



Child Care Issue

The Advocate

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A newsletter on children's issues

April 2000

Child Care Critical for State and for Working Parents

The deaths of two Memphis toddlers left in day care center vans last summer turned child-care quality into a public issue.

Child care in Tennessee received an average quality rating in August 1999 when *Working Woman*, with the assistance of child care experts, rated Tennessee along with other states. The magazine gave the state poor ratings on safety, availability, and commitment. On commitment, the magazine said, "Tennessee continues to lag behind most other states."

Nationally, 75 percent of all young children of employed mothers are cared for by someone other than a parent while their mothers work, according to research by the Urban Institute. Forty percent are in child care more than 35 hours weekly, and about the same percent deal with more than one child-care arrangement.

In Tennessee, in September 1999, 5,993 regulated child-care agencies had a total capacity of 276,257 children, up 8.6 percent since 1998. Regulated child-

care agencies include child-care centers, group child-care centers, and family child-care homes. Slightly more than half (52 percent) of Tennessee's regulated child care

is in child-care centers, and 48 percent is in group homes, family day care homes, and registered homes. In addition, other children are cared for in unregulated home care and in-home care. In Tennessee, homes caring for fewer than five children have no licensing health and safety requirements.

The average cost of quality child care ranges from \$70 a week for a 4-year-old (\$3,640 annually) to \$150 a week for infant care (\$7,800). The 1998 Census Bureau median income per household estimate for Tennessee is \$30,636. After providing for housing, transportation, food, and clothing, little if any money is available to pay for child care, even if child care is a valued priority. Families earning less than \$14,400 annually and paying for care for children under 5 spent 25 percent of their income for the care. Families with incomes more than \$54,000 spent only 6 percent of their income for the care.

The dilemma is clear. A young welfare parent trying to enter the workforce in a job paying minimum wage or only slightly more earns an annual income of \$8,772. This parent's child-care problems are similar to those



What actions increase the likelihood of a child's success?

- ◆ Creating a safe environment;
- ◆ Teaching a child that he or she is special;
- ◆ Creating an environment where the child feels confident about what to expect from his or her environment;
- ◆ Giving a child appropriate discipline;
- ◆ Giving a child a balanced experience of freedom and limits;
- ◆ Exposing a child to a diverse environment filled with books, music, and appropriate toys.

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Child Care Assistance

Many European countries have generous policies related to child care. Ninety-nine percent of care for children aged 3 to 6 is state-funded in France, and 91 percent in Italy. Although the United States does not support child care to this extent, the federal government allows parents an income tax credit for a percentage of work-related child-care expenses and funds some child care. However, unless the child is handicapped, the tax credit ends at age 12. The Child Care and Development Fund is a federal program that provides state with money to help families get services. The Urban Institute estimates that, in April 1998, the program assisted 16 percent of children eligible under federal rules. Other states have done more to help both providers and families. Rhode Island now offers health benefits for child-care workers through its Medicaid-type program, and this year California voters reapproved using taxes on tobacco sales to fund child-care services.

Child-Care Certificates. In Tennessee the Department of Human Services (DHS) assists Families First and low-income families to pay for child care for 50,000 children each month through a certificate program. The child-care providers are reimbursed for a percentile of the market rate for child care as determined by the department each year. Child-care broker agencies across the state help eligible families find day care. DHS also gives more than \$3 million in grants to counties. In 1998, according to the department, these grants created 6,834 new child-care spaces.

Tennessee Child Care Facilities Corporation (TCCFC), a non-profit, quasi-governmental agency, gives loans to assist child care providers with capitol expenses for real estate and equipment and funding for local government and schools. The corporation also trains child-care providers in business and organizational management. It provides loans and development funds focused on expanding access to child care for rural and low-income areas and underserved groups across the state.

Information and Referral. DHS offers services to all Tennessee parents needing child care. It maintains a central toll-free number families can call for information or to make complaints about child-care providers.

