



Child Abuse Issue

The Advocate

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A newsletter on children's issues

February 1998

Drive to Put Children First Begins License Plates Are New Weapon in the Fight Against Child Abuse

The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth is taking orders for the new Children First license plates.

The goal is to raise \$1 million each year from the sale of 40,000 license plates. This is a tiny fraction of the 5.7 million cars registered each year in Tennessee. All proceeds after start-up costs are paid will go to the Child Abuse Prevention Fund.

The plates will identify drivers who put Children First. Art student Russell Duncan of Nashville developed several sample graphics using themes from drawings by children from several day care centers in Tennessee. State Graphic Arts designers incorporated TCCY suggestions into the final design.

The tags cost an additional \$25 over the cost of registering your car. The funds will be used to support programs that prevent child abuse.



At least 100 citizens must purchase the tags before the state will begin



producing them. The first order will go in on April 30. The Tennessee Department of Safety will then begin to manufacture the plates, which will be picked up when they become available at local County Court Clerks' Offices. Purchasers of the special plates will be notified by mail when they are ready, which should be within four to six months.

You will be able to buy the Children First plates at any time after the program begins. You will not have to wait until your registration expires. The basic registration fees will be prorated based on the number of months left on your current registration. Your expiration date will then be changed to one year from the day you pick up your new license plate.

Community volunteer Felicia Anchor and TCCY Executive Director Linda O'Neal are spearheading the drive to sell the tags. If you would like to take a more active role in this project, please contact TCCY.

An order form with complete instructions is included on page 6. If you have any questions, please call Faye Mangrum at (615) 532-1589 or TCCY at (615) 741-2633.

See related story on page 4.

Child Abuse Threatens Tennessee Children

Thirty-two Tennessee children died from abuse and neglect between July 1995 and July 1996, according to Department of Children's Services (DCS) records. The records show that 21 children died from abuse and 11 died from neglect.

These 32 children will never be hurt again, but other children still suffer.

Investigators with DCS determined that 11,775 children were abused or neglected during the same period, fiscal year 1996.

Children's Services investigated 35,336 reports of suspected abuse in fiscal year 1996.

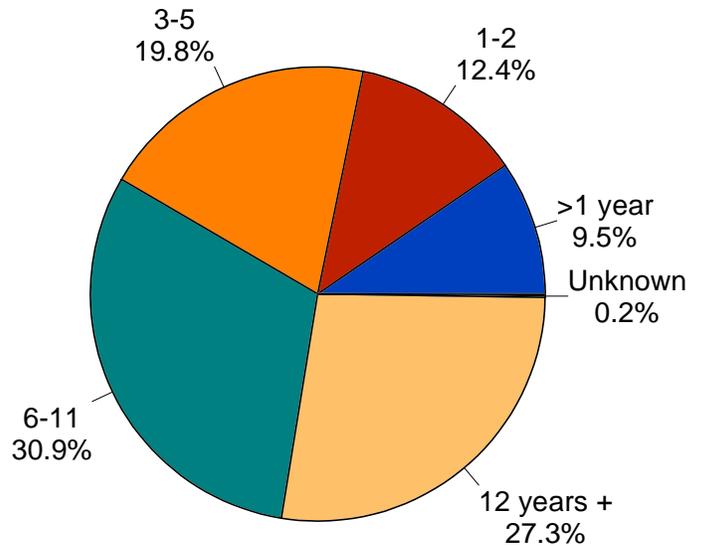
After an abuse report has been investigated by DCS, it is determined to be either indicated or unfounded. If the investigation concludes that an incidence of abuse occurred, the case is declared indicated. If not, it is unfounded.

In fiscal year 1996, two-thirds, or 23,561, of the reports were determined to be unfounded.

More than half of the investigations involved allegations of neglect. Sexual abuse made up another 21 percent. Other forms of abuse, including physical abuse, accounted for the remainder of the indicated cases.

