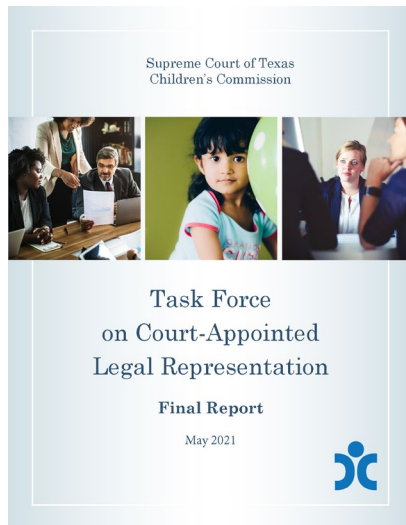


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
Tuesday, June 1, 2021

## Supreme Court Children's Commission Releases Report on Court-Appointed Legal Representation



AUSTIN - Court-appointed legal representation is mandated by law in Texas for all children in the temporary managing conservatorship (TMC) of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and for their parents, if indigent. In May 2021, the Supreme Court of Texas Children's Commission released the [Task Force on Court-Appointed Legal Representation Final Report](#) that analyzes aspects of representation in need of improvement and recommends strategies to raise the quality of court-appointed legal representation in Texas.

The system of providing court-appointed legal representation in Texas is county-based, county-funded, and typically consists of attorneys appointed from a list of approved private attorneys overseen and approved by a judge. Qualifications, compensation, and available resources for these court-appointed attorneys vary from county to county. Texas does not have standards of representation for court-appointed attorneys and oversight of attorney performance varies by jurisdiction.

The *Task Force on Court-Appointed Legal Representation Final Report* identifies elements of quality representation that should be addressed by Texas-specific standards of representation, defining both the breadth and depth of knowledge attorneys required as well as identifying best practices. After exploring differing models of quality representation currently in use across the United States, the *Task Force on Court-Appointed Legal Representation Final Report* concludes that one size fits all is not the right approach for Texas.

The *Task Force on Court-Appointed Legal Representation Final Report* recommends that Texas begin developing and implementing pilot programs that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of different models of representation. While pilots are developed, the Task Force recommends Texas adopt policy and statutory modifications that can have a more immediate impact, such as utilizing federal Title IV-E funds to spur innovation.

To read the complete report or learn more about the Children's Commission, please visit [TexasChildrensCommission.gov](https://www.texaschildrenscommission.gov).

###

Media Contact:

Jessica Arguijo  
[Jessica.arguijo@txcourts.gov](mailto:Jessica.arguijo@txcourts.gov)  
512-463-7226