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Advocate

May 2018

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Children's Mental Health & Foster Care

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The Merry Month of May

The merry, merry month of May has been celebrated for the joys of spring. It is also a time to pause between the seasons to focus on important issues. This issue we focus on Children's Mental Health and Foster Care months. May is also Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month.



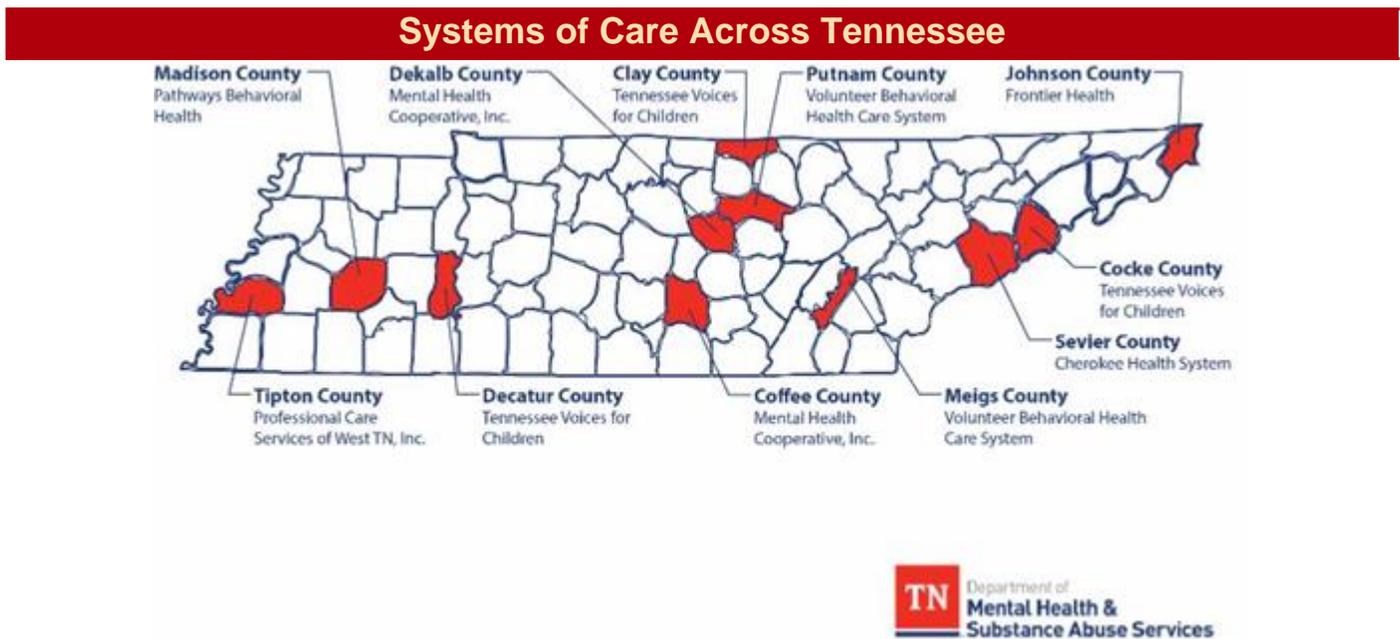
Few people question changes in physical health. Being fit and healthy doesn't keep you from getting a cold or suffering from allergies. The man who wrote the book that popularized running as exercise died of a heart attack at age 52, living nine years longer than his father, however. Physical health is affected by genetics, health habits and circumstances. Any of us can be struck by a severe accident or illness. It has taken time to acknowledge mental and emotional health can also alter over time and circumstances and getting help early for problems when they occur is important. The American Academy of Pediatrics has acknowledged the role pediatricians are forced to play in the absence of mental health professionals and created resources for its members.

Mental Health America, **Mental Health Screening Tools**, bit.ly/2qPtccy.

American Academy of Pediatrics, Mental Health Initiatives, **Tips for Pediatricians**, <http://bit.ly/2qNtccY>.

