



The Advocate

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A newsletter on children's issues

April 2001

TN Legislation Prompts Changes in Child Care

The Tennessee Department of Human Services has begun implementation of the child care law passed by the legislature last year.

While in the past day care licensing was designed to assure parents that centers met a minimum standard of safety, the new regulations require the department to rate centers on a number of measures of quality.

The goals of the new rated license system are to:

- Promote and recognize quality child care;
- Provide a system parents can use to evaluate the quality of child care programs; and
- Increase and retain the number of quality child care providers.

Legislation passed in June 2000 required that DHS establish and implement a tiered, or graded, licensing system and a report card for all licensed child care agencies. Indicators to be considered were:

- Health and safety;
- Training, education, certification, and credentials of supervisory staff;
- Staff ratios;
- Child development and enrichment;
- Accreditation status; and
- Adequacy of physical facilities.

A planning group of 34 people involved with child care centers and 24 people involved in family and



group homes met over nine months to develop the criteria for evaluation. Meetings were held across the state and a draft of the criteria was sent to the more than 5,000 licensed agencies, 180 of whom made written comments.

The components of the rating system for child care centers are:

- Director qualifications;
- Professional development or teaching staff qualifications;
- Compliance history;
- Parent/family involvement;
- Environment rating scales; and
- Staff compensation.

The components of the rating system for family and

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Governor Asks for Money for More CASA Programs

The 2001-02 budget the governor sent to the Legislature includes \$120,000 in the TCCY budget to fund eight additional Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs.

The CASA program began in 1976 in Seattle when a presiding judge decided to use trained volunteers to do the thorough investigation required to make informed decisions in child abuse and custody cases. These volunteers filled in the gap caused by a lack of attorneys trained and willing to work in these cases. The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974 required the appointment of attorneys as guardian *ad litem*s, and in 1990 Congress passed the Victims of Child Abuse Act, which included funding for CASA programs.

In fiscal year 1999-2000, TCCY-administered CASA funds provided services for more than 2,600 children in Anderson, Blount, Davidson, Hamblen, Hamilton, Knox, Madison, Sevier, Shelby, Sullivan, Sumner, Washington, Williamson, and Wilson counties. Each county received \$15,000. In 1998-99, the 14 Tennessee programs used 653 active volunteers to serve 2,363 children.

According to figures available, state funding, including nearly \$300,000 in funding from the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS) to Knox and Shelby counties, made up 36 percent of the programs' budgets. The cost per child served by CASA was an average of \$578. If the length of time a child spends in state custody is shortened by even a month or two on average, the CASA programs are cost effective. The average monthly placement cost per child is \$390 for a child in a DCS foster home and \$2,940 for a child in a contract placement.

State funding for Tennessee CASA projects began in 1986. Until the early 1990s, when the figure was raised, each county received \$10,000 in state funding.

Nationwide, according to the national CASA organization, 42,400 adults volunteer an average of 88 hours a year.

CASA volunteers:



- Conduct thorough research into the facts of a case in juvenile court;
- Make recommendations about the disposition of the case;
- Assure children get services mandated;
- Monitor the case over time.

State funding for CASA programs through the Commission is not available until after a program is developed and operational. Programs must be established before state funds are provided because additional funding is needed since the \$15,000 provided by TCCY is insufficient to maintain a fully functioning program. Limited start-up grants are available from the National Court Appointed Special Advocates Association (www.nationalcasa.org).

Tennessee CASA agencies are supported by the Tennessee Court Appointed Special Advocate Association, a nonprofit organization that was created in 1986 by local program directors. To locate a CASA program, contact the national website.

Grant Application Forms Now Available

The Juvenile Justice Section of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth has taken another step into the 21st Century by placing printable copies of its grant application forms on the TCCY website. The forms can be found at www.state.tn.us/tccy/.

Many recent TCCY publications and information about the agency can be downloaded from the agency website at www.state.tn.us/tccy. Adobe Acrobat Reader software is required in order to print and use these files. A link is provided to the source of this freely available software.

Please contact us at fdelk@mail.state.tn.us to let us know what you think of the website and to recommend additional features.

Governor Proposes Reading Initiative

Most people want their tax dollars spent on programs that work. Gov. Don Sundquist, in preparing proposals for educational improvements, has selected programs that have shown success in improving children's ability to succeed in school.

Sundquist, along with at least five other Southern governors, has made education one of his top priorities for this year's legislation. His proposal has four basic components:

- Improving the teaching of reading by identifying and training reading coaches and better diagnosing student reading problems;
- Expanding early childhood education for more at-risk 4-year-olds;
- Recruiting and preparing the best and brightest students to be teachers;
- Increasing the level of funding for classroom resources to \$500 per class (or about an average of \$20 per child, per year) in five years.