Age of Child Victims

FY 1996



If the abuse report is declared indicated, DCS may arrange for services needed to protect and help the child. Services may also be arranged to help adults in the home so that the child may remain in the home or, if the child has been removed, so that he or she can be safely returned home, if possible.

DCS spends \$6 on custody services for every \$1 spent on children at risk of custody, according to department reports.

Some services are provided by DCS itself, and others, 69 percent, are contracted to outside agencies.

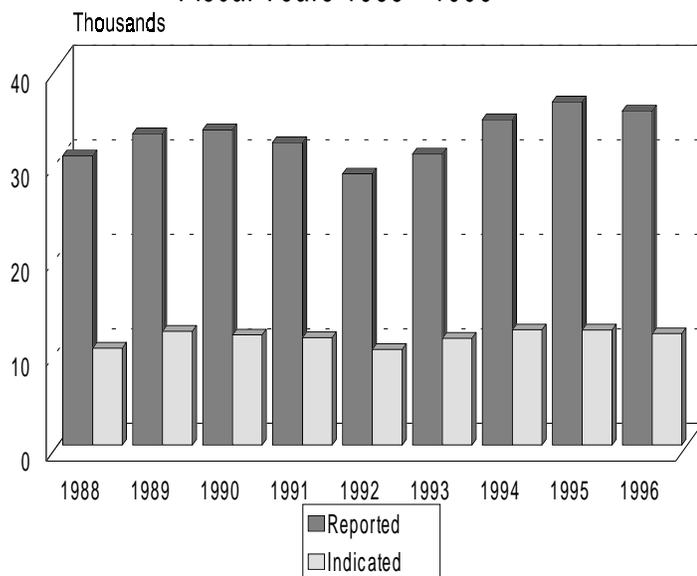
According to DCS information, as of Jan. 28, 1998, 11,390 children were in state custody. Sixty-four percent, or 7,367, were neglected or abused children.

Nearly one-half million children are in out-of-home placements in the United States.

In 1995, more than three million children were reported neglected and abused nationwide. The Child Welfare League of America estimates that three children die each day in the United States as a result of abuse and neglect.

For an overview of the activities of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, check out its web page at www.state.tn.us/youth/children/services/finance/finance.htm.

Child Abuse & Neglect Victims Fiscal Years 1988 - 1996



CYCLE STOPS Program Puts the Brakes on Violence

This year in the United States, 3.3 million children will witness domestic violence.

These children who live in violent homes are the most overlooked victims. Children who witness domestic violence live with fear, anger, and guilt. The very people they look up to for security and comfort are shattering their sense of safety and trust. These same children have a great risk of becoming victims of physical or sexual abuse.

Domestic violence and child abuse are strongly correlated. In fact, statistics tell us that children who live in homes where domestic violence is present are abused and neglected at a rate 15 times the national average.

The turbulent environment in which some children live is often too disorderly to provide them the protection and sense of safety they deserve. These children face a high risk of abuse by both the batterer and the victim. Violence seems to permeate the entire family.

Children who live in a violent atmosphere learn to accept violence as a part of life. This acceptance may translate into violent relationships and violent acts throughout their own lives. These children often grow up living with violence either as a perpetrator or a victim.

Nationally, the trend shows that boys who witness their mother's abuse are 1,000 percent more likely to abuse their adult partners.

And so the cycle of violence is set in motion...

Yet, the cycle can be stopped with a combined approach of education, counseling, and prosecution. In Shelby County the CYCLE STOPS program funded by an Edward Byrne Memorial Law Enforcement Grant is working toward the elimination of cyclical violence in families.

The Shelby County Government Victims Assistance Center, Exchange Club Family Center, Memphis Child Advocacy Center, and the District Attorney's

Office have joined forces in the CYCLE STOPS collaborative effort.