KIDS COUNT: State of the Child, **Access to Mental Health Care in TN**: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tccy/documents/kc/issues/kcsoc17-b_06mh.pdf.

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TCCY partners with the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) in the Systems of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT) project, working to assure children, youth and young adults are provided comprehensive and coordinated mental health services. In April, SOCAT services were expanded to seven more counties from the original four pilot sites.

The initiative focuses on youth age 21 or younger who are experiencing emotional or behavioral concerns that affect their daily life (i.e., having trouble in school, with their family, with peers or adults, with law enforcement, etc.). Additionally, SOCAT focuses on young people who are having difficulty or are at-risk of being kicked out of school or have been or are currently at-risk of psychiatric hospitalization, residential placement or placement in DCS custody.

TCCY staff, [Jill Murphy](#), East; [Laritha Fentress](#), Middle; and [Jeri Moore](#), West, are coordinating outreach efforts across the state.

TDMHSAS, **System of Care Initiative**, <http://bit.ly/TCCYoOC>.

TDMHSAS, **TDMHSAS Announces SOCAT Expansion Sites**, <http://bit.ly/2ratcCY>.

Systems of Care Across Tennessee website, <http://socacrosstn.org/>, contact, keri.virgo@tn.gov

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Foster Care in Tennessee



Tennessee Department of Children's Services regions across the state have outreach events and celebrations planned to honor Foster Care Month.

TNFosters, the state's effort to recruit and support foster parents, continues. Unlike many efforts to recruit families willing and able to open their homes to children, the effort also focuses on engaging faith groups and communities to surround families as they nurture children and youth placed in their homes.

KIDS COUNT: State of the Child, **Child Welfare, Foster Care and Youth Transitions**, https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tccy/documents/kc/issues/kcsoc17-b_13cw.pdf.

Tennessee Department of Children's Services, <https://www.facebook.com/TNdcsl/>.

TNFosters, <https://www.facebook.com/TNFosters/>. Contact 877-DCS-KIDS.

Tennessee Kids Belong, <https://www.facebook.com/TNKidsBelong>. Website: <http://bit.ly/2r0rBES>.

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Legislation Enacted to Improve Adoption Process

The Tennessee legislature has passed a bill comprehensively changing adoption law in the state. The legislation was initiated by the Tennessee Bar Association's (TBA) Adoption Law Section. The changes are intended to improve the adoption process. According to the TBA, "The comprehensive bill addresses many important issues, such as simplifying and adding to the Tennessee Code the parental surrender form, clarifying parental termination grounds, and affording greater protections to biological fathers attempting to assert their parental rights."

Tennessee General Assembly, **SB 1851 Bill Summary**, <http://bit.ly/2rhgrMe>.

Dawn Coppock, **2018 Legislative Update: First In Adoption passes in the Senate with all YES votes!**, <http://bit.ly/2rdOfK6>.

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110th General Assembly Says Goodbye

The 110th Tennessee General Assembly adjourned late Wednesday evening. It was a historic General Assembly, as they left the labyrinth of Legislative Plaza, their home for nearly 50 years,

and moved into the newly renovated Cordell Hull Building.

Many long serving members are stepping aside, retiring, or seeking higher or local offices. At least 25 percent of the 111th General Assembly will be new members to their respective Chambers. The House will elect a new Speaker, raising expectations of other leadership changes.

The Governor's initial budget included \$1.25 million in recurring funding for ACES Innovation Grants; he later added an additional \$1.2 million in recurring funding. DCS also received increased funds for Adoption Assistance and provider rate increases. The departments of Health, Children's Services and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services received additional funds for the Governor's [TN Together](#) Opioid Initiative.

The Governor also proposed \$4.5 million in funding for the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for increased treatment services for youth with juvenile court involvement. These funds were subject to passage of the [Juvenile Justice Reform Act](#). While little reform actually was included in the bill, additional funds for youth are always needed. The Governor plans to issue an Executive Order on how the funds will be expended. The Act requires fines in juvenile court be ordered against parents instead of youth; prohibits transfer of children under 12 years of age to criminal court for any charge other than homicide; makes slight reductions in transfers for 16 year olds; and calls for DCS, the Administrative Office of the Courts and TCCY to develop a juvenile court data collection system.

