



TN KIDS Kick Off

The Advocate

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Summit Kicks Off Initiative for Children

Advocates for children from all over the state met at the Opry House on June 26 to help Gov. Don Sundquist kick off TN KIDS, a community effort for Tennessee's children.

Dr. Peter Benson of the Search Institute in Minneapolis, Doug Price of FirstBank of Colorado, Chattanooga City Councilwoman Mai Bell Hurley, representatives of participating state departments, and local community activists provided expert testimony about what communities can do for children.

Dr. Fredia Wadley, the state's chief health officer, is heading the initiative and moderated a panel of community activists.

TCCY was a co-sponsor of the event, and its coordinators are to take a lead role in implementation.

Benson on Community Assets

Benson's presentation gained power from the 500,000 surveys of young people his organization has analyzed.

He said that in the United States citizens live in the most generationally segregated society ever.

Benson, the author of *All Kids Are Our Kids*, called for individuals to be subjects – instigators of action – rather than objects – acted upon. He called for an “awakening of people to power.”

“We spend so much time naming the problem, we forget to name the good stuff,” Benson said.



Other barriers to problem solving he identified included expecting too little, blame finding, and holding families responsible for all problems of children.

“If you breathe, you must be on the team,” he said.

Price on Child Care Funding

Doug Price is a businessman who sees the value in supporting child-care programs. He said that social efforts happen at the intersection of altruism and selfishness.

Crime and economic growth and the ability of the next generation to care for their elders are related to the quality of education and care they receive, he said.

And child care problems negatively affect employees' work, he said.

Parents - employees - carry the weight of paying for child care, he said, providing 72 percent of its cost as compared to the 27 percent paid by government and one percent paid by business.

Child care is subsidized by young women who work for substandard wages, he said.

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Search Survey Identifies Roles for Communities

The Search Institute, an organization dedicated to social service research, has developed a way of evaluating the nurturing environment communities provide for their children.

The institute has identified 40 assets that communities should provide teens in order to assure their success. Its research finds that communities providing these assets are more likely to produce children who avoid high-risk behavior, such as violence and substance abuse, and are more likely to hold positive attitudes and engage in positive behaviors.

According to the survey, less than a fourth of teens believe adults in their communities value youth or that schools provide caring, encouraging environments.

Rather than just identifying a problem, Search Institute suggests activities to help families, organizations, religious groups, and communities build more supportive communities. It encourages communities and individuals to be proactive rather than reactive, to focus on an image of what they want rather than what they want to avoid.

Resources, including books and handout materials, are available to help parents, communities, and organizations identify useful actions.

For more information about these resources, contact Search Institute, 700 South Third Street, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN 55415, (800) 888-7828, or at www.search-institute.org.

The 40 Assets Identified by the Search Institute

In the list below, the percentage listed is the percentage of 100,000 students in grades six through 12 from 213 U.S. cities who say they experienced the asset.

External Assets Support

1. Family support. Family life provides high levels of love and support (64%).
2. Positive family communication. Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s) (26%).
3. Other adult relationships. Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults (41%).
4. Caring neighborhood. Young person experiences caring neighbors (40%).
5. Caring school climate. School provides a caring, encouraging environment (24%).
6. Parent involvement in schooling. Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school (29%).

Empowerment

7. Community values youth. Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth (20%).
8. Youth as resources. Young people are given useful roles in the community (24%).
9. Service to others. Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week (50%).
10. Safety. Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood (55%).

Boundaries and Expectations

11. Family boundaries. Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person's whereabouts (43%).
12. School boundaries. School provides clear rules and consequences (46%).
13. Neighborhood boundaries. Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior (46%).
14. Adult role models. Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior (27%).
15. Positive peer influence. Young person's best friends model responsible behavior (60%).
16. High expectations. Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well (41%).

Constructive Use of Time

17. Creative activities. Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts (19%).
18. Youth programs. Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or community organizations (59%).
19. Religious community. Young person spends one hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution (64%).
20. Time at home. Young person is out with friends with nothing special to do two or fewer nights per week (50%).

