

# T E N N E S S E E ' S C H I L D R E N 2 0 0 7

## Tennessee's Children At a Glance

State Population <sup>1</sup> .....	5,962,959
Population, Children Under 18 <sup>2</sup> .....	1,390,522
State Poverty Rate <sup>3</sup> .....	14.9
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 <sup>4</sup> .....	21.4
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 <sup>5</sup> .....	19.7
Poverty Rate, Children Under 5 <sup>6</sup> .....	24.3

*All statistics are for 2005.*

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

- In 2004, Tennessee had 76,037 total referrals of child abuse and neglect. Of those, 48,622 reports were referred for investigation.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2004, 14,840 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Tennessee, a rate of 10.7 per 1,000 children, and representing a 57.5% increase from 2003. Of these children, 51.9% were neglected, 31.6% were physically abused, and 24.1% were sexually abused.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2004, 15 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Tennessee.<sup>9</sup>
- On September 30, 2004, 9,590 children in Tennessee lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 9,487 children on September 30, 2003. In 2004, 25.4% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 28.5% were 16 or older.<sup>10</sup>
- Of the children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2004, 60.3% were white, 32.5% were black, 3.5% were Hispanic, 0.1% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 3.7% were children of other races and ethnicities.<sup>11</sup>

## 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 4,877 children exiting out-of-home care in 2004, 63.4% were reunited with their parents or other family members.<sup>12</sup>
- In 2004, 891 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Tennessee, a 7.1% decrease from 954 in 2003.<sup>13</sup>
- Of the 9,590 children in out-of-home care in 2004, 1,785 or 18.6% were waiting to be adopted.<sup>14</sup>

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

- In 2005, approximately 68,381 Tennessee grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.<sup>15</sup>
- Of the 9,590 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2004, 14.3% were living with relatives while in care.<sup>16</sup>
- Of all Tennessee children in kinship care on September 30, 2004, 54.6% were white, 41.1% were black, 1.2% were Hispanic, 0.1% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 2.8% were of other races.<sup>17</sup>

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## CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Tennessee decreased from 185,246 in March 2005 to 180,792 in March 2006, a decrease of 2.5%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2006 was 68,381, a 2.9% decrease from March 2005.<sup>18</sup>
- In 2002, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Tennessee was at 28.0% of the federal poverty guideline.<sup>19</sup>
- In 2004, Tennessee spent \$236,230,766 in TANF funds, including 50.7% on basic assistance, 5.8% on child care, 1.8% on transportation, and 41.7% on nonassistance.<sup>20</sup>
- In 2005, Tennessee collected and distributed \$414,917,582 in child support funds, an increase of 8.5% from 2004.<sup>21</sup>
- In 2005, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Tennessee was \$580 per month. The wage necessary to afford this two-bedroom apartment was \$11.16 per hour, working a 40-hour week.<sup>22</sup>

## CHILD CARE AND HEAD START

- In 2005, Tennessee had an estimated monthly average of 43,200 children served by subsidized child care; 47,600 children received subsidized child care in 2004, and 52,100 in 2003.<sup>23</sup>
- In 2006, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Tennessee, a family of three could make no more than \$27,924, which is equivalent to 60% of the state's median income.<sup>24</sup>
- In 2006, Tennessee had 14,273 children on its waiting list for child care assistance.<sup>25</sup>
- In 2005, Head Start served 16,445 Tennessee children, the same number as in 2004.<sup>26</sup>

## HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- In 2002, 738,300 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid in Tennessee, representing 43.4% of the total number of enrollees.<sup>27</sup>
- In 2001, 12,767 foster and adopted children were enrolled in Medicaid in Tennessee, representing 1.8% of all children in Medicaid.<sup>28</sup>
- In 2001, Tennessee spent \$72,278,008 on Medicaid services for children in foster care, and \$5,661 on Medicaid services per foster care enrollee.<sup>29</sup>
- In 2003, 7,380 babies were born weighing less than 2,500 grams, giving Tennessee a ranking of 38 nationally in number of low-weight births (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).<sup>30</sup>
- In 2003, 730 infants younger than 1 year died in Tennessee, giving the state a ranking of 39 nationally in infant mortality rates (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).<sup>31</sup>

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- In 2004, the birth rate for teens age 15–17 in Tennessee was 26.7 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 89.5. This reflects a total rate of 52.1 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.<sup>32</sup>
- Cumulative through 2004, 11,071 adults and adolescents, as well as 55 children younger than 13, were reported as having HIV/AIDS in Tennessee.<sup>33</sup>
- In 2004, an estimated 36,000 children age 12–17, and 238,000 adults 26 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol in Tennessee.<sup>34</sup>

## VULNERABLE YOUTH

- In 2004, 735 children aged-out of out-of-home care in Tennessee.<sup>35</sup>
- In 2004, 30,000 Tennessee teens age 16–19 were high school dropouts.<sup>36</sup>
- In 2004, 11% of teens age 16–19 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.<sup>37</sup>
- In 2004, approximately 21,000 children age 12–17 in Tennessee needed, but had not received, treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.<sup>38</sup>
- In 2004, approximately 23,000 children age 12–17 needed, but had not received, treatment for alcohol use in the past year.<sup>39</sup>
- In 2003, 32 children and youth younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 2.06 per 100,000 children.<sup>40</sup>

## JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

- In 2003, 15 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Tennessee, compared with 16 in 2002.<sup>41</sup>
- In 2005, 34,316 children younger than 18 were arrested in Tennessee, a 0.3% decrease from 34,434 arrests in 2004. Of the arrests in 2005, 1,596 were for violent crimes and 724 were for possession of a weapon.<sup>42</sup>
- A 2003 census of juvenile offenders showed 1,434 children in juvenile correction facilities in Tennessee.<sup>43</sup>

## FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR TENNESSEE'S CHILDREN

- In 2004, Tennessee spent \$451,524,310 for child welfare services. Child welfare services are all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families.<sup>44</sup> Of this amount, 42% was from federal funds, and 58% was from state funds.<sup>45</sup>
- In 2004, of the \$190,166,931 in federal funds received for child welfare, 19% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 13% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 49% was from Medicaid, 14% came from the Social Services Block Grant, and 4% came from other federal sources.<sup>46</sup>

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- Out of 9,590 children in out-of-home care in Tennessee on September 30, 2004, only 4,348 , or 45.3%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.<sup>47</sup>

## TENNESSEE'S CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE

- 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.<sup>48</sup>
- The federal Child and Family Service Reviews have demonstrated clearly that the more time a caseworker spends with a child and family, the better the outcomes for those children and families.<sup>49</sup>
- According to the 2003 GAO report, the average caseload for child welfare/ foster care caseworkers is 24–31 children; these high caseloads contribute to high worker turnover and insufficient services provided to children and families. CWLA recommends that foster care caseworkers have caseloads of 12–15 children.<sup>50</sup>
- In 2004, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Tennessee was \$23,880; the median income for a family of four was \$55,401.<sup>51</sup>

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