



# Advocate

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## Time for Safety...

Child advocates remain vigilant to protect children from injury, whether intentional or unintentional, in the summer as any other time.

June has been named National Safety Month by the National Safety Council. The leading cause of death for Americans ages 1 through 44 is unintentional injury, which, for youth ages 5 through 24, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), is most likely to be a traffic accident. Falls prompt the most injury visits to emergency room for most ages. Therefore, much of the emphasis of Safety Month is on being aware of threats in one's surroundings and avoiding distracted driving.

National Safety Month information: <http://bit.ly/tccyad8>.

## Safe Prescription-Pain Drug Use

The Governor and Doug Varney, commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS), announced a plan to address prescription drug abuse. According to TDMHSAS, "prescription drug abuse is a pervasive, multi-dimensional issue impacting Tennessee individuals, families, and communities." One of every 20 adults (about 221,000) in Tennessee is estimated to have used prescription opioid pain relievers in the past year for non-medical purposes. It is estimated that 69,100 Tennesseans are addicted to prescription opioids and need treatment. Prescription drug overdose deaths more than doubled between 2001 and 2011.

Addiction to pain medicine is especially problematic in pregnant women, whose use of opioids has increased sharply in the past decade. The number of drug-exposed babies, or those with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), increased three-fold in the same period. Among the many concerns advocates had with the new law criminalizing use of illegal narcotics during pregnancy was its failure to address prescription drug abuse, a significant contributor to NAS.

The path many travel through prescription drug abuse to heroin use, which can be cheaper and more readily available, often begins with chronic pain. The National Safety Council focuses its prescription drug abuse efforts on preventing chronic pain by promoting back safety.

Data shows that the 12- to 17-year-old and 18- to 25-year-old populations are most at risk for abusing prescription opioids in Tennessee.

State's plan for addressing prescription drug abuse: <http://tn.gov/mental/prescriptionforsuccess/>.

Overview of data on NAS in Tennessee: <http://bit.ly/tccyad7>.

Tennessee efforts to prevent NAS: <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/pres-CAD-13-NAS.pdf>.

## Sleep Safety

Some of the most tragic, and preventable, infant deaths are sleep related. The CDC reports suffocation is the leading cause of injury death in infants. The Baby Back to Sleep program – encouraging parents to place their babies to sleep on their backs – has been successful in reducing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Sudden Infant Unexplained Fatalities. The Tennessee Department of Health's (TDOH) new campaign calls attention to the **ABCs of Safe Sleep: Alone: Children die when a parent rolls over them while asleep; Back: On their backs; and In a Crib.** Another "C" might be "clear": cribs should be clear of pillows and toys and have a firm mattress. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends moving infants who fall asleep in car seats, strollers, swings, infant carriers and sofas to a firmer surface. In fact, not sleeping in a crib or bassinette was a factor in four of every five sleep-related deaths in Tennessee.



TDOH's package of infant safe sleep materials is available at <http://bit.ly/tccyadv4>.

The AAP's website for parents, [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org), includes information on safe sleep: <http://bit.ly/tccyadv5>.

## Commissioner's Council for Injury Prevention

Steve Petty represents TCCY on the Commissioner's Council for Injury Prevention (CCIPC) established by the Tennessee Department of Health (TDOH). The CCIP engages leaders to support planning, injury-prevention priority setting and decision making for the TDOH Injury and Violence Prevention Program. CCIP objectives are:

1. Raise awareness and support for injury prevention throughout Tennessee;
2. Enhance the ability of local communities to implement and evaluate evidence-based injury prevention;

3. Provide training, support and guidance for injury and violence prevention.

The CCIP is holding a Falls Prevention Conference 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. July 23 at the Ellington Agricultural Center in Nashville. The keynote speaker will be Ellen C. Schneider from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, who co-leads the National Falls Free® Initiative and facilitates the national Falls Prevention Awareness and Advocacy Committee. Register for the free conference at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/V5YFW8Y>. Contact [Terrence.Love@tn.gov](mailto:Terrence.Love@tn.gov) for more information about the council or the conference.