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Assets

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Internal Assets

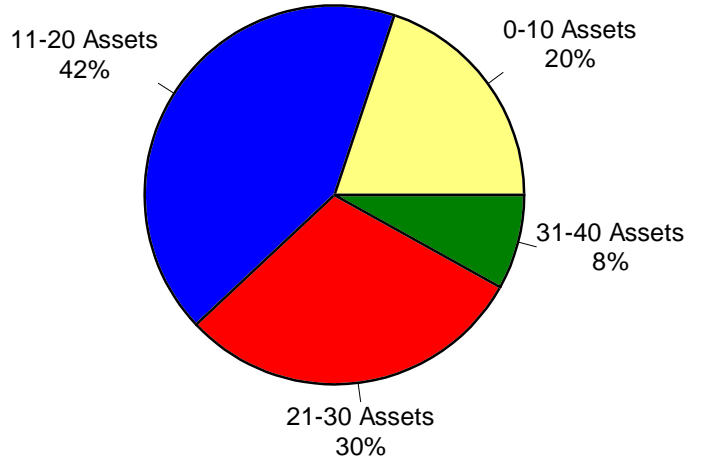
Commitment to Learning

- 21. Achievement motivation. Young person is motivated to do well in school (63%).
- 22. School engagement. Young person is actively engaged in learning (64%).
- 23. Homework. Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day. (45%)
- 24. Bonding to school. Young person cares about her or his school (51%).
- 25. Reading for pleasure. Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week (24%).

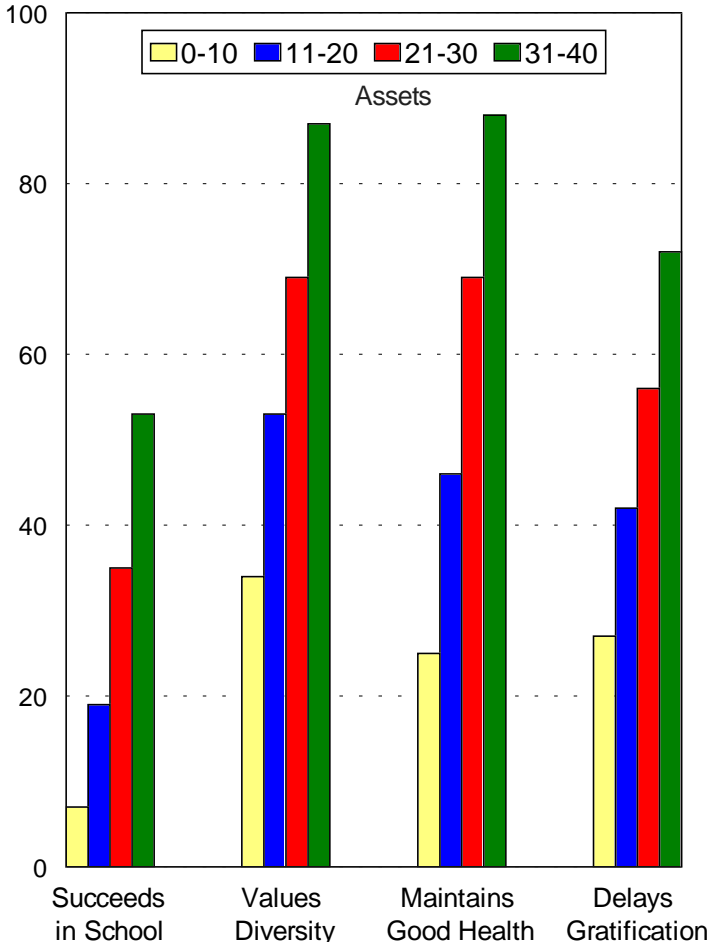
Positive Values

- 26. Caring. Young person places high value on helping other people (43%).
- 27. Equality and social justice. Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty (45%).
- 28. Integrity. Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs (63%).

Youth with Different Levels of Assets



Assets Related to Positive Behavior



- 29. Honesty. Young person tells the truth even when it is not easy (63%).
- 30. Responsibility. Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility (60%).
- 31. Restraint. Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs (42%).

