



Advocate

May 2016

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Foster Care Month

Deciding to become a parent is agreeing to take on an awesome task. Agreeing to temporarily parent another's child who has experienced adverse childhood experiences, including the loss of a parent, requires thoughtful consideration and a big heart. Supportive communities help.

National Foster Care Month grew out of a need to raise awareness of the needs of children in care and recruit foster parents. Research tells us children do better in a home setting than in a residential one. *Minimum Standards of Child Welfare*, published by the federal Children's Bureau nearly 100 years ago, included recommendation to provide children with "home life" if they were unable to remain in their homes.

In 2014, more than 6,000 Tennessee children entered state custody, and 8,000 were in custody at the end of the FY 2014-15. Data from the previous year show 55 percent of children in care were in non-relative foster care, with an additional 15 percent in relative care. Seventeen percent of children in care were in group or residential placements, and most of the rest were moving toward permanency. ([See graph in the KIDS COUNT Data Section.](#))

A number of agencies in Tennessee provide child placement services, but people interested in fostering children can contact the Tennessee Department of Children's Services for more

information.

National Foster Care Month: <http://1.usa.gov/1TeMtgo>.

Information on **Foster Care in Tennessee:** <http://1.usa.gov/244aAcE>.

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day, May 5

May is Mental Health Awareness month, and special attention is paid to children's mental health on May 5 and in the week of May 1-7. The Council on Children's Mental Health (CCMH), co-chaired by TCCY Executive Director Linda O'Neal and Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Commissioner Doug Varney and staffed by TCCY's Melissa McGee, was created by the Legislature in 2008 to improve the system of mental health services for children and families.

National Mental Health Awareness Month: <http://bit.ly/24kSGPz>.

National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day: <http://1.usa.gov/1T5Bkya>.

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Council on Children's Mental Health Reports on Progress



April was a busy month at TCCY, with two major reports released. The Council on Children's Mental Health (CCMH) released its 2016 Report to the General Assembly highlighting the importance of early childhood development and ensuring a strong foundation in the early years to increase probability of positive mental health outcomes. The CCMH 2016 Report emphasizes that Tennesseans are coming together to make good things happen for children and families. Tennessee is investing resources in children and families to provide healthy development throughout childhood. We recognize when children have opportunities to learn and develop, they can better realize their full potential.

The 2016 CCMH Report also identified recently developed three-year strategies and goals in moving forward:

Connect and Engage: Strengthen connection with local communities and actively engage a more diverse group of stakeholders at all levels;

Move Forward with Data: Create a common understanding of needs, services, results and progress through use of data;

Expand Learning Opportunities: Expand learning opportunities available to partners by offering relevant training and access to information and resources that impact Council work;

Promote Policies for Sustainability: Increase awareness among stakeholders and promote policies that will enable and sustain high quality, integrated services for children and families throughout Tennessee.

The CCMH Report also highlights steady growth of the Council over the past few years:

Contact Melissa.McGee@tn.gov.

Council on Children's Mental Health 2016 Report:

<http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/tccy/attachments/ccmh-report16.pdf>

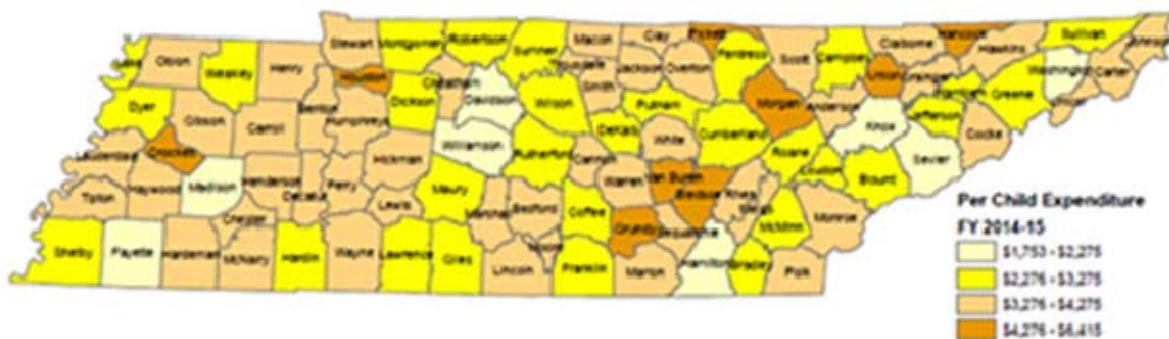
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How Does Tennessee's Budget Serve Children?

