

# FY2022 -2023 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

DOLLARS INVESTED FROM 0-5 HAVE THE  
**LARGEST RETURN ON INVESTMENT**  
OF ANY AGE GROUP<sup>1</sup>

## Invest early to support Tennessee's youngest children.

- Continue policies that worked to stabilize child care in Tennessee.
- Through state agency contracts, support professional development opportunities for child care providers.
- Increase subsidies and incentives to providers to attract high-quality professionals.

## Prevent and mitigate the impact of ACEs by investing in community initiatives.

- Increase funding of ACEs innovation grants to further existing efforts, particularly in rural/distressed counties.
- Create and sustain statewide and/or regional infrastructure to provide technical assistance to help communities become trauma-informed and promote resilience.

## Support the healthy development of students by expanding access to support services.

- Fund and prioritize direct clinical mental health services in schools.
  - Counseling services should be provided by a Qualified Mental Health Professional, be easily available to all students and free of charge regardless of insurance status.
- Fund Family Resource Centers in every school district and increase service capability in districts where only a small portion of students can currently be served.

**50%**  
OF ALL LIFETIME CASES OF  
MENTAL ILLNESS BEGIN BY<sup>2</sup>  
**AGE 14**

**89%**  
OF CHILDREN IN CUSTODY  
ARE THERE DUE TO  
DEPENDENCY/NEGLECT<sup>3</sup>

## Invest state dollars in programs working to reduce the number of children entering state custody.

- Additional resources should be provided to help support relative caregivers. Child abuse prevention stakeholders should utilize community resources to connect relative caregivers with adequate supports. Maintain open communication with relative caregivers about where they may need extra support.
- Increase available placements at all levels to ensure that children are placed in an environment appropriate to their needs.

## Continue progress toward a trauma-informed youth justice system aimed at increasing community safety by reducing recidivism, supporting youth development and increasing community involvement.

- Fully implement the evidence-based services outlined in the Juvenile Justice Reform Act.
- Fund innovation and pilot programs to address juvenile offenses without court involvement.

## Fund programs and expand eligibility to prepare transition age youth for success in the workforce.

- Increase the number of youth served by extension of foster care services.
- Fund more Resource Centers for youth participating in extension of foster care services in rural parts of the state to assist transition age youth in those areas that are not currently being served.

**773**  
YOUTH SERVED THROUGH  
EXTENSION OF FOSTER  
CARE SERVICES LAST  
YEAR<sup>4</sup>