## Child Welfare

In April we called attention to the need to prevent child abuse, and in May we celebrated foster care. June has been designated Reunification Month by the American Bar Association. The most common reason children in Tennessee leave state custody is to be reunited with their parent or caretaker. Equipping family members with the skills, understanding and perseverance they need to overcome problems has far-reaching effects. Reunification Month recognizes individuals and those who support their efforts to be safely reunited as families.

National Reunification Month information: <http://bit.ly/tccyad9>.

## Updates



At its recent conference, the [Tennessee Court Appointed Special Advocates](#) statewide organization celebrated 25 years improving the lives of children.

**About Us.** TCCY and friends recently showered **Council on Children's Mental Health Director Dustin Keller and former TCCY staffer Sumita Keller** (left) with good wishes and gifts to help the couple prepare for the arrival of their son, **Ranjan Thomas Keller**.

It's been an exciting time for **Dr. Dustin Keller**, who was hooded as a Ph.D. at a graduation ceremony. Keller

earned his Ph.D. in psychology from Northcentral University.

TCCY's statewide DMC Task Force held a very successful **Disproportionate Minority Contact Summit** in Memphis on June 6, which included a panel of legislators and reports from local programs.

TCCY Executive Director Linda O'Neal and Associate Director Richard Kennedy met with *The Tennessean* Chairman Emeritus John Seigenthaler to present him the first **John Seigenthaler Making KIDS COUNT Media Award** named in his honor. Seigenthaler was unable to be present when the award was announced at Children's Advocacy Days. (Seigenthaler and O'Neal are shown at right.)



## Mark Your Calendar

June 18, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., **Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare West Region "Summer Spritzer,"** Madison County Health Department, 804 N. Parkway, Jackson. Registration and information: <http://conta.cc/QK8oTr>.

June 19-20, **TCCY Council on Children's Mental Health** meeting, Ed Jones Auditorium, Ellington Agriculture Center, Nashville. Contact Dustin Keller: [Dustin.Keller@tn.gov](mailto:Dustin.Keller@tn.gov).

June 21, **Resource Parent appreciation/training event**, Davy Crockett State Park, Lawrenceburg.

June 21, 1-3 p.m., **Disability Coalition on Education (DCE): RTI<sup>2</sup> (Response to Intervention) Training**, Boling Center for Developmental Disabilities, 711 Jefferson Ave, Memphis. Contact Angela Webster, Disability Law & Advocacy Center of TN: (615) 298-1080, (931) 561-3209 or [angelaw@dlactn.org](mailto:angelaw@dlactn.org). Info: <http://bit.ly/1jNa3DP>.

June 27, **West Tennessee Rural Health Association**. Contact [susan@rhat.org](mailto:susan@rhat.org) or (615) 413-3322 for information.

June 28, **Resource Parent Appreciation/Training Event**, Henry Horton State Park, Marshall County.

Aug. 3-6, **Tennessee Juvenile Court Services Association Conference**, Park Vista Hotel, Gatlinburg. Contact [mmiller@bristoltn.org](mailto:mmiller@bristoltn.org) or (865) 436-9211.

March 10-11, **2015 Children's Advocacy Days**, War Memorial Auditorium. Contact Richard Kennedy at [Richard.Kennedy@tn.gov](mailto:Richard.Kennedy@tn.gov).

## In the News

*The (Nashville) Tennessean*, "Drug-Dependent Babies Challenge Doctors, Politicians," <http://bit.ly/tccyad11>.

*The (Nashville) Tennessean* editorial, "Law Jailing Moms Is Based in Ignorance," <http://bit.ly/tccyad10>.

ABC TV, *Katie!*, "Meet Inspiring Foster Kids," <http://bit.ly/tccyfb4>.

*The (Nashville) Tennessean* editorial, "Kudos to DCS getting 'back on track'," <http://bit.ly/tccyfb5>.

