



Advocate

November 2014

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Bullying Awareness Issue

TCCY intern Kaila Gilbert provided much of the content of this newsletter.

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Bullying

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Youth Transitions Advisory Council Submits 2014 Annual Report

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council reported on the state's efforts to improve the transition of youth in Department of Children's Services' (DCS) custody to adulthood in October. Services to youth over the age of 18 are now "extension of foster care" (EFC) services. The report listed accomplishments and recommended improvements. In fiscal year 2014, according to the report, 779 youth received EFC services. The percentage of eligible youth who accepted EFC services in fiscal year 2013-14, 40 percent, was double the amount in fiscal year 2010-11, the first year post-custody services were offered.

Tennessee became the first U.S. state to extend comprehensive transition services to all youth aging out of both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Primary partners include four resource centers, funded for fiscal year 2015 to provide transitional services and assistance: "I AM READY, Chattanooga; Youth Connections, Nashville; South Memphis Alliance; and Helen Ross McNabb, Knoxville. The Youth Villages Transitional Living services were expanded, with the collaborative funding from both the nonprofit and DCS. This program is being rigorously evaluated.

Former foster youth and representatives of government and private agencies make up the Council. DCS coordinates Youth Leadership Academies and Youth 4 Youth board meetings for youth with local groups across the state.

Steve Petty (steve.petty@tn.gov) staffs the Youth Transitions Advisory Council.

"Aside from the skills I could've learned in any book, it was the wisdom that also came with it..... I needed that support and it allowed me to take a turn for the better. It's not about where I come from but where I'm going."
Hezekiah , participant in the Youth Villages Transitional Living Program

- The report is available at <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/yt-ar-14.pdf>

New KIDS COUNT® Report Recommends Two-Generation Programs to Strengthen Families

Creating Opportunity for Families: A Two-Generation Approach, released Nov. 12 by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT® project, calls for cooperative efforts to strengthen families — parents and children — as they seek better futures. Successful parents help children thrive, and together they contribute to a stronger economy in Tennessee and nationwide.

Half of all Tennessee children age eight or younger, nearly a quarter million children, live in families whose low incomes limit their access to health care, out-of-school activities and family time together, while also increasing their stress.

Creating Opportunity for Families: A Two-Generation Approach is available online at <http://bit.ly/2genf>



Johnson County High School Students Promote “Unity Day”



East Tennessee teens have taken a stand against bullying with the launch of “Unity Day.” On October 22nd, the student body contained a rolling sea of orange that symbolized unity in an anti-bullying campaign. The event came together as an initiative of the Unity Committee, a combination of parents, students and faculty committed to fighting bullying. This committee also provides opportunities for students to gain leadership skills while raising awareness. It hopes to expand its membership among students.

Principal Arnold stated, “I think we have a strong climate here at JCHS, but there’s always work to be done.”

- For the full story, [click here](#).

Talking About Bullying in Tennessee: Terms and Definitions

All states in the U.S. have their own unique policies concerning anti-bullying and harassment practices. Tennessee’s history is relatively recent. When two high school students committed suicide in 2011, [lawmakers worked to address the situation](#) by gathering better data. A 2013 report found 5,478 reported cases of bullying in Tennessee schools. Individual county citizens have since initiated a number of anti-bullying campaigns. In June of 2014, Tennessee was the first state to pass a statewide anti-bullying campaign in the workplace. Understanding the key points of Tennessee anti-bullying policy will help advocates as they press forward on policy measures and reforms.

- **Tennessee Recognized Terms:** Harassment, intimidation bullying or cyberbullying.
- **Bullying vs. Harassment:** According to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), bullying becomes harassment when it is based on a student’s race, color, national origin, sex or disability. This includes behaviors like:
 - Verbal abuse, such as name-calling, epithets, slurs;
 - Graphic or written statements;



- Threats;
- Physical assault;
- Other conduct that may be physically threatening, harmful or humiliating.
- **Prohibited Behaviors in Tennessee:** Tennessee law states that retaliation to bullying is also prohibited in schools and communities. In particular, the laws prohibit:
 - Retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying;
 - Perpetuating bullying or harassing conduct by spreading hurtful or demeaning material, even if the material was created by another person (e.g., forwarding offensive e-mails or text messages).

(Source: <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/info-facts.asp>)

Bullying in Your District: Tennessee Code Annotated 49-6-4501-4503 requires every school district have a policy prohibiting bullying and harassment as well as procedures for investigating reports of bullying and harassment. Questions regarding bullying should be directed to the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools at (615) 741-3248.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention Tackles Bullying, Electronic Aggression

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently spotlighted youth bullying and strategies for preventing it on its Youth Violence page. Special attention was given to electronic aggression. Also known as cyber-bullying, this interaction may happen through email, chat rooms, social media sites, text messages or other forms of instant communication. In general, the Internet provides meaningful opportunities to broaden knowledge, connect with similar peers and gain new skills. However, there are risks involved: the Internet may be used to embarrass, threaten or harass one's peers.

The CDC defines bullying as "Any unwanted aggressive behaviors. . .that involve an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated."

Promising program elements for more effective strategies include:

- Improving supervision of students;
- Using school rules and behavior management techniques in the classroom and throughout the school to detect and address bullying by providing consequences for such behavior;
- Having a whole-school, anti-bullying policy, and enforcing that policy consistently;
- Promoting cooperation among different professionals and between school staff and parents.

