss the goals and tasks to be completed in order to reunify with the child/children. Families are encouraged to provide input into the FSP and identify barriers or challenges that may impact their ability to complete the tasks, such as transportation issues, language barriers, or financial complications. Once a plan is created, caseworkers provide the family with information about the services and support available to complete the items on the FSP. Services that are offered may include counseling, substance abuse treatment, parenting classes, or other related services.

If a family completes the FSP, the permanency caseworkers conduct a home study to assess whether the home is safe and appropriate for the child to return (Newquist et al., 2020). For families who do not complete their FPS within the allotted 12 months, DFPS may take steps to pursue other permanent options for the child, such as termination of parental rights and adoption. However, the 12-month timeline is not a hard and fast rule, and there may be some flexibility in certain circumstances. If the courts find the parties in the case have not completed the required services, DFPS will file a petition to terminate parental rights. The termination hearing will be held within 14 days (about two weeks) of filing the petition. Once rights are terminated, the legal status of the child/children



changes from TMC to Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) (The Texas Department of Family Protective Services, 2018). When courts grant DFPS PMC off a child, the Department has full legal custody of the child. The goal of PMC is to provide a safe and stable home for the child while working towards a permanent living arrangement.

In 2020 there were 6,694 children under PMC status in Texas, a slight increase from the previous year, according to data released on the DFPS website. DFPS oversees the well-being of all children under its care, regardless of legal status, TMC, or PCM, by developing a case plan, or child plan of service (CPOS), that address the necessary services, support, and permanency goals for the child (The Texas Department of Family Protective Services, 2020a). The CPOS also incorporates educational goals, addressing any physical or therapeutic needs. In addition, court hearings are held to continue to provide updates on the child's progress and living situation. DFPS data for the fiscal year 2021 showed 14,529 children in PMC in Texas. From the total number of PMC cases, 3,394 children were adopted, representing 23.4% of the total PMC children. The remaining children may have had other permanent living arrangements, such as guardianship, kinship placement, or aging out of the child welfare system. DFPS data shows that 730 children aged out of the system during the fiscal year 2021, representing 5% of the total number of children with PMC status.

Regardless of the legal status designated to a child in DFPS custody, each child is assessed for the appropriate level of care that needs to be provided. The DFPS website outlines four different levels of care for children: basic, moderate, specialized, and intensive (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, n.d.b). Children who are

classified as needing a basic level of care are capable of responding to limit-setting or other interventions, requiring less restrictive settings. Basic-level children, as outlined by DFPS, have characteristics and traits that can be described as developmentally typical and minimally disruptive. The moderate service level requires a more structure and supportive setting.

A moderate level of care may require more therapeutic or medical intervention. Characteristics of a moderate level child may include “frequent non-violent, anti-social acts, occasional physical aggression, minor self-injurious actions, and difficulties that present a moderate risk of harm to self or others” (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, n.d.b). Additionally, children who may have experienced exposure to substance abuse, mild cognitive impairments, or social deficits could also require the designation of moderate level of care.

The third level of care outlined by DFPS is specialized service level. Children categorized as specialized require more intensive interventions, to include treatment settings, therapeutic foster placements, more involved medical care, 24-hour supervision, and additional high-level services for care. Characteristics of children who require specialized services include, “unpredictable non-violent acts, anti-social acts, frequent and unpredictable physical aggression, major self-injurious acts, suicidal or homicidal ideations or acts, substance abuse, sever mental or emotional deficits” (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, n.d.b).

The fourth level of care outlined is “intense service” level. This level of care requires the highest degree of structure for the child. A child categorized as an intense level of care is placed into a more restrictive environment to limit the child’s access to the

environment or community for the child's protection. DFPS states that those who care for children under specialized and intensive level of care designations are required to have specialized training in order to provide the necessary therapeutic and habilitative services and interventions. Children who are assessed as needing intensive services are described as being extremely physically aggressive, having recurring serious self-injuries behaviors, including suicide attempts, and pose as a potential harm to themselves or others.

A study by Graham et al. (2015) examines the decision making of placing a child into foster care placements. Within the study, assessment of children is a factor in the decision-making process. The authors of the study express how the decision-making process of placement and those who make the decisions is an area of research that has been under evaluated. However, the importance and implications of such decisions greatly contribute to the outcome goals established by policy, legislation, and treatment goals of those providing care (Graham et al., 2015). The researchers found that case factors, child assessment and case complexities, were the most important factor in child placement decisions.

### **DFPS Legislative Changes**

Following investigations and removal, children put into out-of-home care are placed into several types of foster care settings. As previously stated, a child's designated level of care has implications for the most appropriate placement and how placement decisions are made. The most common type of placement, however, is an unrelated foster family, yet over the last few decades, kinship or relative placement has increased (Bald et al., 2022). Anthony Bald, Joseph Doyle, Max Gross, and Brian Jacob (2022) analyzed

existing national data on the changing landscape of foster care placement and the economics of care. They report that at the end of 2019, children placed in kinship homes rose to 32%, an increase from 9% since 2004. Additionally, they report that in 2019, 10% of children were placed in a congregate care setting. Congregate care ranges from group homes to residential treatment centers. The DFPS Data Book (2021a) reports that of the 44,284 children placed at the end of the 2021 fiscal year in Texas, 23,181 were placed into relative care—roughly 52%—which shows a slight increase over the previous years. For example, in 2012, Texas had 45,694 children in out-of-home placements, of which 20,861 were in relative or kinship placements—a 6% increase in nine years. There has been legislation change and altered legal language in the Texas Family Code regarding kinship placement that will be discussed later in this study.

The ultimate goal of placement in Texas is family reunification. The Texas Family Code outlines the importance of family reunification in numerous subsections. For example, Sec. 262.1095, *Information Provided to Relatives and Certain Individuals; Investigations*, states “(d) the department shall use due diligence to identify and locate all individuals described by Subsection (a-related to the child within the third degree.) no later than the 30th day after the date the department files a suit affecting the parent-child relationship” (Tex Fam. Sec. 262.1095). Additionally, the court outlines specific findings that must be made to keep children in out-of-home placement:

1. There was a danger to the child’s physical health or safety, which was caused by an act or failure to act of the person entitled to possession, and for the child to remain in the home is contrary to the child’s welfare.

2. The urgent need for protection required the immediate removal of the child and reasonable efforts, consistent with the circumstances and providing for the safety of the child, were made to eliminate or prevent the child's removal; and
3. Reasonable efforts have been made to enable the child to return home, but there is a substantial risk of continuing danger if the child is returned home. (Texas Family Code Sec., 262.201)

However, following the 87th Legislative session, the definition of *neglect* in the family code altered the wording from “substantial risk” to “immediate danger.”

Therefore, risk alone is no longer a factor in child removal, but the state must show the child is in immediate danger if returned to the home environment. Additionally, under the same section and subsection of the Texas Family Code, 262.201, additional language was added to assert the right to maintain placement with kin and expedite family reunification. At the adversary hearing, following a court order of removal, it is the responsibility of DFPS to place the child in a relative's home. The removed child is not to be placed in foster care unless all other options have been exhausted.

At both the federal and state levels, foster care has experienced recent significant overhauls to improve child outcomes. The Family First Prevention Service Act (FFPSA) was signed into law in early 2018 as a part of a more significant bipartisan budget act (Bipartisan Budget Act, 2018). The purpose of the legislation requires that the welfare system exhaust all efforts to keep children safe with their families, avoiding the potential trauma related to placement in care. The bill allotted funding for state welfare agencies to provide services for families and youths navigating the system.

Legislation in Texas has inputted many policies for the improvement of the welfare system prior to and following the enactment of FFPSA. House Bill 482 (2017) directed additional funding to DFPS and “work toward ensuring the average caseload for specified workers and SWI does not exceed specific levels” The Texas Department of Family Services, 2020c). Although the bill does not cap caseloads, agency leaders are required to assign cases by certain safe standards outlined by the bill. House Bill 482, however, does not set a standard recognizing caseload variability with consideration to number of children assigned and their designated level of care.

Another example of CPS legislation within Texas is House Bill 4, which provides more financial assistance to formal caregivers. The bill is intended to address kinship placements and lower placement disruptions rates, ultimately to improve children’s outcomes. The legal landscape of child welfare in Texas has made significant movements toward reform and restructuring. Legislation in Texas has prompted a shift from the traditional service model of DFPS to a Community-Based Care service model. The shift is intended to improve the quality of care for children and create a more flexible and responsive system that can better meet the unique needs of individual children and families. One of the recent bills working towards improving the system is Senate Bill 11, which “provides for the expansion of CBC and transfer case management function from the state to the CBC provider” (S.B. 11, 2020).

The legal language surrounding child welfare laws in the state should not be viewed as subjective. The laws have been designed to be clear and precise in their intent and application, typically based on established legal principles enacted through the legislative process. Nevertheless, the interpretation and application of the Family Code

can be subject to interpretation by individuals and institutions involved in the removal of children. The law is interpreted by caseworkers, investigators, judges, and attorneys. Child welfare laws, in particular, are complex and involve a range of legal standards and requirements, making it challenging to apply them consistently in all cases and jurisdictions. Although Texas Family Law has attempted to evolve in addressing growing concerns of adverse child outcomes, there are continued barriers to the application in the child welfare system.

Permanency workers in child welfare play a crucial role in ensuring child safety. Understanding family law is essential for these workers to navigate the legal framework that governs child protection and family services. However, the strains of job responsibilities can affect how child welfare workers address their legal requirements. Working within child welfare can be emotionally and mentally demanding, and many workers may experience burnout, compassion fatigue, or secondary traumatic stress (Griffiths et al., 2020). These strains can impact how workers approach legal requirements, such as investigating allegations of abuse or neglect, testifying in court, or recommending placement or services, placement decision, and level of care designations. Stress can also affect decision-making by impairing judgment, reducing attention and memory, and increasing the likelihood of errors and biases (Rittschof & Fortunato, 2016). Therefore, understanding recent legislative changes and evolving policies and procedures is essential for child welfare workers to fulfill their legal obligations and make informed decisions that protect the well-being of children.

## **Texas Child Welfare: Two-Model System**

### **Legacy System**

The traditional service model of the child welfare system, or legacy system, is a centralized, state-run system where child protective services are delivered through a state agency (Texans Care for Children, 2021). This system primarily focuses on child safety and protection, often involving removing children from their homes and placing them into foster care. Services within this system are delivered through an arrangement of contracts and a network of providers. For example, the state contracts with private organizations throughout the state to deliver residential treatment, foster care placement and adoption services. Under the legacy model, DFPS was responsible for all aspects of the child welfare system, including placement, case management, and service delivery.

When a child abuse or neglect report is received, a caseworker is assigned to investigate and determine whether a child is in danger of harm or if there is reason to believe so. If the caseworker determines the child is at risk, the child may be removed from their home and placed in foster care. The legacy system's goal is to protect the child from harm and ensure their safety. Providers are responsible for meeting certain standards and requirements set by the state, including licensure and background checks.