TCCY is pleased the appropriations bill [HB 2644](#) was amended to include funding for vital programs for children. Legislative amendments added \$1.4 million recurring for early childhood home visiting programs, in addition to the \$1.5 million recurring originally included in the Governor's proposed budget. The funds are a partial restoration of reductions made to the program over the last 10 years. Members of the Home Visiting Leadership Alliance, Children's Hospital Alliance of Tennessee, March of Dimes, Save the Children and Tennesseans for Quality Early Education led the fight to secure this funding.

Other amendments provided \$56,000 to the Tennessee CASA Association for quality assurance and program expansion and \$2,000 each (\$112, 000) in additional funds for the 56 counties who have or develop CASA programs. Both of these amendments are non-recurring, meaning they will not be in the budget proposed for FY 2020 unless added as an improvement or by amendment. CASA funding passes through the TCCY budget.

The budget was also amended to include \$500,000 in non-recurring funding to the Department of Education for the Breakfast After the Bell school breakfast program. If they are not all expended next fiscal year, the Breakfast After the Bell funding will carry over into the next fiscal year.

Steve Petty, TCCY youth policy advocate, will continue to update information on the work of this session until the Governor has either signed, allowed to become law without signing or vetoed all legislation passed and public chapter numbers have been assigned.

2018 Legislative Guidance, <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tccy/documents/leg/leg-guidance2.pdf>.

2018 State of the State Address, <http://bit.ly/2npTcCy>.

2018 Budget Recommendations: <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tccy/documents/leg/leg-budget.pdf>.

Legislative Report: <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tccy/documents/leg/legislat.pdf>.

2017 Legislative Guidance: <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tccy/documents/leg/leg-guidance1.pdf>.

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Update



TCCY Commission member **Destiny Sweeney** was named by the national Foster Club as a 2017 Outstanding Young Leader. A college student, Destiny, who is a youth member from the Chattanooga area, was appointed to the Commission in 2016.



Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee honored TCCY Executive Director **Linda O'Neal** for her dedication to improving the lives of children and families in Tennessee at its Pinwheel Party Child Abuse Prevention Month event. Linda is also being added to the **Tennessee Justice Center (TJC) Hall of Fame** this month for her "integrity, courage and expertise in child welfare policy." TJC credited her with making TCCY one of the state's most effective and influential government agencies. TCCY friends and partners Davidson County Juvenile Court Judge Shelia Calloway and Vanderbilt University's Craig Anne Heflinger are also being honored.

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Mark Your Calendar

May 3, 12:30 to 3:30 p.m., **Youth Transitions Advisory Council**, Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee, 937 Herman Street, Nashville. Contact 615-532-1685 or steve.petty@tn.gov.

May 4, 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., **Tennessee Disability Pathfinder** with Northwest Tennessee Council on Children and Youth presents "**Future Planning**," University of Tennessee-Martin, 133 Boling, University Center, 2nd Fl., Rm. 206 ABC, Martin. The training supplies information on resources available to assist individuals with disabilities in planning their futures. Preregistration required at <http://bit.ly/2qLWlJu>.

May 10, 11 a.m., **Insure Our Kids Enrollment Training**. The webinar will cover coverage options, eligibility, and the enrollment process. Insure Our Kids is a statewide campaign to enroll every uninsured child who is eligible for health insurance. Together we can raise public awareness of TennCare and CoverKids and connect families to enrollment assistance. Register at <http://bit.ly/2HE3ZB8>.

May 11, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., 6th Annual **Tennessee Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Conference**, New Vision Baptist Church (Battlefield Campus), Murfreesboro. Approved by NASW -

TN for 5 CEUs. Register by May 4 at <http://bit.ly/2H5ZVJn>. Fees range from \$0 to \$40.

