Child Maltreatment

In 2018, Tennessee had 136,625 total referrals for child maltreatment. Of those, 70,590 were referred for investigation.\(^i\)

There were 9,186 child victims of maltreatment in Tennessee in 2018, at a rate of 6.1 children per 1,000. This translates to an 21.5% decrease since 2013.\(^ii\)

Of the 9,186 children, 4,770 were first time victims.\(^iii\)

The largest age group of victims was children under one, representing 2,145 of the 9,186 cases.\(^iv\)

- 58% of child maltreatment perpetrators in 2017 were parents of the child. 42% were non-parents or had an unknown relationship.\(^vi\)
- 56% of Tennessee’s child victims in 2017 were female while 44% were male.\(^vii\)

Plans of Safe Care

- In 2018, Tennessee did not report the number of infants who were screened-in with prenatal substance abuse exposure.\(^ix\)
- Tennessee reported no plans of safe care for screened-in infants.\(^x\)
Tennessee’s Children 2020

Age Distribution of Maltreatment Victims, 2017

- Child fatalities increased in 2018 from 43 in 2017 to 47 in 2018.xi
- Tennessee reported 83 total child victims of sex trafficking with 71 females and 12 males.xii
- All 9,413 victims received postresponse services while 89,657 non-victims received postresponse services as well.xiii

Foster Care and Adoptions
- 14,170 total children were served by the foster care system in FY 2018.
- 8,929 children were in care on the day of September 30th, 2018.
- 6,888 children entered care during the 2018 FY while 5,241 exited during the same year.
- 1,248 of Tennessee’s children were adopted while 1,625 were still waiting to be adopted.xv

There was a 4.1% decrease in the number of children in care between 2017 and 2018. Adoptions from the system decreased 1% from 2017.xvi

343 children in Tennessee aged out and exited foster care in 2017. This is decrease from 466 in 2016 and represents an 26.4% decrease.xvii

- Children in foster care in 2017 spent an average of 13.2 months in care.xviii
- The average length of stay in Tennessee for children waiting to be adopted from foster care in 31.3 months.xix
- The average age of children waiting to be adopted in 2017 was 9.9 years old.xx
- The average age of adopted children was 6.6 years old.xxi
Where are Children in Foster Care Staying?

- With a Relative Foster Parent: 62%
- With a Non-Relative Foster Parent: 13%
- In a Group Home: 23%
- Unaccounted for/Runaway: 2%

Data from 2017 shows that 4,406 children in foster care within Tennessee were living with non-relatives while 918 stayed with a relative. xxii

1,634 children were staying in group homes while 147 children were classified as runaways. xxiii

6% of households in Tennessee in 2018 had a grandparent living with a grandchild. xxiv

The average length of time a child in care spent living with their current relative foster family was 7.3 months. xxv

Child Poverty

Tennessee had 426,000 children in 2017 who lived with parents who lacked secure employment, representing 28% of all children. xxvi

27% of Tennessee’s children lived in households with a high housing cost burden. xxvii

The average number of individuals receiving TANF fell from 59,154 in 2017 to 49,671 in 2018. This represents a 16% decrease. xxviii

The state spent $48,976,548 on WIC in 2019, serving 112,155 people. This represents a 12.3% decrease in total participants and a 19.5% decrease in spending. xxix

934,310 people in Tennessee were food insecure in 2017, including 285,770 children who struggled with hunger. xxxi

40.7% of households receiving SNAP benefits in 2017 had children. xxxii
Health

Tennessee had 7,409 low birth-weight babies born in 2017 which is constituted as babies weighing less than 5.5 pounds. This translates to 9.2% of infants born in Tennessee in 2017.

Tennessee had a total of 8,911 preterm births in 2018, meaning less than 37 completed weeks of gestation. 10.3% of all white babies were born premature while 14.7% of black babies arrived prematurely in 2018. The total premature birth rate was 11.1%.

There were 5,516 births to mothers aged 15-19 in Tennessee in 2017, representing a rate of 27 in every 1,000 teen girls.

597 infants under 1 died in Tennessee in 2017, representing an infant mortality rate of 7.4 per 1,000.

5.2% of Tennessee’s children had no health insurance in 2018. This represents 83,000 children. Tennessee is not a Medicaid expansion state.

904,130 children in Tennessee were enrolled in Medicaid in 2018. This represents 1.7% decrease from 2017.

107,140 children in Tennessee were in the state Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 2018. This represents an 3.6% increase from 2017.
Juvenile Justice System

- There were 19,692 total arrests for children under 18 in Tennessee in 2018.
- 1,422 of these arrests were for Disorderly Conduct.
- 3,843 arrests were made for Property Crimes.
- 2,380 were arrested under the charge of Drug Abuse Violations.
- 537 children lived in juvenile correction facilities in Tennessee in 2017. This is a decrease from 693 kids in 2015, representing a 17.3% decline.

Teens & Youth

- 27,000 (7%) of Tennessee’s youth were both not in school and not working in 2017.
- In 2017, there were 12 reports of children in Tennessee aged 10-14 committing suicide, and 63 reports of suicide among children aged 15-19.
- 129 children under age 19 were killed by a firearm in Tennessee in 2017.

Child Welfare Services Funding

- Tennessee spent $733,893,368 on child welfare services in 2016. Child welfare services are all of the direct and administrative services that state agencies provide to children and families.
- $330,262,087 were allocated from the federal government and $403,631,281 came from state and local funds.

Federal Funding Sources

- 4.9% Title IV-E
- 30.2% Title IV-B
- 3.4% Medicaid
- 59.2% Social Services Block Grant
- 2.2% Other Sources

- The breakdown of the $330,262,087 in federal funding received in Tennessee in 2016.
- $4,971,600 as part of the Title IV-E Foster Care Program.
- $47,205,300 as part of the Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Program.
- Tennessee’s sum of expenditures for Social Service Block Grants in 2017 was $34,464,961.
Tennessee’s Children 2020


100
Tennessee’s Children 2020


xvi Based on Calculations from the CWLA


xx Ibid.

xxi Ibid.


xxiii Ibid.

xxiv Ibid.


xxvii Ibid.


xxoi Ibid.


xxix Medicaid.gov, Keeping America Healthy. (2019). Home, CHIP, Reports & Evaluations, Annual Enrollment Reports, 2018 Number of Children Ever Enrolled Report, Unduplicated Number of Children