Representatives of state agencies serving children again this year provided information to TCCY's Resource Mapping Program on how their organizations spent money on children during FY 2014-15. Resource Mapping submits reports to the Legislature annually, as required by legislation passed in 2008, beginning with a 2009 report covering expenditure data from FY 2006-07.

Each year, data collection has improved. TCCY and its partners are working toward a goal of being able to "see" spending across the state, and each agency continues to explore ways to report more child and youth program data by county. The 2015 report includes a number of maps showing county-level spending and program participation. Resource Mapping tracks only those funds that flow through the state to serve children and youth. Local government and private/non-profit expenditures are not included.

Tennessee Department of Education Per-Child Basic Education Program (BEP) Expenditures, FY 2014-15



Resource Mapping: <http://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/tccy/attachments/MAP-rpt16.pdf>.

One in 10 Tennessee Children Deals with Parental Incarceration

Providing opportunities for all Tennessee children to succeed, including those with incarcerated

parents, is the focus of a report released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Having a parent in jail is one of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) that undermine the architecture of a child's developing brain – the foundation for all child development – with lifelong impacts on mental and physical health.

Tennessee is tied with five other states for the third highest prevalence of parental incarceration, with one in 10 children in the state (144,000) having lived with a parent or guardian who served time in jail or prison after the child was born.

TCCY held a news event to promote the release. Participating were TCCY's **Linda O'Neal**; Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Commissioner **Doug Varney**, who presented on recovery courts; Big Brothers, Big Sisters Vice President of Programs **Carly Southworth**, on the Amachi program; and The Family Center CEO **Dawn Eaton**, on parenting education.

The report is available at: <http://bit.ly/1YVWQd9>.

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109th General Assmby Concludes Its Work

Perhaps the biggest victory for Tennessee children in this year's legislative session was the passage of legislation to improve the quality of pre-K programs across the state. The legislation requires the Department of Education to provide more coaching and support to pre-K classrooms and teachers.

In February, the Commission took positions on 25 pieces of legislation, supporting 18 and opposing seven. Of the 18 bills the Commission supported, 12 became law. Of the seven bills the Commission opposed, only one passed after the bill was amended to address the Commission's concerns.

That bill created a task force to study the creation of a department of juvenile justice. The Commission has historically been opposed to separating juvenile justice from child welfare. The bill was amended to include representatives of the Commission on Children and Youth and the Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (TCJFCJ) on the task force and to allow the TCJFCJ to comment on task force recommendations and report prior to submission to the General Assembly in January.

Other bills the Commission successfully supported included a bill removing the exemption to child abuse charges for persons providing prayer in lieu of medical treatment. The two bills brought by the Department of Children's Services easily passed. One of those bills made changes to the putative father registry that will make it easier to terminate parental rights in preparation for adoption of children. The other bill allows foster parents to make reasonable, every day decisions for the children in their care to participate in the kinds of things most children do, sports, sleep-overs, other normalizing activities as their same age peers. The bill also limits those foster parents' liability

Budget. TCCY is pleased to report the appropriations amendment to fund new CASA programs in Bledsoe, Carter, Dickson, Grundy, Marion and Sequatchie counties was included in the FY 2016-17 budget. Additionally, annual state funding for CASAs was increased to \$18,000 per year, per

county. The General Assembly also included funding for new nursing staff at all five perinatal centers. The Department of Children's Services budget was increased, including funding of \$1.25 million for ACE awareness. Two home visiting programs, Healthy Start and Child Health and Development are funded in the Department of Health budget, though still on a non-recurring basis.

Steve Petty, TCCY policy advocate, will continue updating information on the work of the General Assembly until all bills passed are signed by the Governor and officially become law. Information is available on TCCY's website.

TCCY Legislative Information: <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/article/tccy-legislat>.

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

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

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Updates

TCCY is pleased to welcome Jennifer Drake-Croft as director of Early Childhood Well-Being/Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Jennifer comes to TCCY from The Family Center. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Berry College, a Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Tennessee and has expertise in child development, child trauma and child abuse prevention. She is married and is the mother of one son, who is the love of her life.

The Tennessee Department of Health announced Dr. Michael Warren, formerly head of Maternal and Child Health, has been appointed Deputy Commissioner for Population Health. More Information: <http://1.usa.gov/1VnVNEZ>.

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Mark Your Calendar

May 13, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. CDT, **Tennessee CASA Conference.** New Vision Baptist Church, Murfreesboro. Information at <http://bit.ly/1S6Rrft> or Lynne@tncasa.org.

May 16, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. CDT, **Empowering Faith Communities to Foster Resilience: Promoting Safe Stable Nurturing Relationships and Environments,** St. James Missionary Baptist Church, 600 28th Avenue, North, Nashville. Register at <http://spc051616.eventbrite.com/>.