Social Competencies

- 32. Planning and decision-making. Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices (29%).
- 33. Interpersonal competence. Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills (43%).
- 34. Cultural competence. Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. (35%).
- 35. Resistance skills. Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations (37%).
- 36. Peaceful conflict resolution. Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently (44%).

Positive Identity

- 37. Personal power. Young person feels he or she has "control over things that happen to me" (45%).
- 38. Self-esteem. Young person reports having a high self-esteem (47%).
- 39. Sense of purpose. Young person reports that "my life has a purpose" (55%).
- 40. Positive view of personal future. Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future (70%).

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5 Things You Can Do to Mobilize Your Community for Asset Building

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1. Talk with leaders, friends, neighbors, and other citizens about the vision and potential for asset building. Share materials that describe the asset-building approach.
2. Sponsor community-wide or regional events to talk about asset building and its potential. Invite influential people to the event. Also work hard to include youth, parents, seniors, and other groups.
3. Gather information on what's currently happening in your community and how it could be enhanced with an asset-building focus or partnership.
4. Work with a cross-section of leaders and other residents to develop plans or strategies for an asset-building initiative.
5. Serve on a committee or task force to implement asset-building strategies.

Governor Establishes TN KIDS Awards

The governor has established a \$5,000 TN Kids Award to recognize communities that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to improving the lives of their children and families. It is designed to join families, community leaders, businesses, churches, synagogues, and other interested citizens in partnerships with children's initiatives.

Any Tennessee city or county may apply by submitting a letter of intent by October 1, 1998, and a completed application by April 1, 1999, to William C. Haynes, Tennessee Department of Health, Office of the State Health Officer, 3rd Floor, Cordell Hull Building, 426 Fifth Avenue, North, Nashville, TN 37247-0101.

Applicants should include citywide or county-wide coordination, identification of needs, and unified community involvement; have well-planned public information efforts; and sponsor, with community groups, activities to recognize outstanding programs and children.

For more information, call (615) 741-3111.

Kids Count Regional Report

Kids Count Region-by-Region Look at the Status of Tennessee's Children was released in July. The report looks at the state of children in Tennessee's nine regions and highlights the work of the regional councils and coordinators.

Per capita income has risen in all of the state's nine regions when compared over a four-year period, according to data in the report. The report also indicates that children are sharing in the prosperity. The number of Food Stamp Program participants and the number of children receiving AFDC dropped in all regions.

However, the fall in public assistance is contrasted with an increase in participation in the free and reduced-price lunch program in all regions.

The regional report examines 16 measures of child well-being in the Northeast, East, Southeast, Upper Cumberland, Mid-Cumberland, South Central, Northwest, Southwest, and Memphis/Shelby County regions. It reports health, social, and economic indicators and is the most comprehensive regional report on child well-being in the state.

Lower teen pregnancy rates and lower high school dropout rates in all regions are good news. Memphis, with the highest teen pregnancy rate, had the greatest improvement. The decline in high school dropout rates ranged from a 62.9 percent drop in Upper Cumberland to a 9.1 percent drop in Southeast.

The percentage of low-birth-weight babies increased or remained the same in all regions. The number of children in special education programs also increased in all regions.

The data on most other indicators is mixed. Some regions have something to celebrate; others, work to do. The report is designed to arm concerned citizens in each of the regions with the information they need to determine ways to help their children.

