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Advocate

July 2017

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Education

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The School Year Is Beginning

As school systems prepare for the 2017-18 school year, they will be welcoming a lot of challenges: students coping Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), living in communities of concentrated poverty and with parents struggling to survive and who still deal with their own lack of educational success.

Research validates a common sense understanding that basic needs must be met in order for children to learn. School systems are looking for ways to support students and teachers. Social-Emotional learning and Restorative Justice are among their tools.

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Trauma-Informed School Practices

The research on Adverse Childhood Experiences and childhood trauma has made trauma-informed schools a necessity for children. A 2016 pilot study in Connecticut identified four main goals of trauma-informed schools and successful methods to achieve these goals. Any school shifting towards being trauma-informed should aim to:

- Educate staff on trauma-sensitive practices;
- Equip staff with the ability to recognize which students need support;
- Provide various systems that can provide services to students;
- Help students learn the skills to cope and respond to current or future stress.

To achieve these goals, schools can engage in a number of activities: professional development training sessions for all school staff; collaboration with community organizations that provide trauma-informed services to youth; and clinical workshops for teachers to implement research-based, trauma-informed practices in the classroom.

Perry, D.L. & Daniels, M.L., *School Mental Health, Implementing Trauma-Informed Practices in the School Setting: A Pilot Study*, <http://bit.ly/2t0pd3y>.

(Thanks to Sarah Kirschbaum for this information.)

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Restorative Justice in Schools

Through mindfulness and emotional awareness, restorative discipline aims to end the negative cycle caused by punitive practices in school. Many punitive practices in schools, such as suspension and expulsion, lead children down a path of learned helplessness and negative feelings toward school. During a conflict, restorative discipline gives a voice to those harmed, heals the relationship, encourages accountability and creates a more caring climate.

Restorative discipline can be practiced in many ways. One tactic is restorative minichats, a three-step process in resolving conflict. This strategy involves speaking with the child harmed (unwind), speaking with the child who wronged (rewind) and speaking with any other children present (windup). The minichat approach will contribute to a classroom that values children's well-being.

Mullet, J.H., *Children & Schools, Restorative Discipline: From Getting Even to Getting Well*, <http://bit.ly/2tYubuM>.

(Thanks to Sarah Kirschbaum for this report.)

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Tennessee Department of Education Programs to Improve School Climate

As one of the Tennessee *Building Strong Brains* partners, the Tennessee Department of Education (DOE) has equipped 30 trainers to make information on Adverse Childhood Experiences available to school personnel as part of the department's efforts to support student learning. Most of these supports are part of the Special Populations and Student Support division within DOE. These services include preventing bullying, keeping students from being chronically out of school, providing a safe environment and helping students remain physically or mentally healthy.

Tennessee AWARE (Advancing Wellness And Resilience Education)

The DOE is implementing the AWARE program, created with funding from a competitive Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant, to address the mental health and behavioral issues impacting students. Pilot programs are operating in three counties: Anderson, Lauderdale and Lawrence.

TN DOE Special Populations and Student Support, <http://bit.ly/2tIEtIG>.

Anderson County Schools AWARE Program, <http://bit.ly/2tY1wR>.

Lauderdale County Department of Education AWARE Program, <http://bit.ly/2uj3bqa>.

Lawrence County School System, <http://bit.ly/2tq2y1K>.

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Tennessee Rises in KIDS COUNT Ranking

Tennessee's improvements for children in education, health and economic well-being placed the state at 35th, according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *2017 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* released on June 13. The *Data Book* ranks states in measures of child well-being across four domains and within 16 indicators. The annual report provides data over a five-year period as well as year-to-year. Tennessee ranks 26th in health, 33rd in education, 35th in economic well-being and 40th in family and community in this year's *Data Book*. "The *2017 KIDS COUNT Data Book* reflects substantial progress during the administration of Governor Bill Haslam," said Linda O'Neal, executive director of TCCY.

Health continues to be the state's highest ranking. "Good public policies in Tennessee help children and teens avoid substance abuse and reduce preventable deaths: child restraint devices and seat belts in vehicles; bicycle helmets; life jackets in boats; graduated driver licensing, suicide prevention training; and other prevention strategies," said O'Neal.

