



# Advocate

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## New Commission Members

When people talk about the Commission on Children and Youth, they frequently think of the staff, the agency's work or a specific division. However, the Commission is actually a group of dedicated volunteers appointed by Governor Haslam. This year six new members were appointed, and two serving members were reappointed. New appointments were Rev. Audrey Taylor Gonzalez, Memphis; Genesis L. Hardin, youth member, Knoxville; Bill Haynes, Jackson; Petrina L. Jones-Jesz, Cane Ridge; Steven Neely, Nashville; and Glenda Terry, Cookeville. A [list](#) of all Commission members and information about [new members](#) are available online.

## New KIDS COUNT Policy Report, The First Eight Years, Available

The critical importance of the early years for children and our shared future is highlighted in a new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The report, *The First Eight Years: Giving Kids a Foundation for Lifetime Success*, calls a child's first eight years foundational for assuring success in school and life. By the time they reach third grade, only slightly more than one in three children in the United States have developed the cognitive skills necessary to be on track to successfully complete high school. Unfortunately, federal spending on children is lowest during the years when rapid brain growth is occurring. *The First Eight Years: Giving Kids a Foundation for Lifetime Success* is available online at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org)

## TCCY Has Moved!



The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth has moved to the Andrew Jackson Building. The move is part of the state's T3 (Transforming Tennessee Tomorrow) plan to reduce costs by eliminating leased office space and creating a more open, collegial, collaborative work environment. TCCY's new home has been newly renovated. TCCY's telephone number and zip code will remain the same, but it's new street address is Andrew Jackson Building, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, 502 Deaderick Street, Nashville, TN 37243-0800.

## TCCY Gets New Mid-Cumberland Regional Coordinator



TCCY's Susan Cope is now staffing the Mid-Cumberland Council on Children and Youth, replacing April Swoner, who is pursuing a new career in nursing. Susan, who most recently administered grants in TCCY Juvenile Justice division, joined the agency in 2004 as a Children's Program Outcome Review Team interviewer. A LEAD TN leadership training graduate, Susan worked for DCS immediately prior to coming to TCCY and also worked for the Commission on Aging.

## Youth Transitions Advisory Council 2013 Report Available

The annual report of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) has been submitted to the Legislature as required by law. YTAC, which is an advisory council on post-custody services for youth in state custody who age out of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, includes professionals and youth representatives. The [report](#) lists recommendations for improved services as youth age out of state custody. Contact Steve Petty at [Steve.Petty@tn.gov](mailto:Steve.Petty@tn.gov) for more information.

# DCS Commissioner Sees Life on the Front Line



Commissioner Jim Henry has seen firsthand the challenges Department of Children's Services workers face. The Tennessean (<http://tnne.ws/12qbbEI>) documented his home visit to the home of a mother who was the second generation of a family involved with the agency, implementing a requirement all DCS workers spend a day with a caseworker. The article also details improvements since Henry took over the agency: a dramatically improved statewide hotline, training with the TBI to improve child protective investigations and using updated technology to link workers in the field with needed resources.

## Creative Public Private Partnership Funds Utah Pre-K

A Utah public-private partnership involving the investment company Goldman Sachs will add more than 600 pre-k students to two Utah school districts. The districts, two investment companies, the United Way and Voices for Utah Children have teamed in a \$7 million social-impact bond, also known as a pay-for-success loan program. These are loans aimed at positive social impacts and reducing future costs. Based on data from Voices, the state's KIDS COUNT affiliate, pre-k graduates are less likely to need more expensive special education services. The funds, which are being distributed through the United Way, will, according to media reports, be spent on more teachers and training. If, the at-risk 3-year-olds are achieving at grade level when they reach third grade, government funds will be used to repay the investors. If, however, the increased education funding does not pay off, the investors will take the loss. For more information about this creative plan, contact <http://bit.ly/1eHEJzH>.

## Mark Your Calendar

Nov. 20, Second Look Commission, Administrative Office of the Courts, Union Street, Nashville. Contact Craig Hargrow at [Craig.Hargrow@tn.gov](mailto:Craig.Hargrow@tn.gov) for more information.

Nov. 21, Youth Transitions Advisory Council, Goodwill Industries, 937 Herman Street, Nashville. Contact Steve Petty at [Steve.Petty@tn.gov](mailto:Steve.Petty@tn.gov).

Nov. 24-26, Connecting for Children's Justice Conference, Sheraton Music City Hotel, Nashville. Register at <https://2013ccj.eventbrite.com/>. Early registration discount ends Oct. 14.

## In the News

Keeping up with Affordable Health Care Act implementation. The Kaiser Family Foundation operates Kaiser Health News (<http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org>), which has provided information about the health care changes and the implementation of the the act's most complex and wide-reaching provision, enrollment by individuals in health care exchanges.

Tennessee will add three more family justice centers. Family justice centers provide victims of domestic violence with a single location to access safety, advocacy, justice, and other services necessary to end the cycle of violence in the home. Using a coordinated, comprehensive approach to family violence, these types of centers bring many agencies and organizations under one roof and become "one-stop-shops" to provide help for victims and their children. For more information contact <http://1.usa.gov/1ipjfMG>.

Tennessee students showed greater improvement than any other state. Results in the recently released 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed that Tennessee had the largest growth in student achievement of any state in a single testing cycle since NAEP started nationwide assessments a decade ago. More information is available at <http://1.usa.gov/HDzJT3>.

## Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts

In 2012, children living in with at least one unemployed parent represented 11 percent of the total child population or 146,000 children. The percentage has remained steady since 2010. More data on Tennessee child well-being is available at <http://bit.ly/15alkVu>.

## New Research Information

Vanderbilt released an interim report (<http://bit.ly/19iFUVD>) from the multi-year study of the effects of pre-k.

Pew Charitable Trusts reported on sentencing reform <http://bit.ly/15FQwcn>