



## CHILD PROTECTION CONNECTION™ HISTORY AND AWARDS

The **Child Protection Connection®** ("The Connection") is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit umbrella organization originally operating under the name Texas Loves Children, Inc., d/b/a Texas Lawyers for Children. The Connection was founded in 1995 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., but was moved to action 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 (TLC Online Center) was created by the organization to expand the accessibility of essential resources to attorneys and judges in the child protection 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. Over the next several years, The Connection used the innovative technology and capabilities of the TLC Online Center (also referred to as The Child Protection Connection® for Texas) to replicate similar online centers in four other states. Through this growth model, the Child Protection Connection® for California, Florida, Maryland, and Alabama were born. The Connection's national goal is to protect the rights of abused and neglected children by replicating online centers in every state to connect, equip, and mobilize judges, attorneys, and other advocates within each state.

The Child Protection Connection® now serves one third of the U.S. child population. The Connection continues to add new capabilities to the online center model and increase 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. This model continues to be the only resource of its kind serving the professionals who protect abused and at-risk children in court.

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

- In 2009, The Connection'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 The Connection's Texas 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 improving child protection, speeding up the court process, and as an innovative program that has been proven effective and can serve as a model for others.**
- The Connection's Director, Barbara Elias-Perciful, was chosen as the 2017 recipient of the Fairy Davenport Rutland Award for Distinguished Service to Children and Families, given by the Texas State Bar Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect, for her tireless work for the children of Texas and elevation of the practice of child protection law through the [Texas Lawyers for Children Program](#).