The book is available online at <http://bit.ly/2th3K3i>, and TCCY regional coordinators have some copies. They may be contacted at <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/article/tccy-reg-cordin>.

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Legislative Action

The Council on Children's Mental Health was recommended to the House and Senate Government Operations Committee for a four-year continuation during by the [Joint Government Operations Subcommittee on Health, Education and Welfare](#) in the first step of its sunset review. Legislation to this effect will be introduced in 2018. TCCY Associate Director Richard Kennedy provided testimony to the committee with the assistance of DMHSAS Deputy Commissioner Sejal West. The video is available [here](#), beginning at the 1:15 mark.

TCCY legislative updates will return in early 2018 when the General Assembly returns and legislators file new bills.

Legislative Summary: <http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/tccy/attachments/legislat.pdf>.

TCCY Legislative Update: <http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/tccy/attachments/legupdat.pdf>.

TCCY Budget Recommendations: <http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/tccy/attachments/leg-recommend.pdf>.

TCCY Legislative Listserv: <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/article/leg-listserv>.

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Update



TCCY's Executive Director Linda O'Neal has been appointed by legislative leaders to the state's **Joint Ad Hoc Blue Ribbon Task Force on Juvenile Justice**, which will review the state's juvenile justice system and develop data-driven, evidence-based policy recommendations to improve outcomes for youth, families and communities.

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Mark Your Calendar

July 12, 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., Mental Health America of Middle Tennessee presents "**Childhood Trauma and ACEs**," Patterson Park Community Center, 521 Mercury Blvd, Murfreesboro. Speakers: Alexine Batts, Joanne Perley and Kathy Rogers. Fee: \$75. Information: tstarling@mhamt.org or 615-269-5355. Register: <http://bit.ly/2tlkeuj>.

July 13-15, **East Tennessee State University** presents its annual **Early Childhood Conference** and pre-conference programs, Meadowview Marriott Conference Resort & Conference Center, 1901 Meadowview Parkway, Kingsport. Register: <http://bit.ly/2uj3JMO>. Information: ecconference@etsu.edu.

July 12-14, **2017 Youth Sports Safety Conference & Celebration Gala**: Program for Injury Prevention in Youth Sports, Vanderbilt Recreation & Wellness Center, 2700 Children's Way, Nashville. Register: <http://bit.ly/2t2gsE2>.

July 14, 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., Mental Health America of Middle Tennessee presents "**Childhood Trauma and ACEs**," West Tennessee Healthcare, 620 Skyline Dr., Jackson. Speakers are Joanne Perley and Kathy Rogers. Fee: \$75. Information: tstarling@mhamt.org or 615-269-5355. Register at <http://bit.ly/2tybmm5>.

July 17-18, **System of Care Across Tennessee 5th Annual Conference**, Embassy Suites Hotel Murfreesboro, 1200 Conference Center Boulevard, Murfreesboro. Information available on agency website: <http://bit.ly/2t3JfKJ>.

July 20, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., National Conference of State Legislatures presents a free webinar: **State Preschool Programs: Annual Yearbook Update**. Register: <http://bit.ly/2q38fQc>. Information: alison.may@ncsl.org.

July 25, 6 p.m. Mid-Cumberland Council on Children and Youth co-sponsors with Humphrey's County Drug Alliance "**Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome**," Waverly United Methodist Church, 115 W Main St, Waverly. Guest speaker: Carla Saunders of East Tennessee Children's Hospital. Information: 931-296-2231 or karrie.thompson@tn.gov. Register at <http://bit.ly/2uiZmkF>.

Aug. 21-22, **Building Blocks for Infant Mental Health Conference**, Franklin Marriott Cool Springs, 700 Cool Springs Blvd., Franklin. Information: <http://bit.ly/2srlbQ5>.

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In the News

Wadhvani, A., *Tennessean*, **Advocates: Child abuse victims will suffer under Senate health bill**, <http://tnne.ws/2s3fztr>.

