



Advocate

March 2015

[Calendar](#)

[In the News](#)

[KIDS COUNT Facts](#)

[Research](#)

[TCCY Home](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[TCCY Newsroom](#)

[TCCY Regional Councils](#)

What Policies Will Be Best for Tennessee Children?

In This Issue:

- [How Will Proposed Legislation Affect Children?](#)
- [What Are the State's Priorities?](#)
- [Children's Advocacy Days Coming Soon;](#)
- [Continuing Efforts to Expand Health Care Coverage;](#)
- [CHIP Reauthorization Still Needed;](#)
- [Support Home Visiting Programs;](#)
- [KIDS COUNT Data Snapshot: Measuring Access to Opportunity in the United States;](#)
- [Updates: TCCY Says Good-by to Administrative Services Assistant Diane Baham.](#)

How Will Proposed Legislation Affect Children?

The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth's mandate includes reviewing and making recommendations on the state's budget for programs and services for children, to making "recommendations concerning establishment of priorities and needed improvements with respect to programs and services for children and youth" and issuing impact statements on proposed legislation. Each year Commission staff researches bills filed in the General Assembly, and the Commission votes to make recommendations based on the impact of the proposed legislation. The Commission's 2015 Impact Statement report considers legislation focused on:

- Implementing a TCCY Second Look Commission recommendation for a chief medical examiner and improved medical examinations of child fatalities;
 - Deleting the "Intractable Pain Act" to limit access to and addiction to opioid medications;
 - Consideration of bills related to juvenile justice, schools and transfer of youth to adult courts;
 - Improved collection of demographic data by law enforcement;
 - Regulating electronic cigarettes;
 - Efforts to eliminate human trafficking.
- **2015 TCCY Impact Statements** are available at <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/legimpact1.pdf>
 - **TCCY Recommendations on Insure Tennessee:** <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/leg-IT-15.pdf>

TCCY Legislative Reporting

You can sign up to receive weekly reports and, updates of the bills and the legislative process. TCCY will begin weekly updates on March 6.

In its role as an advocate for children, TCCY also monitors and reports on legislation as it moves through the legislative process.

- **TCCY Legislative Report:** <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/legislat.pdf>
- **TCCY Legislative Updates:** <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/legupdat.pdf>

Sign Up for TCCY Updates and Newsletters: <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/listserv.shtml>.



What Are the State's Priorities?

Governor Bill Haslam released his budget for the upcoming year at the annual State of the State speech in early February. The Governor had asked departments and agencies to anticipate a 7 percent reduction when they submitted their 2015-16 budget requests, and his final budget calls for \$200 million in cuts. The budget also adds money to the state's reserve (or rainy day fund).

The proposed budget fully funds the state's Basic Education Program (BEP) and the funding formula for higher education. Haslam proposed salary increases for K-12 teachers.

The Governor also proposed programs to help bridge the gap between high school and college and a program to provide assistance to adults who failed to complete college.

Issues of interest to child advocates are:

- Reduction in the number of youth to be held at Woodland Hills Youth Development Center (with an associated reduction in staff) and additional funding for Wilder and Mountain View Youth Development Centers,
- Funding for Family Resource Centers has been moved to recurring funding;
- TennCare funding, with some concerns regarding mental health service reductions;
- \$1.5 million for Healthy Start and Child Health and Development (CHAD) home visiting programs continued in non-recurring funding;
- Includes \$250,000 for non-recurring funding for the Amachi Initiative, a mentoring program for the children of inmates.

More information about the Governor's proposed budget is available:

- **State Budget Information,** <http://1.usa.gov/1A41Oq0>
- **PowerPoint Presentation on State Budget,** <http://1.usa.gov/1uA3QIN>
- **Legislative Budget Hearings,** <http://1.usa.gov/1Arye2u>.

Children's Advocacy Days Coming Soon



Every day across the state, there are people working to improve the lives of children and youth. Some provide care and important services, some are volunteers helping a child in need and, some speak out on behalf of kids to improve their well-being. By their actions, they are all advocates. And, they are all everyday superheroes!

On March 10th and 11th, 2015, the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth's 27th annual Children's Advocacy Days will celebrate these "Superheroes of Advocacy."

- Register for Children's Advocacy Days: <http://bit.ly/1yYlqKX>

Continuing Efforts to Expand Health Care Coverage

Despite support from the business community, health care providers and citizens who traveled to the Capitol from across the state, the Governor's program to provide health care access to the working poor, Insure Tennessee, failed in the Senate Health and Welfare Committee by a vote of 4 to 7. In his State of the State speech, the Governor joined advocates in expressing hope that expansion would be reconsidered and passed.

CHIP Reauthorization Still Needed

Funding for the Children's Health Insurance (CHIP) will end on September 30, 2015, if action is not taken by Congress. The federal percentage of CHIP funds is higher than that for Medicaid (70 percent compared to 57 percent). The program is a block grant, and states set income eligibility standards and benefit levels within federal guidelines.

