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Children's Champion

• November 18, 2020 •
Tennessee Justice Center

MORE YOU KNOW

EPSDT: Ensuring Children with Disabilities Get Vital Services

There are over 76,000 children with disabilities in Tennessee. Every child should receive the health care they need. Yet most families, including many middle-class families, cannot afford to pay out-of-pocket for all the necessary services for their children. Tennessee has a few programs to provide children with the medical care and support they require to live healthy fulfilling lives.

Children in low-income families with and without disabilities may qualify for TennCare depending on [household income](#). The services provided to children on TennCare is governed by [TennCare Kids](#). TennCare Kids is Tennessee's Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program. All EPSDT screenings, check-ups, and treatments are free from birth to age 21 for those on TennCare. TennCare Kids makes sure children receive all medically necessary services at no cost to their families.

Families with incomes higher than the limits outlined have some other options to get their children with disabilities enrolled onto TennCare.

- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** - SSI provides a monthly check to those with disabilities to assist them. Children and adults on SSI are **guaranteed TennCare** coverage. There are income limits based on a variety of factors. You can check your child's eligibility using the [Social Security's Benefit Finder](#). Learn more about the application process through your local Social Security office.
- **Employment and Community First CHOICES (ECF CHOICES)** - This is a program for individuals of all ages **including young children**. ECF CHOICES provides a variety of benefits and home and community-based services including employment exploration, personal assistance, and home modifications. **These services are in addition to TennCare coverage**. ECF CHOICES does have income limits. However, parental income does not count if the child qualifies for nursing home care. It is a good option for children who lose SSI. Find out about all the other services available and how to apply on TennCare's [ECF CHOICES](#) page.
- **Katie Beckett** - The [Katie Beckett program](#) is designed to provide supplemental medical coverage for children with severe disabilities in higher income families. There is no set income limit. **The program will provide some children with TennCare and other children with monetary support to help pay for some of the medical services they need**. This is an exciting new program with lots of potential. More details are below.

Other notable programs in Tennessee which provide medical services and assistance to children with disabilities:

- **Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS)** -This program is specifically for **children under age 3** with developmental delays and disabilities. Older children can receive TEIS-type services through their school system. It helps families find and access resources to support children in their development. **There are no income limits or citizenship requirements**. The evaluation and service coordination are free of cost and the services are usually covered by insurance policies. For uninsured individuals, the services are provided at a low-cost. Check out [TEIS page](#) to learn more about what it offers and how to start the process.
- **Children's Special Services (CSS)** - The program provides reimbursement for medical services and care coordination for those children who have qualifying diagnoses and met the financial requirements. Children up to age 21 with physical disabilities and special health care needs may qualify for CSS assistance. **CSS has income limits, but there are no citizenship requirements**. It is available to children regardless of their health insurance (uninsured, private, TennCare). To see if your child is eligible and begin the application process, contact [Tennessee's Department of Health, Family Health and Wellness Division](#).

It is no small feat for families to care for children with disabilities and make sure all their children's needs are met. However, access to affordable and comprehensive health care can alleviate some of the stress.

