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Advocate

August 2016

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2016-17 School Year Begins

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Schools Are the Key to Our Future

A recent survey of young voters ages 18 to 35 ranked education as their most important issue. Business groups like the local Chambers of Commerce understand the importance of education. Much of the conflict over testing, etc., focuses on academic achievement, despite the evidence of the role of sleep, nutrition, trauma, safety, housing, etc., in achieving success. Child advocates seek to help communities understand the importance of supportive services and build foundations to support our schools.

Graduation Rates Are Improving!



In the 2016 *Education Week* report, “Diplomas Count,” Tennessee exceeded the national average of the public school graduation rate for all students and all of the subcategories: students with disabilities, limited English proficiency or economic disadvantages and those from different racial categories. Tennessee, like the nation, still has room for improvement in educating students with disabilities.

For 10 years, *Education Week* magazine has published this report on high school graduation policy and data to compare states that were using different definitions of school dropout. In 2012, the federal government required all states to use the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate. TCCY continues to report a similar cohort graduation rate, which measures graduation of students who entered school in the ninth grade but failed to complete 12 years of education.

GradNation. Another report, *Building a Grad Nation*, also noted the nation’s graduation rate was at a record high. It identified Tennessee as on pace to achieve a 90-percent graduation rate by 2020.

Education Week, **Diplomas Count**, 2016 (Subscription or registration required), <http://bit.ly/29CguvA>.

2016 Building a GradNation Report: Progress and Challenge in Raising High School Graduation Rates: <http://bit.ly/29sAA9q>.

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Positive Behavior Responses Improve Retention

Some successful efforts to improve high school graduation address the time when students transition to high school, a crucial point where decisions about continuing school are made, and during high school. However, as with other aspects of education, the time to plan to meet goals is at the beginning. Positive early learning experiences foster development and draw children into an engaged relationship with school. Appropriate school responses to student behavior can decrease school dropout, increase academic success and raise positive attitudes about school.



Suspension and expulsion have the opposite effect and contribute to increased incarceration. A recent U.S. Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families report recommends ways to assure best practices and equal treatment.

Recommendations include:

- Establishing fair and appropriate policies and implement them without bias;
- Investing in a highly skilled workforce;
- Accessing specialized supports for administrators and educators;
- Strengthening family partnerships;
- Implementing universal developmental and behavioral screening;
- Setting goals and tracking data.

The report identifies qualities of successful programs, including:

- Using data to make the case that expulsion and suspension is a local problem that affects children and families in the community, demonstrate that policies and interventions are working and fix those that are not;
- Identifying and taking advantage of policy opportunities, such as revision of school policy manuals, child care licensing regulations or quality rating and improvement systems;
- Having the support of state leaders—whether governors, state legislators, council members or department heads—to help push policies over the finish line;
- Partnering with, or taking the lead from, families, teachers and the advocacy community to ensure that their voices are heard and that the policies and practices implemented address their needs;
- Addressing the issue across the early childhood system, including in public pre-K, child care, and other early learning programs and using policy levers that are specific to each system; and
- Expanding and enhancing existing supports for early educators, such as early childhood mental health consultation or behavior coaches.

U.S. Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, ***State and Local Action to Prevent Expulsion and Suspension in Early Learning Settings***, <http://bit.ly/2a1CYSk>.

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An earlier TCCY newsletter on education included a cartoon of a child arriving in school burdened by luggage – a representation of the burden of poverty, parental stress, etc., some children drag into school each day. In the years since, research on the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and stress on the brain and body has led to more trauma-informed education.

Stress impacts both students and staff. A recent study of the levels of a stress hormone in children and teachers' reports of their own stress, found higher stress in children with stressed teachers. Efforts have turned to creating school climates that foster a supportive atmosphere for students and staff. According to the National Center on School Climate, a sustainable, positive school climate promotes youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributing and satisfying life. This climate includes:

- Norms, values and expectations that help people feel socially, emotionally and physically safe;
- Engaged and respected people;
- Students, families and educators working together to develop, live and contribute to a shared school vision;
- Educators modeling and nurturing attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning;
- Each person contributing to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.

Compassionate Schools. One tool being used to create a positive school culture is Compassionate Schools, founded on the belief compassion is a pre-requisite for fostering resiliency. The 10 principles of a Compassionate School are to:

1. Focus on culture and climate in the school and community;
2. Train and support all staff regarding trauma and learning;
3. Encourage and sustain open and regular communication for all;
4. Develop a strengths-based approach in working with students and peers;
5. Ensure discipline policies are both compassionate and effective (Restorative Practices);
6. Weave compassionate strategies into school improvement planning;
7. Provide tiered support for all students based on what they need;
8. Create flexible accommodations for diverse learners;
9. Provide access, voice and ownership for staff, students and community;
10. Use data to identify vulnerable students, and determine outcomes and strategies for continuous quality improvement.

