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TENNESSEE
STATE UNIVERSITY

Center of Excellence
for Learning Sciences

2020 Annual Report



Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences
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Nashville, Tennessee

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www.tnstate.edu/learningsciences

2020 Annual Report Issue 6

This annual report is published by the Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences at Tennessee State University for faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the Nashville community.

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Tennessee State University Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences 2020 Annual Report

About the Center

Through the Academics–Research–Service model, the Center works together with academic institutions, community-based service organizations, and government agencies to promote learning and strengthen communities.

The partnerships between the Center and state organizations have a multidisciplinary mission that focuses primarily on the needs of Tennessee but is national in scope.

A few of the accomplishments of these partnerships include: (1) creating programs and projects which impact the quality of early childhood programs for Tennessee's children, especially those within communities of highest need; (2) intensive training for those providing family support services; and (3) influence on public policy.

About Tennessee State University

Founded in 1912, Tennessee State University (TSU) fosters scholarly inquiry and research, lifelong learning, and a commitment to service.

Tennessee State University is an 1890 land-grant institution and Nashville's only comprehensive public university, as well as Middle Tennessee's first public Carnegie Doctoral/Research institution. The university has two convenient locations – a 450-acre main campus, with more than 65 buildings, located in a residential setting; and the Avon Williams Building located in the heart of downtown, near the center of the Nashville business and government district. TSU has demonstrated expertise as a robust educational and entrepreneurial research engine with a continuous positive impact on the economic tapestry of Nashville, the State of Tennessee, region and nation. The university offers unparalleled research, produces workforce-prepared talent, and provides educational and technical assistance services to industries, communities, and businesses worldwide.

Tennessee State University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution committed to educate a non-racially identifiable student body. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons who need assistance with this material may contact the Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences, 615-277-1651.

About this Annual Report

This annual report covers the period from July 2019 to June 2020. The report represents a series of reports on the progress of the programs housed within the Center and includes specific events and program data. It summarizes the specific projects and programs that the Center has engaged in over the past year, but as with any summary, it does not fully capture the range and depth of activities undertaken. To more fully explore the Center, its mission and programs, visit our website at www.tnstate.edu/learningsciences.

Table of Contents

Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences	4
Academic and Professional Development Programs	8
Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) Statewide Management Office	8
TECTA Tuition Support for Higher Education	9
Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential Support	10
Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) TSU Site	10
Research Projects	11
Service Programs and Community Partnerships	12
Social Services Competency Based Training (SSCBT) Program	12
Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start Program	13
Tennessee State University Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership	14
Training and Technical Assistance Programs	16
TECTA Orientation	16
Tennessee Early Childhood Program Administrator Credential (TECPAC)	17
Tennessee Child Care Online Training System (TCCOTS)	18
Tennessee State University 2020 Employee Recognition	19

Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences (COELS)

Here's what we've been up to in 2019 - 2020

The Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences at Tennessee State University aims to conduct research that addresses the needs and priorities of the educational community through academic and professional development programs, service programs, community partnerships, and training/technical assistance programs.

COELS is one of 26 centers established by action of the Tennessee General Assembly in 1984 to expand research and contribute to the overall economic and community development base of the state.



DR. KIMBERLY SMITH
Director, Center of Excellence
for Learning Sciences

Program Highlights

This year presented a host of new challenges. The year began as expected, but things took a turn in March of 2020 when an EF-4 tornado charged through Nashville and middle Tennessee and was quickly followed by the arrival of the COVID-19 virus and the resultant quarantine procedures. Like most universities, Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences staff shifted to working from home for the safety of our staff and students.

Despite these challenges, the Center has remained deeply focused on our programs, which provide services and support to essential workers in child care and human services. Our efforts have resulted in \$16,160,993 in funding, a 22% increase from the 2018-2019 fiscal year. This report focuses on the work of our teams, who continue to build capacities and strengthen communities through education.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Beginning in March of 2019, all of the Center staff on the main campus began working from home. All of our Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start child care centers in west Tennessee suspended in-person care. CAREs staff continued to engage with and support parents and spent the remainder of the year focusing on safely reopening.

The TSU TECTA site, along with all other sites, shifted all services online including online TECTA Orientation, academic registration via email, Zoom and individual phone meetings, all support group, director, and advisory group meeting moved online, and resources, articles and information about webinars were shared on the TSU TECTA Facebook page.

TECTA moved all conferences online. The TECTA Summer Research Institute and the first ever TECTA Leadership Series were both held virtually. The Summer Research Institute Webinar Series began in June and continued through August of 2020 with 587 attendees over the course of the series. The TECTA Leadership Series was hosted over three sessions and 433 people attended.