The legacy child welfare system has been criticized for being overly focused on child protection at the expense of family preservation and reunification (Beltran & Epstein, 2013). DFPS places children throughout the state and is not required to find placement within proximity to the removal county. In addition, critics have argued that the system is potentially traumatizing for children who are removed from their homes and placed in foster care and that the system may not adequately address the root causes of



child maltreatment, such as poverty, mental health issues, and substance abuse (McRell et al., 2021).

Overall, the traditional child welfare system is designed to protect children from harm but does not sufficiently support families by addressing underlying issues that contribute to maltreatment. Additionally, placing children outside of the counties of removal increases barriers and challenges related to family reunification. There are a multitude of additional challenges that DFPS has faced in its efforts to provide for children and families in the state.

### **Outcomes and Challenges**

Texas DFPS has numerous challenges and criticisms related to trauma and abuse in the child welfare legacy system. Despite a longstanding civil lawsuit against the DFPS, reports indicate that under the legacy system, maltreatment of children in care continued. There are reports of children in foster care being mistreated, neglected, and abused by their caregivers, including physical and sexual abuse and neglect. In some cases, children have died as a result of maltreatment while in DFPS custody. With a history of child maltreatment, concerns regarding lack of oversight and accountability have become a significant source of consideration. Texas DFPS has been recognized as not adequately monitoring the care provided to children, which can lead the poor outcomes (*M.D. v. Abbott, 2015*).

The lack of oversight and accountability in the DFPS system has become a significant concern, given its history of child maltreatment. Texas DFPS has been criticized for failing to adequately monitor the care provided to children. A recent article by Sara Kilmer highlights that in less than a year (2019–2020), 11 children in state

custody had died, and the state's failure to monitor children in its care is due to a litany of issues. In addition, the courts found data collection and information sharing to be in error.

The DFPS system primarily uses two information systems, the Information Management for the Protection of Adults and Children in Texas, or IMPACT, and the Childcare Licensing Automated System, or CLASS. Caseworkers input data related to case management activities into IMPACT, while the CLASS system contains preliminary information related to abuse investigations in licensed childcare facilities. However, a significant concern with using two systems is that they do not merge collected data. In addition, child placing agencies were not always uploaded into either system. As outlined in *M.D. v. Abbott*, this lack of integration leads to a child's needs falling through the cracks, resulting in continued abuse and neglect while in state care.

Inefficient data collection, inaccurate information, and limited accessibility to pertinent child information are complicated issues addressed in the civil action suit against Texas DFPS. The judge overseeing the federal lawsuit has submitted an opinion with recommendations to DFPS and outlined specific goals. Several of those recommendations aimed at correcting monitoring and oversight issues. Some of the court's recommendations are as follows:

1. Integrate IMPACT, CLASS, and other filing systems so all data relevant to a child are in one centralized location;
2. Require that caseworkers meet privately with their assigned children;
3. Include a photograph of each child in their case file;
4. Establish a 24-hour hotline for reports of abuse and neglect;

5. Track instances of child-on-child-abuse and appropriately categorize any such incidents;
6. Respond to reports of abuse and neglect immediately;
7. Require that all permanent managing conservatorship children have attorney ad litem and a CASA volunteer;
8. Expand enforcement tools for correcting placement facilities' failure to report instances of child abuse. (*M.D. v. Abbott*, 2015)

DFPS face numerous challenges related to staffing and working conditions as well. For example, the agency experiences high turnover rates, particularly among permanent case workers, and struggles to keep up with the demand for service (The Office of the Texas Governor, 2017). In addition, the high caseloads and stressful working conditions take a toll on employees, and there are concerns about burnout, low morale, and other related issues. In response to these challenges, DFPS has experienced several reforms over the years to improve the working environment for employees. Reformation efforts have included reducing caseloads, increasing staff compensation and benefits, and providing more training and support to help workers fulfill their job demands (Lee, 2021).

The working environment within DFPS significantly impacts the quality of care and service provided to children in the foster care system (Steen, 2011). When permanency caseworkers are overburdened, stressed, and experiencing low morale, it can lead to various outcomes for children and families. For example, high caseloads and heavy workloads can make it difficult for caseworkers to provide the level of attention and support those children in foster care need. A study out of Florida sought to evaluate

potential links between organizational characteristics of child protection systems and their outcomes. Julie Steen, the author of the study, looked at areas affecting child welfare workers, such as caseload levels and turnover rates, and their relation to two outputs, abuse verification rates and case closure rates. The study showed that caseload plays a vital role, stating, “One possible interpretation of this result is that higher caseloads result in less time available for handling non-judicial cases, possibly resulting in quicker closing” (Steen, 2011, p. 54).

Another study on the prevalence of burnout in the child welfare system estimates that turnover rates in this area are between 20% and 40% (Rittschof & Fortunato, 2016). As outlined by Maslach and Jackson (1982), the theory of burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by prolonged and excessive stress. Burnout can significantly affect the workers and the children they serve. Burnout can lead to high turnover rates, decreased job satisfaction, and an increased risk of mistakes and errors. The risk of burnout within this field is high due to caseworkers’ frequent contact with negative situations, caseworkers’ working with families who are often hostile and resistant, and caseworkers with traumatized children on their caseloads (Rittschof & Fortunato, 2016). Within this high-stress field, burnout has been shown to decrease effectiveness, leading to delays in services, missed appointments, and other issues that directly impact well-being. The working environment can also impact the quality of foster homes and other placements for children in care. Caseworkers who are overworked and stressed may not have the time or resources to conduct thorough assessments of the safety and appropriateness of placement. The effects of being stressed and overworked can lead to situations where signs of abuse or neglect are missed.

In addition to high caseloads and heavy workloads, high turnover among permanency workers can be a significant problem within the system. When caseworkers leave the agency, it can disrupt the continuity of care for children, who may have to adjust to working with new caseworkers and may receive a different level of attention and support than they previously did. Despite the efforts of the department to improve the working environment, DFPS remains a subject of ongoing concern. The agency continues to face significant challenges related to staffing and caseloads. There are ongoing efforts to identify and implement solutions to improve employees' working conditions and ultimately better serve the families and children who rely on DFPS for support and protection.

### ***M.D. v. Abbott***

The state of Texas and DFPS have been sued on various occasions because of the issues within the traditional service model. Some key reasons for the lawsuits include allegations of insufficient resources, inadequate staffing, and violations of children's rights (Texans Care for Children, 2021). For example, *M.D. v. Abbott* is a class-action lawsuit filed in 2011, alleging that the Texas foster care system is inadequate and violates the constitutional rights of children in care. The suit was filed on behalf of children in long-term foster care or PMC status and claimed that the state failed to provide adequate placement, medical care, and other services to children in the state's custody.

The federal lawsuit in Texas found in 2015 that the welfare system was "so broken that it violated the constitutional rights of children in foster care" (*M.D. v. Abbott*, 2015) and appointed two special masters to oversee reforms. The special masters were tasked with developing and overseeing a plan now known as the "performance-based child

welfare system” (PBCWS). The PBCWS is designed to hold DFPS accountable for achieving specific outcomes related to children’s safety, permanency, and well-being in the state’s care. Under the PBCWS, DFPS is required to meet specific performance measures, funding, and the ability to achieve those measures. In addition to addressing the concern for child outcomes, the PBCWS also includes provisions for caseworker training and caseload size (Garstka et al., 2021).

### **Single-Source Continuum Contractors and Community-Based Care**

The implementation of PBCWS in Texas requires the state to shift from a state-run child welfare services system to a CBC model. This shift means the state contracts with private, often nonprofit organizations to provide child welfare services, including foster care, adoption, and family support services. These organizations are known as “single-source continuum contractors,” or SSCCs. SSCCs are responsible for providing a continuum of care for children in the state’s custody, which includes placement and support services (Texas Health and Human Services, n.d.). The PBCWS holds the SSCCs accountable by requiring specific performance measures to be met. Outcome measurements are related to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in care.

Under the PBCWS, SSCCs must work closely with DFPS to ensure that the child welfare system is functioning effectively and that the needs of the children are being met. The SSCCs are also required to engage with the local community to build a network of support for the children and families they serve. The CBC model under the PBCWS is designed to be more flexible and responsive to the needs of those in the state’s care (The Texas Department of Family Protective Services, 2021). The SSCCs can work more closely with local communities to provide a range of support for families to stay together

or provide a stable and supportive environment for children in foster care. By holding the SSCCs accountable for specific outcomes, the PBCWS aims to improve the quality of care and services provided (The Texas Department of Family Protective Services, 2022).

### **Change to CBC in Texas**

The change from the traditional service model to the CBC model has been a gradual process that has unfolded over several years, with various changes occurring at different stages. The DFPS's website outlines the different times and stages of the change, as well as which regional catchment areas are practicing under which service model. The shift began with a planning and research phase in early 2000. The planning phase included examining practices from other states and consultation with stakeholders such as providers, advocates, and foster families. Next, the CBC model was tested through pilot programs in different state regions. State regions were designed to test different service models and evaluate for best practices concerning child outcomes, placement stability, family reunification, and other related measurement goals (The Texas Department of Family Protective Services, 2022). Based on the success of the pilot programs, the CBC model was expanded to additional regions of the state. This included the creation of new contracts with providers and the development and procedures to support the new model. Finally, full implementation of the CBC model occurred in 2021 in all regions of Texas, which included the creation of a new system for tracking data and monitoring outcomes, as well as ongoing evaluation to identify areas for improvement.

The change to CBC is meant to be a more collaborative, community-driven approach to child welfare and, as such, can involve different working environments than the traditional DFPS model. Literature suggests that under the CBC model, there is a

greater emphasis on working collaboratively with community partners, including nonprofit organizations and other service providers. Ideally, the new model promotes community collaboration, creating a more team-based working environment and emphasizes the importance of regional child placement. In addition, as previously stated, the goal of CBC model is to offer more flexibility and responses to the needs of local communities. Flexibility can create a working environment that is more adaptable to the changing circumstances and needs of children, families, and communities, and aims at keeping children within a reasonable proximity to their county of removal (The Office of the Texas Governor, 2017).

The issues of turnover, caseload manageability, and employee satisfaction have been an ongoing concern in Texas's child welfare system, including under the legacy model and during the transition to the CBC model. While recent legislation and policy changes have been designed to address some of these concerns, there is still a lack of research that evaluates the full extent of its impact on these areas. Within the new model, several features are designed to improve working conditions and support the well-being of employees. For example, under the PBCWS, SSCCs and their contracted providers must meet specific standards for staff-to-client ratios, ensuring that caseloads are more manageable (Garstka et al., 2012; Texans Care for Children, 2021). Additionally, provision forming and support for staff members are required to help improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover rates. Some of those efforts include required ongoing training members on trauma-informed care and cultural competency. These financial provisions are a part of both state and federal efforts to improve the service delivery of



the foster care system which are a benefit to both service delivery models (Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation, n.d.).

Although the design for CBC and the provisions outlined for SSCCs in the PBCWS aim at improving working conditions and child outcomes, the model is still a relatively new approach to child welfare. As a result, much is still to be learned about its impact on employee satisfaction, turnover rates, and caseloads.