Reading Initiative. The goal of the proposal is that all children will be reading competently by grade three. Research suggests that if a child gets behind by the third grade, the prognosis for educational success is very poor. Two-thirds of Tennessee's third graders may be reading below proficiency levels now.

Many teachers do not have the skills to help their students read. An ongoing review of the teaching of reading by the Rand Corp. identified at least nine complexities of teaching reading. The governor proposes to select a teacher from each school serving kindergarten through grade eight for special training as a reading coach. The reading coach will then provide peer support by leading weekly team meetings with other teachers. Efforts will also be focused on catching up students who have fallen behind.

A three-year pilot study of similar proposals in Mississippi found significant increases.

Quality Early Childhood Education has been shown to have a long-term effect on children's education. The Abecedarian Study conducted by the University of North Carolina found that early and

Long-Term Effects of High Quality Early Childhood Education

At age 21, people who had been given high quality child care as young children:

- Had higher reading and mathematics achievement scores;
- Were twice as likely to still be in school at age 21;
- Were more than twice as likely to be attending or to have graduated from a 4-year college.
- Were on average older at the birth of their first child;
- Were somewhat more likely to be employed.

Source: Carolina Abecedarian Project

Effects of High Quality Child Care:

- Quality child care continues to predict children's performance well into school careers.
- Children who have traditionally been at risk are more affected by the quality of child care experiences.
- The quality of child care classroom practices was related to children's cognitive development.
- The closeness of the child care teacher-child relationship influenced children's social development through the early school years.

Frank Porter Graham Center, 1999

consistently high quality child care had significant effects that lasted through the school years and to age 21.

Education officials testified about "Suzie" who arrived at school with a vocabulary of only 25 words and, like her five older siblings, behind other children. Unlike the other children of her low-functioning parents, Suzie began a Tennessee Early Childhood Learning Program. She completed the program with a 2,000 word vocabulary, and successfully moved into a regular classroom, avoiding the need for the special education services the rest of her family received. The proposed program, to be progressively implemented, would provide early childhood education to every 4-year-old child at risk of school failure. The program would be voluntary, but the goal is to make preschool available for every at-risk child within five years.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention. According to a report by the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Tennessee did something right in 1992. The state, which was 48th in the nation

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Information Available Through Health Department Site

The goal of the TNKIDS Web site project is to support the Governor's Initiative on Children and Youth by coordinating and computerizing data and documents from several Tennessee departments dealing with children and youth; developing interactive Internet tools for accessing, profiling and graphically displaying data and statistical results, including interactive mapping; and creating a Web site parallel to the HIT site with a new component called SCORE (Summary County Results Explorer).

Since all of the participating partners in the TNKIDS effort provided annual data at the county level to KIDS COUNT, the initial planning and development of the TNKIDS Web site was focused on KIDS COUNT data, reports, and national comparisons for benchmarking. This was the logical structural and organizational foundation for creating the Web site for TNKIDS data, and for making data available for customized queries on SCORE.

The activities involved in the startup of the Web site included:

1. Loading the KIDS COUNT report data onto the TNKIDS site, for use in SCORE by report year, and designing the site logo with input from partners;
2. Providing links from KIDS COUNT SCORE to the national KIDS COUNT Web site and to that of the sponsoring agency, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY);
3. Loading recent Tennessee KIDS COUNT reports under HIT REPORTS;
4. Receiving similar summary data from each participating department at county and regional levels by event year to populate KIDS SCORE, as a supplement to KIDS COUNT SCORE, with accompanying documentation. Requested data comes from partners in the TNKIDS Web site development, namely:
 - Tennessee Department of Health;
 - Department of Children's Services;
 - Department of Human Services;
 - Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges;
 - TennCare Bureau;
 - Department of Education;

- State Testing and Evaluation Center;
- Tennessee State Data Center; and
- Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth.

5. Providing summary measures on the TNKIDS Web site for customized queries, and also for geocoding and mapping.

The initial product was the interactive version of KIDS COUNT data for Tennessee by report year, with the capability of producing county and regional level comparisons and analyses of about 15 variables by region/county and year. This includes the ability to compare results for one county with those for other counties, the region, and state, as well as other states and the United States as a whole. Data for such comparisons are available for specific measures from the national KIDS COUNT site link.

The Web site for TNKIDS contains hundreds of variables from the partners for the 0-18 year age group. It allows for performance of all functions available on the HIT/SPOT Web site, including time trends, bar charts, overlay maps, data listings, and county profiling and ranking. Other elements and data sets will be added to further enhance the site as the TNKIDS area grows. The TNKIDS area is being carefully tailored to sponsor and user needs.

Other activities include:

- adding new measures and data sets;
- adding new functionality to the web site;
- continuing to upload reports as created, as well as prepared charts, tables and links;
- enhancing the user interface; and
- providing technical assistance and case studies of how to use the web site for community-based health planning and needs assessment and for related purposes.