Statistics	
National	
Children who spend some or all of their day being cared for by someone other than their parents.	3 of every 5 children <6 and half of all children <3
Percent of working women who provide half or more of their household income	55%
American families with young children that earn less than \$35,00 per year	50%
Children of working mothers are poor or would be poor if their mothers did not work	1 in 3
Percent of babies 0-1 who are in child care	50%
Child care teachers who leave their position each year	33%
Public school teachers who leave their position each year	6.6%
Number of children who fend for themselves after school	5,000,000
Tennessee	
Average cost of a public college tuition in Tennessee in 1997	\$2,051
Number of 3 and 4-year-olds at high risk of school failure	45,000
Average salary for a child care worker (1996)	\$11,140
Source: Tennessee: Child Care Challenges, Children's Defense Fund	

Child Care Resource Centers. DHS, with the Tennessee Developmental Disabilities Council and the Tennessee Department of Health, has established regional Resource Centers across the state. The centers assist providers to improve professional practices, include children with disabilities, and improve the health of children.

Training. Legislation passed in 1999 mandated that fees charged to child-care facilities be used for training child-care workers and improving the quality of child care. The Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance TECTA is a statewide program operated by the Tennessee Department of Human Services and Tennessee State University. The program assists child-care workers in getting training through state colleges and universities. A needs assessment found that 24 percent of group and family care providers had completed at least one level of the (TECTA) certification. This program has been cited as one of the state's most effective quality-improvement efforts.

Critical

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of countless other young Tennessee families face (Governor's Task Force on Child Care).

Welfare reform has affected the availability of child care assistance for working families, as the state focused funds on helping families leaving welfare care for their children while they work in newly obtained employment.

Achieving quality child care in Tennessee has been a challenging endeavor for those individuals working to promote safety in the standards that govern licensing of providers. In 1998 standards were filed that would improve worker-to-child ratios in Tennessee. Because of opposition, the child-care ratio improvement was withdrawn from committee approval, leaving child care ratios above the accepted national standards.

The National Center for Early Development and Learning suggests the following policy changes to improve the quality of day care:

- ◆ Strengthen standards and rules and/or regulations;
- ◆ Require initial and ongoing training for staff working in child-care programs;
- ◆ Recruit and retain better educated, skilled staff;
- ◆ Continue efforts to inform parents about the importance of quality child care;
- ◆ Provide necessary funds to support the costs of high quality child care.

Importance of Child Health

A child's health is also important to early brain development.

- ◆ From birth through the growth years, proper nutrition and a balanced diet play an important role in brain development. In looking at the biological antecedents for brain development it, is easy to see how basic interventions have a significant impact on a child's development. Prenatally the nutrition of the mother is critical for formation of the brain during one of the highest periods of growth.
- ◆ Early detection and intervention and referral for developmental or health problems can prevent further complications or impairment of brain development.
- ◆ The importance of age-appropriate activities with secure one-to-one interactions is the foundation for brain stimulation and supports awareness of a child's needs should areas of developmental or health problems arise.

Child Care Ratios Worker/Child Comparison of Current State Standards/U.S. Recommended Ratios/TN Proposed/Withdrawn Standards

Age Group	TN Worker to Child	U.S. Recommended Ratios	TN Proposed/Withdrawn Standards
Infant	1 Worker/5 Infants	*1 Worker/3 infants, 0-24mo.	1 Worker/4 infants (group size no larger than 8)
Toddler	1 Worker/7 Toddlers	*1 Worker/4 Toddlers, 25-30mo.	1 Worker/6 Toddlers (group no larger than 12)
Two-Year-Olds	1 Worker/8 Children	*1 Worker/5 Children, 31-35 Months	1 worker/7 Children (group no larger than 14)
Three-Year-Olds	1 Worker/10 Children	*1 Worker/7 Children	1 Worker/9 Children (group no larger than 18)
Four-Year-Olds	1 Worker/15 Children	*1 Worker/8 Children	1 Worker/15/ Children (group no larger than 24)
Five-Year-Olds	1 Worker/20 Children	*1 Worker/8 Children	1 Worker/16 Children (group no larger than 24)
Six-Year-Olds	1 Worker/25 Children	*1 Worker/8 Children	NA

*Developed by: American Public Health Association and American Academy of Pediatrics

In addition, a child-care needs assessment conducted for DHS listed the following ideas for improving care:

- ◆ Increase the ability of licensing staff to monitor and assist programs;
- ◆ Assist programs based on their ability to demonstrate quality standards;
- ◆ Increase the rate paid by the state for child care for low-income parents;
- ◆ Encourage funding from other sources, such as employers, business, and faith communities.

