

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth's

THE STATE OF THE CHILD IN TENNESSEE

2025

DATA HIGHLIGHTS



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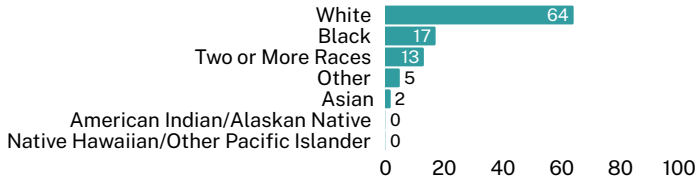




DEMOGRAPHICS

More than one in five Tennesseans were under 18

Percent of Tennessee under 18 population by Race



One in seven Tennessee children were a part of an immigrant family



1 in 8 Tennessee children spoke a language other than English at home. Of those, more nearly two-thirds spoke Spanish.

ECONOMICS

19.1 percent of Tennessee children under 18 lived below the poverty level in 2024.



One in five Tennessee children under age 5 live in poverty

In January 2024, there were 1,013 children and 514 young adults across Tennessee experiencing homelessness on a single night.



Average weekly wages in Tennessee increased by 8% or **\$100 per week** between Q1 2023 and Q1 2025.

HEALTH

In the 2024-25 school year, **158,053 public-school students had a chronic health condition** medically diagnosed by a healthcare provider. The three most common chronic health conditions among public school students were:

ADHD
40,114

Asthma
30,356

Severe/life-threatening allergy/anaphylaxis
29,990

On average, 836,574 Tennessee children ages 0 - 18 were covered by TennCare each month in 2025. Using 2024 population numbers, **half of Tennessee's children were covered by TennCare.**

In 2024, 6.5 percent of Tennessee children were uninsured.

In 2023, two-thirds of children who were uninsured in Tennessee were financially eligible for coverage through TennCare or CoverKids.

Among mothers who had a live birth in Tennessee in 2024, nearly 70 percent began prenatal care in the 2nd or 3rd month of pregnancy. Approximately 2.6 percent, or 2,221 births, had no prenatal care.

In 2024, only 37.5% of the Tennessee 24-month-old cohort had received two doses of the flu vaccine.

In 2023, **Tennessee had a child and teen death rate of 32.2 per 100,000**, the state's highest since 2000.

In 2023, among deaths of Tennesseans ages 1 to 17:
 1 in 5 deaths were due to a firearm
 1 in 8 were due to motor vehicle traffic
 1 in 15 were due to cancer
 1 in 16 were due to poisoning

In 2023, Tennessee had the 7th highest rates of homicides and homicides by firearm for those age 1 to 17.

In Tennessee, the rate of infant deaths due to accidental suffocation/strangulation in bed was nearly 2.5 times higher than the national rate and the third highest in the nation.

CHILD CARE & EARLY EDUCATION

2025 Tennessee Market Rate Child Care Costs

Infant Center-Based
\$13,926

Infant Group-Homes
\$9,697

Toddler Center-Based
\$12,800

Toddler Home-Based
\$9,179

65 percent of Tennessee children under 6 had all available parents in the workforce in 2024

Infant center-based care was more than 2025 in-state tuition at all of Tennessee's four-year public universities.

EDUCATION

Tennessee has seen strong post-pandemic recovery on TCAP ELA scores. In 2025, 40% of students scored "Approaching" in ELA and **39% Met or Exceeded Expectations**, compared to 50% and 29% respectively in 2021.

During the 2024-25 school year, Tennessee school districts employed:

- 2,726 School Counselors
- 586 School Social Workers and
- 655.5 School Psychologists
- and 1,106 schools had a partnership with a community-based mental health provider.

In 2023-24, **133,836 public school students with disabilities received special education services.** The majority of those had a Speech/Language Impairment or a Specific Learning Disability.

One in 10 Tennessee schools had infrastructure rated in fair or poor condition.

Tennessee's public schools needed **\$79.6 million** in infrastructure improvements to be in compliance with state and federal laws.



HEALTH



Data from Tennessee Food Banks Regarding Temporary Suspension of SNAP Benefits

Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee – Kingsport
October 2025 compared to October 2024
29% increase in meals distributed.

Second Harvest Food Bank of East Tennessee – Maryville
Purchased **175,000+ lbs** of food earlier than normal due to need, equivalent to **\$160,000 in additional cost.**

Chattanooga Area Food Bank – Chattanooga
60% increase in households served in the first week of November 2025 compared to the first week of November 2024

70% increase in Tennessee children served during the same period.

Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee – Nashville
October 2025 compared to October 2024
46% increase in individuals served

November 2025 compared to November 2024
60% increase in individuals served

MENTAL HEALTH

Among those ages 12 to 17 in Tennessee in 2022-23, within the last year:

- One in seven had serious thoughts of suicide
- One in 15 made a suicide plan
- One in 24 made a suicide attempt
- 5.6 percent received substance use treatment in the last year.
- 31 percent received mental health treatment in the last year.

In 2022-23, **63.7 percent of Tennessee youth** ages 12 to 17 with a past year Major Depressive Episode did not receive treatment.

Tennessee had the lowest percentage in the country of teens perceiving there to be great risk associated with smoking a pack or more of cigarettes a day.

In 2022-2023, 13.3 percent of Tennesseans age 12 to 20 reported alcohol use within the last month. Among that same age group, **7.4 percent reported binge drinking within the last month.**

In 2022-2023, 4.9 percent of Tennesseans age 12 to 20 met the criteria for alcohol use disorder within the last year.

CHILD WELFARE

In FY2025, there were **15,901 victims of abuse or neglect in Tennessee** with either a substantiation or a case disposition of services needed/services court ordered.

The number of hotline referrals received by DCS in 2025 has trended below the amount typically received in the last five years.

In FY2024, **58.5 percent of children who exited to permanency did so within less than a year** while 14.5 percent did so in 2 years or longer.

60 percent of exits from foster care in 2023 were to reunification.

In FY2025, 949 youth aged out of foster care. Among those who were eligible, 67 percent accepted Bright Futures (formerly Extension of Foster Care Services). **FY2025 had the highest acceptance rate since the state began offering the program.**

As of December 15th 2025, **DCS had investigated 206 deaths, the largest number of deaths in 10 years.**

Of the 50 substantiated abuse deaths in 2024, 68 percent of the victims had contact with Department of Children's Services within the three years prior to their death. Of the 21 still pending deaths, 15 had prior contact with the Department.

ADVERSITY & RESILIENCE

Nearly **one in five Tennessee children were reported to have experienced two or more adverse childhood experiences.** This was more common among those living below the federal poverty level at 29 percent.

Among Tennessee children 12 - 17, **34.4 were reported to have been bullied in the last 12 months** while 12.8 were reported to have bullied others.

83.5 percent of Tennessee children age 6 months to 5 years and 63.1 percent of those 6 to 17 years old were considered to be flourishing.

YOUTH JUSTICE

In FY2024, there were 1,073 youth placed in a Juvenile Detention Center for more than 30 days. This represents a 23 percent increase from 870 in FY2023.

In FY2024, 402 youth were in a Youth Development Center or Hardware Secure facility, 633 were served by Aftercare, and 2,451 were served through state probation.

Between 2023 and 2024, **the crime rate for those age 10 to 17 decreased slightly from 43.7 to 41.7 per 1,000.** In 2014, the crime rate was 49.4. Although there has been a decline in the overall crime rate for those age 10 to 17, there has been an increase in the rate among the most serious offenses, pointing to a need for more effective evidence-based early intervention services.



TENNESSEE
COMMISSION ON
**CHILDREN &
YOUTH**



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