The Victims Assistance Center has developed an extensive training program for professionals in law enforcement, social services, and the criminal justice system. The training program is designed to help professionals make the strong correlation between domestic violence and child abuse. This knowledge will help when diagnosing, offering services, making referrals, investigating cases, and prosecuting cases.

The Exchange Club Family Center offers vital counseling to children who live in violent homes. The 12-week program is open to children between the ages of four and 12 who have witnessed domestic violence. This program is specifically designed to help break the cycle of violence by teaching children the definition of family violence, explaining that abuse is

not normal, and helping them learn to identify and express feelings in a nonviolent manner and learn appropriate coping skills. A support group for the battered partner is offered simultaneously.

The Child Advocacy Center and the District Attorney's Office have put together a highly skilled prosecution team housed in the Memphis Child Advocacy Center. This team consists of Memphis Police Department investigators, Department of Children's Services caseworkers, a full-time prosecutor from the District Attorney's Office, and a victim services manager. This team works together to determine the best way to handle cases of child sexual abuse and severe physical abuse in order to protect the child and lead to a successful prosecution of the offender.

If we are to put a stop to the cycle of violence that affects our children and our society, we must deal with domestic violence. For more information, contact Leigh Anne Jordon, training coordinator for CYCLE STOPS at (901) 576-4357.

This article was written by Leigh Anne Jordon and submitted by Linda K. Miller, executive director of the Shelby County Government Victims Assistance Center and vice chair of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth.



Funds Benefit Prevention Efforts

Money raised from the sale of Children First license plates will go to the Child Abuse Prevention Fund of Tennessee. The program, which is managed by the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, funds both public and private nonprofit agencies with projects to fight child abuse.

Projects funded through the program range from community education programs that alert the public to signs of abuse and appropriate responses to it to intensive in-home training for at-risk parents. Some programs rely on professionals; others, specially trained aides or volunteers. Some workers interact intensively with a few families; others educate and provide short-term help to hundreds each year.

Prevention programs identify groups with a high potential for abuse, including teen parents, some new disadvantaged parents, parents who have been abuse victims, and parents with identified parenting problems.

Using a variety of methods, including demonstrations and role playing, parents are taught the skills of child rearing. They are also taught methods for reducing the stress that all too often triggers abuse. Some projects funded through the grants help link overburdened parents to resources within the community.

Some programs also sponsor support groups for parents. Other programs provide 24-hour hot lines and make staff available 24 hours a day.

Several programs work within the schools to help young children learn about child abuse prevention and teens be better parents.

The Exchange Club Carl Perkins Center in Jackson operates a Parent Training Lab for families.

The Sexual Assault Crisis Center in Knoxville operates support groups for adolescents who have been identified as victims of sexual abuse.

The Memphis Child Advocacy Center's Project Be Safe trains those who work with children to help them recognize and respond to abuse.

LeBonheur Children's Medical Center involves absent fathers, encouraging fathers to share in their children's lives.

Florence Crittenton of Knoxville, Family and Children Services of Chattanooga, and Metropolitan Public Schools are among the programs that work with teen parents in high schools.

Programs funded by the Child Abuse Prevention Fund and the counties they serve are listed below by council region.

Programs in the East Tennessee Region

Associated Catholic Charities – Knox
Child and Family Services of Knox County
Florence Crittenton Agency of Knoxville, Inc. – Knox
Regional and Community Health Services, Inc. – Campbell
Sexual Assault Crisis Center – Knox, Blount, and Anderson

Programs in the Southeast Region

Behavioral Research Institute, Inc. – Bradley and McMinn
Chattanooga Kids on the Block – Hamilton, Marion, Sequatchie, Grundy, and Bledsoe
Family and Children's Services of Chattanooga – Hamilton

Programs in the Upper Cumberland Region

Exchange Club – Holland J. Stephens Center – Cumberland, Putnam, and Overton
Rural Cumberland Resources, Inc. – Cumberland

