The State of Babies Yearbook: 2021 is here, and once again it shows that Tennessee’s babies are struggling to thrive. The State of Babies Yearbook: 2021, a national and state resource from Zero to Three with data and indicator analysis powered by Child Trends, provides a snapshot of how babies are faring across nearly 60 data points in areas essential for a good start in life: Good Health, Strong Families, and Positive Early Learning Experiences. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Tennessee ranked near the bottom for babies.

Tennessee’s ranking overall, in the Strong Families and Positive Early Learning Experiences measures, remained steadily at 'reaching forward' since the 2020 yearbook, but it dropped from 'reaching forward' to 'getting started' on
the Good Health measure. This is due to high infant mortality rates, pre-term births, and babies with low birth weights. These already high rates are consistently higher for Black babies.

TJC launched a #BlackHealthMatters webpage which compiles resources on policies that address racial health disparities, including infant and maternal health, and amplifies the voices of those who have shared their experiences with us.

Check out TJC’s Black Health Matters page to learn more.

New Children's Chat Vlog

We just launched a new video blog (“vlog”) to make complex topics easier to understand and more accessible to everyone. Take a look at our first episode, "How Does the American Rescue Plan Affect TennCare, SNAP, and Other Benefits?"
Welcome TJC’s 2021 Mothers of the Year

Every year, TJC honors some of our most dedicated and inspiring moms and caregivers as TJC’s Mothers of the Year. Read the stories of this year’s Mothers and Caregivers of the Year.

TJC in the News

- Nonprofit names Caryville couple who fosters medically fragile children ‘Parents of the Year’
- The TennCare Trap: How one state’s war on Medicaid fraud ensnares working moms in Alabama
- Tennesseans are dying waiting on our $1.4 billion for Medicaid expansion | Opinion
- Tennessee families sue to stop TennCare block grant, citing Trump’s ‘haste’ to approve

Federal Marketplace Special Enrollment Period Extended

Open enrollment for the ACA Marketplace is now open until August 15. Many families have lost their health insurance due to the pandemic. This is an opportunity to enroll through healthcare.gov.

Trouble with your application? Call us toll-free: 1-877-608-1009

FEDERAL & STATE UPDATES

American Families Plan

On April 28, 2021, President Biden introduced the American Families Plan. It follows on the tails of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the American Jobs Plan in hopes to continue reducing child poverty and racial
inequities in child outcomes. It centers on expansion of America’s middle class. Currently, it consists of $1.8 trillion in investments and tax credits for America’s families.

This plan includes things like universal preschool, child care cost reductions for families and increased wages for child care workers; a national paid family and medical leave program; and extensions on the time limits of ARPA’s changes to the child tax credit, child and dependent care tax credit, and ACA premium tax credit. The American Families Plan seeks to improve not only child well-being, but the economic state of America.

Check out the fact sheet to learn more about what the American Families Plan will do for Tennessee families

**McCutchlen v. Becerra: Tennessee’s Block Grant Lawsuit**

On April 22, 2021, thirteen Medicaid enrollees, represented by TJC, the National Health Law Program, and King & Spalding LLP, filed a complaint in the US District Court for the District of Columbia. It challenges the Department of Health and Human Services’ approval of the TennCare III Block Grant through the end of 2030.

The Trump administration overstepped their legal bounds when they approved Tennessee's Medicaid block grant. They did not provide the required public comment period, depriving people of the opportunity to voice their objections to the project. We sued to rectify their illegal action and to protect the 1.5 million Tennesseans who would be harmed by the damaging policies made possible by this block grant.

Read the Complaint

**TennCare Postpartum Coverage Extension Update**

Before this year, Tennessee was one of only three states that had not opted to extend postpartum coverage beyond 60 days. Our country and state are experiencing a maternal mortality crisis that is disproportionately killing Black mothers.
For this reason, we are grateful that Governor Lee and the Legislature’s fiscal year 2021-2022 budget includes $7 million to extend postpartum coverage for mothers on TennCare from 60 days to 12 months. There is also funding to provide limited dental coverage to pregnant women on TennCare.

We look forward to learning more about how these changes will be implemented and will share the news as it becomes available.

**JOIN US**

**Historical Walking Tour: Tracing the Footsteps of TN's Justice Champions**
*Tuesday, May 25, 2021 | 11:00 am - 12:00 pm*

Join the Tennessee Justice Center for a walking tour of downtown Nashville hosted by nationally recognized advocate for social justice, lawyer, and co-founder of TJC, Gordon Bonnyman.

**Understanding Early Childcare and Summer P-EBT**
*Thursday, May 27, 2021 | 10:00 am - 11:00 am*

Join us to learn the basics on early childcare and Summer P-EBT for children in Tennessee.
SNAP 101

*Thursday, June 3, 2021 | 11:00 am - 12:00 pm*

Join us for an overview of SNAP including eligibility, the application process, program changes driven in response to the pandemic, and how we can work together to advocate for positive change.

[Register]

Best Practices for Navigating the TennCare Connect Portal

*Thursday, June 24, 2021 | 11:00 am - 12:30 pm*

Designed to help advocates understand how answers to specific questions about income, resources, and expenses can affect eligibility for a given category, this training is ideal for any advocate who helps people enroll in coverage regardless of their knowledge level.

[Register]

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
If you believe you received this message in error or wish to no longer receive email from us, please (Unsubscribing is not supported in previews).