### **Challenging Transition**

Texas has faced several challenges transitioning from the legacy service delivery model to the CBC model. Some of the challenges mirror those experienced under the legacy system. The CBC model requires significant resources, including funding, staffing, and infrastructure. A challenging aspect of resource limitation is the need for provider capacity. Considering the localization goals of the CBC model, it relies on a network of private providers to deliver services. Texas has faced challenges in recruiting and retaining adequate providers and foster families to meet the needs of children and families in care. The funding concerns are being brought back into legislation. Legislative leaders' initial state budget proposals include allocating \$4 billion to support child protection work within DFPS, representing an increase of \$196.3 million in all funds, including \$350.7 million in general revenue funds, from the 2022–2023 biennium (Melhado, 2023). The proposed budgets for the upcoming legislative session have specific provisions for the continuation of foster care redesign.

The transition from the legacy to the CBC model significantly shifts how child welfare services are delivered. Throughout the transition period, there have been legal challenges as well. Compliance with state and federal regulations is still a necessity under

this new model of care. In addition, adequate monitoring and oversight is needed to ensure that SSCCs and their providers meet the needs of children and families effectively and efficiently. CBC providers operate under contracts with the state of Texas, which provide oversight and monitoring from multiple agencies, including DFPS, Health and Human Services (HHS), Legislators, and Independent Evaluators. Even with the increase in budget, Texas continues to face challenges in securing funding to support the CBC transition and finding safe and appropriate placement for children in care (Bohra & Oxner, 2021).

Overall, the transition from traditional child welfare to a CBC model is a significant change that requires careful planning, coordination, and attention to legal considerations. While the specific legal challenges faced by Texas vary, it is essential to ensure that the new model is compliant with all regulations, adequately funded, and focused on protecting the safety and well-being of children in the care of the system. It is also pertinent that data collected is regularly analyzed and assessed in an effort to improve welfare worker retention, job satisfaction, and child outcomes.

### **DFPS Regions**

Texas has 11 DFPS regions, each with its regional oversight and staff. The regions are responsible for providing a range of DFPS services, managing their budget, and working with local community partners to provide services within the catchment area. With the implementation of the CBC model, DFPS selects SSCC for each of its 11 regions (The Texas Department of Family Protective Services, 2021a), which means that one organization is responsible for providing all foster care and adoption services in a particular region rather than multiple organizations competing for contracts. As

previously discussed, the goal is to create a more stable and consistent system of care. The selection process for single SSCCs is based on various factors, including their capacity to provide service in a particular region, their track record of providing high-quality services, and their ability to meet the needs of children with complex needs.

Under CBC, SSCCs provide a full continuum of services to children and families within their designated catchment area or region. Texas DFPS website has information regarding each catchment area and descriptors of each stage of the SSCCs. For example, in Stage I, SSCCs are responsible for finding foster homes or other foster care placements for children in the state care while providing services. In Stage II, the SSCC expands services to include support for relative or kinship placements, which are not verified. In addition, the SSCC is responsible responsibility for the provisions of legal case management. Current regions that are active SSCCs contracts, in the second stage of transition, are Region 1 (41 counties), Region 2 (30 counties), Region 3b (7 counties), and Region 8b (27 counties) (The Texas Department of Family Protective Services, n.d.a). In addition, new regional community catchment areas have recently been proposed for SSCC contracts and CBC model implementation.

### **Impact of the Shift in the Service Delivery Model**

An organization's working environment can significantly impact employee satisfaction and intention to leave. Conversely, a positive work environment can lead to higher employee satisfaction and lower turnover rates. This is especially important within the child welfare field, where work stress is high due to a history of high caseloads, high-stakes job responsibilities, and low pay.

Child welfare and permanency workers have a challenging and often stressful working environment. These professionals work in various settings, including child protection agencies, social service agencies, and schools. They are responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of vulnerable children and families. In the case of child welfare services, they involve investigating allegations of abuse or neglect, developing, implementing interventions, and monitoring ongoing progress. The working environment for child welfare workers can be demanding, with extended hours, heavy caseloads, and elevated level stress levels. The impact on child outcomes can be significant, as stressed or overworked workers may be less effective in their interventions, leading to potentially adverse outcomes for children and families. Therefore, child welfare agencies must prioritize worker support and address the systemic issues that contribute to elevated stress levels and burnout among workers to improve outcomes for the children and families they serve.

When looking at the change in the service model, positive child outcomes are the goal. With this goal in mind, organizations should prioritize creating a supportive culture, promoting work-life balance, recognizing, and rewarding employees, and fostering clear communication between employees and management.

### **Workload of Child Welfare Professionals**

High caseloads can have significant implications for child welfare workers responsible for investigating and responding to child abuse and neglect. For example, in 2017, the number of children receiving a child protective services investigation or alternative response in the U.S. increased by 10% from 2013, which totaled over 3 million cases (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). With the rising

number of child welfare cases, it is essential to consider the size of the child welfare workforce and worker caseloads. According to data from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in 42 states in 2017, the total child welfare workforce was 22,820, with 18,502 workers responsible for investigations and alternative responses. On average, each worker completed 72 cases per year during that time, which can lead to high stress levels and potential errors in handling the cases.

Workload and caseload are often positively correlated with child welfare service agencies. However, few empirical studies have explored the specific characteristics of the caseload that impact caseworkers' workloads in the child welfare system. In a study conducted by Kim et al. (2019), individual and regional factors were identified that influenced both subjective and objective dimensions of workloads. The researchers collected survey data from 1,244 caseworkers at a public child welfare agency in the U.S., evaluating their perceptions of unmanageable workloads and self-reported overtime. The study found that self-reported overtime work increased when caseworkers had more cases than the state caseload standard for investigation units and worked with at least two distinct types of cases simultaneously, investigations and case management. Moreover, having sufficient staffing levels to meet caseload demands at the regional level impacts an individual's workload (Kim et al., 2019).

According to Strolin et al. (2006), there is a correlation between high caseloads and child welfare workers leaving the system. Numerous studies, including Benton (2016), Kaye et al. (2012), Kim (2011), and Wilke et al. (2018), suggest that caseload size affects worker retention and turnover. Smith (2005) examined public child welfare workers in 12 counties of a U.S. state and found that as caseload size increased, the

likelihood of worker retention decreased by 6%. High caseloads have also been linked to early departures from the child welfare workforce, worker errors that harm children, and negative consequences for the agency (Wilke et al., 2018).

A distinction should be made between *caseload* and *workload*. *Caseload* refers to the number of cases or clients a caseworker manages. How caseload is measured varies by regional and organizational policies and procedures and typically includes either number of families or children assigned to a worker (Kim, 2011). *Workload*, however, is the overall work or tasks a caseworker is responsible for completing. This can include both direct service provisions and administrative duties. The workload can vary depending on the complexity of cases, the needs of individual families and a child's level of care designation. Additional considerations that influence workload is the number of FSPs and CPOS a single caseworker may be responsible for. Proximity of child placement is another influencing factor in an increase in workload. Caseload size does not inherently reflect actual workload and weight of responsibilities faced by caseworkers accurately.

### **Turnover Intentions of Child Welfare Professionals**

An individual's intention to leave their job can be influenced by a range of factors, such as organizational culture, work-life balance, lack of recognition or feelings of worth, communication issues, and poor leadership, as noted by Graef and Hill (2000). According to a recent study by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), more than 40% of U.S. employees experience burnout from their workload (Ladika, 2022). The study reveals that 42% of surveyed individuals reported feeling overwhelmed with too many projects and responsibilities and struggling to adapt to changes in their working

environment. Graef and Hill (2000) also caution that even moderate staff turnover in the child welfare system can lead to “crisis conditions” if adequately trained replacements are not readily available to take on the workload.

A study by Helen Cahalane and Edward W. Sites (2008, p. 91) shows that “empirical evidence suggests that efforts to retain highly skilled and educated public child welfare workers should focus on creating positive organizational climates within agencies.” In the study, the researchers address whether a difference in perceptions of the agency work environment distinguished if workers chose to stay or leave the agency. It found that individuals remaining in public child welfare had statistically lower scores on emotional exhaustion, role overload, and role conflict and higher scores on fairness, growth, advancement, and organizational commitment, than those in privatized child welfare agencies (Cahalane & Sites, 2008).

Another study looking at turnover rates in the child welfare field found that occupational mobility patterns impact employee retention (Burns & Christie, 2013). In this study, researchers Burns and Christie (2013) addressed mobility patterns, turnover, retention, and attrition in five child welfare worker teams. The study’s focus was on attention from managers and its effect on their workers. They found that a lack of positive attention and validation was an influencing factor in the increase of turnover rates, 8% in 2006 and 11% in 2010 (Burns & Christie, 2013).

The literature suggests that high staff turnover impacts response to the needs of children and families dependent on the system’s consistency and those who oversee their cases. However, addressing turnover by implementing a positive organizational culture

and effective leadership who provide regular support and guidance has shown to be effective.

### **Job Satisfaction of Child Welfare Professionals**

Koeske and Koeske (1989) assert that job satisfaction is a response to different elements of a job or work experience, and it stems from an individual's perception that their work is rewarding and fulfilling. The belief system allows for the interpretation of one's values in different ways, such as physical, psychological, or monetary forms of compensation. In a 2022 article by Ladika, the SHRM found that work-life balance is among the top three factors contributing to job satisfaction. Job satisfaction, or worker well-being, is a commonly researched topic in child welfare. Lizano and Barak (2015) conducted a longitudinal study to evaluate burnout and job satisfaction among public child welfare workers. Their study indicated a consistent relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and job satisfaction across all groups and models, suggesting that emotional exhaustion recursion, regardless of social support and specialized training.

Certain job satisfaction factors important to child welfare include caseload size, job clarity or ambiguity, physical or emotional comfort, financial rewards, promotion opportunities, role conflicts, and the worker's career mobility (Mor Barak et al., 2001). Mor Barak et al. (2001) stated that job satisfaction predicts turnover or intent to leave consistently.

### **Conclusion: Implications of Literature Review for a New Research**

The literature review suggests that the change to a CBC model of care can be beneficial for providing services and keeping families together while acting in the child's



best interest. Legal challenges and changes that guided the legacy system to the CBC model present an expectation that the change will positively affect various factors. The current lawsuit in Texas has outlined specific areas of improvement in child outcomes. After conducting an extensive literature review, it was found that there is a significant gap in the available information regarding how the work environment for child welfare workers will change to accommodate high workload demand and address job satisfaction and turnover rates.

Despite the importance of child outcomes, there is a lack of research and information on the specific strategies that CBC child welfare agencies have used to improve the working conditions for their staff. This is especially critical because the work environment of child welfare workers directly impacts foster children's well-being in the system. For example, high caseloads and staff turnover rates can lead to inadequate care, longer stays in foster care, and disrupted placement stability, affecting the child's overall development and future outcomes. Therefore, it is imperative to understand whether these issues have been translated into the CBC service mode model changing in the model has had any impact in these are

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The present study investigates permanency case works perspective on the transition change to the CBC model and its effects on turnover intention, job satisfaction, and workload manageability. The study answers the following research question: Has the implementation of the CBC model positively impacted turnover intention, job satisfaction, and workload manageability issues as perceived by permanency workers compared to the legacy model? The present study also explores the relationship between those variables to understand the areas associated with foster children's well-being.