May 23, **Building Strong Brains: Tennessee ACEs Initiative Training**, 1.5 hours, Gallatin. Contact Susan.Cope@tn.gov for more information. Register at <https://bsb-may-23-in-gallatin.eventbrite.com>.

May 24, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., **Youth Mental Health First Aid**, TSPN Office, 446 Metroplex Dr., Nashville. Register at <http://bit.ly/2qHYvtl> for \$20.

May 24-25, **Disability Mega Conference**, Nashville Airport Marriott, 600 Marriott Drive, Nashville. Early registration ends March 31. Information: <http://www.tndisabilitymegaconference.org/>.

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In the News

Tamburin, A., *Tennessean*, **Advocates once praised Bill Haslam's juvenile justice bill. Now they say it's watered down.** <http://bit.ly/2qHtccy>.

Mullinix, H., *Crossville Chronicle*, **Community comes together for child abuse prevention,** <http://bit.ly/2qJtccy>.

Memphis Daily News, **Daily Digest: WFGM Grant Makes Memphis An Evidence2Success City** (scroll down to find digest entry), <http://bit.ly/2qGtccy>.

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Research Information

Hammond, S., *Conversation*, **How social media can make life better for young people in care,** <http://bit.ly/2qJtccY>.

Science Daily, **Growing opioid epidemic forcing more children into foster care,** bit.ly/2qJtccY.

Jackson, K., *Social Work Today* (18,2:10), **Predictive Analytics in Child Welfare: Benefits and Challenges,** <http://bit.ly/2qJtccy>.

Centers for Disease Control, *Rural Health Policy Briefs*, **Access to Mental Health Services for Children in Rural Areas,** <http://bit.ly/2qEtccy>.

Sparks, S.D., *Education Week*, **Students' Healthy Habits Can Boost Their Chances for College,** <http://bit.ly/2qJtccY>.

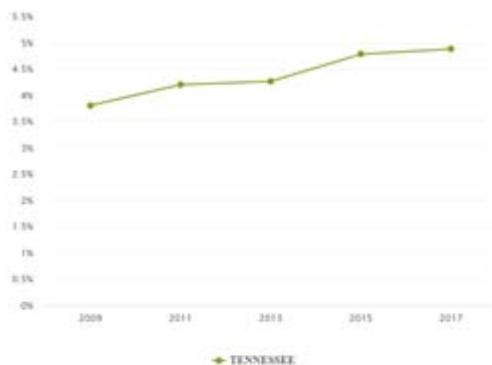
Sparks, S.D., *Education Week*, **New Research Suggests Practical Ways to Make School Discipline, Access Equitable,** <http://bit.ly/2qNtccy>.

Vieth, V., Gundersen National Child Protection Training Center, **When Faith Hurts: The Spiritual Impact of Child Abuse,** bit.ly/2Hdtccy.

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Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts

Reported Child Abuse Percent

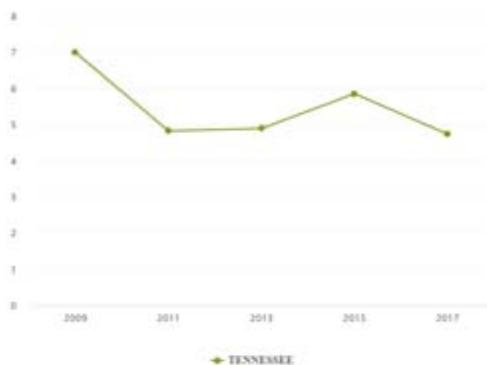


Note: Non-consecutive years appear adjacent in the trend line because one or more years have been deleted.

REPORTED CHILD ABUSE CASES (PERCENT)

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth
KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

Substantiated Child Abuse/Neglect Cases - Rate per 1,000



Note: Non-consecutive years appear adjacent in the trend line because one or more years have been deleted.

SUBSTANTIATED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT CASES (RATE)

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth
KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

<http://bit.ly/2G1TCcy>

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

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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