Programs in the Mid-Cumberland Region

Catholic Charities of Nashville, Inc. – Davidson
Crittenton Services of Nashville – Davidson
Exchange Club Family Center – Davidson
Exchange Club Family Center, Inc. – Rutherford
Kids on the Block of Middle Tennessee – Davidson and Middle Tennessee counties
Metropolitan Public Schools System – Davidson
Rape and Sexual Abuse Center – Davidson

Programs in the South Central Region

Child Development Center – Coffee and Franklin

Programs in the Southwest Region

Children and Family Services, Inc. – Tipton
Exchange Club – Carl Perkins Center – Madison
Exchange Club – Carl Perkins Center – Haywood, Henderson, and Tipton
The Exchange Club/Tina Turner Child Abuse Prevention Center – Lauderdale

Programs in the Memphis/Shelby County Region

Exchange Club Child Abuse Prevention Center of Memphis – Shelby
LeBonheur Children's Medical Center – Shelby
Memphis Child Advocacy Center – Shelby
Parenting Center of Memphis – Shelby

Prevention Programs Work

Child Abuse Prevention of Tennessee, which receives funding from the Child Abuse Prevention Grant Program, has asked some of its clients to speak about the effect the program had on their lives.

This program is probably best known for its Parent Help Line, a 24-hour supportive listening and referral line for families. Other services provided by the program include a Parent Support Group, parenting classes, and Parent Pathway, an early intervention program for families with newborns.

Excerpts from these letters are included below.



EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO, after exhausting every option known to us, my wife and I were at the point of despair concerning our 11-year-old son. He was totally out of control – abusive, combative, self-destructive, and beyond our direction.

The situation was rapidly deteriorating. He refused to respond to any of our efforts to guide or coerce him. We had pleaded with him, grounded him, and spanked him severely, with no positive results. The situation threatened our sanity, health, and future as a family.

Through the tears and raised voices, I saw the parent Helpline sticker affixed to our telephone message board. The comfort, understanding, and advice we received that day enabled us to effectively deal with our situation.

Today, life isn't perfect, but our relationship with our son is better than I would have thought it could be. I owe this to that volunteer on the telephone that evening and to Child Abuse Prevention of Tennessee.

I AM A SINGLE PARENT. Shortly after my daughter was born, I enrolled in school to try to get enough education to earn a living.

I went to classes in the morning, worked in afternoon, and got home after 5 p.m. Then I would nurse the baby while I cleaned our apartment, ate my supper, washed out her diapers and my clothes, and then tried to study.

But nearly every night, no matter what I did, my baby cried so long and so loudly that studying seemed impossible – so I soon began shaking my tiny daughter to try to quiet her. Gradually, a pattern of hitting her developed. I would scare her, but I wouldn't leave bruises.

One day I saw the terror in her eyes, and I knew it had to stop. I even thought about killing her, but I couldn't think of a way to do it without causing her pain.

That's when I reached out for help.

With the help of the group, I learned that I wasn't a chronically abusive parent and that my problems were induced by stress. I also learned my cues, the little things that happened prior to an abusive episode that I had never noticed before...

You need people to encourage you when you fail, and you need people to pat you on the back when you succeed.

I'm a good parent now. I want my daughter to grow up and love herself and love me. I've changed, and so has my child. She isn't afraid of me any more.

Recently, my daughter said, "We love each other very much," and I said, "Yes, we do." That brought so much hope for me.



TV Series to Teach Parents and Child Care Workers

Many of the child abuse prevention programs teach parents realistic expectations about child development.

This spring parents and child-care professionals can learn about child development right in their homes.

The Whole Child: a Caregiver's Guide to the First Five Years will be televised on Tennessee's PBS-affiliated television stations. The 13-part series on developmental education and care from birth to five shows real caregivers at work and identifies the elements of quality day care.

The series, when used with *The Whole Child* textbook and program guides, meets the criteria as a Child Development Associate certification course. Some area colleges and universities will be offering the

course. Contact area institutions for information.