Regional Report Finds Good News and Bad News

Good News

Bad News

Northeast	Lowest child death rate in the state.	Highest percent of children under 18 referred to juvenile court.
	Lowest teen violent death rate in the state.	Second highest percentage of births lacking adequate prenatal care.
	Lowest teen pregnancy rate in the state.	Highest percentage of children receiving special education.
East	Lowest percent of births lacking adequate prenatal care.	Ranks sixth of nine regions in state on infant mortality rate.
	Lowest percent of children under 18 referred to juvenile court.	Teen violent death rate up 68 percent from 1992 report.
	Second lowest child death rate.	Second highest percent of children receiving special education.
Southeast	Next to lowest in state in teen violent death rate.	Highest indicated child abuse rate.
	In lowest third of state in percent of children under 18 referred to juvenile court.	Ranks next to last of state regions in percent of high school dropouts.
	Third highest per capita income in state.	Ranks next to last in rate of children in state custody.
Upper Cumberland	Lowest percent of low-birth-weight births in state.	In highest third of state regions on child death rate.
	Lowest rate of infant mortality.	Lowest per capita income.
	Lowest percent of high school dropouts.	Teen violent death rate up 56 percent from 1992 report.
Mid-Cumberland	Second lowest percent of births lacking adequate prenatal care.	In highest third of state regions in percent of high school dropouts.
	Second lowest rate of indicated child abuse and neglect.	In highest third of state regions in percent of children under 18 referred to juvenile court.
	Lowest percent of children receiving free/reduced price lunches and population enrolled in TennCare or receiving Food Stamps.	Indicated child abuse and neglect rate up 40 percent from 1992 report.
South Central	In lowest half of state regions in percent of children under 18 referred to juvenile court.	Highest child death rate in state.
	In lowest half of state regions in infant mortality rate.	Highest teen violent death rate in state.
	Second lowest percent of children under 18 receiving AFDC.	Indicated child abuse and neglect rate up 130 percent from 1992 report.
Northwest	Lowest rate in state of children in state custody.	In highest third of state on percent of births lacking adequate prenatal care.
	Second lowest percent of children under 18 referred to juvenile court.	Second highest in state on percent of low birth weight births.
	Second to the lowest in state in percent of high school dropouts.	Teen violent death rate up 87 percent from 1992 report.
Southwest	Percentage of high school dropouts has fallen 32 percent from figures in 1992 report.	Highest percentage of births lacking prenatal care.
	Teen pregnancy rate fell 11 percent from figures in 1992 report.	Highest rate of children in state custody.
	Per capita income increased 24 percent from 1992 report.	Second highest rates of infant mortality, child death, teen violent deaths, and teen pregnancy.
Memphis/Shelby County	Second lowest in state regions on rate of children in state custody.	Highest in state on percent of low-birth-weight births and infant mortality.
	In lowest third of state regions on rate of indicated child abuse.	Highest in state in teen pregnancy rate.
	Highest per capita income.	Highest in state of children under 18 receiving AFDC.

Regional News

Regional Councils Tapped by Governor

The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth co-sponsored the Governor's Summit on Tennessee's Children, and the regional councils and coordinators have been selected the lead organizations in working with communities to facilitate broad-based efforts by business and community representatives to implement and plan TN KIDS initiatives.

The Tennessee Department of Health Regional Community Development staff will also provide technical assistance to the communities to help them assess needs and develop community plans.

An overriding goal of these activities is to help communities build the assets available to their children.

The activities will give life to the initiative's vision: Through the combined efforts of our communities, public organizations, and businesses, children have responsible,

nurturing families; quality child care available when needed; enter school healthy and prepared to learn; experience success during school; and graduate with skills needed to be productive citizens.

The initiative has six goals:

- ✔ Have children born healthy and keep them healthy;
- ✔ Assist parents in protecting and nurturing children;
- ✔ Provide quality child care when needed;
- ✔ Have children prepared to learn when they arrive at school;
- ✔ Provide environment so that children will succeed in school;
- ✔ State agencies will develop the infrastructure to assist communities in providing opportunities for children to succeed.

Summit

Continued from Page 1.

Price quoted Allan Bloom: "The greatness of a nation is measured by the future it provides its children."

Films and a panel discussion highlighted state, community, and business activities to help children.

Strategy

The governor reported on the strategy behind TN KIDS, which was developed by a year-long planning process funded by the Danforth Foundation. It included:

- ✔ Priority on early intervention and prevention services;
- ✔ Coordination of services for families and children at the state and local level;
- ✔ Increased involvement of families and communities in programs for children;
- ✔ Evaluation of measurable goals and objectives.

In addition to TCCY, state departments are collaborating in the Initiative:

Department of Health, which is the lead planning agency;

Department of Children's Services;
Department of Human Services (Families First);
Department of Education;
Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation.