Gonzales, J., *Tennessean*, **Trump budget cuts threaten programs that help Tennessee's neediest children, officials say**, <http://tnne.ws/2rW0auj>.

Mattise, J. AP, *Williamson Herald*, **Tennessee improves 3 spots to 35th in child well-being marks**, <http://bit.ly/2szHVhE>.

Carson, S., *Public News Service*, **Things Are Looking Up for TN Children, According to Report**, <http://bit.ly/2s0HnTx>.

O'Neal, L., *USA Today Network-Tennessee*, **Good public policies improve outcomes for children**, <http://tnne.ws/2szTntU>.

Gonzales, J., *USA Today Network-Tennessee*, **Tennessee moves to 35th for kids' health and happiness**, <http://tnne.ws/2s068z8>.

WSW-NewsChannel 5, **Tenn. Improves 3 Spots To 35th In Child Well-Being Marks**, <http://bit.ly/2tXOgBt>.

Chattanooga.com, **Norris Applauds Upward Movement of Tennessee's Status on Child Well-Being**, <http://bit.ly/2s5nbLp>.

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Research Information

Education Week Teacher, **Special Report: Social-Emotional Learning: It Starts with Teachers**, <http://bit.ly/2sKowJv>.

EdBuild, **Fractured: The Breakdown of America's School Districts**, <http://bit.ly/2t4ihCP>.

Campbell, E., *Greater Good Magazine*, **Overview of 4 Different Research Studies on Mindfulness in Schools**, <http://bit.ly/2rLuFnA>.

Fronius, T., et al, WestEd Justice & Prevention Research Center, **Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools: A Research Review**, <http://bit.ly/2s4UmyP>.

Jones, D.E., et al., *American Journal of Public Health*, **SEL in Kindergarten predicts future well-being**, <http://bit.ly/2tDA1SY>.

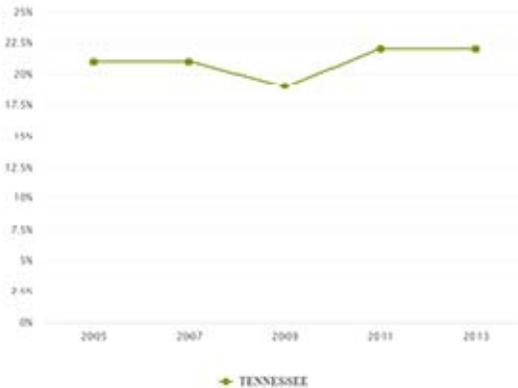
Simon-Thomas, E.R., **Three Insights from the Cutting Edge of Compassion Research**, <http://bit.ly/2s53UcS>.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, **Understanding Bullying** (Fact Sheet), <http://bit.ly/2tYrt8C>.

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Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts

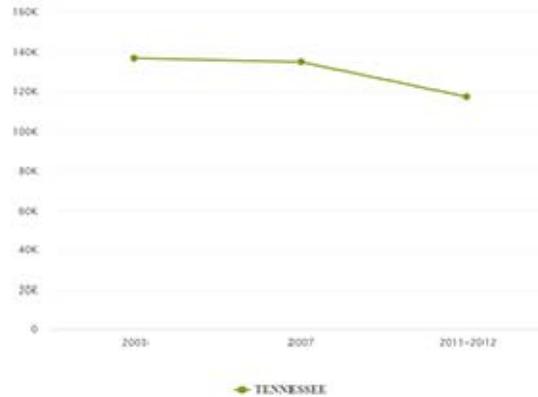
Fourth Graders Who Are Chronically Absent from School



FOURTH GRADERS WHO ARE CHRONICALLY ABSENT FROM SCHOOL (PERCENT)

National KIDS COUNT
KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

Children Ages 6 to 17 Who Repeated One or More Grades



CHILDREN AGES 6 TO 17 WHO REPEATED ONE OR MORE GRADES SINCE STARTING KINDERGARTEN (NUMBER)

National KIDS COUNT
KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

<http://bit.ly/2rHFG9t>

<http://bit.ly/2sVKWcK>

More data on Tennessee child well-being are available at <http://bit.ly/15alkVu>.

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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