



**For Immediate Release:**

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**Tennessee county profiles provide insight into child well-being across the state**

*County Profiles of Child Well-Being in Tennessee provide in-depth county-level data on Tennessee children throughout the last two years*

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** — The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth has released its [County Profiles of Child Well-Being in Tennessee](#). The profiles include substantial county-level data and county ranks in important areas affecting child development: economic well-being, education, health, and family and community. The profiles also list county measures on 38 indicators, an analysis of the county’s strengths and challenges and policy recommendations to improve outcomes.

The information reported in the profiles is based on data gathered prior to and during the pandemic, the profiles provide an important glimpse into how the pandemic and subsequent response has impacted children across Tennessee.

The data is primarily from 2020 and the 2020-21 school year, with a few 2019 indicators. Some indicators show substantial volatility year to year, especially in rural counties with fewer people where small changes in actual numbers of events can cause large changes in rates.

Key indicators include:

- Tennessee had more than one in five children living in poverty in 2020. The lowest percentage is in Williamson County (3.6 percent) and the highest percentage is in Lake County (40 percent).
- Fewer than one in three 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students in Tennessee rated proficient on 2020-21 TNReady Reading tests. In Haywood County, fewer than one out of every 10 students rated proficient compared to Williamson County, where more than half of all students rated proficient.
- Across Tennessee 4.9 percent of children were uninsured in 2019. The lowest percentage of children lacking health insurance was 3.8 percent in Lake County. The highest percentage was in Pickett County at 6.9 percent.
- Tennessee had 4.6 substantiated cases of abuse or neglect per 1,000 children in 2020. Decatur County had the highest rate at 12.2 and Williamson county had the lowest at 1.

Comparing data across counties provides a glimpse into the inconsistent experience of children across the state. Comparing the strongest performing counties to those facing the greatest challenges we see differences that are often more than a factor of 10. A child in Lake County is over 10 times more likely to live in poverty than a child in Williamson County. A 3<sup>rd</sup>- to 8<sup>th</sup>-grade child in Williamson County is over 10 times more likely to show proficiency on TNReady reading tests than a similar child in Haywood County. A child in Picket County is almost twice as likely to lack health insurance as a child in Lake County. A child in Decatur County is 12 times more likely to suffer a substantiated case of abuse or neglect than a child in Williamson County.

"As an agency, we are always working to improve the well-being of children, youth and families across the state," said Richard Kennedy executive director of Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth. "These county profiles always serve as a reminder that the experience, opportunities, and access to positive outcomes can look vastly different for each child in Tennessee."

The counties ranked in the top 10 are Williamson, Wilson, Sumner, Rutherford, Washington, Moore, Blount, Smith, Weakley, and Crockett. The counties with the greatest opportunities for improvement are Madison, Shelby, Lake, Lauderdale, Hancock, Davidson, Union, Haywood, Campbell, and DeKalb.

#### **Release Information**

The *County Profiles of Child Well-Being in Tennessee* and additional information about data methodology can be found at [www.tn.gov/tccy/countyprofiles](http://www.tn.gov/tccy/countyprofiles)

#### **About the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth**

The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth is an independent agency created by the Tennessee General Assembly. Its primary mission is to lead systems improvement for all children and families through data-driven advocacy, education, and collaboration. Information on the agency is available at [www.tn.gov/tccy](http://www.tn.gov/tccy).

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