#### **Research Design**

A longitudinal study would be desirable to meet the objectives of the present study, with three data collection points, before, during, and after the change in the service delivery systems. Due to the feasibility issue, a cross-sectional survey study is applied. The cross-sectional survey design is used to address the multiple areas outlined in the literature review influencing foster children's well-being. Survey participants recall their experiences in the previous, traditional model (legacy system) and assess the work environment based on their memory. The same questions are asked relevant to respondents CBC experience to compare data over time (Yegidis et al., 2017). This design allows for simultaneously co-collecting various characteristics, enabling an analysis to make observations based on characteristics determined to influence caseworker's turnover intention, job satisfaction, and workload manageability (Yegidis et

al., 2017). However, this design results in a weak internal validity, as it does not fully support the conclusion that independent variable changes are responsible for the observed changes in the dependent variable.

A one-time cross-sectional survey has limitations worth noting. Firstly, it cannot establish causality as it captures data at a single point, making it difficult to determine whether the observed associations are correlative or causal (Yegidis et al., 2017). Secondly, it lacks temporal information, which is crucial in understanding the trajectory of perceived change. Finally, recall bias can lead to measurement errors when participants inaccurately recall information about past events, perceptions, and experiences. Additionally, legislative changes have had an effect on both service delivery models, a variable that could not be accounted for with the current study design and methodology.

### **Population and Sampling**

The present study evaluates the perception of permanency workers in a Texas DFPS region under a SSCC contract with a CBC organization that oversees foster children's care and well-being. A sample of child welfare professionals who have experienced the shift to the community-based care model was recruited. Ideally, the study would include a sample size from a transitioning region currently utilizing the legacy model as it works through the transitioning stages to the CBC model. However, due to time constraints, financial requirements, and lack of access to such a sample size, a non-probability convenience sampling method is used. Workers were identified from available online source on the organization's website and exclusions were made based on specific job title criteria. Job titles selected for the study are permanency caseworkers,

supervisors, and directors. Convenience sampling is suitable for the present study and initial explorations of descriptive research.

### **Instrumentation**

Data were collected through self-administered online questionnaires. The organization required a formal request to its internal management team. The request was approved, and the informed consent and survey invitation was emailed to all employees within the organization's permanency department. The research protocol was also sent to the Institutional Review Board at the university level and was approved. The survey was administered through Qualtrics, distributed by the organization's executive team via email. An email list for permanency workers working for the SSCC is public information and contains 150 contact emails for employees with job titles relevant to the desired study population. The questionnaires included closed-ended questions on their workload, turnover intention, and job satisfaction. Demographic information (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status) was also collected.

The principal data collection strategy involved completing a questionnaire by direct permanency workers employed with one of the SSCCs in Texas. The instrument was specifically developed for the investigation and includes demographic and work history information, such as age, gender, office location, level of education, years of experience, and income level. A series of questions designed to assess workers' perceptions of turnover intention, job satisfaction, and workload information. The questions and surveys chosen for this study were designed to elicit workers' perceptions about the aspects of their employment that contribute to or mediate turnover intention, job satisfaction, and manageability of caseloads.

## **Workload**

Working in the child welfare field is complex and multifaceted, involving various factors. Existing measurements found required more time and access to the sample. Time-test studies have been used to evaluate the relationship between caseload responsibilities and the time it takes to accomplish work that needs to be done. However, select caseload and workload questions were created for this pilot study from information obtained during the literature review. Two main dimensions were created to assess workload manageability: workload and workload support. Workload questions consist of how many hours the permanency workers worked a week, how many children were on their caseloads, and how many parents were on their caseloads. Workload support questions were designed to assess perspective on the time, preparation, and training they had to do their jobs effectively.

The number of hours case workers work can significantly impact their workload manageability. Long work hours could result in fatigue, burnout, and reduced job satisfaction, which can affect the quality of work done. Participants had four options representing the number of hours a week worked, 31–40, 41–50, 51–60, and more than 60.

The number of children assigned to a permanency worker's caseload is directly related to the required work. Higher caseloads demand time, attention, and resources, affecting the individual's ability to provide adequate care and attention to each child's individual needs. Children who are a part of sibling sets were counted separately, and the participants had one of six options: 1–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–12, 13–15, and more than 15.

Another critical factor when evaluating workload manageability is whether children and families are counted as separate regarding caseload size. Permanency workers are required to work with both children and parents. The number of parents on their caseload can impact their workload as they coordinate services, visitations, and court hearings with multiple parents. In addition, high numbers of parents on their caseloads increase the administrative work and time demands. For these purposes, one plan of service was also counted separately. Additionally, participants were asked to include any foster families or biological families that are a part of their workload responsibilities. The participants had one of six options, 1–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–12, 13–15, and more than 15.

Workload support questions are rated using a 7-point Likert Scale. A score of 1 represents 'strongly disagree,' and 7 represents 'strongly agree.' The survey consists of items written in the positive. The items chosen for this dimension are selected to gain information on the perceptions of caseworkers' support, training, and approving time utilization. Participating in child protective court is one component of workload and workers' responsibility. Permanency workers are required to participate in court hearings. Inquiring about whether they have received training for court and feel prepared can provide insights into their confidence and competence in navigating the legal process. Time is also relevant to the ability of workers to assess and evaluate the children and families on their caseloads. The perception of child welfare workers' time spent with children on their caseload provides insight into their ability to conduct thorough assessments, provide necessary services, and monitor the welfare of children in their placement setting.

## **Job Satisfaction**

The Job Satisfaction Survey measures job satisfaction among permanency case workers working in the CBC service model of child welfare. The Job Satisfaction Survey is commonly employed. It was developed by Paul E. Spector (1994) and has been used in numerous studies. This instrument includes 37 items that measure nine dimensions: pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. Each item is rated using a six-point Likert Scale. A score of 1 represents 'strongly disagree,' and 6 represents 'strongly agree.' The survey consists of items written in both positive and negative directions. The 9 subscales comprise four items, with scores ranging from 4–24.

Additionally, the total job satisfaction score is based on the sum of all 36 items, with scores ranging from 36 to 216. Each item is rated on a scale of 1 to 6, using the original response choices. High scores on the scale indicate greater job satisfaction. However, the scores for negatively worded items are reversed before being summed with the positively worded items to obtain facet or total scores. The reversal ensures that a score of 6 on a negatively worded item is equivalent to a score of 1 on a positively worded item, allowing them to be combined accurately. In the present study, five dimensions were chosen in an effort to shorten the time required to complete the survey. Dimensions chosen were selected based on the literature review. The dimensions used are pay, supervision, operational conditions, nature of the work, and communication, resulting in 20 questions for the thesis survey questionnaire.

According to Batura et al. (2016), the Job Satisfaction Survey has been shown to have adequate construct validity. However, the job satisfaction determinants exhibit

variations across diverse settings. One study implemented mixed methods to evaluate the dependability and validity in gauging job satisfaction among maternal and newborn health workers operating within a government hospital located in rural Nepal (Batura et al., 2016). The instrument was administered to 137 participants, and qualitative data were collected from an additional 78. The results from the internal consistency tests offered evidence of the reliability and sensitivity of the measurement. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of internal consistency was used to measure the reliability of the measurement tool. The overall value for the Job Satisfaction survey was 0.78, which is above the 0.7 threshold value, meaning the tool is internally consistent.

### **Turnover Intent**

The turnover intention is measured using the Turnover Intention Scale, or TIS-6. This model was developed by Gert Roodt (2004) and has since been cited numerous times and utilized in its assessment in organizational research to assess an employee's intention to leave their current job. The instrument developed in this study consists of a series of questions designed to assess employee satisfaction with various aspects of their job, such as pay, job security, working conditions, and opportunities for advancement. Responses to the questions provide insight into the level of satisfaction in the current job and the probability of employees leaving their current position. The TIS-6 is utilized for this thesis research instrumentation with six items for closeness and survey length. Each item is rated using a five-point Likert Scale. A score of 1 representing either 'never' and five representing 'always,' or one representing 'very satisfying' and 5 'totally dissatisfied.' The survey consists of items written in both positive and negative directions. Areas of consideration are job satisfaction, personal needs, and perception of



work-related goals. High scores on the scale indicate greater intent for turnover. However, the scores for negatively worded items were reversed before being summed with the positively worded items to obtain facet or total scores. This reversal ensures that a score of 5 on a negatively worded item is equivalent to a score of 1 on a positively worded item, allowing them to be combined accurately.

Additional studies verify this instrument and test its reliability and validity in various settings. One study produced by Su (2021) implemented the measurement to evaluate its effectiveness in the Chinese population of social workers. The study involved 196 social workers who were employed at various organizations and were administered the TIS-6 (Su, 2021). The TIS-6 exhibited high internal validity, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70. The study evaluated a confirmatory factor analysis, which showed an appropriate fit in utilizing the six-item single-factor model of the TIS-6. The findings of this study indicate a significant positive correlation with perceived stress while inversely correlated with collective psychological ownership and work engagement. The study found that the TIS-6 was a reliable and validated tool in assessing turnover intention.

### **Demographic and Professional Characteristics**

Demographic information such as gender, age, race, education level, CBC office location, job title, income, and length of experience in child welfare are used as moderating variables by first collecting and categorizing the data based on these factors. Then, during the statistical analysis study, the factors were included as control variables to examine their potential impact on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This helped to ensure the results were not biased by the effects of

demographic factors. The study more accurately assesses the relationship between the variables by controlling these factors.

## **Ethical Considerations**

### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Ethical considerations concerning data privacy and confidentiality have been considered in conducting this study. Each participant was given an informed consent, informing the participant of the purpose of the study and how their data will be collected, stored, and used. The informed consent additionally explains any risks of participating in the study. As a part of the informed consent, contact information was provided to the participants if questions or concerns regarding the study were to arise. In addition, participants were given contact information for the principal investigators and the Institutional Review Board.

The rights of the participants to anonymity and confidentiality were also considered. This was achieved by refraining from requesting identifying information, such as age, birthday, or contact information. In addition, data collected for this study is protected from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure. This is achieved by using secure servers, password-protected databases, and encryption methods.

### **IRB Application**

Because this study uses human subjects, the research was reviewed and approved by ACU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (See Appendix A for the approval letter). The IRB application included the agency's permission for this study.

## **Data Collection**

After receiving IRB approval, the survey was sent to collect the data. Potential participants received an invitation letter (Appendix B) via email, which included a link to the informed consent (Appendix C). In addition, participants were required to read and sign the informed consent before taking the survey. The survey was created using Abilene Christian University Qualtrics and includes demographic questions such as gender, race, age, job title, annual income, and office location. The online survey consists of two questionnaires: one to assess perceptions of the legacy model and another to assess perceptions of the CBC model. Both questionnaires have the same three blocks of questions.

No identifying information was recorded to protect the participants' rights to confidentiality. The information was recorded in an Excel spreadsheet and then transferred into a statistical analysis system. Once transferred into the statistical analysis system, the Excel spreadsheet was shredded in the School of Social Work department office. After the data were gathered and the project was complete, the statistical analysis was deleted.

## **Statistical Analysis**

The data analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 27.0. Descriptive statistics were used to measure central tendency and variability. This involved summarizing the data using measures of means, medians, standard deviations, and percentages. This approach to analysis provided a general overview of the data collected and identified any patterns that existed.