Program videos and other materials may be purchased by calling the Annenberg/CPB Project at 1-800-LEARNER.

The dates of the first program are listed below:

Stations running the series weekly:

WSJK/WKOP, Knoxville, March 29, 12:30

WKNO, Memphis, March 14, 7:30 a.m.

WDCN, Nashville, March 29, 8 a.m.

Stations running the series as a block

WCTE, Cookeville, March 1, 3:30-10 p.m.

WLJT, Martin, May 25, 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Other stations:

WTCL, Chattanooga, to be scheduled.

Contact your local station for other times.

Children First License Plate Order Form



Support Child Abuse
Prevention Programs!

Let people know you
put Children First!

Closing date for initial orders is April 30, 1998.

Proceeds from Children First license plates above regular license plate costs will go to child abuse prevention programs. If you do not place an order at this time, Children First plates will be available around the summer of 1998 at your local County Clerk's office.

Children First license plates will be available for a cost of \$25 above regular license plate costs. Personalized Children First license plates will be available for a cost of \$50 above regular costs.

1. Return this completed order form to the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY) by March 20, 1998. (Order forms can be copied for multiple/additional orders.)
2. Include a check for \$25 (\$50 if you want a personalized plate) payable to TCCY with the completed order form.

Children First plates will be produced from four to six months after the closing date (4/30/98) and shipped to your County Clerk's office. You will be notified by mail when the plates are available.

3. Take your notice and your current license plate to your local County Clerk's office. Your cost will be prorated based on the number of months left on your current plate and you will have already paid the extra amount for your Children First license plate. Your expiration date will be changed to one year from the day you pick up your new license plate.

Please provide the following information:

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____
street city state zip

County of Residence: _____

Please note: personalized license plates will not have the C over F that appears above.

Do you want your license plate personalized? Yes No

If yes, print your personalized request (five letters or numbers): _____

Mail this order form
and check to the:

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth
Andrew Johnson Tower, 9th Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243-0800.

Funding Cuts Injure Programs

Megan, a four-year-old girl, has been betrayed by those who should have protected her.

Megan's mother cannot be relied upon to care for her. The mother, who is addicted to drugs, used to leave Megan at home by herself for hours at a time. Megan is no longer able to stay with her.

A relative sexually abused Megan. Her mother believes this abuser, who also abused her, began abusing Megan when she was three or four months old.

Living with these betrayals is hard work. Megan takes antidepressants and has been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

She had also developed a wide variety of inappropriate behaviors. Megan exposed herself, masturbated at naptime, and allowed peers to touch her inappropriately. She also became volatile and physically aggressive because she had difficulty expressing her emotions.

Megan often became sick, expressing her hidden emotions through sleeplessness and painful headaches.

For a time, Megan found help and a safe place.

Her grandmother cared for her, and she received help from a therapeutic preschool. The staff of the therapeutic nursery worked intensively with Megan and her grandmother and saw a great deal of improvement in the child.

But Megan has been betrayed again. She and other children across Tennessee have lost the benefits of therapeutic preschools and nurseries.

With the implementation of the TennCare Partners program, therapeutic nurseries have lost most and, in many cases, all of their funding. The majority of children who formerly received this service in Tennessee no longer have access to therapeutic nurseries or preschools.

A study by the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO) found that, as of January 1997, 91 percent of children - 840 children - lost therapeutic nursery services and 17 of the 28 therapeutic nurseries in Tennessee had closed.

For the children this means less chance of success. These children have lost the care and support they need.

Megan's grandmother described the therapeutic preschool as "a giant window which allowed my grandchild to find the sunshine that she deserves to grow and flourish now and in the future."

What are therapeutic preschools and nurseries?

Therapeutic nurseries and preschools are programs for preschool-age children who have been physically and sexually abused and neglected. These programs provide the structure, individualized attention, and nurturing that victimized children need.