The web site for accessing the TNKIDS site is <http://web.utk.edu/~chrg/hit/main/tnkids1.htm>.

Source: Tennessee Department of Health web site, a project sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Health and conducted by the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Community Health Research Group.

Options for Receiving *TCCY Legislative Updates*, and *Legislative Summary*

The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth tracks legislation related to children and youth during the legislative session. This information is made available on the agency's website at www.state.tn.us/tccy/legislat.html.

You can also get this information through our new listserv, or electronic mailing list.

Option 1: If you have an Internet address at work or at home:

Type listserv@tsslan.state.tn.us in the "To:" area of your e-mail message.

Leave the subject line blank.

In the message area type: Subscribe TCCY First Name Last Name. (But use your own first and last name instead of the typed words First Name Last Name.)

This should connect you directly to the electronic mailing list.

You will receive a confirmation message verifying that you are enrolled.

Option 2: If you do not have Internet access, but have a State of Tennessee GroupWise address:

Type **Debbie Wynn** or **af01061** in the "To:" area of your message. In the message area type the GroupWise address where you wish the *Legislative Report, Updates, and Summary* to be sent.

Debbie will return your e-mail message to verify that she received it. If you do not receive a verifying return e-mail from Debbie within two working days, please call her at (615) 532-1586 or Steve Petty at (615) 532-1685.

You will begin receiving the *Legislative Report, Updates, and Summary* through GroupWise.

If you have questions or need assistance you can call Debbie Wynn at (615) 532-1586 or e-mail her at dwynn@mail.state.tn.us, or call Steve Petty at (615) 532-1685 or e-mail him at spetty@mail.state.tn.us.

Child Care

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group day care homes are:

- Professional development;
- Compliance history;
- Parent/family involvement; and
- Business and environment.

Beginning in July 2001, each agency licensed by DHS will receive an annual report card of its performance. The report card and the license will be sent out at the same time and are to be posted together by the agency. In addition to the evaluation by DHS licensing counselors, raters will be hired to evaluate additional aspects of the program, such as classroom layout, the teacher-child interaction, the display of art in the room.

The rating scale will be a four-tiered system. Agencies that meet basic standards, including basic health and

safety standards, will receive no rating, but agencies can receive up to three stars. For parents, more stars mean higher quality child care. For the agencies, more stars mean higher child care subsidies.

The legislation specifically called upon TCCY to consult with DHS on the creation of the rating system, and TCCY staff members were extensively involved in its development. The other implementation partners were the Tennessee Department of Education, the 12 regional Child Care Resource Centers, Tennessee State University, the University of Tennessee Social Work Office of Research and Public Service, and child care providers.

For more information on the tiered licensing system, contact Brenda Ramsey at **(615) 313-4781**.

TCCY Sponsors Outstanding Children's Advocacy Day

The 13th Annual Children's Advocacy Day was the best yet, according to many participants. More than 350 people learned what is going on in the state departments of Health, Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, and Children's Services; with the state's spending problems; and with children's health. Four outstanding Tennesseans were honored Wednesday.

Fredrick Harris of Madison was the winner of the first Youth Excellence Award. Merrill Harris of Doweltown was the 2001 winner of the Jim Pryor Child Advocacy award.

Jamie Satterfield of the Knoxville News-Sentinel and Becky Magura of WCTE-TV in Cookeville, representing large and small markets respectively, were the winners of the 2001 Making KIDS COUNT media awards.

The Youth Excellence Award, given for the first time this year, is designed to honor a young adult, who, after being involved in the court system as a juvenile, overcame personal obstacles and now serves his or her community.

Fredrick Harris, the first winner, spent a lot of years with the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, first as a resident at Woodland Hills Youth Development Center and now as a case manager, working to help children in residential facilities and group homes.

Harris gave the credit for his achievement to his faith and the support of several DCS employees.

Fredrick Harris overcame personal losses and negative peer pressure, but has gone on to earn a master's in educational administration. While in undergraduate school, only a few years out of the training center himself, he went back to Woodland Hills for an internship. At age 25, he has custody of his sister.

Merril Harris continues to advocate for the preschool special education classroom in which she teaches and to help her five adopted special-needs children live as independently as possible. But her commitment to children doesn't end at home or at work. She is

involved with her community and, as one of the people who nominated her said, "Her theme has never wavered since we met: All children and all people count."

Jamie Satterfield, a reporter with the Knoxville News-Sentinel, was honored for her efforts to inform the public about issues important to children and families, including foster care and juvenile justice.

Becky Magura, station manager at WCTE in Cookeville, led the production of a child sexual abuse prevention series being distributed nationwide. Magura produced "Robbin Esther's Box," based on a book by a survivor of parental child abuse.