An internal consistency reliability analysis was conducted for any scale where the developer reported Cronbach's Alpha to ensure that a scale measures the intended factor consistently. Although concerns about misusing this approach exist (Sijtsma, 2009) and it is inappropriate for formative indicators (Hardin & Marcoulides, 2011), this analysis remains a widely used tool for assessing a scale's reliability. Cronbach's Alpha refers to the extent that correlations among items in a domain vary, which results in some error associated with the average correlation found in any particular sampling of items (Nunnally, 1978). A high Cronbach's Alpha suggests that the questionnaire items in the scale are highly correlated. Nunnally (1978) considered an alpha level equal to greater than 0.6 as indicative of minimally adequate internal consistency. As a part of the preliminary analyses, a series of reliability analyses were conducted to assess the quality of the scales by examining their internal consistency.

Cronbach's Alpha ranges from 0 to 1, with the higher values indicating greater internal consistency. However, it is essential to note that a high value of Cronbach's Alpha does not necessarily imply that the scale measures a signal factor or construct. A misconception confuses homogeneity with internal consistency, which can lead to the improper interpretation of Cronbach's Alpha (Raykov, 2012). Homogeneity refers to the similarity or homogeneity of items within a scale, meaning that all the items are items measuring the same construct. Raykov (2012) states that internal consistency is a measure of the degree to which items within a scale are correlated with one another, which indicates the reliability or consistency of the scale. Cronbach's Alpha assesses the extent to which items in a scale are interrelated but does not necessarily guarantee that they are measuring a single underlying factor.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The findings of the present study examine job satisfaction, turnover intention, and workload manageability among permanency workers in a catchment area of DFPS under and SSCC contract. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the major variables, while reliability testing was conducted for job satisfaction and turnover intention. The study also includes descriptive and internal consistency analysis of workload manageability. The findings provide insights into the factors affecting the job satisfaction and turnover intention of permanency workers, as well as the impact of workload manageability on their performance.

#### **Participants**

Of the 125 potential respondents, 43 permanency workers responded to the survey, resulting in a respondent rate of 34.4%. The total number of respondents who had worked under the legacy system represents 32.6% of *t.*, legacy *n* = 14; CBC *n* = 43). Table 1 presents descriptive statistics reporting the participants' demographic background. The study participants in this sample were primarily female (97.7%), with the largest age group ranging from 25-44, accounting for 60.4%. Most participants are permanency case managers (76.7%).

**Table 1***Demographic Information of the Sample (N = 43)*

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Sex	Male	1	2.3
	Female	42	97.7
Race	Hispanic	6	14.0
	NH White	32	74.4
	NH African American	2	4.7
	NH American Indian or Alaskan Indian	2	4.7
	NH Asian	1	2.3
Age	18–24	2	4.7
	25–34	13	30.2
	35–44	13	30.2
	45–54	10	23.3
	Above 54	5	11.6

### **Descriptive Statistics of Major Variables**

Table 2 offers a comprehensive overview of the demographics and professional attributes of the respondents of the study. The table includes educational background, job titles, income levels, pay structures, and experience in the field.

In terms of education, the majority of workers hold a bachelor’s degree, indicating the significance of a solid academic foundation in child welfare work. The next largest group possesses a master’s degree, followed by those with an associate degree. The most common job titles in the table are permanency directors, supervisors, and case managers. Most workers are permanency case managers, suggesting the prevalence of frontline, hands-on roles in the system.

The income distribution among workers is diverse, reflecting the varied responsibilities and seniority levels within the sector. However, a substantial percentage of respondents fall within the \$50,000 to \$59,999 income bracket, with smaller

percentages distributed across other income categories. Regarding pay structures, most workers are compensated on an hourly basis rather than being salaried employees. The table also reveals a range of experience levels among the respondents. While a significant number have 1 to 2 years or 3 to 4 years of experience, there are also individuals with less than a year or up to a decade of experience in the field. This demonstrates the dynamic nature of the child welfare workforce, which includes professionals with a diverse range of experience and dedication.

**Table 2**

*Professional Information*

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Degree	Some college but no degree	1	2.3
	Associate degree in college (2-year)	3	7.0
	Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)	33	76.7
	Master's degree	6	14.0
Job title	Permanency Director	2	4.7
	Permanency Supervisor	7	16.3
	Permanency Case Manager	33	76.7
Income	\$20,000 to \$29,999	1	2.3
	\$40,000 to \$49,999	11	25.6
	\$50,000 to \$59,999	22	51.2
	\$60,000 to \$69,999	6	14.0
	\$70,000 to \$79,999	2	4.7
Pay type	I am a salaried employee	10	23.3
	I am paid hourly	33	76.7
Length in Child Welfare	Less than 1 year	4	9.3
	1–2 years	13	30.2
	3–4 years	12	27.9
	5–6 years	4	9.3
	7–8 years	1	2.3
	8–10 years	4	9.3

## Reliability Testing

### Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention

Table 3 presents the results of the reliability analyses for the measures of job satisfaction and turnover intention, which were reported to have validity and reliability. Some sub-constructs, however, did not meet the criteria for acceptable internal consistency reliability, with Cronbach's alpha falling below .70 specifically operating conditions within the job satisfaction survey. The other constructs within the survey were found to have satisfactory reliability. Despite operating conditions not meeting the criteria for reliability coefficients (i.e., Cronbach's alpha), this study utilized the sum, or mean scores as instructed by the developers of the turnover intention and job satisfaction scales. Additionally, it was done to facilitate the comparison of the study's scores with those of other articles that employed the same instrumentation.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive and Internal Consistency of Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention*

	Legacy (n = 14)					CBC (n = 43)				
	$\alpha^a$	Min	Max	M	SD	$\alpha^a$	Min	Max	M	SD
Job satisfaction										
Pay	<b>.89</b>	5.0	21.0	12.6	5.5	<b>.79</b>	4.00	23.00	12.07	4.48
Supervision	<b>.87</b>	8.0	24.0	19.0	5.7	<b>.91</b>	7.0	24.0	20.0	4.5
Operating condition	<b>.21</b>	7.0	16.0	11.2	2.9	<b>.54</b>	4.0	19.0	9.1	3.1
Nature of work	<b>.49</b>	16.0	23.0	18.9	2.2	<b>.82</b>	8.0	23.0	16.8	4.2
Communication	<b>.78</b>	12.0	23.0	17.9	3.8	<b>.79</b>	10.0	24.0	16.5	4.0
Turnover Intension	<b>.81</b>	2.0	4.3	2.9		0.7	<b>.88</b>	1.3	4.5	2.9

Note. <sup>a</sup> Cronbach's  $\alpha$

*Turnover Intention Scale: 1: Never, 2: Sometimes, 3: About half the time, 4: Most of the time, 5: Always*



## **Workload Manageability**

Table 4 displays the findings of the reliability analyses conducted on the measures developed for this study, which were based on the literature review. One of the measures, Workload Sum, exhibited Cronbach's alpha below the commonly recommended threshold of .70, with a value of .55. The other constructs demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability, all over the threshold of .70. Despite not meeting the criterion for Cronbach's alpha, this study opted to use the sum or mean scores. The decision was motivated by the common misinterpretation of Cronbach's alpha in the presence of method effects or method variance in the data. Method effects refers to the influence of the measurement method on the observed correlations among specific items, as Raykov (2012) highlighted. For instance, when the same method or format, such as a self-reported questionnaire, is used to measure different constructs, participants may respond consistently due to the formatting of the questions, opposed to the actual underlying constructs being measured.

This cautionary approach was adopted to mitigate potential issues arising from method effects, which could artificially affect the reliability estimates, including Cronbach's alpha. By using the sum or means scores, the research acknowledged the possibility of method effects and prioritized the consistency of response patterns across items.

**Table 4***Descriptive and Internal Consistency: Workload Manageability*

	Legacy (n = 14)					CBC (n = 43)				
	$\alpha^a$	Min	Max	M	SD	$\alpha^a$	Min	Max	M	SD
<b>LoadSum</b>	<b>.71</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>.55</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>2.8</b>
Load1		1	4	2.64	0.93		1	3	2.21	0.57
Load2		1	6	5.29	1.34		1	6	5.37	1.18
Load3		3	6	4.77	1.09		1	6	4.29	1.50
<b>LoadSupportMean</b>	<b>.84</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>1.2</b>
LoadSupport1		2	7	5.23	1.64		2	6	4.85	1.32
LoadSupport2		1	7	4.71	1.94		1	7	4.71	1.64
LoadSupport3		2	7	5.57	1.45		1	7	5.32	1.49
LoadSupport4		1	7	5.38	1.50		1	7	4.57	1.67

*Note. <sup>a</sup> Cronbach's  $\alpha$* *Load1: Number of hours I work a week.**Load2: Average amount of children on your caseload.**Load3: Average amount of families on your caseload (foster+biological families)**LoadSupport1: I have ample time to assess the wellbeing of children on my caseload during my monthly visits.**LoadSupport2: I have been well-trained to testify in court.**LoadSupport3: I have all the information I need to testify in court for all the children and families on my caseload.**LoadSupport4: I have enough time to adequately prepare for court.*

### Hypothesis Testing

A paired sample *t*-test and multiple linear regression were utilized in this study to test the hypothesis and examine the relationship between the variable chosen. The paired sample *t*-test was used to compare means of the variables related to job satisfaction, workload manageability and turnover intention. These tests were chosen to determine the statistical significance of the relationship between the variables, and to potentially predict the value of the variables. In this section, the findings of the analyses are presented using these statistical techniques.

## Change Due to System Transition

The study evaluated how the transition from the legacy system to the CBC system affected the work environment. Therefore, paired-sample t-tests were conducted at a two-tailed alpha level of 0.05 to compare outcome variables. The results in Table 5, revealed statistically significant differences in job satisfaction for operating conditions ( $M = 11.46$ ,  $SD = 2.90$ ) and nature of work ( $M = 18.92$ ,  $SD = 2.33$ ) between the two systems, with higher scores reported under the CBC system. Additionally, workload was found to be significantly decreased under the CBC system ( $M = 14.69$ ,  $SD = 5.57$ ). Furthermore, workload support showed higher statistical significance under the legacy system ( $M = 6.38$ ,  $SD = 1.49$ ) than the CBC system ( $M = 5.06$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ). However, no statistically significant differences were found in job satisfaction as it relates pay, supervision, communication, or turnover intention variables.

