



C4P News

Parents as Child Advocates

Introduction to Advocacy

Much of the information on child advocacy focuses on children who fall into some at-risk category (special needs, trauma, etc). However, all children benefit from having an advocate, and the most available advocate for many children is the parent.



Featured Professional: Mr. Lindsey Cody— East Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

Lindsey Cody (far right, pictured with TCCY Vice President Lt. John Adams, President Kelly Drummond, and Secretary/Treasurer Sandi Groover), is the newly appointed Regional Coordinator for the East Tennessee Council on Children and Youth (ETCCY).

What is the Goal of Advocacy?

According to the Children's Defense Fund, the goal of an advocate is to level the playing field for all children. Advocates work to protect children from ill treatment and ensure that all children have access to the resources they need for their education, physical health, and mental health.

Who are Child Advocates?

Anyone who cares about the wellbeing of children can become an advocate. Parents can be the most effective advocates for their children if they know how to identify their child's needs and how to access resources to help meet these needs. Parent educators have the opportunity to help parents learn these skills and become better advocates for their children.

The National Center for Learning Disabilities website is home to some tips and skills on how all parents can become advocates for their children. These tips can be found at <http://www.nclcd.org/at-school/your-childs-rights/advocacy-self-advocacy>

Mr. Cody began working with the TN Department of Children's Services in 1998 as a Child Protective Services Investigator. He worked in Juvenile Probation for 3 years and then as a Child Care Program Evaluator until assuming the new position as Coordinator for the ETCCY. Mr. Cody is a graduate of Lindenwood College.

The ETCCY was recently redesigned and held its first conference on October 29, 2009, entitled **STEP UP FOR KIDS**. Contributing to the success of the conference were guest speakers: Kelly Drummond of the BOYS/GIRLS Clubs, Dustin Keller, Mental Health Director for the TCCY, Lois Snow of the TN School Health Coalition, and Trudy Hughes, Commission Member and recipient of the Jim Pryor Child Advocacy Award. TCCY is an independent state agency that advocates for improvement in the quality of life for children and families in Tennessee. The East TN Council addresses local needs of children and families; provides organizational structure for statewide networking on their behalf and provides local input to the Commission. Council members include individual professionals, professional organizations, and other citizens interested in positively affecting the lives of Tennessee's Children. The Council is planning a Legislative/Networking conference in the near future. For more information or membership, please contact Lindsey.Cody@tn.gov

Keeping You Current

- * February is National Parent Leadership Month!
- * April is Child Abuse Prevention Month!

Featured Books

A Child Called It: Dave Pelzer's autobiographical account illustrates why it is important for parents to become advocates for their children.
I Speak for this Child: True Stories of a Child Advocate by Gay Courter



Trivia Question

Parents can become better advocates for their children through parent education by:
 A) decreasing parenting distress, B) reducing drug/alcohol use,
 C) improving parental perceived competence, or D) all of the above.
 The first person to turn in a correct answer (via [email](mailto:)) will receive a \$5 Starbucks gift card!

Meetings, Trainings, and Events

- Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth's annual Children's Advocacy Days will be March 9-10, 2010 in Nashville.
- Connecting for Children's Justice Conference will be held on November 23-24. <http://www.tncac.org/registration>
- Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare conferences during the month of December <http://www.tcsww.org/trainingandevents.html>

Featured Resources

- The KIDS COUNT Data Center, an initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, has released the 2009 Data Book, which profiles the well-being of America's children on a state-by-state basis and ranks states on 10 key measures of child well-being. The book can be accessed at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2009/Default.aspx>
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteers help to ensure that the best interests of abused and neglected children are considered in the court system. More information can be found at <http://www.tncasa.org>