Gerald Hickson, the head of pediatric medicine at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, gave the keynote presentation on Tuesday of Children's Advocacy Days. A panel including Dr. Shelia Peters, Juvenile Court Referee Andrei Lee, and Pat Lawler discussed mental illness and the juvenile justice system.

In addition to the award presentations on Wednesday, Betty Cannon, chair of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, presided over a program that included state legislators and information on legislation about children.

The Advocate is published by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth as an information forum on children's issues. The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, an independent state agency, serves as an advocacy agency and information resource for planning and coordination of policies, programs, and services on behalf of the state's children and youth. The 21-member Commission, appointed by the governor, works with other agencies and with regional councils on children and youth in each development district to collect information and solve problems in children's services. To receive *The Advocate*, contact Fay L. Delk, Publications Editor, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, 710 James Robertson Parkway, 9th Floor, Nashville, TN 37243-0800. Phone: (615) 741-2633. Fax No.: (615) 741-5956.

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No person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, 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.

Reading

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in pupil to teacher ratios at time, vowed to reduce class sizes by 2001. By 1998-99 only a tiny percentage of schools were requesting waivers to exceed the class size limits, but the waivers to allow teachers to teach classes for which they were not trained and the number of people teaching without a license doubled between 1994-95 and 1998-99.

Teacher shortages in Tennessee are nearing a crisis stage, according to the governor. One of the problems identified is teacher turnover. The state and local schools systems opened up the classrooms, but classrooms need teachers. Something happens to education students as they transition into teachers; 20 percent of incoming teachers leave the field within three years; 50 percent of teachers in urban schools leave within five years, the point when they are just becoming skilled in their professions.

Recruitment. The governor's proposal would extend scholarships (or loan forgiveness) to students who want to teach in Tennessee's public schools, especially those teaching in shortage areas. Professionals in other fields who want to switch to teaching would be able to participate in a streamlined teacher education process.

Retention. The program calls for a mentoring program to help new teachers over the hurdles of the first year of teaching.

Teacher Turnover

Each year an estimated 6 percent of teachers leave the field.

Twenty percent of all newly hired teachers leave the profession within three years.

In urban districts, nearly 50 percent of newcomers flee the profession during the first five years.

Source: National Education Association

Certification. Tennessee is the only state in the Southeastern region that doesn't reward teachers for earning national board certification. The governor's plan would pay the cost of the certification process and give a yearly stipend to those who earn it.

Resources. Today, too many Tennessee teachers are being asked to teach children without being given the resources to do it. Many teachers use their own funds to purchase the materials they need; other scrounge around and get donations.

The governor's plan would double the amount of funding teachers receive to spend on resources. It would also increase funding for technology.

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth Regional Coordinators

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Meetings and Events

Council Activities

Northeast

May 4, Quarterly Meeting, Kingsport, tba.

Southeast

April 30, Title 33 Training, Family & Children's Services, 301 8th St. Chattanooga, 1 p.m.

May 9, Meeting, Family & Children's Services, Chattanooga, "Bullying" program, 11:30 p.m.

East

April 20, Juvenile Justice Forum, Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, \$10.

May 1, Juvenile Justice Conference, tba.

South Central

May 10 Positive Assets and Better Parenting, tba.

Southwest

May 18, Mental Health Care for Children, tba.

Upper Cumberland

May 8, UC Career Center, "Parenting Plan" panel of judges, Cookeville, 9 a.m.

May 15, Title 33 training, Career Center, 10 a.m.

C-PORT Review Schedule

May 21-25, Upper Cumberland. Exit conference, June 1, 2 p.m.

June 18-22, Northeast. Exit conference, tba.

July 16-20, East Tennessee. Exit conference, tba.

Contact (615) 741-2633 for more information

Commission Meeting

May 16-17, Nashville. Contact (615) 741-2633.

Special Events

April 19, Recognizing Child Abuse, videoconference, Union University, Blasingame Academic Complex, Rm. BAC-44, Jackson, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. (731) 423-6545.

April 20, Co-Occurring Mental Health & Substance Related Disorders Training.

Memphis, UT Medical Center, Wood Auditorium, registration required, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

April 24, Child Abuse Prevention Conference 2001, University Center, UT in Chattanooga. 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m., \$25.00, contact 423-266-6918.

April 26, Middle Tennessee Association for Child Care Training, First Church Unity, 5125 Franklin Pike, Nashville. Contact (615) 250-7200.

May 3-4, Tennessee Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges. Middle Mini-Conference, Ashland City. Contact call 1-800-952-3048 or (615) 741-3980.

May 11, 15, 21, and June 1, Suicide Prevention Regional Conferences; Kingsport, Nashville, Chattanooga, and Memphis. Contact (615) 298-3359

For more updated information on TCCY and child advocacy events, see the TCCY Web Events Calendar at www.state.tn.us/tccy/events.html.



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on Children and Youth**
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