

## What are Birth Defects?

Birth defects are problems that occur in the baby's development before birth. Every year more than 14,000 Texas babies are born with a birth defect. Some birth defects can be seen right away, but others are found when the baby is a little older. Some children with birth defects do not have major problems, but others may need special help. For example, a child with a birth defect may need special help learning to walk or talk, or may have many medical expenses. This depends on the type of birth defect and how serious it is.

## Getting Help In Texas

Sometimes families wonder where to get help for a child with a birth defect or other special needs. This brochure tells about some places Texas families can get help. If you have a child with a birth defect or other special needs, your family might find this information useful now or in the future.

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## Your Privacy

Families may wonder why the Texas Birth Defects Registry has information about their child, why we have their mailing address, and how else we might use this information. Please know that information about children with birth defects and their families is confidential and regulated by law. The state law that directed the Texas Department of State Health Services to begin collecting this information (*Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 87*) has very strict rules about your privacy and about keeping information confidential. Information can only be used in ways to improve public health, such as tracking the rates of birth defects, researching causes of birth defects, and for education and prevention activities. It is also used to let families know about available services, such as through this brochure.



## The Texas Birth Defects Registry

The Texas Birth Defects Registry is a program at the Texas Department of State Health Services that collects information about babies born with birth defects. We do this to help answer some important questions about birth defects. For example, where are children being born with birth defects? Do birth defects affect some groups more than others? What causes different types of birth defects? Are there ways to prevent them?

We also want to help Texas children born with a birth defect and their families get the help they need.

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For more information, please contact:

Texas Birth Defects Registry  
MC 1964

Texas Department of  
State Health Services  
PO BOX 149347

AUSTIN TX 78714-9347

Phone: (512) 776-7232 or  
1-888-963-7111, Ext.7232

Email

[birthdefects@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:birthdefects@dshs.state.tx.us)

Website

[www.dshs.state.tx.us/birthdefects](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/birthdefects)



# Does your child have special needs?

## Help for Children with Special Needs from the Texas Birth Defects Registry

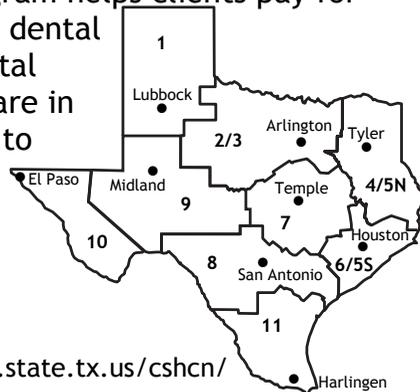


## Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Social Workers

are located around the state and can help you find out about programs available to help your child. To learn more, call the office closest to you and ask to speak to the Social Worker on call.

- Region 1 ..... (806) 655-7151
- Region 2/3 ..... (817) 264-4627
- Region 4/5N ..... (903) 533-5256
- Region 6/5S ..... (713) 767-3111
- Region 7 ..... (800) 789-2865
- Region 8 ..... (210) 949-2155
- Region 9 ..... (432) 683-9492
- Region 10 ..... (915) 834-7682
- Region 11 ..... (888) 276-0702

Staff may assist you in applying for benefits from the Children with Special Health Care Needs Services Program. This program helps children with special health care needs and people of any age with cystic fibrosis. The program helps clients pay for medical, dental and mental health care in addition to other services.



[www.dshs.state.tx.us/cshcn/](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/cshcn/)

## Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)

serves families that have babies and children, up to age 3, with disabilities or delays in their development. ECI staff work with families to plan services for the child's particular needs. These services and activities are provided at home and in the community. Call **1-800-628-5115** or go to [www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis/](http://www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis/).

**2-1-1** is a free telephone number you can call from anywhere in Texas to get information about available health and human services in your community. When you dial 2-1-1, your call goes to an Area Information Center serving your part of the state. A trained specialist will talk to you and give you information about services available for your needs. Callers from outside of Texas or those experiencing problems connecting can dial 877-541-7905 (toll-free). More information can be found at [www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org).

**www.yourtexasbenefits.com** offers easy and secure online access to Texas Health and Human Services Commission benefits including Medicaid, Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Children's Health Insurance, nursing home care and other services. You can also search the **Texas Health and Human Services Commission Reference Guide** for specialized state programs at [www.hhs.state.tx.us/tirn/refguide.shtml](http://www.hhs.state.tx.us/tirn/refguide.shtml). Programs include community-based services so that children with disabilities can remain in their own homes and communities, the Medical Transportation Program, the Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program, and many more.



## What About Genetic Services?

You may want to speak with a specialist in genetics, especially if:

- ◇ you think that you or a family member might have an inherited disorder or birth defect.
- ◇ you are pregnant or planning to be after age 35.
- ◇ you already have a child with mental retardation, an inherited disorder or a birth defect.
- ◇ your infant has a genetic disease.
- ◇ you have had babies who died in infancy or three or more miscarriages.

A genetic services provider can help you understand conditions such as birth defects that have occurred in your family. He or she will discuss the possibility of these occurring again. The provider may ask questions about your family history to help understand inheritance patterns. He or she may also conduct a physical exam.

DSHS Genetic Services has a list of genetic service providers throughout the state. To find the one nearest you, visit: [www.dshs.state.tx.us/genetics/default.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/genetics/default.shtm) or call 1-800-252-8023. Financial assistance for genetic services is available for some families, depending on income.