National School Climate Center, **School Climate**, <http://bit.ly/2apeg4n>.

Thompson, David, Buncombe County Schools, InDesign SlideShare: **Building Resilient Children by Creating Compassionate Schools**, <http://bit.ly/2a1BpSb>.

Wolpov et al, Compassionate Schools: The Heart of Learning and Teaching, Western WA University, **The Heart of Learning and Teaching: Compassion, Resiliency, and Academic Success**, <http://bit.ly/2abm4So>.

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Through the state's Building Strong Brains ACEs initiative, the Tennessee Department of Children's Services will be accepting proposals for innovative approaches to prevent and mitigate the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences. The deadline to submit proposals is August 5, 2016. The link for the application is below. Please contact Regina Newman with any questions (Regina.Newman@tn.gov).

Tennessee Department of Children's Services, **Announcement of Funding**, <http://bit.ly/29nsOLT>.

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kidcentraltn.com Has Resources for Helping Children Return to School

Tennessee's online resource for families has information about helping children transition back to school. School retention and success are built on student attendance. Attendance is linked to student engagement, which contributes to children's desire to go to school. Watch their video using the link below.

<http://kidcentraltn.com>, <http://bit.ly/2arfxqp>.

Back to School: Help Kids Keep Their Attendance Up, <http://bit.ly/2axShb3>.

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Updates

TCCY Juvenile Justice Director Craig Hargrow graduated from the Tennessee Government Management Institute. Craig also directs the Second Look Commission and TCCY's Disproportionate Minority Contact efforts.

Hargrow is also celebrating the Bronze medal his son Khalfani earned in an international martial arts competition in Birmingham, England.

DCS now has information on reporting child abuse for those more comfortable speaking Spanish: <http://bit.ly/29ORyQC>.

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Mark Your Calendar

Aug. 1-3, **Child Welfare League of America Conference**, Orange County, California. Information: <http://bit.ly/1TeVbOu>. Register: <http://bit.ly/29VGkel>.

Aug. 2, **Coalition for Juvenile Justice Youth Summit**, Georgetown University Hotel and Conference Center, Washington, DC, for emerging leaders under age 25. Information: <http://bit.ly/1ZyPo8z>. Register by June 19 at <http://bit.ly/1UoORIs>. Fees range from \$90 to \$120.

Aug. 3-5, **North American Council on Adoptable Children Conference**, co-hosted by Harmony Family Center and Tennessee Department of Children's Services, Nashville. More information available at info@nacac.org, (615) 644-3036 or www.nacac.org.

Aug. 4, 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., **Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) Meeting**, Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee, 937 Herman Street, Nashville. Contact Steve.Petty@tn.gov.

Aug. 5, 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., **Innovations in Substance Use Disorder Treatment**, Sponsored by Centerstone, Patterson Park Community Center, 521 Mercury Blvd, Murfreesboro. Free. Register at <http://bit.ly/29p2nqo>.

Aug. 5, 2016, 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., East TN Council on Children and Youth workshop, **"Stronger Babies, Stronger Communities,"** Bridgewater Place, 205 Bridgewater Road, Knoxville. Register at <http://bit.ly/29hnNVY>. Approved for 3.0 CEUs by NASW-TN. Contact: Lindsey.Cody@tn.gov.

Aug. 12, 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., **Ethical Practice in a Digital Age**. Brown-Kopel Business Center, Freed-Hardeman University, Henderson. Information and registration at <http://bit.ly/2atEY91>.

Aug. 14-17, **Joint Conference on Juvenile Justice**, 33rd Annual Joint Conference on Juvenile Justice, Peabody Hotel, Memphis. Sponsored by the Tennessee Juvenile Court Services Association and the Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Registration form available at <http://bit.ly/298o6VH>. Contact: Jennifer.mckissick@shelbycountyttn.gov.

Aug. 23, **Council on Children's Mental Health Meeting-August**, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Midtown Hills Police Precinct, 1443 Twelfth, S., Nashville. Contact: Melissa.McGee@tn.gov.