This year the SSCBT program shifted its training modules online. The training sessions, mentoring, and oral review were all conducted online in accordance with the COVID safety measures.



The Annual Steering Committee met to discuss the strategic work of the TECTA program.

Academic and Professional Development Programs

TECTA unveiled a new logo and revamped website in January. Six years since its last logo refresh, the rebrand included a new color scheme that combines the classic TECTA purple with TSU's reflex blue, new fonts and design styles, and most notably, a simplified new logo. The logo rebrand includes the TECTA sites and the affiliated initiatives. The statewide website, www.tecta.info, also underwent a full redesign.

The TECTA program provided over \$1.1 million in tuition support for 825 students taking 2,132 courses. TECTA also assisted 138 students across the state in the pursuit of a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential™.

Research Projects

The Center submitted three research proposals totaling over \$6 million dollars. Each proposal focused on a difference aspect of training early childhood educators. The Center was awarded \$50K from the Tennessee Board of Regents to build an online learning community for educators for the upcoming 2020-2021 fiscal year.

This year the Center released a new white paper outlining pay disparities among men and women working in child care, coauthored by Dr. Erin Lynch and Dr. Celeste Brown. The full-text paper is available at www.tnstate.edu/learning-sciences/research.aspx.



Dr. Kimberly Smith leads a Faculty Development Workshop on "Writing a Compelling Proposal" for TSU faculty.

Service Programs and Community Partnerships

The Social Service Competency Based Training (SSCBT) program expanded its services to the state of Idaho. Beginning in August 2019, the College of Southern Idaho's Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Twin Falls, Idaho became the state's first cohort of SSCBT participants.

The Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership program conducted a selection process during the fall of 2019 for new partner centers. The program now serves 80 children at the Daniel Payne Christian Child Care Center, the 18th Ave Family Enrichment Center, Mini Rock Stars Child Care Center, and the Fifteenth Ave. Baptist Church Child Learning Center.

The Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start program was awarded \$2.2 million for the 2019 – 2020 fiscal year from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF)/Office of Head Start. This amounts to a 5% increase from the previous year.

Training and Technical Assistance Programs

Several new training and technical assistance programs launched this year. The TECTA Family Child Care Network successfully piloted an online course that provides a training-based pathway for providers to earn the Family Child Care CDA®.

TrainTN was built and officially launched in 2020. TrainTN is an online portal for trainers in early childhood education and child development to receive recognition from the Tennessee Department of Human Services. Development of the portal was a joint effort between CCR&R, the Tennessee DHS, TECTA, and UT SWORPS. TECTA is responsible for processing all applications and making sure the initial requirements are met.

The Tennessee Professional Archive of Learning, or TNPAL website, also launched in 2020. Following alongside other states, TNPAL serves as a workforce registry for early childhood professionals. The system was developed in collaboration with the IDEALS Institute at Johns Hopkins University. Educators can create their own training profile, document their professional accomplishments, and develop a professional development plan.

Looking Ahead to 2020-2021

Faced with widespread uncertainty, the Center of Excellence has made remarkable progress in collaboration with our state, community, and university partners. We are working on exciting new advancements for 2021.

- The Tennessee Board of Regents has awarded \$50,000 to the Center as part of the Student Engagement, Retention, and Success grant program. The project, entitled ClearPath ECE, will create online resources to help Early Childhood Educators with college and career success.
- TECTA received over \$14 million in funding for fiscal year 2020-2021. As a 22% increase over last year's award, this funding will be used for strengthening the TECTA Family Child Care Network, providing additional professional development for leadership targeted toward administrators and directors of child care programs, and providing tuition and academic technical assistance for early childhood students in two-year and four-year colleges and universities statewide.
- The Center was awarded over \$1 million to expand its Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) program to Rutherford County. Beginning September 2020, 64 children and families will be served through the expansion. This grant also includes Quality Improvement funds to enhance classroom learning equipment and materials and to provide training for staff and families.