May 21, **Managing Traumatic Brain Injury Through the Continuum of Care,** Vanderbilt Medical Center, Nashville. Register by contacting Kate.carney@vanderbilt.edu.

May 24-25, Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network training, **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST),** Workforce Essentials, Inc., 350 Pageant Lane, Ste. 406, Clarksville. To register, contact mleitsch@tspn.org or (615) 506-2729 before 4 p.m. CDT on Tuesday, May 17.

May 26-27, **2016 Disability MegaConference,** Nashville Airport Marriott, 600 Marriott Dr., Nashville. Register at <http://bit.ly/1VXKkMk>.

March 14-15, 2017, **Children's Advocacy Days,** War Memorial Auditorium. Contact: John.Rust@tn.gov.

In the News

PBS News Hour, **To Improve Lifelong health, Memphis Tries Rooting Out Childhood Trauma**, <http://to.pbs.org/1Vo25nW>.

O'Neal, Linda, *The (Nashville) Tennessean*, "Reducing the impact of parental incarceration in Tennessee," <http://tnne.ws/1W463Tw>.

O'Neal, Linda, *The (Memphis) Commercial Appeal*, "Reducing the impact of parental incarceration in Memphis," <http://bit.ly/1SVdY1k>.

Gonzalez, Tony, WPLN-Nashville Public Radio, "Jailing of Tennessee Parents Taking Toll on Children": <http://bit.ly/231wUxU>.

The (Memphis) Commercial Appeal, "Editorial: Early investing to mitigate ACEs pays big dividends later to children and society," <http://bit.ly/26LSIYD>

Venkataraman, Karthik, WCYP-5, "High Rates of Incarcerated Parents in Tennessee": <http://bit.ly/1Sw3x5f>.

Pleasant, Joseph, WKRN-TV 2, **Metro Schools working to help parents, children with adverse experiences**, (ACEs) <http://bit.ly/1RtPexF>.

Christina A. Samuels, *Education Week*, **Early-Ed. Measures Perculate at State, Local Levels**, (registration required) <http://bit.ly/1RCbQIS>.

Grace Tatter, Chalkbeat Tennessee, **Six months after sobering study, bill to up pre-K quality heads to governor's desk**, <http://bit.ly/22utAAq>.

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Research Information

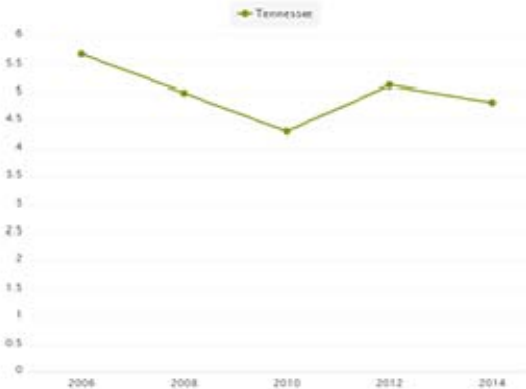
Haskins, Ron, et al, Brookings Institution, **Can states improve children's health by preventing abuse and neglect?**: <http://brook.gs/1UIDajK>.

Elsevier, **High-Quality Foster Care Reduces Chance of Callous-Emotional Trait Development for Abandoned Children Early in Life**, <http://bit.ly/1QF5syS>.

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Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts

Children Remaining in Custody at the End of State Fiscal Year

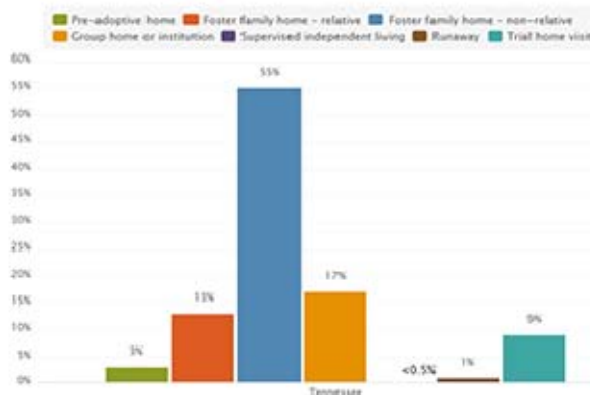


Note: Non-consecutive years appear adjacent in the trend line because one or more years have been deselected.

REMAINING IN STATE CUSTODY (RATE)

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

Children in Foster Care by Placement Type, Percent, 2013



CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE BY PLACEMENT TYPE: ALL (PERCENT) - 2013

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

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

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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