Aug. 23, 8:30 a.m to 12 p.m., Northwest and Southwest Council on Children and Youth are co-sponsoring **Not for Sale: Ending Human Trafficking in Tennessee**, Boling University Center, Martin. Free. Pre-registration at <http://bit.ly/2ajHTC2> is required.

Aug. 25-26, **Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth Meeting**, Andrew Jackson Building, 502 Deaderick St, 9th Floor, Nashville. Contact: natasha.m.smith@tn.gov.

Aug. 27, 8:00 am to 3:45 pm CDT, Tennessee Health Care Campaign annual conference, **To Your Health, Tennessee: Sustaining the Effort!**, Nashville School of Law. Contact (615) 227-7500 or susanveale@thcc2.org. Registration fee is \$40 for an individual. Register at <http://bit.ly/1Q8PPq4>.

Aug. 31-Sept. 2, **20th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect**, "Building Community, Building Hope," Grand Hyatt Washington, DC. More information: <http://bit.ly/2aNEAkG>.

Sept. 1, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Rural West Suicide Prevention Network, **"Saving Lives in Rural West Tennessee: Adverse Childhood Experiences,"** Ayers Auditorium, J.Walter Barnes Conference Center, Jackson-Madison Co. General Hospital. Register at <http://bit.ly/2azBEMx>.

Sept. 20, 10 a.m., **Second Look Commission Quarterly Meeting**, Administrative Office of the Courts Conference Room, 511 Union St., Nashville. Contact: Craig.Hargrow@tn.gov.

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

In the News

Sparks, Sarah D., *Education Week*, “**One Key to Reducing School Suspension: A Little Respect**” (Login registration or subscription required.): <http://bit.ly/29CxtL5>.

Tully, Sarah, *Education Week*, “**Education Secretary to PTA: Demand Diversity in Schools, Teaching Force**” (Login registration or subscription required.): <http://bit.ly/29mWzSU>.

McMillin, John, *Lebanon Democrat*, “**National report details health and human service statistics**,” <http://bit.ly/29BKyUk>.

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Research Information

Food Research and Action, **How Hungry Is America? FRAC’s National, State, and Local Index of Food Hardship**, June 2016, <http://bit.ly/29de5ot>.

USB News, **Stress contagion possible amongst students and teachers**, <http://bit.ly/29djKea>

U.S. Department of Education, **State and Local Expenditures on Corrections and Education: A Brief from the U.S. Department of Education, Policy and Program Studies Service**, July 2016, <http://bit.ly/29omVyx>.

Whitebook, Marcy, et al., Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, ***The Early Childhood Workforce Index***, <http://bit.ly/29u3IDL>.

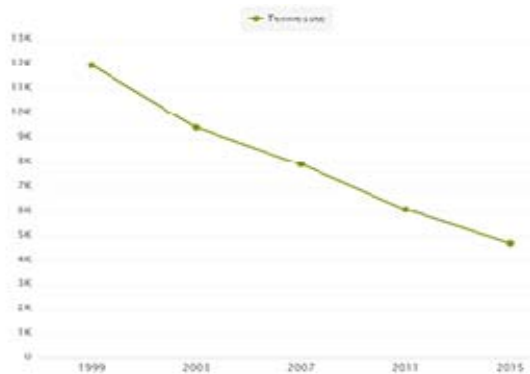
Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, ***America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being***, <http://bit.ly/29Bbgle>

Dynarski, Mark, Brookings Institute, ***On Negative Effects of Vouchers***: <http://brook.gs/1RTjcqg>.

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Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts

Cohort High School Dropouts

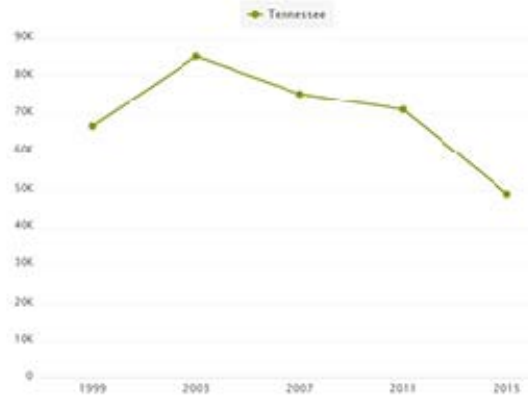


Note: Non-consecutive years appear adjacent in the trend line because one or more years have been deselected.

COHORT HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS (NUMBER)

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

School Suspensions



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

SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS (NUMBER)

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

<http://bit.ly/2a5xsj2>

<http://bit.ly/2ac27Kn>

More data on Tennessee child well-being are 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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