ICYMI

- **CMS Approval of Tennessee's Katie Beckett Program-** The Program is for children under age 18 with disabilities and/or complex medical needs who are not Medicaid eligible because of their parents' income or assets. On September 20, 2019, TennCare submitted a demonstration amendment to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to establish the Katie Beckett Program. **On November 2nd, CMS approved Parts A and B of the program.**
 - Part A will provide up to 300 children with significant severe disabilities full TennCare benefits and up to \$15,000 in home and community- based services.
 - Part B will provide up to 2,700 children with severe disabilities a stipend of up to \$10,000 to help cover services not covered by their insurance. Part B does not provide full TennCare benefits.
 - Starting **Monday, November 23, 2020**, families can complete the online self-referral form through TennCare Connect to begin applying for the program. Get more information on the new program [here](#).
- **Recent News**
 - [A year later, Tennessee's massive reserve for needy families is even larger, with no spending plan in place](#)
 - [In The Search For Psychiatric Care, One Tennessee Family Feels Caught In A Vicious Cycle](#)
 - [Thoughts from Michelle Johnson, Executive Director at TJC, on Supreme Court hearing oral arguments on Affordable Care Act](#)
- **Breaking the Cycle Report-** Tennessee has a public health crisis and it is not just COVID-19. It is also opioid misuse, excess chronic disease burden, and loss of health coverage and access. In addition, Tennessee has a higher incidence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) or childhood trauma than the rest of the country. Rashmi Bharadwaj outlines in [this report](#) the connections between Tennessee's healthcare issues and the prevalence of ACEs. One issue it explores is how ACEs are multigenerational issues and the need for access to affordable health care for both children and adults. [READ THE REPORT](#).
- **New Blog Post** – Check out this blog post, [Well Child Visits are Still Essential](#), written by King Child Health Fellow Heavyn Jennings
- **Are the Kids Alright? Webinar** - Last week, TJC and Camille Carter and Heather Smith from Mental Health America of the Midsouth hosted a webinar focused on the mental health challenges facing young people today, the warning signs of serious issues, and coping strategies and resources to support kids during this challenging time. [View the recording](#).

- **Tennessee Voter Experience Survey-** The Tennessee Disability Coalition is surveying Tennesseans with and without disabilities to learn more about their experiences with voting or not voting in the 2020 election. Be one of the first 250 people to complete the following survey before November 30th for the chance to win one of 5 Amazon gift cards worth \$20 each. Fill out the Survey [here](#).

LOOKING FORWARD

Federal updates

- **Protect the ACA - On November 10, 2020**, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the California v. Texas case to decide the future of ACA. If you did not get a chance to listen live, a recording is available [here](#) from C-Span. The case was sent to the Supreme Court after a federal appeals court removed the individual mandate. The lawsuit, filed by Tennessee and other states, creates chaos and fear for the 40% of adult Tennesseans with pre-existing conditions. Before the ACA, insurance companies could – and often did – deny health insurance to millions of Americans with common conditions such as diabetes, asthma, cancer and even pregnancy. If the ACA was repealed, there would be devastating effects on many sectors of the population including [pregnant women and children](#). It would cause at least **526,000 Tennesseans** and millions of people across the country (including children) to lose coverage, eliminate protections for pre-existing conditions, and cause health insurance prices to go up for everyone. [Check out our ACA page and learn about steps you can take to help protect the ACA.](#)

State updates

- **P-EBT Round 1 (March, April, and May 2020)-** Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) is a program for children who are enrolled in the free or reduced-price school meal program. 244,000 children were missed by March, April, and May P-EBT benefits in the spring. **It is not too late to receive P-EBT if you missed the application.** P-EBT benefits for children who lost access to school meals in the spring will be sent to schools. The schools will distribute (in some cases mail) these cards to families. Here are some things you should know:
 - If you already received P-EBT for March, April and May this does not apply to you.
 - P-EBT cards will be sent to the school your child attended this past spring. Look for an announcement from your child's school or contact the school for more information.
 - Some schools will mail cards or will schedule a pick-up date. Some schools have designated a separate P-EBT pick-up location. Contact your school to get more details.
 - Schools have 30 days to get P-EBT cards to families.
 - If you have issues picking up your card in this 30 day time frame, contact your school.

- **P-EBT Round 2 (August and September 2021)-** P-EBT for August and September will be mailed directly to families soon. Schools submitted information on the children who qualify due to school closures or remote learning options that do not allow children to participate in the free or reduced-price meal program. Here are some things you should know.
 - There is no application for August and September.
 - All qualified families will receive new P-EBT cards even if your family participates in SNAP or Families First.
 - Each child will receive a P-EBT card. If you have 3 qualified children, you will receive 3 separate cards.
 - P-EBT cards are being mailed in nondescript envelopes. Be on the lookout and don't mistake this for junk mail.
 - Children qualify for August and September P-EBT if they are doing remote learning or their school has had to close for 5 days or longer due to COVID-19.