Tennessee's CHIP program, CoverKids provides health care coverage for children and pregnant women with incomes up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level who do not have insurance and whose incomes exceed the limits for TennCare. Well-child visits and immunizations are covered totally, but there are co-pays for other services. TCCY supports an administration bill filed in the Tennessee Legislature calling for continuation of CoverKids through 2020.

Support Home Visiting Programs

Home visiting programs, research shows, are among the most effective programs in preventing child abuse and getting at-risk families to a good start. The Governor's budget includes continued non-recurring funding for two of the Department of Health's home visiting programs. Child Health and Development (CHAD) serves children who are at risk of child abuse and neglect or developmental delays or those with developmental delays. Healthy Start is a voluntary program designed to reduce infant and child mortality, prevent child abuse and neglect and promote family health. The program enrolls at-risk families to prevent problems before they occur. Neither of these programs is available statewide.

According to the Department of Health, 3,700 families received home-visiting services during fiscal year 2013-14. Research from the program models shows they improved immunization status, decreased child abuse and neglect, increased breastfeeding initiation, decreased smoking by mothers, increased child development screening and delayed subsequent pregnancies by mothers receiving services.

The federal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program is set to expire March 31,

2015. National organizations are calling for action to extend the program and assure programs can continue to enroll at-risk families.

More information on home visiting programs: <http://bit.ly/1A7iwox>.

KIDS COUNT Data Snapshot: *Measuring Access to Opportunity in the United States*

A new KIDS COUNT® Data Snapshot, *Measuring Access to Opportunity in the United States*, looks at improvements in the assessment of one of the central measures of child well-being: the percent of children who suffer from the stress and hardship of poverty. Poverty is linked to a range of other health, educational and opportunity outcomes that make a difference in how well children are doing.

The KIDS COUNT® report first asks the question, “What if?” What if there were no programs to help families care for their children, to make sure they have adequate food, housing, help if children or parents are disabled and to provide other services? The answer is that one in every three children in the United States and in Tennessee would be poor.

The report then looks at the effect of public policies to help children. Nearly a quarter of a million Tennessee children and 11 million U.S. children are raised from poverty when the effect of federal programs is considered. They reduce the percentage of Tennessee children in poverty from one in three (33%) to less than one in five (17%).

- *Measuring Access to Opportunity in the United States* <http://bit.ly/1JITQhc>

Updates: TCCY Says Good-bye to Administrative Services Assistant Diane Baham

Diane Baham (at right) retired from TCCY after almost 31 years with the state. Eight years after beginning work with the state at age 19, she moved to TCCY's predecessor, the Children's Services Commission, to work for eight years. She moved to work with the Legislature's Select Committee on Children and Youth and then left state service to finish a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. After working for 10 years in the private sector, including teaching at Vanderbilt's Susan Gray School, she returned to work at TCCY. The Commission honored Diane at its meeting Friday, followed by a celebratory lunch with staff. Please join TCCY in wishing Diane a great future.



Mark Your Calendar

March 3, **National Home Visiting Day of Action**. Info: <http://bit.ly/1A7iwox>.

March 4, **Tennessee Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence 2015 Policy and Action Day on the Hill**. Info: <http://www.tncoalition.org/>.

March 4, Coffee County Anti-Drug Coalition and Children's Advocacy Center co-host **2015 UNITE: Building Strong Families Conference**, Tullahoma National Guard Readiness Center, 1402 E. Carroll St., Tullahoma.

March 8-10, **2015 Tennessee Conference on Volunteerism and Service-Learning**, Cool Springs Marriott, Franklin. More information at www.tn.gov/finance/adm/vt/TCVSL.shtml or volunteer.tennessee@tn.gov.

March 10-11, **Children's Advocacy Days**, War Memorial Auditorium, Nashville. Register at <https://cad2015.eventbrite.com>.