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.

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Regional Councils Help Communities Plan



Citizens in Tennessee's nine regions are solving problems in their communities. Some of the activities are highlighted below. For more information, contact the regional coordinator.

Mid-Cumberland Region

Mid-Cumberland Council on Children and Youth's Child Welfare Committee has initiated region-wide efforts to make the interview rooms where children visit with their families under Department of Children's Services supervision more child friendly by furnishing them more attractively. This project was the result of a survey of DCS offices.

Upper Cumberland Region

The one-week Creative Arts Day Camp sponsored by the Child Protection Council of Cannon County with the Cannon County Drug Free Alliance and the Woodbury Lion's Club involves 60 children ages 5 to 12 in the arts. The teachers volunteer their time, and the \$30 fee is waived for children who live in

public housing. Older children volunteer to help with the camp. The group also sponsors a science camp.

Southwest Region

The Hardeman County Community Health Council has built a community partnership that has established new programs for children in that community. It is planning for an after-school program at the Bolivar Middle School. Members of the partnership include ministers, government agencies, and nonprofits.

Memphis/Shelby Region

Activities in the Memphis and Shelby community region are varied and diverse. The Memphis/Shelby County Children and Youth Council is developing a *Read to Children* project in conjunction with the Hamilton Elementary School Initiative. Residents of Hurt Village sponsor a summer camp. Autozone employees started a food drive. Law enforcement officers serve through Big Brothers and Big Sisters' *Bigs in Blue* program.

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Meetings and Events

Council Activities

Northeast Tennessee Regional Council

Aug. 5, CHILD WATCH Training, Johnson City Medical Center
 Oct. 1, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Conference, Morristown

East Tennessee Regional Council

Sept. 2, Meeting: Brain Research in Young Children
 Oct. 7, Meeting: Mental Health Awareness
 Nov. 4, Child Care Mini-conference, Anderson Co.

Upper Cumberland Regional Council

Sept. TBA, Legislative Child Watch receptions
 Oct. 6, Networking Conference, Fall Creek Falls State Park

Mid-Cumberland Regional Council

Fall Networking Conference: Juvenile Justice Reform Commission, Fall 1998

South Central Regional Council

Aug. TBA, County Meetings on County Priorities and State of the Child

Aug. 21, Regional Meeting: Regional Priorities, Motlow State Com. College
 Sept. 18, Regional Meeting: Juvenile Justice, Maury Regional Hospital
 Oct. 2, Regional Meeting and Mini-Conference, Motlow State Com. College

Northwest Tennessee Regional Council

Aug. 28, Quarterly Council Meeting, TBA
 Nov. 6, Fall Conference, Paris Landing State Park

Southwest Tennessee Regional Council

Aug. 14, Meeting: Resiliency in Children
 Nov. TBA, Meeting with Northwest Council

Memphis-Shelby Regional Council

Aug. 26, Meeting: Volunteerism & Violence Prevention, Shelby Board of Education

C-PORT Review Schedule

Aug. 31-Sept. 4, Shelby, exit conference - TBA
 Sept. 28-Oct. 2, Northeast, exit conference - Oct. 9

Oct. 26-30, Knox County, exit conference - Nov. 5
 Nov. 16-20, South Central, exit conference - Dec. 1
 Call TCCY at (615) 741-2633 for more information.

Special Events

Northeast TCSW Regional Conference, Thursday, Oct. 29, Johnson City
 Middle East TCSW Regional Conference, Friday, Nov. 6, Knoxville
 Southeast TCSW Regional Conference, Tuesday, Oct. 27, Chattanooga
 Middle TCSW Regional Conference, Thursday, Oct. 22, Nashville
 Sept. 17-19, *Vanderbilt Symposium on Alcohol and Drug Abuse*, Willis Carroon Center, Nashville
 Sept. 27-28 - Education Edge Conference at the Nashville Renaissance Hotel
 Oct. 3-5, *Tennessee Voices for Children State of the Child Conference*, Nashville
 Nov. 8-10, *TN Association of Mental Health Organizations Annual Meeting*, Knoxville Hilton



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