**Table 5**

*Paired Sample t-test: Job Satisfaction, Workload Manageability, and Turnover Intention*

Category	Variable	Legacy		CBC		paired sample <i>t</i> -test	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Job Satisfaction	Pay	12.54	5.74	11.46	6.29	0.50	0.63
	Supervision	19.08	5.16	20.08	4.21	-0.57	0.58
	Operating condition	11.46	2.90	8.38	2.26	2.96	0.01
	Nature of work	18.92	2.33	15.38	5.20	2.50	0.03
	Communication	17.92	3.93	15.23	4.92	1.62	0.13
Work	Load (Sum)	14.69	5.75	10.77	4.15	2.31	0.04
	Support (Mean)	6.38	1.49	5.06	1.05	3.26	0.01
Turnover intention		2.87	0.70	3.22	0.92	-1.16	0.27

*Note Turnover Intention Scale: 1: Never, 2: Sometimes, 3: About half the time, 4: Most of the time, 5: Always*

## **Factors of Turnover Intention**

A multiple regression analysis was performed to explore factors influencing turnover intention. Before testing the hypotheses about the associations, assumptions for testing a regression model were considered using Field's recommendation (2013). Multicollinearity problems (i.e., a high correlation between factors) were examined using the tolerance value for predictors (less than 0.2) or variance inflation factor (VIF) (10 or above). All predictors were included in the model because all factors had tolerance value higher than 0.2. The regression analyses in job satisfaction constructs (pay, supervision, operating conditions, nature of work, communication, workload, and workload support) between the two service model systems. The data yielded perplexing results, including multiple statistically significant predictors for a regression within the small sample size ( $n = 13$ ). Therefore, the regression model was refined by considering the association conceptually.

The new regression models include only job satisfaction related constructs because some information is similar to the job load related measurements that the researcher developed. In addition, a new variable for "Operating Condition-Load" was created by summing only 2 items of the reversed version (I have too much to do at work; I have too much paperwork). The new "operating condition-load" variable yielded more coherent reasonable results, as it seemed unusual to observe statistical significance with such a small number of valid cases ( $n = 13$ ).

Table 6 presents two multiple linear regression models. Each regression model had turnover intention (either during legacy system or CBC system) as the outcome variable and five job satisfaction related constructs during the time as predictors. The

regression model for the legacy found no statistical predictors of turnover intention during the legacy system:  $F = 1.775$ ,  $p = 0.224$ ,  $R^2 = .526$ . These results could be caused by a small number of valid cases ( $n = 13$ ). A bootstrapping method analysis to address this issue was conducted, but the results were consistent.

The CBC system regression model shows that some factors are statistically significant in predicting turnover intention,  $F = 13.559$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = .653$ . The regression indicates that the job satisfaction related constructs under the legacy system explain approximately 65.3% of variance in turnover intention.

The workload (part of operating condition in job satisfaction) on turnover intention was statistically significant,  $t = -2.656$ ,  $p = 0.012$ . Caseworkers who have a higher satisfaction with the workload under the current system (i.e., CBC system), have a lower intention to leave the current job.

The nature of work was another statistically significant predictor of turnover intention under the CBC system,  $t = -2.656$ ,  $p = 0.045$ . Caseworkers who are more satisfied with their work due to the nature of the work (e.g., consider their work meaningful, like their work) have a lower intention to leave their job. Other predictors (i.e., pay, supervision, or communication) are not statistically significant predictors of turnover intention in the current system (i.e., CBC system).

**Table 6***Multiple Linear Regression Models of Turnover Intention*

Predictor	<i>Legacy</i> (n = 14)		<i>CBC</i> (n = 42)	
	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Pay	0.156	0.880	-0.648	0.521
Supervision	-1.859	0.100	-1.019	0.315
Workload (operating condition)	-1.467	0.181	-2.075	0.045
Nature of work	-1.477	0.178	-2.656	0.012
Communication	1.803	0.109	-0.469	0.642
<i>F</i>	1.775	0.224	13.559	<0.001
<i>R square</i>	0.526		0.653	

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of permanency workers regarding their work environment in a specific region of the Texas DFPS that transitioned from the traditional, or legacy model, of child welfare services to the new model, known as the community-based care model. The study focuses on factors such as job satisfaction, turnover intention, and workload manageability, to better understand the impact of this transition on the workforce. This research aims to fill a gap in the existing literature by surveying a sample of permanency workers in a DFPS region of Texas that has transitioned to the CBC model. The findings of this study have important implications for understanding the effect on permanency workers by changing the service delivery model in the context of child welfare, not only in Texas but in other regions considering similar transitions. In addition, the results of this study can help inform future regional changes and decision-making processes related to implementing the CBC model.

#### **Discussion of Major Findings**

Descriptive statistics and reliability testing were used for data analysis to evaluate any significant changes in perception of respondents who experienced the change in service delivery model, with practice experience under the two different systems. Additionally, paired-sample t-tests were conducted to test the hypothesis and compare the respondents' experiences between the legacy model and the CBC model. Finally,

multiple linear regression was employed to gain additional insights into the factors influencing turnover intention.

### **Implications of Findings**

The findings of this study have many implications. First, the results of the paired-sample t-test revealed statistically significant differences in job satisfaction and workload between the two systems (legacy and CBC systems), with higher scores reported under the CBC system. This implies that the CBC system may have a decrease in job satisfaction while also showing a statistically significant decreased workload compared to the legacy system. However, no significant differences were found in other variables such as pay, supervision, communication, or turnover intention. This suggests that the changes due to the transition may be specific to job satisfaction and workload, while the other factors may not have been significantly affected.

The regression models used in the present study showed that workload and nature of work were statistically significant predictors of turnover intention under the CBC system. The results suggest higher satisfaction with workload and nature of work, which are associated with lower turnover intention. However, no statistical predictors of turnover intention were found under the legacy system. This result could be due to the small number of valid cases in the sample. The implication is that workload and nature of work may be important factors in influencing turnover intention in the current system. Efforts to improve workload manageability and nature of work may effectively reduce turnover intention among permanency workers.

Other factors such as pay, supervision, and communication were not found statistically significant predictors of turnover intention. This result could indicate that the



previously stated predictors may not significantly impact turnover intention in the current CBC system. However, further research should be conducted using a larger sample to effectively analyze these predictors and their relationship to turnover intention.

### **Implications for Practice**

The present study has implications for the child welfare field and social work practice. The findings suggest that workload, specifically in the context of operating conditions, is a significant predictor of turnover intention among permanency workers in the child welfare field.

Social work practitioners should be mindful of the workload demands placed on themselves and their employees, taking steps to ensure that workloads are manageable. Caseload size and workload demand should be looked at as two separate considerations. As previously stated, higher caseloads do correlate to higher workloads, however, workload has the potential to be higher if the number of families (biological parents or other individuals involved in the case) is not included in the caseload size. It is important to note the influence of how caseload is measured. As discussed in the literature review, child welfare cases have a level of individuality in their makeup and complexity. Careful consideration should be made when assigning cases, including factoring the children's level of care, proximity of placement, and number of families and family plans of service that a single caseworker is responsible for managing.

The findings also show the importance of participating in perceived meaningful work. The results highlight the significance of the nature of work that influences turnover intention among workers. Practitioners should prioritize, encourage, and foster meaningful and fulfilling work experiences and environments for their employees. This is

greatly important in the child welfare field because of the inherent stress and challenges workers face. Providing opportunities for workers to engage in the work that they find meaningful and enjoyable, or creating a working environment that is uplifting and affirming may have an influence in decreasing turnover intention and increasing retention in the field.

Graham et al. (2015) discusses related implications for practice. Their study's findings suggest that placement rate increases were observed when worker perception of support was lower. The findings in the study of placement decision making process echoes aspects of the present study's findings by highlighting the importance of operating in supporting and nurturing working environments.

### **Implications for Policy**

Considering the extensive amount of legislation, changes in policy, and the push for a change in delivery service model from the legacy to the CBC model, this study highlights the need for policy interventions at local, state, and legislative levels to address workload manageability, system transitions, job satisfaction, and turnover intention among permanency workers in the child welfare field.

The CBC model is intended to be localized, providing community care through networking and collaboration with community stakeholders. Policies that are designed within this system should be mindful of the minimum legal standards within the state, but also ensure regular quality assurance, assessments, and evaluations of more than just the child outcomes.

Internal evaluations should drive the policies and guidelines of practice and of care. Additionally, providers who regularly assess and evaluate outcomes should publish

their collected data and work towards improving care at a state level. The state legislature should have the available literature to make informed decisions regarding the successes of implemented programs and accurate and encompassing data needed to create systematic changes. Research from the ground up should aim at informing policy.

Workload manageability in the present study was shown to have low internal consistency reliability, indicating that it may not be a reliable measure as it relates to either service model. However, the operating condition-load variable created from the job satisfaction survey showed the implications of workload as a predictor for turnover intention. High workloads increase stress, burnout, and turnover intention, as previously discussed in the literature review. Therefore, policy interventions should focus on improving workload manageability by providing adequate resources, support, and staffing levels to ensure workers can effectively manage their workload without experiencing excessive stress and burnout. Policy changes could include increased funding for staffing, training, overtime pay, and technologies to streamline administrative tasks.

The present study's findings indicated that job satisfaction was not significantly impacted by factors such as pay, supervision, or communication. This is suggestive that policy interventions should go beyond traditional factors such as pay raises or increased supervision. Policy efforts should include promoting a positive work environment, recognizing and valuing meaningfulness of practice, providing opportunities for professional growth and development, and ensuring workers have a voice in the decision-making processes. If child welfare workers are not satisfied with their job, it can lead to increased turnover and potential disruptions in the continuity of care for foster children.

Policy makers at all levels should consider conducting regular assessments of workers job satisfaction and take effective measures to incorporating their feedback into policy and practice changes to continuously improve the work environment for child welfare workers. The suggested policy changes could increase worker retention, ensuring stability in the care provided to children in care.

A change in the service delivery model within the system should be carefully considered. In the context of the foster care redesign triggered by legislative changes, policy decisions related to system transition should consider the potential impact on permanency workers job satisfaction, workload, and turnover intention. This should be a consideration for local, state, and legislative policy makers. Policy and legislation influencing the transition should consider the potential implications for workers and ensure that appropriate support, resources, and training are provided to minimize any negative effects on workers job outcomes, and ultimately the quality and sustainability of child outcomes and care.

Although the study findings may not directly impact foster care redesign or the lawsuits brought against the state of Texas, they highlight important considerations related to workload manageability, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. The systems transition is the direction the state is headed to improve overall child outcomes. The present study explores the transition's potential impact, which could inform policy decisions regarding foster care redesign and the movement towards CBC and future SSCCs. By implementing policies prioritizing child welfare workers' well-being, job satisfaction, and retention, policymakers can support these workers in their critical roles

of providing services to vulnerable populations and ultimately improve outcomes for the children, families, and communities they serve.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Several limitations to this research should be noted. First, the cross-sectional data collection precludes causal interpretations of the findings, though patterns of association may be observed. Second, the generalizability is limited because universities self-selected to participate in this study, although participants were randomly selected. Moreover, it must be pointed out that the study response rate of 43 participants has a direct relationship to some of the analysis results.

The present study found that some sub-constructs did not meet the criteria for acceptable internal consistency reliability, particularly in the context of operating conditions and the sum of workload manageability. Further research could explore the reliability of these measures to develop strategies to improve the reliability of the measures. Additionally, the study employed a cross-sectional design examining job satisfaction, turnover intention, and caseload manageability during two different systems at one point in time.

It is important to note that the present study was conducted following a statewide change that saw implementation of more training, reduction of overall caseload size and additional access to funding. Changes experienced under the CBC system were also requirements for the legacy system. Future research should utilize a longitudinal design to explore the transition overtime and identify potential predictors and factors that are solely due to the service delivery model changes. A longitudinal study design would be

able to capture perception of workers' and how their jobs evolve, before, during, and after the transition from the legacy model to the CBC model.