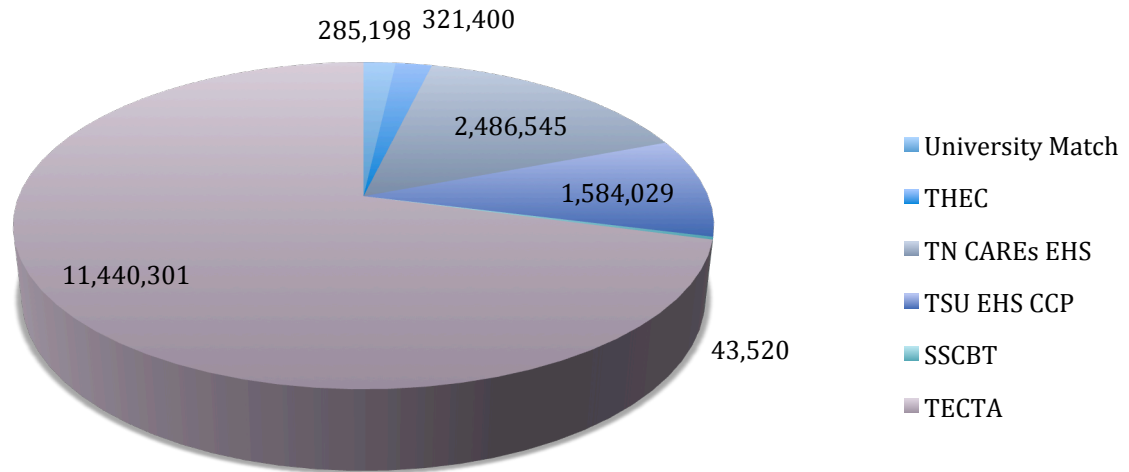
Amy Laird and Dr. Smith attended the Region 9 Head Start Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii.



Zora Bates and Tammy Brewer directed a training session for Mentors in the TECTA Family Child Care Network.

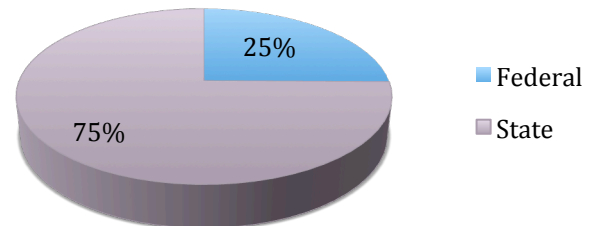
Total Funding by Program

The Center secured a total of **\$16,160,993** for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.



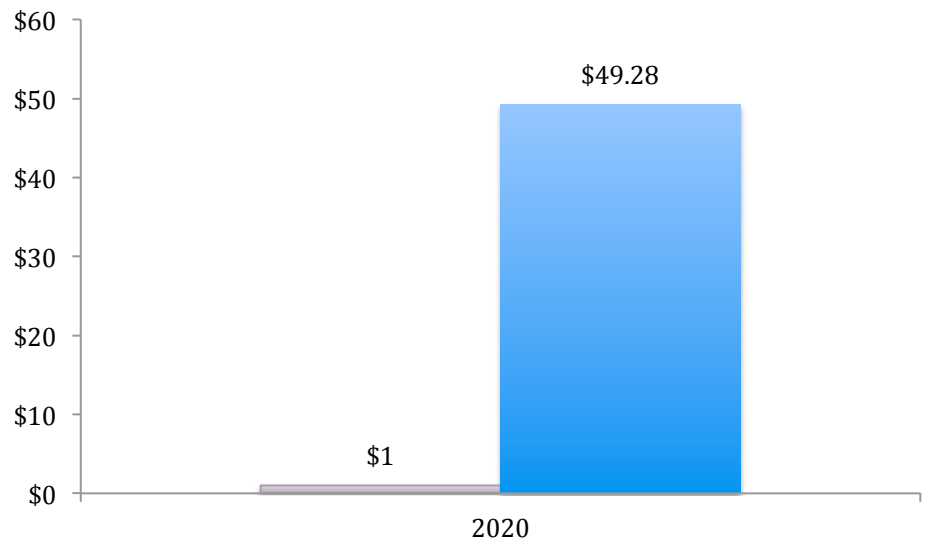
Total Percentage by Funding Source

One quarter (25%) of the total funding came from federal agencies. Seventy-five percent (75%) was secured from state departments.



THEC Appropriations and Return on Investment

As one of Tennessee's 26 Centers of Excellence, the Center receives annual funding from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). For FY 2020, every dollar invested by THEC provided a return of \$49.28.



