

Tennessee's Juvenile Justice History: A Timeline of Significant Milestones

2019

- July 2019: Juvenile Justice Reform Act revisions went into effect requiring:
 - Provider performance-based metrics be established
 - Research-based, presumptive limits on length of custody in order to prevent indefinite custody.
 - Presumptive six-month service limits for probation and judicial diversion with possible extension every six months for probation cases that are the result of an adjudication of delinquency and a possible extension of up to six additional months for judicial diversion cases, with court approval. (July 1, 2019)
 - Presumptive six-month service limits for probation and judicial diversion with possible extension every six months with court approval. (July 1, 2019)
 - Validated risk/needs assessment is required within seven days of youth being placed on probation or in custody to inform supervision levels, services, and case planning.
 - That youth were no longer allowed to be charged fees for appointment of counsel or court fees. Failure to pay restitution could no longer be the sole reason for continued supervision or custody.
 - A mandated behavior response system for youth on types of supervision:
 - Responses given to address negative violations/behaviors and to incentivize/acknowledge positive behaviors.
 - Responses specific to youth's risk, needs and severity of the behavior;
 - Responses to violations and positive behaviors to be documented in youth's case plan within three days of occurrence.

2018

- May 2018: Juvenile Justice Reform Act signed by Governor Haslam with effective dates: 5/21/2018, 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.
- September 2018:
 - Gateway to Independence is privatized on September 1
 - Statewide transportation officers realigned, and ten transportation officers transitioned to the Office of Juvenile Justice and created a juvenile justice centralized transportation unit.
- December 19, 2018:
 - After two successful site visits, Wilder Youth Development Center receives its letter of compliance and becomes the first youth development center in the nation to receive accreditation by the Council on Accreditation.

2017

- Gateway to Independence moved to New Vision's campus
- February 17, 2017: Woodland Hills closed. Youth were transitioned to Gateway to Independence and the building became Tennessee Volunteer Challenge Academy Youth Challenge -- a structured, disciplined, quasi-military residential program focusing on education and practical life skills
- July 1, 2017: Mountain View Youth Development Center is privatized
- October 2017: The Office of Juvenile Justice began providing supervision over all youth in custody adjudicated delinquent and non-custodial probation and diversion cases. The supervision of juvenile justice case managers and juvenile justice transportation officers realigned and transitioned from Child Programs to the Office of Juvenile Justice. The Office of Juvenile Justice continued to oversee the Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ).

2015

- Under Governor Bill Haslam, Wilder Youth Development Center, Woodland Hills, and Mountain View discontinued using confinement as a form of discipline and adopted the Behavior Modification Program

2012

- Taft Youth Development Center in Pikeville closed
- New Visions Youth Center for Girls closed due to low enrollment. The building sat empty until 2017.

2011

- Group homes which were ran by the state were closed.

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 Center was built in Nashville to serve females that met criteria for youth development center. During January 2006, it served 24 females with plans to serve up to 36.

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 programs formerly administered by the Department of Youth Development were transferred to DCS.

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.

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.

1993

- January 1993: Supervision of operations of Mountain View Youth Development Center is transferred to the State of Tennessee from Corrections Corporation of America

1992

- Woodland Hills Youth Development Center, though the administration of the State, opened its doors serving a co-ed population. Spencer Youth Center youth are transferred to Woodland Hills

1991

- Tennessee consolidated most of the funding for children and families under the state's Department of Finance and Administration, under the "Tennessee's Children's Plan." The Children's Plan was a statewide effort to control costs and improve the quality of services available for child welfare and juvenile justice. The state subsequently embarked on this realignment of children's services

1990

- Mountain View Youth Development Center, under the supervision of Corrections Corporation of America, opened its doors in Dandridge, Tennessee

1989

- Under Governor Ned Ray McWherter, the Department of Youth Development was created to oversee all juvenile correctional programs and youth centers

1988

- The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth was created and authorized to implement provisions of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) of 1974 and to distribute grand funds received through the act. Under the JJDPA, detention of status offenders (runaways, truants, or curfew violators) was prohibited. In addition, it prohibited contact between juvenile and adult offenders and placement of youth in adult facilities except under specific circumstances. The act also directed states to address racial disparities in the justice system.
- Doe v. Norris, 1988 – Class action lawsuit filed on behalf of unruly children challenging the constitutionality of the Department's practice of co-mingling unruly children with delinquent offenders in secure juvenile facilities. The Tennessee Supreme Court held that:
 - The practice of confining status (or unruly) offenders in secure facilities operated primarily for delinquent children and co-mingling the two groups violated substantive due process guarantees in the Tennessee and U.S. Constitutions because it consisted of punishment without an adjudication of guilt;
 - Co-mingling of status and delinquent offenders violated status offenders' equal protection rights because the practice was not precisely tailored to serve a compelling governmental interest where dependent and neglected children were not also confined with delinquent offenders.

1983

- The Highland Rim School for Girls closed, and Spencer Youth Center became co-ed

1982

- Under Governor Lamar Alexander, 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.

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

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 old youth who had committed crime against property
 - Taft classified for 14 -18-year old repeat offenders who had committed a crime against a person

1976

- Doe v. Bradley class action lawsuit filed on behalf of mentally retarded youth committed to the Department of Correction (now DCS). It was alleged that the Department of Correction violated statutory and constitutional rights of plaintiffs by failing to provide appropriate treatment and habilitative care. An agreed order entered in 1980 mandated the following:
 - The Department will develop individualized evaluation, classification and program planning (Individual Program Plan IPP) with the identification of treatment areas that are performed by professionals qualified to performed assessments. Develop procedure to train personnel to formulate and monitor the implementation of the IPP and follow-up review. (Policy 9.7, 18.12-16, 18.21 and 24.8-9)
 - Programs of behavior management should be uniform and will use primarily reward of acceptable behavior that is specific to the individual youth and administered in accordance with specified written principles (Policy 18.17-18)
 - Disciplinary sanctions must be provided within a program with adequate notice of disciplinary rules and possible sanctions (Policy 24.6-7, 25.1-5, 27.33-37)
 - Grievance procedure require a clear and uniform method for all youth to file and process complaints (Policy 24.5)
 - Medical, dental and psychological services must be appropriate for each youth's need and shall be provided (Policy 20.38-51)

1975

- Tennessee Youth Development Center is renamed John S. Wilder Youth Development Center

1974

- Two group homes were opened: one in Memphis and one in Nashville. The Memphis group home was later known as the Tennessee Peabody Residential Treatment Center and the Nashville group home was later known as Nashville Treatment 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 transferred to Tennessee Youth Development Center (later known as Wilder Youth Development Center) 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

1971

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

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

1958

- Statewide juvenile probation system becomes operational

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).

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.

1918

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

1911

- Tennessee Reformatory for Boys in "Jordonia" (later renamed James M. Taft Youth Development Center) opens under Governor Ben Hooper. This facility housed males between 11-23 years old.

1907

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