

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Youth Health & Safety, Select
For HB 2237

Compiled on: Monday, March 20, 2023 10:35 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: March 20, 2023 2:30 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Shannon Hoffman

The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health
Austin, TX

HB 2237 enables the creation of the Child First grant program within Texas. As of 2023, the Child First program has also been implemented in North Carolina, Florida, and Connecticut. This grant program disperses grants to non-profits around the state for the purpose of providing Child First programming. Child First (Child and Family Interagency, Resource, Support, and Training) is a comprehensive, home-based, therapeutic intervention targeting young children and families with multiple risk factors embedded in a coordinated “system of care.”

Mental health concerns can often begin in early childhood, especially when a child may experience multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) within their home or surrounding environments. Experiencing multiple ACEs within the first few years of a child’s life has also been linked to lower physical health outcomes, substance use, and suicidality. ACEs can often occur in a child’s life despite the parent or guardian’s best efforts to care for their child. However, preventative care for children and families, especially in early childhood, can significantly reduce these negative behavioral and physical health outcomes. Additionally, home-based services not only lead to higher family engagement, collaboration, and in-vivo practice, but also can remove multiple barriers to active participation such as transportation and school or work conflicts.

Through research, the Child First Program specifically has demonstrated significant improvement in child mental health, language delays, maternal mental health, and reduced CPS involvement. In Texas, funding grant programs that provide comprehensive, collaborative family-based interventions can be a great first step towards widespread mental health and wellbeing in the state for our most at-risk Texans.

Andrea Sparks

Buckner International
Dallas, TX

Buckner International supports funding to increase services to vulnerable children and families. If established, this grant program will fund an evidence-based program to protect children and strengthen families.

Shariq Ghani, Executive Director

Minaret Foundation

Richmond, TX

This program will expand the care needed for our most vulnerable children by aiding programs and providers for children. Ensuring our children are ready mentally and academically for school and social environments is essential to their early childhood development and sets the stage for the rest of their lives. Long-term this bill benefits families, our workforce, and our economy. In the short term, it benefits our neighborhoods, teachers, and parents. We ask that you provide favorable consideration for HB 2237.