Academic and Professional Development Programs

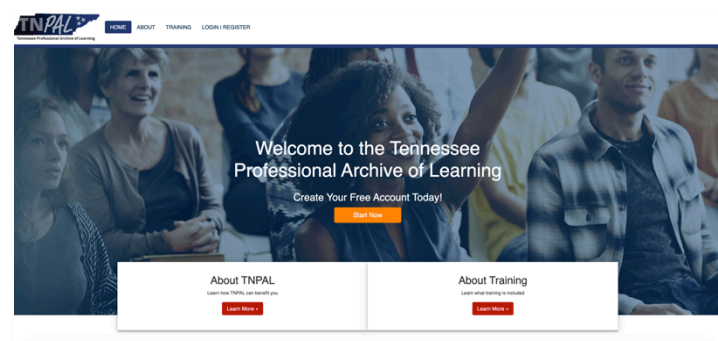
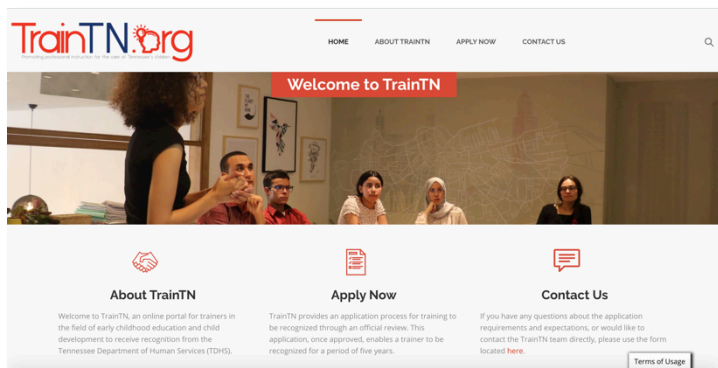
Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) Statewide Management Office

Since 1992, TECTA has provided high quality professional learning through free training and academic tuition support to thousands of Tennesseans in the early care and education workforce.

The TECTA program maintains a diverse student/participant body, many of whom are working in minimum wage jobs. TECTA's workforce support includes a basic 30-hour non-credit bearing orientation course and financial support for academic courses that articulate from the Associates to Baccalaureate level and beyond. TECTA is also taking part in national efforts to evaluate and improve the systems and policies that impact the development of the early

childhood workforce. Overall, TECTA provides professional development opportunities and supports public policy and services, which improve the quality of care for Tennessee's children.

TECTA is funded by the Tennessee Department of Human Services and FY 2020 saw an increase from \$9.5 million to \$11.4 million in funding.



The TrainTN and TNPAL registry websites were both launched in 2020.



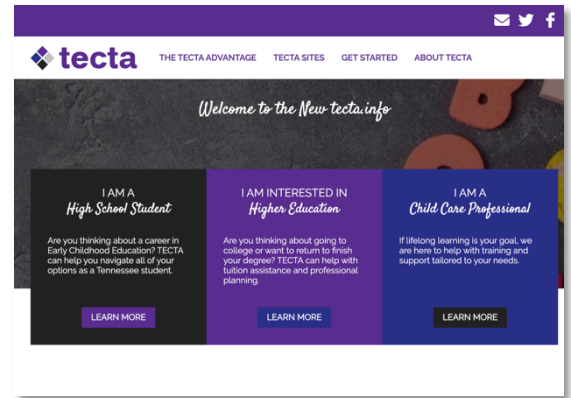
LIN VENABLE
Statewide Program Director, TECTA



The TECTA program rebranded this year with a new logo for all TECTA sites and programs.