If you have questions about P-EBT, email TJC at nutrition@tnjustice.org

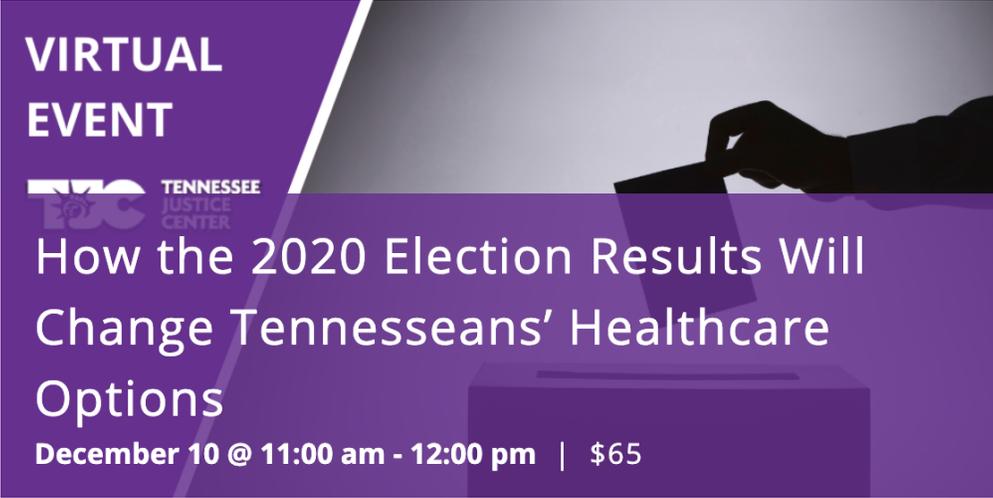
TJC will send updates on any breaking news regarding P-EBT as we learn about them. [Sign-up here to be the first to know.](#)

JOIN US



Make Tennessee Healthier for #GivingTuesday 2020
Thursday, December 1
[GIVE TODAY](#)

This Giving Tuesday, give the gift of health to a family in our community! With a donation to TJC, you are helping our fellow Tennesseans receive care & support this holiday season. **BONUS:** All gifts up to \$10,000 will be matched by a generous donor!

A purple banner for a virtual event. On the left, it says "VIRTUAL EVENT" in white. Below that is the Tennessee Justice Center logo. The main text in white reads "How the 2020 Election Results Will Change Tennesseans' Healthcare Options". At the bottom, it says "December 10 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm | \$65". The background features a silhouette of a hand putting a ballot into a box.

**VIRTUAL
EVENT**

TENNESSEE
JUSTICE
CENTER

**How the 2020 Election Results Will
Change Tennesseans' Healthcare
Options**

December 10 @ 11:00 am - 12:00 pm | \$65

**How the 2020 Election Results Will Change Tennesseans' Healthcare
Options**
Thursday, December 10
11 PM CT/12 PM ET
[**REGISTER HERE**](#)

During this one-hour webinar, TJC will discuss the impacts a Biden or Trump Administration will likely have on these vital public health programs as well as the Federally Facilitated Marketplace (FFM). Whether it is Medicaid Expansion, Medicaid Block Grant, or pandemic policy changes, our legal team will give you a glimpse into the future, so you are prepared and ready to help Tennesseans obtain or keep their healthcare insurance coverage.

As a reminder, the Tennessee Justice Center also helps with:

1. Enrollment onto TennCare and CoverKids
2. Service Issues
3. Redetermination Issues

If you ever encounter anyone who is having trouble getting health insurance or getting health services, please call TJC: (615) 255-0331.

If there is any information you would like us to share on your behalf, including events and resources, please reply to this email.

Sincerely,



Kinika Young
Senior Director of Health Policy and Advocacy
Tennessee Justice Center

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