



June 16, 2021

Statement of Intention of the Travis County Model Court LGBTQ+ and CPS Committee

The Travis County Model Court for Children and Families believes that ALL children have the fundamental right to dignity, safety and permanency. Research has shown that LGBTQ+ youth experience higher rates of sexual violence, suicide, drug abuse, and homelessness.¹ These disparities are often exacerbated by the systemic inequities inherent in the current child welfare system. Research has also shown that there is a disproportionate representation of LGBTQ+ youth in the child welfare system.² The Travis County Model Court LGBTQ+ CPS Committee strives to create a more equitable child welfare system for LGBTQ+ youth, families and caregivers. This Committee aims to advocate for policies that promote equitable outcomes for LGBTQ+ youth, families and caregivers within the child welfare system. Initial goals include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Empowering youth through practices that affirm gender identity and sexual orientation;
- (2) Honoring the dignity of LGBTQ+ persons;
- (3) Promoting inclusive and equitable professional practices via increased cultural competence of child welfare professionals and caregivers; and
- (4) Creating policies based on the social determinants of health and well-being (e.g. healthcare access, housing, employment, school safety) that ensure equitable outcomes for LGBTQ+ persons.

For questions about the Travis County Model Court for Children and Families, please contact Tammy Jitnoom, Judicial Aide and Model Court Coordinator: Tammy.Jitnoom@traviscountytexas.gov

¹ See <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/lgbtq-youth/child-welfare>, <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/lgbtq-youth/health-depression-and-suicide>, and <https://www.hrc.org/resources/preventing-substance-abuse-among-lgbtq-teens>

² <https://www.childrensrights.org/lgbtq-2/>, as cited by Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, "Texas must support an inclusive child welfare system for LGBTQ parents, kids", Jan. 29, 2020; <http://hogg.utexas.edu/texas-must-support-an-inclusive-child-welfare-system-for-lgbtq>