Child-Care Work Force

Child-care workers are often in low-income families. According to a report by the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force, they are 97 percent female, and 41 percent are parents. Ten percent are single parents. They are better educated than the general population, but only 18 percent get fully paid health benefits. The 2000-01 U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Occupational Outlook Handbook says half the child-care pay range was \$6.61 or less in 1998, and 50 percent of the workers earned between \$13,760 and \$22,370.

According to the U.S. DOL, 40 percent of the child-care work force (four times the percent of all workers) is self-employed. Family day-care owners make \$9,528 in 1996 dollars after paying expenses of providing care. Owners of unregulated child care make less.



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Study Explores Child-Care Needs

A study of Tennessee child-care needs was conducted by the University of Tennessee College of Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS) for the Department of Human Services and released in July 1999. The study, the Tennessee Child Care Needs Assessment, identified areas in which the assistance program might be more helpful.

The study found that Tennessee's low-income families most commonly needed child care that is:

- ◆ On a more flexible schedule;
- ◆ Affordable;
- ◆ Accessible to parents' homes or workplaces or with transportation services;
- ◆ Of high quality and developmentally appropriate;
- ◆ Available for children 3-years-old or younger; and
- ◆ Available for sick children.

In addition, families participating in Families First, Tennessee's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program, also needed care:

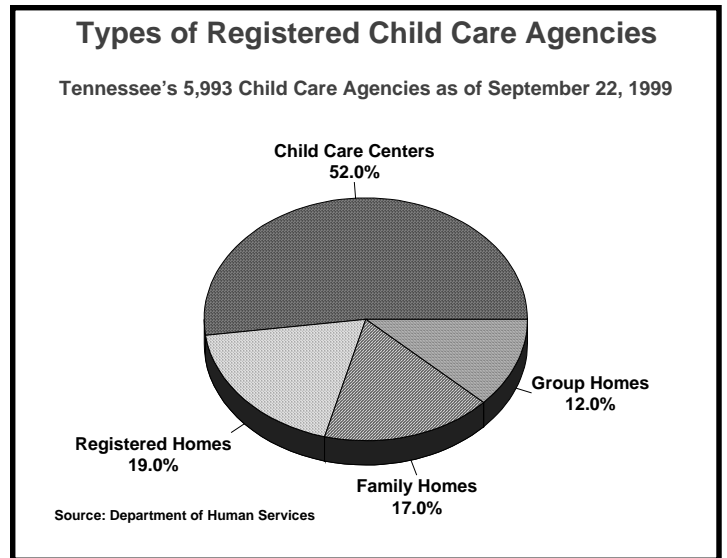
- ◆ For preschool-age children;
- ◆ In after-school hours;
- ◆ During second-shift work hours; and
- ◆ On Saturdays.

Lack of the types of child care needed were listed among the barriers to getting child care, as well as the parents' lack of knowledge about how to find high-quality care and how to use child care. Fewer than a fourth of any group of child-providers interviewed in the study provided services during non-traditional hours. The largest percentage that did was made up of group and family homes that served families during the second shift (from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m.). The most serious shortages of child care were:

- ◆ Care for infants;
- ◆ Care during second-shift hours;
- ◆ Care during third-shift (11 p.m. to 7 a.m.) hours;
- ◆ Care on weekends; and
- ◆ Care for children sick with more than a cold.

The good news about quality care:

- ◆ Slightly more than half or more of child-care providers (the percent varies based on type of care) have five or more years of experience caring



for children.

- ◆ From 40 percent of assistant teachers to up to 87 percent of center directors (the percent varies based on type of care) are educated beyond a high school degree.

The bad news about quality care:

- ◆ Less than 20 percent of group and family-care home providers reported accreditation by the National Association of Family Child Care.
- ◆ Less than 21 percent of child-care center staff members and group and family home providers had received a Child Development Associate credential.
- ◆ Few teachers had early childhood state teaching certificates.

While 95.2 percent of the Families First child care customers responding to the SWORPS survey said they were satisfied with their current child-care arrangement, 45 percent had had their children in two or more child-care arrangements since they were first on Families First. Families First customers most liked the quality of care and the convenient location of the provider. They least liked the limited hours of service.

The study found that other agencies in the community helped to meet child-care needs. Centers have increased their services, and some businesses have initiated on-site child care or started to accept child-care assistance.

Legislature and Child Care

Children's Advocacy Day and Children's Rights Conference Keep Advocates Busy

This was going to be the year of child care in the state legislature, with a number of bills being filed, including the Governor's Comprehensive Child Care Bill.