The study's findings are based on data from one specific region in Texas that has experienced the change to the CBC service model. Future research should conduct a comparative study across different regions and/or states, to examine the variations in workers' outcomes and the factors that influence them. A comparative study could help identify contextual factors, such as differences in child welfare policies, funding mechanisms, workforce composition, and cultural factors. Expanding upon the literature in this way would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the complex interactions between policy, practice, worker outcomes, and ultimately, child outcomes.

An examination of additional predictors of turnover intention should be explored in future research. Factors such as pay, supervision, and communication were not found to be statistically significant predictors in the current study. Analyzing additional predictors for turnover intention, such as organizational culture, job demands, and personal factors, would create a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of influencing factors of turnover intention within the field of child welfare.

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, the findings from this pilot study have important implications for future research in the field of social work. Due to the mixed results, study design limitations, and time constraints, further investigation into workload management, turnover intention, and other related factors is warranted. The field of child welfare would additionally benefit in researching the development and evaluation of interventions

aimed at improving job satisfaction, reducing turnover intention, and addressing workload challenges for permanency workers.

The results of this study suggest that the transition from the legacy service model to the CBC service model may have had effects on various job satisfaction constructs and may have contributed to a decrease in overall job satisfaction in the CBC model. The findings also highlight the significance of workload, with reduced workload and increased workload support reported in the CBC model compared to the legacy model.

It is important to note that the present study has several limitations, and further research is needed to fully understand the impact of the change in service models. Advancing our understanding of the factors that influence permanency workers' perceptions of their working environment and identifying effective strategies to support their well-being can contribute to the development of evidence-based practices and policies that promote the sustainability and effectiveness of the child welfare workforce, ultimately benefitting the children and families they serve.

## REFERENCES

- The Administration for Children and Families. (2022, June 28) *Foster Care*. Health and Human Services. Retrieved October 6, 2022, from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/focus-areas/foster-care>
- Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation. (n.d.). Federal Foster Care Financing: How and Why the Current Funding Structure Fails to Meet the Needs of the Child Welfare Field. U.S Department of Health and Human Services. ASPE. Retrieved October 6, 2022, from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/reports/federal-foster-care-financing-how-why-current-funding-structure-fails-meet-needs-child-welfare-field-0>
- Bald, A., Doyle Jr., J. J., Gross, M., & Jacob, B. A. (2022). Economics of foster care. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 36(2), 223–246. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.36.2.223>
- Batura, N., Skordis-Worrall, J., Thapa, R., Basnyat, R., & Morrison, J. (2016). Is the Job Satisfaction Survey a good tool to measure job satisfaction amongst health workers in Nepal? Results of a validation analysis. *BMC Health Services Research*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-016-1558-4>
- Beltran, A., & Epstein, H. (2013). The standards to license kinship foster parents around the United States: Using research findings to effect change. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 16(5), 364–381. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10522158.2013.832463>
- Benton AD. 2016. Understanding the diverging paths of stayers and leavers: An



- examination of factors predicting worker retention. *Children and Youth Services Review* 65: 70–77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.04.00>
- Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018. H.R. 1892 – 115<sup>th</sup> Congress (2017-2018). H.R. 1892, 115<sup>th</sup> Cong. (2018). Enacted.
- Bohra, N., & Oxner, R. (2021, July 21). *Texas foster care system desperate for more funds, more beds*. The Texas Tribune. <https://www.texastribune.org/2021/07/19/texas-foster-care-crisis/>
- Brown, A. C., & Stathatos, P. (2022, April). *Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: One size does not fit all*. Texas Policy. Retrieved December 2, 2022, from <https://www.texaspolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2022-04-RR-RfF-BrownStathatos-ReportingChildAbuseNeglect-002.pdf>
- Burns, K., & Christie, A. (2013). Employment mobility or turnover? An analysis of child welfare and protection employee retention. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 35(2), 340–346.
- Cahalane, H., & Sites, E. W. (2008). The climate of child welfare employee retention. *Child Welfare*, 87(1), 91–114.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). *Preventing Child Maltreatment: Program Activities Guide*. Retrieved September 1, 2022, from [https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/cm\\_prog\\_activities\\_guide-a.pdf#:~:text=CDC%20defines%20child%20maltreatment%20as%20any%20act%20or,harm%2C%20or%20threat%20of%20harm%20to%20a%20child.](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/cm_prog_activities_guide-a.pdf#:~:text=CDC%20defines%20child%20maltreatment%20as%20any%20act%20or,harm%2C%20or%20threat%20of%20harm%20to%20a%20child.)
- The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. Pub. L. No. 115-271 (2018).

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/law-regulation/child-abuse-prevention-and-treatment-act-capta>

- Day, E., Tach, L., & Mihalec-Adkins, B. (2021). State child welfare policies and the measurement of child maltreatment in the United States. *Child Maltreatment*, 27(3), 411–422. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10775595211006464>
- Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., Koss, M. P., & Marks, J. S. (2019). REPRINT OF: Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 56(6), 774–786. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2019.04.001>
- Field, A. (2013). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). London: Sage
- Garstka, T. A., Collins-Camargo, C., Hall, J. G., Neal, M., & Ensign, K.. (2012). Implementing performance-based contracts and quality assurance systems in child welfare services: Results from a national cross-site evaluation. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 6(1), 12-41. <https://doi-org.acu.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/15548732.2012.644200>
- Graef, M. I., & Hill, E. L. (2000). Costing child protective services staff turnover. *Child Welfare*, 517–533.
- Griffiths, A., Royse, D., Flaherty, C., & Collins-Camargo, C. (2020). Perceptions of workload and job impact as predictors of child welfare worker health status. *Child Welfare*, 98(3), 97–120.

- Hardin, A. M., & Marcoulides, G. A. (2011). A Commentary on the Use of Formative Measurement. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 71*(5), 753–764.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164411414270>
- Humphrey, K. R., Turnbull, A. P., & Turnbull, H. R. (2006). Perspectives of foster-care providers, service providers, and judges regarding privatized foster-care Services. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 17*(1), 2–17.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/10442073060170010101>
- Kaye S, Shaw T.V, DePanfilis D, Rice K. 2012. Estimating staffing needs for in-home child welfare services with a weighted caseload formula. *Child Welfare 91*(2): 61–76.
- Kilmer, S. (2022). The Texas foster care system: 7 years after M.D. V. Abbott. *Houston Journal of Health Law & Policy, 21*(2), 325–369.
- Kim H. 2011. Job conditions, unmet expectations, and burnout in public child welfare workers: How different from other social workers? *Children and Youth Services Review 33*(2), 358–367. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.10.001>
- Kim, H., & Drake, B. (2019). Cumulative prevalence of onset and recurrence of child maltreatment reports. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 58*(12), 1175–1183.
- Kim, J., Yi, E. H., Pierce, B., & Hall, J. (2019). Effective workload management in child welfare: Understanding the relationship between caseload and workload. *Social Policy & Administration, 53*(7), 1095–1107.
- Klika, B. J., & Conte, J. R. (2017). *The APSAC Handbook on Child Maltreatment* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

- Koeske, G. F., & Koeske, R. D. (1989). Work load and burnout: Can social support and perceived accomplishment help? *Social Work, 34*, 243–248.
- Ladika, S. (2022, March 14). *Burnout Is a Problem for HR Professionals*. SHRM. <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/spring2022/pages/hr-practitioners-are-coping-with-burnout.aspx>
- Lee, J. Y. (2021). Child welfare reform: The role of federal court oversight in child protective service workers' caseloads. *Child Abuse Review, 30*(2), 155–165. <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2644>
- Lizano, E. L., & Barak, M. M. (2015). Job burnout and affective wellbeing: A longitudinal study of burnout and job satisfaction among public child welfare workers. *Children and Youth Services Review, 55*, 18–28.
- McRell, A. S., Holmes, C. R., Singh, A., Levkoff, S. E., Schooley, B., Hikmet, N., & Seay, K. D. (2021). Youth in Foster Care and the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard. *Child Maltreatment*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559520957748>
- M.D. v. Abbott, 152 F. Supp. 3d 684 (S.D. Tex. 2015). <https://casetext.com/case/md-v-abbott>
- Melhado, W. (2023, January 24). *New Texas foster care report shows improvements, continued deficiencies*. The Texas Tribune. <https://www.texastribune.org/2023/01/20/dfps-foster-child-protective-services-court-report/>
- M.E. Mor Barak, J. Nissly & A. Levin. (2001). Antecedents to retention and turnover

among child welfare, social work, and other human service employees: What can we learn from past research? A review and metanalysis. *Social Service Review*, 625–661.

Newquist, J., Ladd, L. D., & Cooley, M. E. (2020). Processing the removal and managing the moves or removals of foster children: A qualitative exploration of foster parents' experiences. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 37(5), 537–545. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00652-w>

Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory (2nd ed.)*. New York: McGraw-Hill

Office of the Administration for Children & Families. (2021). Adoption and foster care analysis and reporting system. (AFCARS Report # 28). Retrieved September 22, 2022, from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/report/afcars-report-28>

Office of the Texas Governor (2017). *Reforming Texas' Foster Care System*. Retrieved October 6, 2022, from <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/Reforming-Texas-Foster-Care-System>

Pagano, C. B. (1999). Adoption and foster care, recent legislation. *Harvard Journal on Legislation*, 36, 242–249.

Raykov, T., & Marcoulides, G. A. (2011). *Introduction to Psychometric Theory*. Routledge eBooks. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203841624>

Rittschof, K. R., & Fortunato, V. J. (2016). The influence of transformational leadership and job burnout on child protective services case managers' commitment and intent to quit. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 42(3), 372–385. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2015.1101047>

Roodt, G. (2004). Turnover intentions. *Unpublished document. Johannesburg: University*

*of Johannesburg.*

Sijtsma, K. (2009). On the use, the misuse, and the very limited usefulness of Cronbach's alpha. *psychometrika*, 74, 107–120.

Smith B.D. 2005. Job retention in child welfare: Effects of perceived organizational support, supervisor support, and intrinsic job value. *Children and Youth Services Review* 27(2), 153–169. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2004.08.013>

Spector, P. E. (1994). Job satisfaction survey.

Steen, J. (2011). An exploratory study of the relationship between child protection system stressors and case outputs. *Administration in Social Work*, 35(1), 46–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03643107.2011.533620>

Strolin JS, McCarthy M, Caringi J. 2006. Causes and effects of child welfare workforce turnover. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 1(2), 29–52. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J479v01n02\\_03](https://doi.org/10.1300/J479v01n02_03)

Su, X. (2021). Validation of the Chinese version of the turnover intention scale in social workers. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 47(2), 207–218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2020.1738312>

Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International Journal of Medical Education*, 2, 53–55

The Texas Department of Family Protective Services. (2022). *Child protective service Handbook*. Community-based care operations manual. <https://www.dfps.texas.gov/handbooks/CPS/default.asp>

Texans Care for Children. (2021, July 2). *Review of Child Protection Policy Progress During the 2021 Texas Legislative Session*.

