Tennessee Index of Child Well-Being Methodology

As the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Tennessee partner, the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) gathers county-level data on over 60 indicators of child well-being and posts them to the KIDSCOUNT datacenter. Staff at TCCY has chosen 11 of these indicators to make up its Index of Child Well-Being. Staff additionally chose a twelfth which will be available at the county level next year and will be included in future Indices. The indicators that make up the index are:

- Percent of children living in poverty;
- Rate (per 1,000) of substantiated instances of child abuse or neglect;
- Percent of children who lack health insurance;
- Rate (per 1,000) of teens age 15 to 17 were pregnant at some point in the year;
- Rate (per 1,000) of infants less than one year of age who died from any cause (infant mortality);
- Rate (per 100,000) of children ages 1 to 14 who died from any cause;
- Rate (per 100,000) of teens aged 15 to 19 who died from accidents, homicides or suicides;
- Percent of students who scored as "proficient" or "advanced" on the TCAP reading and language test;
- Percent of students who graduated from high school based on the NCLB formula;
- Percent of students who were suspended at least once during the school year;
- Percent of students age 16 to 19 who were seeking, but unable to find, work during the year (youth unemployment rate);
- *Percent of adults reporting four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) from their childhood (to be added in 2017).*

Indicators were chosen with a preference for measures of outcome rather than process. We tried to avoid using indicators that mostly measure the same thing (such as percent of children living in poverty and percent of children eligible for free and reduced-price lunch). We tried to avoid using indicators for which a "better" rate was ambiguous (a low rate of children receiving SNAP benefits could reflect low poverty rates or poor outreach). In order to smooth year-to-year differences that can sometimes be a random blip in the data or that seem large because of a small county's population, the average of the rates from 2012, 2013 and 2014 were used in the ranking.

Because these rates are scaled differently (some are percent [or per 100], some are per 1,000 and some are per 100,000), they should not simply be summed to create an overall rank. In order to make them comparable, TCCY summed the Z-score for each of the three years, and then summed those for all eleven indicators, and ranked the counties based on that total.