Children's Mental Health Month

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May Is Children's Mental Health Month

Around 13 to 20 percent of children in the United States have a mental health disorder. Efforts to help families identify problems early and increase resource are part of the Children's Mental Health Awareness Month.
Children and adolescents who practice mindfulness are more likely to experience more positive emotions, less anxiety, more positive friendships and an overall greater well-being. An overview of 19 studies on the positive impacts of mindfulness showed promising results in the area of children’s mental health. In addition to these benefits, individuals who practice mindfulness have higher cognitive and performance skills.


Fathers' Mental Health Influences Their Children's

Fathers are more involved in parenting than ever before, according to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Thus, researchers are now interested in looking at the role fathers play in children's mental health.

A 2013 study looked at the relationship between mothers’ mental health, fathers' mental health, and children’s mental health. Research has found that a mother’s mental health plays a large role in her child’s mental health: if the mother is depressed, there is a higher risk of the child becoming depressed.

However, this study found that when fathers had good mental health, children were less likely to be affected by mothers’ poor mental health. This means a healthy father can help shield a child from potentially poor mental health outcomes. This study not only sheds light on the protective role a father can play, but also emphasizes the importance of the mental health of one or both parents.


*(Thanks to Sarah Kirschbaum and Angela Webster for this report.)*

AIMHiTN Making Progress

The Association of Infant Mental Health in Tennessee (AIMHiTN) is beginning efforts to improve the lives of infants, young children and families. The organization resulted from the Tennessee Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative. AIMHiTN is a multidisciplinary non-profit organization for all professionals who support the development of children ages birth through five.

“AIMHiTN is excited about this huge step in its developmental process and can’t wait to begin these efforts through the implementation of various practice and programs,” said Angela Webster, executive director.

One of AIMHiTN’s biggest efforts is Tennessee’s new Infant Mental Health Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health (IMH-E®). Endorsement® is an internationally recognized credential supporting and recognizing the
development and proficiency of professionals who work with or on behalf of young children, ages zero to three, and their families.

IMH-E® is available across four different practice specialties spanning the continuum of care. It is relevant for professionals across multiple disciplines ranging from early care and education to mental health, academia and medicine. Individuals can apply for the IMH-E® category that best aligns with their knowledge, experiences, and expertise:

- Infant Family Associate: Promotion;
- Infant and Family Specialist: Prevention/Intervention;
- Infant Mental Health Specialist: Clinical Intervention/Treatment;
- Infant Mental Health Mentor: Leadership.

AIMHiTN expects to begin accepting Endorsement® applications by November of 2017 and will share further information as things move forward! The kickoff event for AIMHiTN’s IMH-E® is June 26-27, 2017, in the Nashville area. More details will be forthcoming. Information about IMH-E® and other infant mental health topics will be featured on AIMHiTN’s website, which will launch soon.

(Thanks to Sarah Kirschbaum and Angela Webster for this report.)

AIMHiTN Website, aimhitn.org.


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Physical Fitness and Children's Mental Health

May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. In addition to improving fitness and bone and heart health, physical activity is linked to improved academic performance and executive function. Evidence suggests physical activity also has mental health benefits in children. Activity is especially helpful for children with ADHD.


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"In re Gault," 50th Anniversary of Juvenile Due Process Rights

On May 15, 1967, the Supreme Court issued In re Gault, finding children accused of crimes in juvenile court had a right to due process provisions, including representation by a lawyer, notification of the charges, ability to cross examine witnesses and right to not incriminate one’s self. The National Juvenile Defender Center is leading the campaign to recognize the impact of these changes and call for improvements in the treatment of children in juvenile court. The Gault decision
was written by Justice Abe Fortas, a native of Memphis.


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### May is National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month!

Teen pregnancy rates are dropping across the country, but the need continues to provide alternatives to prevent young lives from being derailed when they are on their way to productive adulthood.


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### Legislative Action

The Tennessee General Assembly likely will complete its work on the budget the first week in May and adjourn the second week. Legislators have filed budget amendments to add funding for the Tennessee Compilation of Selected Laws on Children, Youth and Families. Two House amendments, one by Rep. Kevin Brooks, and one by Rep. David Hawk, will be considered in the House Budget Subcommittee. In the Senate an amendment by Senators Becky Massey, Doug Overbey and Rusty Crowe will be voted on in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee.

Advocates are also working on amendments for home visiting and TN Court Appointed Special Advocates (TN CASA). The home visiting amendment would restore funding from non-recurring to recurring. The TN CASA amendment would provide an additional staff person to provide for quality assurance and expansion initiatives.

Don't forget to sign up for the TCCY Legislative Listserv ([http://www.tn.gov/tccy/article/leg-listserv](http://www.tn.gov/tccy/article/leg-listserv)) to get progress reports each week.


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Congratulations to TCCY Executive Director Linda O'Neal who received the Senator Douglas Henry Award for Service to Children and Families at Risk from the University of Tennessee College of Social Work March 22 at the Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare.

The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth says goodbye to Audrey Taylor Gonzalez, who is returning to Uruguay and will no longer be serving on the Commission.

Mark Your Calendar

May 8, 11:30 a.m. CDT, South Central Council on Children and Youth quarterly meeting, Maury County Health Department, 1909 Hampshire Pike, Columbia. Contact Shaun.Noblitt@tn.gov.

May 8, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. CDT, Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network Middle Tennessee Region presents Adverse Childhood Experiences Training, TSPN Main Office, 446 Metroplex Drive, Suite A-224, Nashville.

May 10, 17, 24, 31, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. CDT, Free Webinar Series: Children and Medicaid: Protecting Tennessee's Children, Tennessee Justice Center. Contact awalton@tnjustice.org. Register at http://bit.ly/2qaPzLF.

May 11, 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. CDT, Youth Transitions Advisory Council, 12:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m., Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee, 9327 Herman Street, Nashville. Information: (615) 532-1685.


March 13-14, 2018, Children's Advocacy Days, War Memorial Auditorium. Contact: John.Rust@tn.gov.

In the News


Research Information


Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts

Children Who Have One or More Emotional, Behavioral or Developmental Condition Percent - 2011-12

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, 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.

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