More information:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/bullyingresearch/index.html>.

Updates

The Dept. of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services was awarded two federal grants totaling \$5 million to address Tennessee's rising suicide rate. Only four states earned these competitive grants: <http://bit.ly/tccyfb51>

Mark Your Calendar

Dec. 1, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Tennessee Children's Advocacy Centers presents "**Stewards of Children,**" a training program that teaches adults how to recognize, prevent and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. South College West Campus, 400 Goody's Lane, Knoxville. Free and open to the public, but registration required; Contact Ambler Brown at abrown@tncac.org or (865) 986-1505 x109 to RSVP/learn more.

Dec. 2-3, **Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO) 2014 Annual Conference**, Embassy

Suites Hotel & Convention Center, Murfreesboro. [Click here](#) to access the online conference registration or contact tamho@tamho.org for more information.

Dec. 5, 8 a.m., **Northeast Council on Children and Youth Breakfast for Our Legislators**, The Holiday Inn, 101 W. Springbrook Dr., Johnson City. Register by contacting diane.wise@tn.gov. Fees required (\$9 for current members; 19 for new or renewing members).

Dec. 5, 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m., **Upper Cumberland Council on Children and Youth Legislative Breakfast**, Upper Cumberland State Office Building and Regional Health Facility, 1100 England Drive, Cookeville. Contact John.Rust@tn.gov for more information.

Dec. 5, 8-10:30 a.m., **Northwest Council Legislative Forum and Networking Breakfast**, Boling University Center, 2nd Floor Ballroom, U.T. Martin. Registration free with paid membership; \$20, non-members. Contact dana.cobb@tn.gov by Dec. 1 to register.

Dec. 5, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., **East Tennessee Council on Children and Youth Legislative Breakfast**, 2nd Presbyterian Church, 2829 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, with DCS Commissioner Jim Henry, Judge Tim Irwin and invited state legislators.

Dec. 8, **Compassion Fatigue**, TBA. Contact Mental Health America-MT at www.mhamt.org, (615) 269-5355 or tstarling@mhamt.org. Register at <http://bit.ly/tccyec52>.

Dec. 11-12, **Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth meeting**, Andrew Jackson Building, 502 Deaderick St., Nashville. Contact Diane.Baham@tn.gov for more information.

March 10-11, **Children's Advocacy Days**, War Memorial Auditorium, Nashville. TBA. Contact (615) 741-2633 or richard.kennedy@tn.gov. Register at <https://cad2015.eventbrite.com>.

In the News

The (Nashville) Tennessean, "Report says low-income families need linked job, child care programs" <http://bit.ly/tccyfb48>.

Public News Service, Tennessee, "Governor's proclamation recognizes the state's afterschool programs' role in developing children," <http://bit.ly/tccyfb49>.

Memphis Commercial Appeal, Linda O'Neal, "Guest column: Children succeed when their parents succeed," <http://bit.ly/tccyfb47>.

Research Information

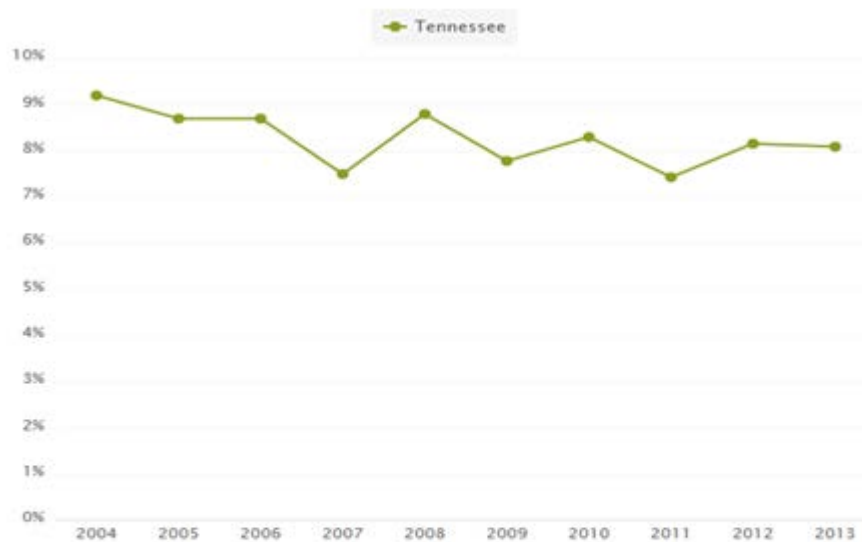
How Schools Can Help Students with Traumatic Stress, Rand Corporation, <http://bit.ly/14jwlls>.

Public Favors Public Funding to Support Parents and Children, Children's Leadership Council: <http://bit.ly/tccyad51>.

Assessing Alternative Modifications to the Affordable Care Act, reporting on impact of eliminating tax credits and individual mandate, Rand Corporation: <http://bit.ly/1zADU5b>.

America's Youngest Outcasts: A Report Card on Child Homelessness, National Center on Family Homelessness at <http://bit.ly/tccyad53>.

Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts



SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS (PERCENT)

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth
KIDS COUNT Data Center, 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>.

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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