The governor's bill included the following proposals:

- Mandatory criminal background checks for new employees and residents of Department of Human Services (DHS) licensed child-care agencies.
- Civil penalties of up to \$1,000 for serious violations.
- Partial revocation, suspension, or denial of licenses to be used by DHS when warranted. (This provision addresses concerns about the department's implementation of zero tolerance.)
- Streamlined probationary process and due process hearings.
- Increase in child care licensing fees. The current fees ranging from \$5 to \$25 have not increased since 1986. Funds generated by the increase will be earmarked for improving child care quality.
- Licensing information that must be available to parents and the public is expanded and must continue to be posted in a clearly visible place.

One bill would require DHS to establish a rating program for the child care system that would produce a yearly report card on the quality of the child care. This bill would require the participation of TCCY in setting up this process.



Resources

- Tennessee Department of Human Services Child Care Program – www.state.tn.us/humanserv/childcare.htm
- Child Care Resource and Referral line (800) 462-8261, (615) 313-4820 (Nashville)
- National Association for the Education of the Young Child – www.naeyc.org
- National Child Care Information Center – <http://nccic.org> or 800-616-2242
- National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care – <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/index.html> or 1-800-598-KIDS
- Frank Porter Graham Center, University of North Carolina study of long-term effects of early childhood education - www.fpg.unc.edu/~abc or (919) 966-0867
- Fight Crime: Invest in Kids (value of child care to prevent crime) www.fightcrime.org or (202) 776-0027

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Advocates, journalist honored at Children's Advocacy Day

More than 400 advocates attended the 12th annual Children's Advocacy Day this year, which followed TCCY's second Children's Rights Conference. TCCY called upon panels of experts and legislators to make each of these events successful. Trudy Hughes and Sandi Fisher were awarded the Jim Pryor Child Advocate of the Year Award March 22 at the 12th annual Children's Advocacy Day.

The Pryor award winners both began their careers in social services as volunteers and have made significant contributions to children in Tennessee.

Trudy Hughes, executive director of the Children's Advocacy Center of Hamilton County, left a career in commercial banking in 1982. She worked with the juvenile court in Knox County and headed up a Home TIES family-support program before moving into her current position. She implemented new programs and has helped plan conferences and write legislation.

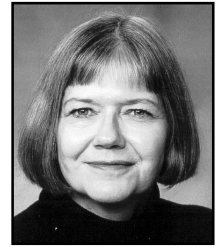
"While serving as director for the Home TIES program, Trudy was available to her families 24 hours per day, seven days a week," said James Nelson, president of the Southeast Council on Children and Youth. "Under her direction, this intensive in-home intervention program boasted an 82 percent success rate after only one year."

Hughes has been active with both the East Tennessee and Southeast Tennessee Councils on Children and Youth and served as Southeast council president from 1993 to 1997.

Sandi Fisher, program development coordinator for the Northeast Tennessee Community Services Agency, has been a foster parent, a teacher and also worked with a Homes TIES program. In her current position, she has facilitated the development of a plan to meet needs identified in Northeast Tennessee.

"Sandi is always willing to provide technical assistance and her grant-writing skills to individuals and agencies to obtain grants that service children," said Diane Cupp, president of the Northeast Regional Council on Children and Youth. "(Her) extended family includes many children and young adults that (she and her husband) choose to mentor."

Fisher's lengthy participation with the Northeast Tennessee Council on children and Youth includes a term as co-chair of the Legislative Committee and frequent assistance with special projects.



Fisher

Carrie Ferguson, staff writer, for *The (Nashville) Tennessean*, received TCCY's first Making Kids Count Media Award for her series of articles on adoption and on children in state custody.

"Carrie's work represents the best of Tennessee journalism and shows the impact informed enterprise journalism can have," said Linda O'Neal, executive director of TCCY.

The Jim Pryor Award, which began in 1995, is awarded to a Tennessean who has demonstrated a commitment to improving, expanding and advocating for children and youth. The award was established in memory of James F. Pryor, a long-term member of the Commission. Pryor was a leading advocate for protecting children and promoting child health, safety, and well-being.

The awards will be given annually at Children's Advocacy Day when volunteers and professionals from across the state gather at the State Legislature to share their concerns about the effect of proposed legislation on 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.

