



## HISTORY AND AWARDS

The **Child Protection Connection™** was developed by Texas Loves Children, Inc., d/b/a Texas Lawyers for Children ("TLC"), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. TLC was founded in 1995 initially to provide specialized training about child abuse issues to Dallas judges and attorneys. Founder Barbara Elias-Perciful had been practicing business litigation at the Dallas law firm Carrington, Coleman, Sloman & Blumenthal, L.L.P., when she took a pro bono case to represent a 12-year old girl who had been sexually abused by her father for years. This little girl's case revealed the devastating deficiencies in the systems meant to protect abused and at-risk children, including a severe lack of tools, research, and expertise available for these children's pivotal cases. Compared to working at a business litigation firm, "It was like practicing law in a tent compared to practicing law in a castle," describes Barbara regarding the vast differences in the availability of funding and resources for attorneys representing abused children and those representing businesses and other types of paying clients.

In 2004 the Texas Lawyers for Children Online Legal Resource and Communication Center ("Online Center") was created to expand the accessibility of essential resources to attorneys and judges in the child abuse field in Texas and to target court system improvement. In November 2007, the Texas Supreme Court's Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families selected the TLC Online Center program as one of its Texas Court Improvement Program projects for improving the court system's handling of child abuse cases. The Texas Lawyers for Children Online Center was then replicated for four other states as the Child Protection Connection™. A state-specific Child Protection Connection™ has the capability to put resources, expertise, and training directly into the hands of judges, attorneys, and other professionals across the state, forming a living, breathing network that fosters collaboration 24/7.

### **The Child Protection Connection™ has received significant national and regional awards:**

- In 2009, TLC's Director, Barbara Elias-Perciful, was honored with the American Bar Association's national Child Advocacy Award, due largely to her work in creating the Child Protection Connection™ and for its impact on the lives of children in Texas.
- The Child Protection Connection™ was selected as the recipient of the 2010 Award for Excellence in Social Innovation, given by the Dallas Center for Nonprofit Management, that recognized TLC's program as "**a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient and sustainable... and demonstrates significant positive change around a specific social issue.**"
- In 2014, the Child Protection Connection™ was recognized by the Foundation for Improvement of Justice with a national award for improving the justice system through its work in child protection and "speeding the process" as an **innovative program that has been proven effective and can serve as a model for others.**

The Child Protection Connection™ now serves one third of the U.S. child population. With the vision of expanding the Connection to every state, TLC continues to add new capabilities to the Child Protection Connection™ model and its capacity to build collaborative communities, enhance legal representation, improve judicial decision-making, and facilitate change in agency policy and legislation in each state and across the nation.

The Child Protection Connection continues to be the only resource of its kind serving the professionals who protect abused and at-risk children in court.