



Invisible Children's Project

About the Invisible Children's Project

Project Vision

All children who have a parent or guardian with a mental health problem are able to obtain the supports and services that they and their families need to function in healthy ways that promote their growth, development and well-being.

Project Mission

The mission of the Invisible Children's Project is to identify children who have a parent or guardian with a mental health problem and advocate for a system of care for these families to obtain needed supports and services.

History

The first Invisible Children's Project was launched in New York in 1993, by the Mental Health Association in Orange County, Inc., to support parents with mental health problems in their parenting role and to keep families together.

In 2003, the National Mental Health Association selected the Mental Health Association in Texas to be the first statewide coalition to address these issues. A number of local projects were also initiated across the country.

What We Are Doing

- We are collecting data to document the needs of invisible children throughout Texas through surveys, focus groups, and existing data that state agencies have gathered.
- We are working with community and state organizations to identify and provide services to children when a parent or guardian with mental health problem seeks services.
- We are developing information about children and families who have a parent or guardian with a mental health problem.
- We are advocating for the establishment of evidence-based services for invisible children.
- We are providing information for families, communities and policy-makers.

Coalition Members

Ben Canada, Texas Association of School Boards

Chris Ruiz, Advocate

Christina C. Escareno, Texas Youth Commission

Daisy Wei, Mental Health Association in Texas

Denise Brady, JD, Mental Health Association in Texas

Elaine Shiver, Parents as Teachers, Mental Health Association in Texas

Erin Espinosa, Texas Juvenile Probation Commission

Gwen Chance, Head Start

Jan Friese, Texas Counseling Association

Jackie Shields, Advocate

Kandis Ream, Family Forward

Kendella Baker, Texas Association of School Boards

Laurie Donovan, Advocate

Louise Lynch, Austin Travis County Mental Health & Mental Retardation Center

Lynn Lasky Clark, Mental Health Association in Texas

Marcia Rachofsky, JD, Texas Mental Health Consumers

Mary Ellen Nudd, Mental Health Association in Texas

Melissa Coats, Texas Association of School Boards

Melanie Gantt, Mental Health Association in Texas

Mike Halligan, Texas Mental Health Consumers Network

Monica Thyssen, Advocacy, Inc.

Pat Koch, PhD, Chair, Invisible Children's Project, Mental Health Association in Texas

Patti Derr, Texas Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

Patti Everitt, Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Paul Ferris, Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments, Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Robin Peyson, Texas Department of State Health Services

Sally Spill, Austin Travis County Mental Health & Mental Retardation Center, Texas Council of Community MHMR Centers

Sharon Newcomb-Kase, Texas Health & Human Services Commission

Sharon Sheldon, Texas Department of State Health Services

Sherri Hammack, Texas Health & Human Services Commission

Sister Helen Brewer, Seton Healthcare Network

Susan Craven, Texans Care for Children

Terry Beattie, Texas Health & Human Services Commission

Therese Ruffing, JD, Attorney

Traci Patterson, Mental Health Association in Texas

Tracy Levins, PhD, Texas Youth Commission

Vicki Hansen, National Association of Social Workers-Texas