Children who have been abused and neglected are busy trying to recover emotionally and physically, leaving little attention or energy for learning ABCs or colors. Therapeutic nurseries help children recover and grow. Children learn tasks like sharing, coloring, and table manners. At the same time, they learn about feelings and how to feel safe.

Teachers are positive adult role models, which some children have never had. The staff also works with parents and other caretakers to improve parenting skills and create a more nurturing, understanding bond between the caretaker and child.

Samantha K. Burkett, a former TCCY intern, participated in writing this newsletter article.

The Advocate is published by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth as an information forum on children's issues. The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, an independent state agency, serves as an advocacy agency and information resource for planning and coordination of policies, programs, and services on behalf of the state's children and youth. The 21-member Commission, appointed by the governor, works with other agencies and with regional councils on children and youth in each development district to collect information and solve problems in children's services. To receive *The Advocate*, contact the Commission at Andrew Johnson Tower, Ninth Floor, 710 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243-0800. Phone: (615) 741-2633. Fax # (615) 741-5956.

The state of Tennessee is an equal opportunity, equal access, affirmative action employer.

No person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or ability to pay, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity operated, funded, or overseen by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY). It is the intent of TCCY to bind all agencies, organizations, or governmental units operating under its jurisdiction and control to fully comply with and abide by the spirit and intent of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Meetings and Events

Council Activities

Northeast Tennessee Regional Council

April 3, "Childhood Shouldn't Hurt," a seminar on child abuse prevention, Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church, Johnson City

May 27, *An Overview of the Legislation of the 100th General Assembly*, quarterly council meeting, Johnson City Library, local legislators invited.

East Tennessee Regional Council

April 15, *Spring Juvenile Justice Forum*, Church Street Methodist Church, Knoxville

Southeast Tennessee Regional Council

March 11, *Council Meeting*, CHILD-PACT, William Haynes

Upper Cumberland Regional Council

March 31, *Youth Issues/Prevention Committee*, Cookeville

April 7, *Forum on School Health*

Mid-Cumberland Regional Council

March 5, 3 p.m.-5 p.m., *Child Watch Meeting*, Monroe-Harding, Nashville

March 28, *Council Meeting*, Nashville
 April 23, *West Networking Conference*, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Clarksville

South Central Regional Council

March 19, *Quarterly Meeting and Conference*, co-sponsored with ASK (Agencies Serving Children) – Motlow State Community College, Lynchburg. Topics: Special Needs of Children, Autism, ADHD and AIDS

Northwest Tennessee Regional Council

April 17, *Outstanding Advocate Luncheon*
 May 29, *Annual Spring Conference*

Southwest Tennessee Regional Council

May 14, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., *Joint Conference* with West Grand Division of Juvenile Court Services Association, Ned McWherter Center, Jackson

Memphis-Shelby Regional Council

March 26, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., *Creating Healthy Relationships for Children and Families*, spring conference, UM Fogelman Center

C-PORT Review Schedule

March 23-27, Southeast; exit conference - April 3
 April 20-24, Upper Cumberland; exit conference - May 8

TCCY Grant Trainings

Juvenile Justice staff will be holding the following 2- hour training sessions for potential applicants for federal grants.

March 4, 9:30 a.m., Nashville
 March 5, 1 p.m., Chattanooga
 March 10, 2 p.m., Knoxville
 March 11, 9:30 a.m., Johnson City
 March 12, 9 a.m., Cookeville
 March 17, 2 p.m., Memphis

Call TCCY at (615) 741-2633 for more information.

Special Events

March 9-10, *Black Administrators in Child Welfare Annual Symposium*, Washington

March 11-13, *Child Welfare League National Conference*, Washington, 202 582-1234

March 25-28, *Children's Defense Fund Conference*, Los Angeles, 202 662-3684



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Commission on Children & Youth
Andrew Johnson Tower, Ninth Floor
710 James Robertson Pkwy.
Nashville, TN 37243-0800
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