<https://txchildren.org/posts/2021/7/1/review-of-child-protection-policy-progress-during-the-2021-texas-legislative-session>

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. (2021a). *Child protective services handbook*. <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/default.asp>

The Texas Department of Family Protective Services. (2021b) *CPS Conservatorship: Six Month, One Year, and Five Year Outcomes*. Retrieved October 2, 2022, from [https://www.dfps.texas.gov/About\\_DFPS/Data\\_Book/Child\\_Protective\\_Services/Conservatorship/Six-Month\\_One\\_Five\\_Year\\_Outcomes.asp](https://www.dfps.texas.gov/About_DFPS/Data_Book/Child_Protective_Services/Conservatorship/Six-Month_One_Five_Year_Outcomes.asp)

The Texas Department of Family Protective Services. (n.d.a). *Community-Based Care*. [https://www.dfps.texas.gov/Child\\_Protection/Foster\\_Care/Community-Based\\_Care/](https://www.dfps.texas.gov/Child_Protection/Foster_Care/Community-Based_Care/)

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. (2021c). *DFPS data card*. [Data set]. [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About\\_DFPS/Data\\_Book/documents/DFPS\\_Data\\_Card.pdf](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About_DFPS/Data_Book/documents/DFPS_Data_Card.pdf)

The Texas Department of Family Protective Services. (2020a). *DFPS Annual Report*. [https://www.dfps.texas.gov/About\\_DFPS/Annual\\_Report/](https://www.dfps.texas.gov/About_DFPS/Annual_Report/)

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. (2020b). *DFPS data card*. [Data set]. [https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About\\_DFPS/Data\\_Book/documents/DFPS\\_Data\\_Card.pdf](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About_DFPS/Data_Book/documents/DFPS_Data_Card.pdf)

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. (2020c). Generally Applicable Caseload Standards: Guidelines for Conservatorship CVS. In *DFPS.texas.gov/handbooks*.

[https://www.dfps.texas.gov/handbooks/CPS/Resource\\_Guides/CPS\\_Generally\\_Aplicable\\_Internal\\_Caseload\\_Standards.pdf](https://www.dfps.texas.gov/handbooks/CPS/Resource_Guides/CPS_Generally_Aplicable_Internal_Caseload_Standards.pdf)

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). (n.d.b). *Service levels for foster care.*

[https://www.dfps.texas.gov/Child\\_Protection/Foster\\_Care/Service\\_Levels.asp](https://www.dfps.texas.gov/Child_Protection/Foster_Care/Service_Levels.asp)

Texas Family Code, tit. 4, Subtitle A, c. 71.

Texas Family Code, tit. 4, Subtitle B, c. 81-88.

Texas Family Code, tit. 4, Subtitle C, c. 91-92.

Texas Family Code, tit. 5, Subtitle A, c. 101-111.

Texas Family Code, tit. 5, Subtitle B, c. 151-162.

Texas Family Code, tit. 5, Subtitle E, c. 261-266.

Texas HB4: 2021-2022: 87th Legislature. *LegiScan*,

<https://legiscan.com/TX/bill/HB4/2021>.

Texas HB5: 2021-2022: 87th Legislature. *LegiScan*,

<https://legiscan.com/TX/bill/HB5/2021>.

*Texas Legislature Online - 86(R) Text for SB 11*,

<https://capitol.texas.gov/billlookup/text.aspx?LegSess=86R&Bill=SB11>.

Texas Health and Human Services. (2021, October). 11100, Overview of Heightened Monitoring | Texas Health and Human Services. *Childcare regulation handbook*.

Retrieved October 6, 2022, from <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/child-care-regulation-handbook/11100-overview-heightened-monitoring>

Texas Health and Human Services. (n.d.). *Single-Source Continuum Contractor*

*Unsolicited Proposal Grants | Texas Health and Human Services.*



<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/business/grants/single-source-continuum-contractor-unsolicited-proposal-grants>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2019). Child maltreatment 2017.

Available: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cm2017.pdf>

Wilke D.J., Radey M., King E., Spinelli C, Rakes S, Nolan CR. 2018. A multi-level conceptual model to examine child welfare worker turnover and retention decisions. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 12(2): 204–231.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15548732.2017.1373722>

Yegidis, B., Weinbach, R., & Myers, L. L. (2017). *Research methods for social workers*. Pearson Education.

## APPENDIX A

### IRB Approval Letter

**Date:** March 16, 2023

**PI:** Kerri Taylor

**Department:** RES-Residential Student, 20531-Masters in Social Work

**Re:** Initial - IRB-2023-18

*Impact of Community-Based Care Model on Child Welfare Professionals: A Study of Workload, Turnover Intent, and Job Satisfaction*

The Abilene Christian University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for Impact of Community-Based Care Model on Child Welfare Professionals: A Study of Workload, Turnover Intent, and Job Satisfaction. The administrative check-in date is --.

**Decision:** Exempt

**Additional Approvals/Instructions:**

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable. All approval letters and study documents are located within the Study Details in Cayuse IRB.

The following are all responsibilities of the Primary Investigator (PI). Violation of these responsibilities may result in suspension or termination of research by the Institutional Review Board. If the Primary Investigator is a student and fails to fulfil any of these responsibilities, the Faculty Advisor then becomes responsible for completing or upholding any and all of the following:

- When the research is completed, inform the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. If your study is Exempt, Non-Research, or Non-Human Research, email [orsp@acu.edu](mailto:orsp@acu.edu) to indicate that the research has finished.
- According to ACU policy, research data must be stored on ACU campus (or electronically) for 3 years from inactivation of the study, in a manner that is secure but accessible should the IRB request access.
- It is the Investigator's responsibility to maintain a general environment of safety for all research participants and all members of the research team. All risks to physical, mental, and emotional well-being as well as any risks to confidentiality should be minimized.

For additional information on the policies and procedures above, please visit the IRB website <http://www.acu.edu/community/offices/academic/orsp...> or email [orsp@acu.edu](mailto:orsp@acu.edu) with your questions.

Sincerely,

Abilene Christian University Institutional Review Board

## APPENDIX B

### Survey Invitation Letter

My name is Kerri Taylor. I am a Master of Social Work student at Abilene Christian University. The following survey was designed to obtain perspectives of child welfare providers within Texas DFPS on how the change to the Community-Based Care service model has affected job satisfaction, turnover intention, and caseload manageability. The aim is to have a range of individuals fill out the survey, case managers, supervisors, and heads of departments. All information obtained will be absent of any personal identifiers to provide anonymity and privacy to those who complete the survey. The survey should take not more than 15 minutes to complete. The purpose of this study is to give voice to those working in the child welfare field within the community-based care sector. The ultimate goal is to shed light on the potential undue burden experienced by those working in the field and how it affects children's needs.

#### Contact Information:

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, you may contact the Principal Investigator of this study. The Principal Investigator is:

Kerri Taylor, MSSW Candidate

(910)742-3393 klt19b@acu.edu

ACU Box 27866, Abilene, TX, 79699

If you are unable to reach the Principal Investigator or wish to speak to someone other than the Principal Investigator, you may contact the faculty supervisor:

Kyeonghee Jang, PhD, LMSW

325-674-6428 khj15a@acu.edu

ACU Box 27866, Abilene, TX 79699

If you have concerns about this study or general questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact ACU's Chair of the Institutional Review Board and Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Megan Roth, Ph.D. Dr. Roth may be reached at

(325) 674-2885

[megan.roth@acu.edu](mailto:megan.roth@acu.edu)

## APPENDIX C

### Survey Informed Consent

Title of Study: Impact of Community-Based Care Model on Child Welfare Professionals: A Study of Workload, Turnover Intent, and Job Satisfaction: (IRB approval number: 2023-18)

You are invited to participate in this study. This form provides important information about that study, including the risks and benefits to you, the potential participant. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions that you may have regarding the procedures, your involvement, and any risks or benefits you may experience. You may also wish to discuss your participation with other people, such as your family doctor or a family member. Also, please note that your participation is entirely voluntary. You may decline to participate or withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Please contact the PI (Principal Investigator) if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study or if at any time you wish to withdraw. This contact information may be found at the end of this section.

#### Purpose and Procedures

The purpose of this study aims to examine how the legislative change to the CBC model affected the ability of permanency case workers to perform their job duties effectively and in the best interest of foster children. The research will be conducted by the PI, a social work graduate student. After you sign the informed consent document, you will be asked to complete a one-time survey before April 1, 2023. The survey is expected to take 10 minutes. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw at any time and for any reason. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study, there will be no penalty.

## Risks and Discomforts

The primary risk with this study is a breach of confidentiality, which is a minimal risk. The researchers have taken steps to minimize the risks associated with this study. You will not be asked for identifying information to further protect your identity. However, if you experience any problems, you may contact the PI (See information below).

Some of the survey questions may cause mild to severe emotional distress. If anxious or depressive symptoms increase please seek assistance from a qualified medical professional.

## Potential Benefits

There are potential benefits to participating in this study. Such benefits may include a better understanding of how legislation and oversight have influenced your work. Additionally, there is the benefit of having your perspective heard anonymously. The researcher cannot guarantee that you will experience any personal benefits from participating in this study. However, the researcher hopes that the information learned from this study will help future child welfare workers and educate those who make decisions at the state level.

## Provisions for Confidentiality

Information collected about you will be handled in a confidential manner in accordance with the law. There will be no identifying information obtained, such as your name, age, race, or the specific department you work in.

1. Responses to the survey are kept confidential. It means that the PI (and others such as the faculty adviser) has access to information about who took a given survey, but this information is not available to anyone else. Some identifiable data may have to be shared with individuals outside of the study team, such as members of the ACU Institutional Review Board. Aside from these required disclosures, your confidentiality will be protected by de-identifying the survey. The PI will never associate a survey respondent's identifiable information with

their survey response in any kind of reporting. When the results of this research study are published as a thesis, full confidentiality will be assured. They will only be used for statistical purposes and will be reported only in aggregated form—that is, individual survey results are combined together and presented as a group. Results for groups of fewer than three people are never reported when there is any risk of breach of confidentiality. Also, password-protected documents and data will be stored in a secure location.

2. This survey is anonymous. It means that the PI has no way of associating any survey response with the person who submitted that response. None of the responses will be connected to identifying information. Sometimes, we ask questions about demographic traits on our anonymous surveys. These are used to gain additional insight into the data through breakouts by categories such as race, gender, or class year. We will never report data on a single respondent.

#### Contact

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, you may contact the Principal Investigator of this study. The Principal Investigator is:

Kerri Taylor, MSSW Candidate

(910)742-3393 klt19b@acu.edu

ACU Box 27866, Abilene, TX, 79699

If you are unable to reach the Principal Investigator or wish to speak to someone other than the Principal Investigator, you may contact the faculty supervisor:

Kyeonghee Jang, PhD, LMSW

325-674-6428 khj15a@acu.edu

ACU Box 27866, Abilene, TX 79699

If you have concerns about this study or general questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact ACU's Chair of the Institutional Review Board and Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Megan Roth, Ph.D. Dr. Roth may be reached at

(325) 674-2885

megan.roth@acu.edu

Consent electronic signature

[Please click the "Yes" ] below if you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. Click only after you have read all of the information provided and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. If you wish to have a copy of this consent form, you may print it now. You do not waive any legal rights by consenting to this study.