

Ways to Connect with Child Care

“There’s been so much positive press about Knoxville in the business media, wouldn’t it be great if Knoxville became known as a world-class place for child care too?”

~Hugh Nystrom, Director of Program Operations for Childhelp Tennessee

Make a Difference Through Prayer

- Pray that all young children in Knoxville will receive the love, resources and consistent care they need to grow physically healthy, emotionally secure, and ready to succeed in school.
- Pray for vulnerable children in child care: those at risk for developmental delays, those who are not adequately nurtured at home, those who are trapped in unhealthy childcare situations.
- Pray for financially stressed parents to gain access to quality child care.
- Pray for child care staff to find deep wells of love, strength, patience and wisdom, and that child care providers serving low-income parents would stay financially viable.
- Pray that government and employers would make sound policies affecting the quality and accessibility of child care.

Make a Difference Through Your Church

- East Child Care Resource & Referral (865-974-7750) would appreciate donated space (a meeting room and parking for up to 60 people) to host free early childhood trainings.
- Provide financial assistance to help low-income families afford quality child care.
- "Adopt" a child care program that serves low-income families: donate educational materials, toys, and personal care items; provide facility maintenance and improvements; assist with office work; and offer appreciation to staff (who are typically underpaid).
- If your church has a seniors group, offer to provide volunteer "grandparents" to a child care agency.
- Offer mentoring and support services to struggling families served by child care programs such as Head Start (865-522-2193) or Great Starts Nursery (865-588-4382 ext 214)—including mothers participating in addiction recovery programs, grandparents raising young grandchildren, and single moms struggling to make ends meet.
- Consider starting (or hosting) a high-quality child care program at your church. Besides full day care, other options include emergency child care (for working parents when children get sick or have a snow day), before- and after-school programs, and summertime programs.
- Organize community education and advocacy on the importance of early education and child development. For more information, see the Tennessee Commission on Children & Youth (<http://www.tennessee.gov/tccy>), an independent state agency that advocates for improving quality of life for Tennessee children and families.

Make a Difference as a Volunteer

Connect with the following organizations that provide child care services:¹

The Children's Center: 865-523-2672, www.thechildrenscenterofknoxville.org

A quality preschool program supported in part by the United Way and the State of Tennessee that serves over 100 children from 6 weeks to 5 years old.

- Read and play games with the children.
- Help plan and coordinate special events.
- Groups: Assist with indoor and outdoor facility maintenance.

Great Starts Nursery (Child & Family Tennessee): 865-588-4382 ext 214, www.child-family.org/

Provides developmental instruction and intervention for children 6 weeks to 5 years old who have been exposed to addictions, in a positive, structured, and consistent learning environment.

- Come in and hold the infants, or play with the toddlers and preschoolers.
- Participate on the Transagency Board, which provides guidance for programs and services.
- Families: Plan activities and parties for the children in the nursery, or plan special events after hours for the children together with their families.

Knoxville-Knox County Head Start: 865-522-2193, www.tnheadstart.org

Provides comprehensive educational, social, and health programs for children from low-income families to contribute to community development.

- Committed volunteers are needed to offer a supplemental curriculum called Be Smart Kids, which prepares children to enter kindergarten. The program involves half-hour, twice-weekly one-on-one sessions to reinforce basic skills such as reciting the alphabet and following directions.
- Read to children, work with children on the computer, or provide child care for evening parent meetings.
- Families: Hold a drive for children's clothing (especially sizes under 7) and preschool books.
- Groups: Help with building maintenance and yard work.

Wesley House Community Center: 865-524-5494, www.wesleyhouse.com

Provides afterschool and summertime enrichment programs to develop and maintain the emotional, academic, and spiritual growth of children and families.

- Tutor children during the afternoon academic time, from 3:45-4:45 p.m.
- Families and groups: Interact informally with children during non-academic time and lead organized recreational activities.

Additional organizations that focus on child care:

¹ Please note that volunteer positions working with children may involve criteria such as being over 18, having a recent physical and being willing to have a background check. Contact the agency for details on volunteer requirements.

Early Learning Center (University of Tennessee): 865-974-0843, <http://elc.utk.edu>
Generates knowledge and practices that improve the field of early education, and provides full-day, high-quality early education programs.

East Child Care Resource & Referral: 865-974-7750, www.tncrr.org
Provides information on quality child care to parents and community agencies and helps parents locate appropriate care; offers consultations and training for early childhood professionals.

Fair Garden Family and Community Service Center: 865-594-1320, www.kcs.k12tn.net
A federally funded program that offers educational programs and supportive services focused on family needs.

Sam E. Hill Family and Community Service Center: 865-594-3632, www.kcs.k12tn.net
*Serves preschool children and their families year-round by utilizing *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*—enhanced by technology and parent/community involvement.*

Therapeutic Pre-School (Helen Ross McNabb): 865-637-9711, www.mcnabbcenter.org
Provides therapeutic care for children ages 2 to 6 who have been sexually, emotionally, or physically abused or neglected, or who have suffered major loss or trauma.

YMCA Child Care Services: 865-522-9622, www.ymcaknoxville.org
A licensed child care program conducted in cooperation with the Knox County school system that serves students from kindergarten to fifth grade.

How to Learn More

- For a list of locations and hours of operation of all licensed providers in Tennessee, visit the Tennessee Department of Human Services website, <http://tnetgis.state.tn.us/childcare>.
- Contact the East Child Care Resource & Referral Line (865-946-1866) to learn what to look for when choosing quality child care and to obtain child care referrals.
- East Child Care Resource & Referral offers quarterly training for early childhood teachers as well as the general public (check the on-line calendar at www.tncrr.org for upcoming workshops; call 865-974-7750 to register).
- Great Starts Nursery (865-588-4382 x 214) has knowledgeable speakers willing to travel to churches and other local groups to talk about the effects of substance abuse on children and their families, and to share about their program's services.
- Head Start Advisory Committees (865-522-2193) meet twice a year to discuss issues such as Education, Family Services, Health, and Transportation that affect participating children and families.