TCCY Family Suffers Losses

TCCY's family suffered great losses in April. Gloria McKnight, a children's program coordinator in the Juvenile Justice Division, died on April 1 after a lengthy struggle with cancer and other related problems. State Sen. Pete Springer, a friend of children and the Commission, died suddenly of a heart attack on April 12.

"Gloria represented the best of TCCY," said Linda O'Neal, the agency's executive director. "She was loyal, dedicated and caring in every aspect of her life – as a mother, grandmother, professional, volunteer, church member, and child advocate. Gloria was the backbone of TCCY's juvenile justice division with 11 years service – the most juvenile justice seniority in the central office. She was a repository of information about TCCY funding requirements and programs across the state."

At a memorial service, TCCY staff members joined her friends and family members to remember Gloria. Drew Daruka said he wanted to live his life with the

dignity and grace that Gloria had. Jim Hedstrom, a longtime co-worker said that if Gloria had been a plant:

"I think she would have been a tree – a great big old tree, with lots of room in the branches for the birds and the squirrels, a tree with lots of leaves and deep roots and plenty of shade. The kind of tree you could look out your window at and admire, the kind of tree that, when it was gone, you really missed."

Though her family has expressed no preference, Gloria contributed to the United Negro College Fund through the State Employee Charity Fund, and donations may be made to the fund in her honor.

Sen. Springer was a friend of children, of TCCY, and of state employees. He sponsored legislation reauthorizing TCCY for six more years during the 1998-99 session and sponsored legislation on education, child care, and other issues. Some of his friends in the Legislature have donated books to local libraries in his honor.

Mailing List Update

TCCY is updating its Advocate mailing list, and we need your help. We need you to let us know if you wish to continue to receive this newsletter. **Members in good standing with the nine regional councils on children and youth and certain elected officials on other TCCY mailing lists will not need to return this coupon.** Other readers will be purged from the list if the coupon is not received.

- I want to continue receiving these mailings.
 I do not want to continue receiving these mailings.
 Please send information about TCCY and regional council membership to me.

Name _____

Agency _____

Address _____

City _____ ZIP _____

Email _____

NOTE: Regional Council members in good standing do not need to return this form. Call TCCY at (615) 532-1584 or your regional coordinator if you have any questions.

Return to:

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth
Andrew Johnson Tower, 9th Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243-0800

Meetings and Events

Council Activities

Northeast

May 5, Regional meeting, Kingsport Library, 10 a.m.

East Tennessee

May 3, 8:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m., Regional Meeting, Church Street Methodist Church, Knoxville.

Southeast

May 17 11:30 a.m., Regional Meeting, Family and Children's Services, Chattanooga.

Mid-Cumberland

May 4, 11:30 a.m., Regional Meeting.

May 5, 11:30 a.m., Rutherford County Council Meeting.

Commission on Children and Youth

May 9-10, Room 16, Legislative Plaza, Nashville.

July 11-12, Room 16, Legislative Plaza, Nashville.

Call (615) 741-2633 for information.

C-PORT Review Schedule

May 1-5, Shelby County. Exit Conference May 12, 10:30 a.m.

May 22-26, Upper Cumberland Region. Exit Conference June 2, 10:30 a.m.

June 12-16, Mid Cumberland. Exit Conference, June 23, 10 a.m.

July 17-21, East Tennessee Region. Exit Conference July 28, 10:30 a.m.

Aug. 14-18, Northwest Region. Exit Conference Aug. 25, 10 a.m.

Call (615) 741-2633 for more information.

Special Events

May 6, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Children's Mental Health Week Celebration, Grassmere. Contact Tennessee Voices for Children at (800) 670-9882 or (615) 269-7751.

May 15-18, Tennessee Association for Child Care (TACC). "Defining the Tools of Excellence." Mountain View Convention Center, Kingsport. Contact

(615) 385-4433.

May 22 - 25, Forensic Evidence in Child Abuse Cases: Collection and Preservation, Wyndham Milwaukee Center Hotel, Wisconsin. Contact (703) 739-0321.

May 24, Child Welfare League of America training on Effective Supervision, Course II, Holiday Inn, Somerville, Mass. Call (617) 769-4810.

June, Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, "Juvenile Law and Procedure." Nashville. Contact (615) 741-3980.

June 9-13, Developing Local Systems of Care for Children and Adolescents with Emotional Disturbances and Improving Policy and Practice, New Orleans. Contact (202) 687-5000.

July 16-19, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges 63rd Annual



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