- March 11-13, Society for Advancement of Violence and Injury Research Conference: **“Maximizing Injury Research to Benefit All,”** Sheraton Hotel, New Orleans. Info and registration: <http://www.savirweb.org/conference>.
- March 12, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., **Council on Children Mental Health Meeting** (postponed from Feb. 19), Location TBA. Contact Melissa McGee at Melissa.McGee@tn.gov.
- March 12, 6 p.m.-8 p.m., **Urban Child Institute and UT Health Science Center present “Brain Awareness Night,”** Urban Child Institute, 600 Jefferson Ave., Memphis. Free, with limited space. Register at <http://bit.ly/1A4TSIA>.
- March 12-14, **Health Disparities Conference**, Xavier University of Louisiana College of Pharmacy Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education (CMHDRE), Sheraton New Orleans Hotel. To register/learn more: <http://bit.ly/tccyev83>, or contact event organizers: (404) 559-6191.
- March 13-14, **2015 Caregivers Conference** to connect and educate foster and adoptive parents, Long Hollow Baptist Church, Hendersonville. Registration \$70 per couple; \$55 per individual. Information at <http://www.jonahsjourney.org/conference>.
- March 17, 8 a.m.-3 p.m., **26th Annual Brain Injury Association of Tennessee Conference**, co-sponsored by the Tennessee Traumatic Brain Injury Program. Lipscomb University, Nashville. CEUs available; fee. Online registration: <http://bit.ly/tccyev84>; For more info, contact Jean Doster: (615) 741-1230 or jean.doster@tn.gov.
- March 18, **Behavioral Health Day on the Hill**, War Memorial Auditorium. Sponsored by Tennessee Coalition for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Contact tstarling@mhamt.org.
- March 18, 1 p.m. CT, **Webinar: Lessons Learned from Implementing Project Lazarus in North Carolina: A Clinical and Community-Based Intervention to Prevent Prescription Drug Overdose, Part 1**. Register at <http://bit.ly/1FoUkSX>.
- March 18-20, **“From Crime Scene to Trial,”** Northwest Arkansas Community College, Bentonville, Ark. Sponsored by Gundersen National Child Protection Training Center. Register online at <http://conta.cc/1vPw1sq>.
- March 27, **Mid-Cumberland Council on Children and Youth Lunch and Learn, “Trends in Narcotics and Methamphetamine Training,”** James E. Ward Agricultural Center, School Exhibit Building, 945 E. Baddour Parkway, Lebanon. Eligible for 1 hour NASW CEU credit. Registration for non-MCCY opens March 16 at <http://bit.ly/1BrniDG>.
- March 30-April 1, **102 Annual Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare**, Franklin Marriott Cool Springs. Contact tlawson@tcsweb.org for more information.

In the News

WMC, “Official Poverty Measure Fails to Provide an Accurate Assessment of Anti-Poverty Programs,”

<http://bit.ly/1N6sXCR>

WMOT, “Without federal aid, 1 in 3 Tenn. kids below poverty line,” <http://bit.ly/1vPHOXV>

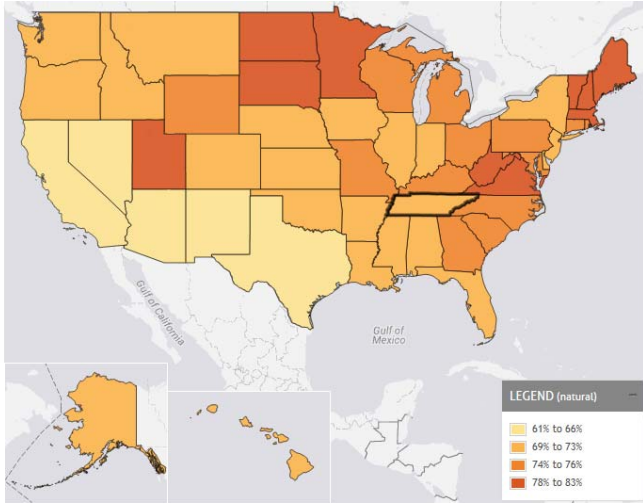
The Christian Science Monitor, “How communities are keeping kids out of crime,” <http://bit.ly/1vzqsn4>.

Research Information

Health Benefits of Addressing Climate Change, Rand Corporation, <http://bit.ly/IM2regu>

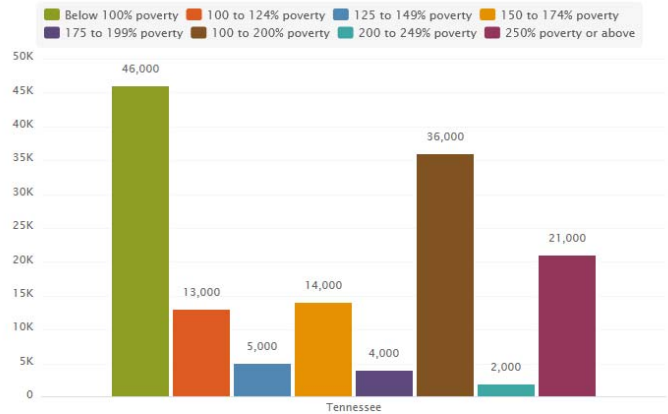
How Will the Affordable Care Act Affect the Use of Health Care Services?, The Commonwealth Fund, <http://bit.ly/IFXLCzC>.

Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts



CHILDREN WHOSE TEETH ARE IN EXCELLENT OR VERY GOOD CONDITION (PERCENT) - 2011-2012

National KIDS COUNT
KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org
A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation



CHILDREN WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE BY POVERTY LEVEL: ALL (NUMBER) - 2011

National KIDS COUNT
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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