

T E N N E S S E E ' S C H I L D R E N 2 0 0 5

Tennessee's Children At a Glance

State Population (2003) ¹	5,841,748
State Population, Children	
Under 18 (2003) ²	1,394,479
State Poverty Rate (2003) ³	13.8%
Poverty Rate, Children	
Under 18 (2003) ⁴	20.0%
Poverty Rate, Children	
Ages 5-17 (2003) ⁵	17.7%
Poverty Rate, Children	
Birth to Age 4 (2003) ⁶	24.1%

C H I L D A B U S E A N D N E G L E C T

- In 2002, 37,525 children were referred for investigation of child abuse and neglect in Tennessee, a rate of 26.9 per 1,000 children.⁷
- In 2002, 18 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Tennessee.⁸
- On September 30, 2002, 9,359 children in Tennessee lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 9,679 children on September 30, 2001. In 2002, 20.6% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 31.9% were 16 or older.⁹
- On September 30, 2002, 60.2% white children, 34.2% black children, 2.7% Hispanic children, 0.2% American Indian/Alaskan Native children, and 2.6% children of other races and ethnicities were living in out-of-home care in Tennessee.¹⁰

P E R M A N E N T F A M I L I E S F O R C H I L D R E N

- Of the 5,443 children exiting out-of-home care in 2002, 70.9% were reunited with their birthfamilies.¹¹
- In 2002, 922 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Tennessee, a 42.7% increase from 646 in 2001.¹²
- Of the 9,359 children in out-of-home care in 2002, 2,346 or 25.1% were waiting to be adopted.¹³

K I N S H I P S U P P O R T

- In 2003, more than 60,468 Tennessee grandparents had primary responsibility for caring for their grandchildren.¹⁴
- Of the 9,359 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2002, 7.1% were living with relatives while in care.¹⁵
- Of all Tennessee children in kinship care on September 30, 2002, 59.3% were white, 36.5% were black, 1.7% were Hispanic, none were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 2.6% were other races.¹⁶

C H I L D P O V E R T Y A N D I N C O M E S U P P O R T

- The total number of *individuals* receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Tennessee increased from 163,802 in March 2002 to 180,466 in March 2003, an increase of 10.2%. The number of *families* receiving TANF in March 2003 was 68,517, a 9.3% increase from March 2002.¹⁷
- In 2001, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamps in Tennessee was 57% below the federal poverty guideline.¹⁸
- In 2003, Tennessee spent \$274,331,478 in TANF funds, including 50.5% on cash assistance, 7.9% on child care, 1.9% on transportation and support activities, and 39.8% on nonassistance.¹⁹
- In 2002, Tennessee collected and distributed \$318,253,081 in child support funds, an increase of 15.2% from 2001.²⁰
- In 2003, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Tennessee was \$542 per month, or 66% of the average monthly income for a worker earning the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour.²¹

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CHILD CARE AND HEAD START

- In 2001, Tennessee served an estimated monthly average of 59,600 children with subsidized child care, an increase from 2000, when 57,800 children were served, and in 1999, when 63,100 children were served.²²
- In 2003, a family of three could make no more than 60% of Tennessee's median income, or \$26,208, to be eligible for subsidized child care.²³
- In 2001, Tennessee had 12,500 children on the waiting list for subsidized child care.²⁴
- In 2003, 16,473 Tennessee children were served by Head Start, a 0.2% decrease from 2002.²⁵

HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- In 2001, 664,998 Tennessee children under age 19 were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 41.5% of the total number of enrollees.²⁶
- In 2002, 16 babies were born to girls younger than 15 in Tennessee. In 2002, the number of babies born to teens ages 15–19 was 10,300, reflecting a rate of 54.3 births per 1,000 girls.²⁷
- As of December 2002, 9,872 adults and adolescents, as well as 52 children under age 13, had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Tennessee.²⁸
- In 2001, 38 children under age 20 committed suicide, a rate of 2.44 per 100,000 children in the population.²⁹
- In 2002, an estimated 39,000 children ages 12–17, and 371,000 adults 18 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol.³⁰

VULNERABLE YOUTH

- In 2003, 8% of teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts, a 3% decrease from 2000.³¹
- In 2002, 17% of young adults ages 18–24 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.³²

JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

- In 2001, 16 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Tennessee, compared with 17 in 2000.³³
- In 2003, 30,437 children under age 18 were arrested in Tennessee, a 14% increase from 26,686 arrests in 2002. Of the 2003 arrests, 1,188 were for violent crimes and 532 were for possession of weapons.³⁴
- A 2001 census of juvenile offenders showed 1,655 children in juvenile correction facilities in Tennessee.³⁵

FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR TENNESSEE'S CHILDREN

- In 2002, Tennessee spent \$425,944,946 for child welfare services. Child welfare services refer to all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families.³⁶ Of this amount, 44% was from federal funds, and 56% was from state funds.³⁷
- In 2002, of the \$425,944,946 spent for child welfare, 9% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 2% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 24% was from Medicaid, 7% came from the Social Services Block Grant, and 1% was from Supplemental Security Income. The remaining funds (56%) came from state and local sources.³⁸
- Out of 9,359 children in out-of-home care in Tennessee on September 30, 2002, only 5,312 or 57% received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.³⁹

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

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T E N N E S S E E ' S C H I L D W E L F A R E W O R K F O R C E

- A 2003 General Accounting Office (GAO) report documented that staff shortages, high caseloads, high worker turnover and low salaries impinge on delivering services to achieve safety, permanence, and well being for children.⁴⁰
- The federal Child and Family Service Reviews have clearly demonstrated that the more time a caseworker spends with a child and family, the better the outcomes for those children and families.⁴¹
- According to the 2003 GAO report, the average caseload for child welfare/foster care caseworkers is 24–31 children and that these high caseloads contribute to high worker turnover and insufficient services being provided to children and families. CWLA recommends that foster care caseworkers have caseloads of 12–15 children.⁴²
- In 2002, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Tennessee was \$24,732 ; the median income for a family of four in Tennessee was \$55,605.⁴³

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