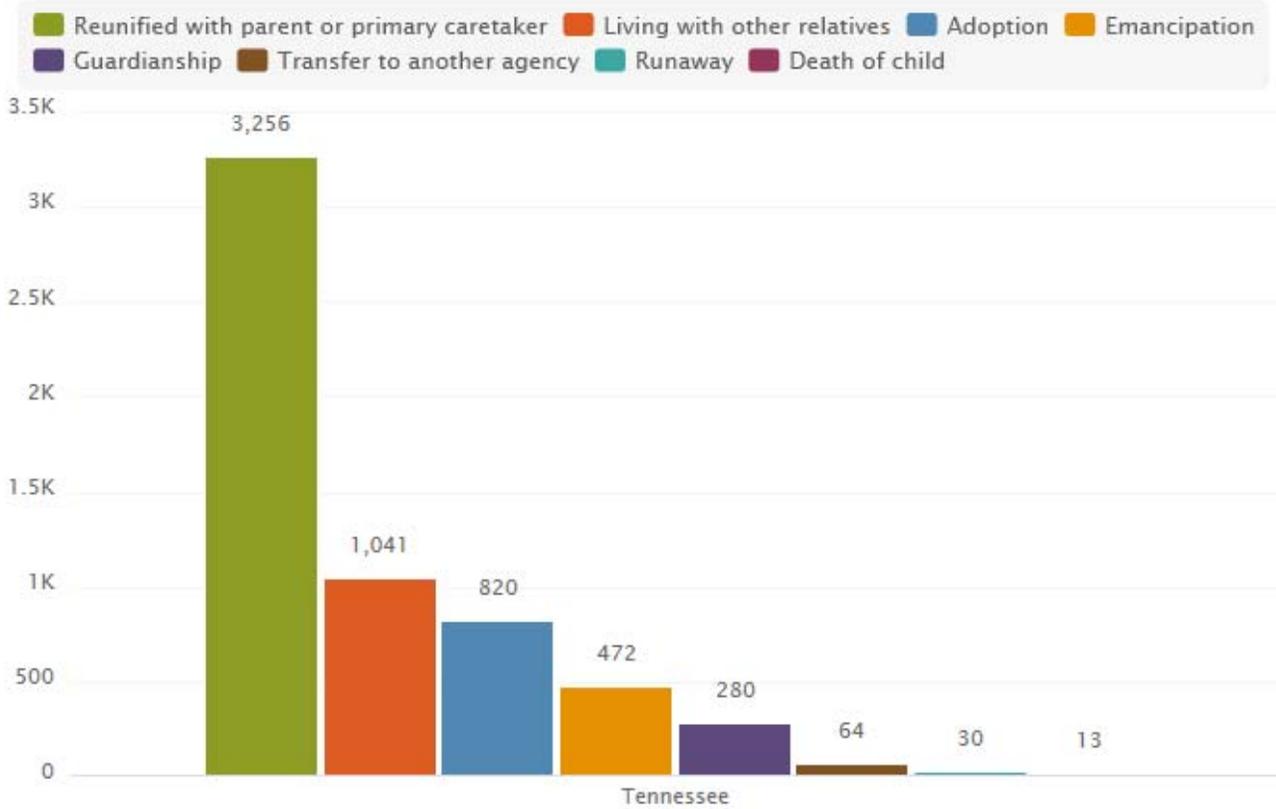
WREG Memphis TV Channel 3, "Minorities Disproportionately Affected by Juvenile Justice System," <http://bit.ly/tccyfb4>.

## Research Information

Pew Charitable Trusts, "Measuring Juvenile Recidivism: Data Collection and Reporting in Juvenile Corrections," <http://bit.ly/tccyad5>.

National Research Council, [The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Exploring Causes and Consequences](#), <http://bit.ly/1sqqAhc>.

## Youth Exiting Foster Care



### CHILDREN EXITING FOSTER CARE BY EXIT REASON: ALL (NUMBER) - 2012

National KIDS COUNT

KIDS COUNT Data Center, [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org)

A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

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

To suggest content or manage subscriptions to *The Advocate*, contact [fay.delk@tn.gov](mailto:fay.delk@tn.gov).

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