

Tennessee's Juvenile Justice History

A Timeline of Significant Milestones

1907

- Governor Malcolm Patterson Act passes to create juvenile facility for boys

1911

- Tennessee Reformatory for Boys in "Jordonia" opens under Governor Ben Hooper. This facility housed males between 11-23 years old.

1918

- Tennessee Reformatory for Negro Boys is founded in Pikeville.
- Tennessee Vocational Reformatory for Girls in Tullahoma receives its first girls.

1921

- Under Governor Alfred Alexander Taylor, State Vocational School for Colored Girls is founded in Nashville. It is later named State Vocational Training School for Girls after desegregation in 1966.

1955

- The name of the Department of Institutions is changed to the Department of Correction (DOC).
- State Reformatory Schools for Boys are renamed State Vocation Training School for White Boys (Jordonia) and Colored Boys (Pikeville).

1958

- Statewide juvenile probation system becomes operational

1965-1966

- Juvenile institutions are desegregated and classified by age.
- Intensive Treatment Rehabilitation Center for juveniles opens in Nashville near Jordonia operated by the Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

1971

- Tennessee Youth Development Center (TYDC) founded in Somerville
- State Vocational Training School for Boys in Pikeville remaned James M. Taft Youth Development Center
- State Vocational Training School for Boys in Jordonia renamed Spencer Youth Center.

1972

- State Vocational Training School for Girls in Nashville reverts to a reception and diagnostic center for juveniles (later renamed Tennessee Guidance and Reception Center for Children)
- Female offenders ages 12-14 are transfered to Tennessee Youth Development Center (TYDC) making it the first co-education juvenile correctional institution in the state's history.
- State Vocational Training School for Girls in Tullahoma renamed Highland Rim School for Girls

1974

- Group homes for juveniles are opened in Nashville and Memphis

1975

- Tennessee Youth Development Center (TYDC) is renamed John S. Wilder Youth Development Center (WYDC)

1977

- Boys' institutions are reclassified:
 - Wilder Youth Development Center classified for youth under 14 years of age
 - Spencer Youth Center classified for 14-18 year olds who committed crime against property
 - Taft classified for 14-18 year old repeat offenders who committed a crime against a person

1978

- Wilder Youth Development Center stopped receiving girls; all girls are committed to Highland Rim School for Girls
- Corporal punishment is abolished in juvenile institutions; the "cells" at Spencer Youth Center closed

1982

- The Division of Youth Services is abolished within Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Tennessee Department of Youth Development is created. All juvenile responsibility and functions are transferred from DOC.

1983

- The Highland Rim School for Girls closed and Spencer Youth Center becomes co-ed.

1988

- The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) was created and was authorized to implement provision of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 and to distribute grand funds received through the act.

1989

- The Department of Youth Development (DYD) was created to administer all juvenile correctional programs and youth centers.

1991

- Children's Plan, a plan to coordinate funding and services of all state child custody programs, was presented by the Department of Finance and Administration to the legislature's Select Committee on Children and Youth. The state subsequently embarked on this realignment of children's services provided by the Department of Human Services, Youth Development, Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and Education

1992

- Woodland Hills was built.

1994

- Governor McWherter's Executive Order 58 created the Office of Children's Services Administration within the Department of Finance & Administration to administer the Children's Plan. The plan combined resources into a single budget account, established service provider contracts that all departments could access, and established outside organization to help plan the care of all children in custody.

1995

- Governor Sundquist's Executive Order 4 transferred the functions of the Office of Children's Services Administration from the Department of Finance and Administration to the Department of Health, effective August 1, 1995.

1996

- January, 1996: Governor Sundquist's Executive Order 6 transferred the Division of Juvenile Probation from the Department of Youth Development to the Department of Health
- April, 1996: Public Chapter 1079 created the Department of Children's Services (DCS), placing both child welfare services and juvenile justice program under the umbrella of one state agency. All juvenile justice program formerly administered by the Department of Youth Development were transferred to DCS.

2006

- Public Chapter 818 created the Division of Juvenile Justice within Department of Children's Services to serve children who are adjudicated delinquent. The position of Deputy Commissioner of Juvenile Justice was created as well as a separate budget exclusively for the division.
- New Visions Youth Development Center for Girls was built in Nashville, TN.

2011

- Several group homes closed: Johnson City Boys Group Home, Magnolia View Group Home, Henderson House, Elizabethton, Inman, and Madisonville Group Homes, as well as Nashville Transition Center

2012

- Taft Youth Development Center in Pikeville closed. For nearly 10 decades it had served as the state's primary facility for its most trouble youth.
- New Visions Youth Development Center for Girls closed.

2015

- Wilder Youth Development Center discontinued using confinement for discipline
- Woodland Hills began to transition to a program for youth who had earned their high school or HISET.

2016

- Gateway to Independence (formerly Woodland Hills) opened.

2017

- Gateway to Independence moved to New Vision's Campus
- Mountain View Youth Development Center is privatized

2018

- Juvenile Justice Reform Act signed by Governor Haslam - May, 2018 with effective dates: 5/1/2018, 7/1/2018, and 7/1/2019
- Reform expanded community-based resources and limited detention and out-of-home placement for youth who commit serious offenses.
- Minor offenses committed by youth on probation handled outside of court.
- Research-based presumptive limits on length of custody to prevent indefinite custody.
- Validated risk/needs assessment required to determine level of services.
- Gateway to Independence is privatized.