Child Maltreatment
In 2020, Tennessee had 126,438 total referrals for child maltreatment. Of those, 68,813 were referred for investigation.¹

There were 8,687 child victims of maltreatment in Tennessee in 2018, at a rate of 5.7 children per 1,000. This translates to an 10.1% decrease since 2016.³

Of the 8,687 children, 4,306 were first time victims.³

The largest age group of victims was children under one, representing 1,925 of the 8,687 cases.⁴

Types of Maltreatment Victims, 2020
- Medical Neglect: 50%
- Neglect: 22%
- Other: 13%
- Physical Abuse: 13%
- Psychological Maltreatment: 11%
- Sexual Abuse: 8%
- Sex Trafficking: 1%
- Unknown: 1%

61% of child maltreatment perpetrators in 2020 were parents of the child. 39% were non-parents or had an unknown relationship.⁶

56% of Tennessee’s child victims in 2020 were female while 43% were male. 1% of child victims are unknown or not reported.⁷

Plans of Safe Care
- In 2020, Tennessee reported 213 infants who were screened-in with prenatal substance abuse exposure.⁹

- Tennessee reported 212 plans of safe care for screened-in infants.¹⁰
Child fatalities decreased from 43 in 2019 to 34 in 2020.xi

Tennessee reported 100 total child victims of sex trafficking.xii

All 8,911 victims received postresponse services while 86,960 non-victims received postresponse services as well.xiii

Foster Care and Adoptions

- 14,674 total children were served by the foster care system in FY 2020.
- 8,839 children were in care on the day of September 30th, 2020.
- 5,860 children entered care during the 2020 FY while 5,835 exited during the same year.
- 1,186 of Tennessee’s children were adopted while 1,829 were still waiting to be adopted.xv

There was a 4.8% decrease in the number of children in care between 2019 and 2020. Adoptions from the system increased 1.7% from 2019.xvi

337 children in Tennessee aged out and exited foster care in 2019. This is decrease from 388 in 2018 and represents an 13.1% decrease.xvii

- Children in foster care in 2020 spent an average of 15.9 months in care.xviii
- The average length of stay in Tennessee for children waiting to be adopted from foster care in 30.4 months.xix
- The average age of children waiting to be adopted in 2020 was 9.3 years old.xxx
- The average age of adopted children was 6.8 years old.xxxi
Data from 2019 shows that 5,285 children in foster care within Tennessee were living with non-relatives while 1,168 stayed with a relative (See Pie Chart). xxii

1,574 children were staying in group homes while 129 children were classified as runaways. xxiii

5% of households in Tennessee in 2020 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 8.8 months. xxv

**Child Poverty**

Tennessee had 418,000 children in 2019 who lived with parents who lacked secure employment, representing 28% of all children. xxvi

xxvii

26% of Tennessee’s children lived in households with a high housing cost burden. xxviii

The average number of individuals receiving TANF decreased from 41,765 in 2019 to 36,455 in 2020. This represents a 12.7% decrease. xxix xxx

The state spent $36,098,509 on WIC in 2021, serving 112,207 people. This represents a 1.0% increase in total participants and a 6.8% decrease in spending. xxxi

905,090 people in Tennessee were food insecure in 2019, including 237,100 children who struggled with hunger. xxxii

41.8% of households receiving SNAP benefits in 2019 had children. xxxiii
Health
Tennessee had 7,356 low birth-weight babies born in 2019 which is constituted as babies weighing less than 5.5 pounds. This translates to 9.2% of infants born in Tennessee in 2019. xxxiv

Tennessee had a total of 8,993 preterm births in 2019, meaning less than 37 completed weeks of gestation. 10.4% of all white babies were born premature while 14.6% of black babies arrived prematurely in 2019. The total premature birth rate was 11.1%. xxxv

There were 4,918 births to mothers aged 15-19 in Tennessee in 2019, representing a rate of 24 in every 1,000 teen girls. xxxvi

563 infants under 1 died in Tennessee in 2019, representing an infant mortality rate of 7.0 per 1,000. xxxvii

Percentage of All Preterm Births by Race or Ethnicity, 2019

Public Health Insurance Coverage for Children, 2020

5.0% of Tennessee’s children had no health insurance in 2019. This represents 80,000 children. xxxix

948,273 children in Tennessee were enrolled in Medicaid in 2020. This represents 4.4% increase from 2019. xi

73,668 children in Tennessee were in the state Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 2020. This represents an 5.0% decrease from 2019. xii
Juvenile Justice System

- There were 19,697 total arrests for children under 18 in Tennessee in 2019.
- 1,403 of these arrests were for Disorderly Conduct.
- 3,717 arrests were made for Property Crimes.
- 2,177 were arrested under the charge of Drug Abuse Violations.
- 345 children lived in juvenile correction facilities in Tennessee in 2019. This is a decrease from 537 kids in 2017, representing a 35.7% decrease.

Teens & Youth

- 21,000 (6%) of Tennessee’s youth were both not in school and not working in 2019.
- In 2020, there were 10 reports of children in Tennessee aged 10-14 committing suicide, and 44 reports of suicide among children aged 15-19.
- 121 children under age 19 were killed by a firearm in Tennessee in 2020.

Child Welfare Services Funding

- Tennessee spent $840,484,149 on child welfare services in 2018. Child welfare services are all of the direct and administrative services that state agencies provide to children and families.
- $394,451,961 were allocated from the federal government and $435,667,433 came from state and local funds.

Federal Funding Sources

The breakdown of the $394,451,961 in federal funding received in Tennessee in 2018:

- $4,971,445 as part of the Title IV-E Foster Care Program.
- $55,472,776 as part of the Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Program.

- Tennessee’s sum of expenditures for Social Service Block Grants in 2020 was $35,317,144.


5. Ibid.


xvi Based on Calculations from the CWLA


xx Ibid.

xxi Ibid.


xxiii Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid.


February 4, 2022 from https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/health-insurance/historical-series/hic.html


Ibid.