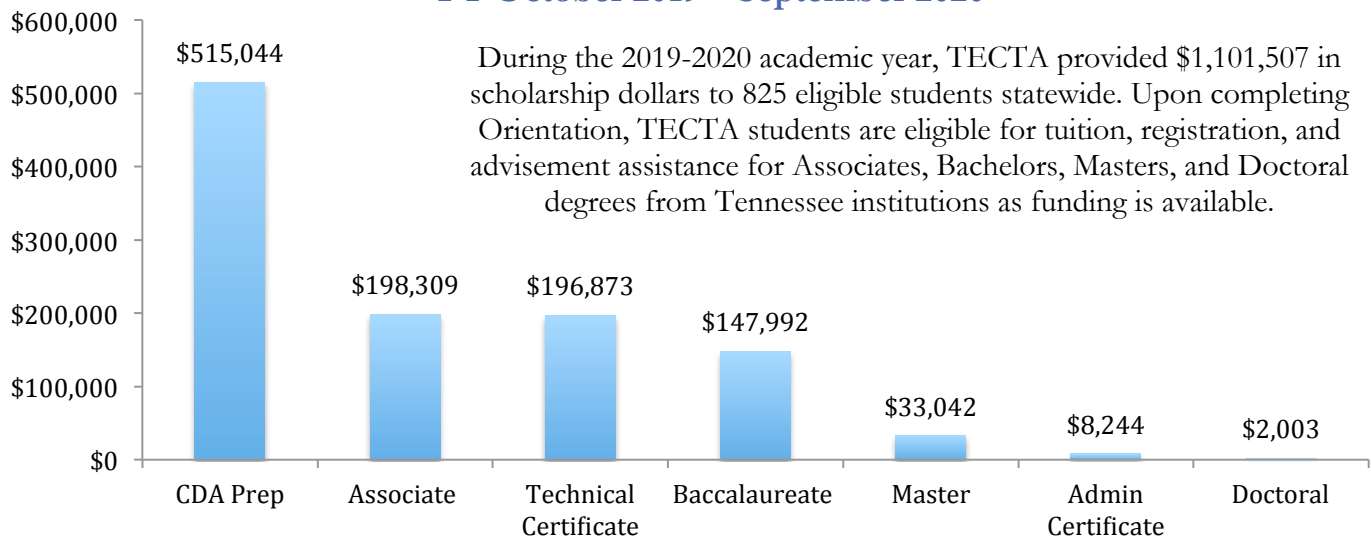


Mary Jo Huff presents “Storytelling with Puppets, Props, and Playful Tales” during the online TECTA Summer Research Institute Webinar Series.

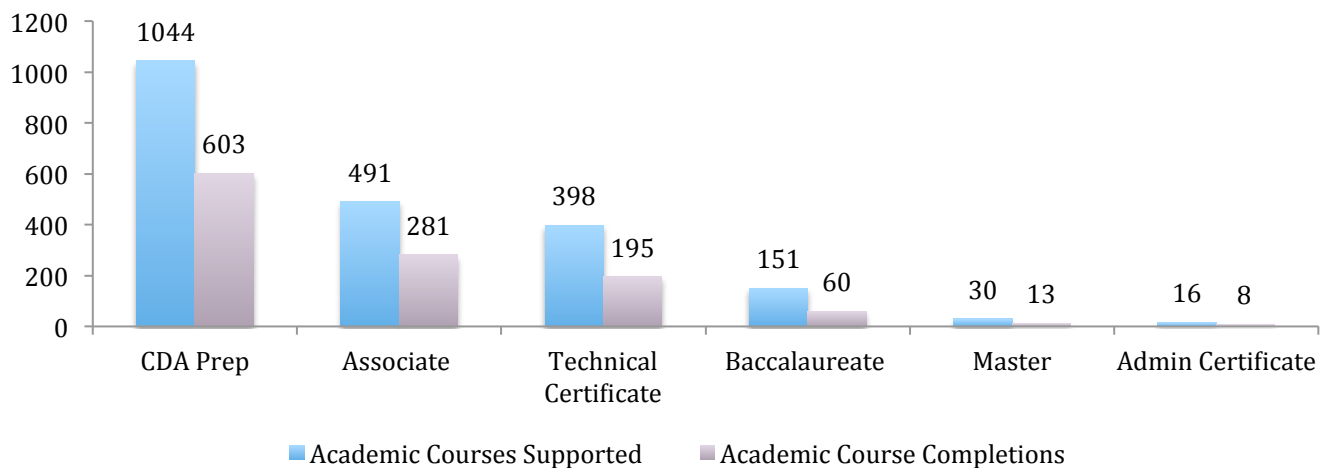


The TECTA website, www.tecta.info, was redesigned and launched in January of 2020.

TECTA Tuition Support for Higher Education FY October 2019 – September 2020

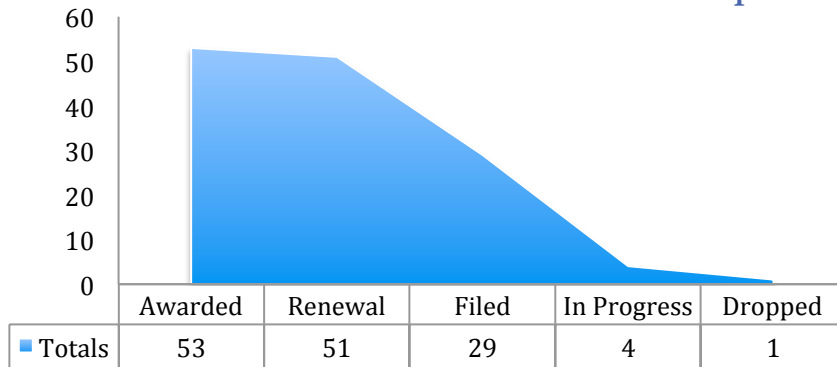


Academic Support by Education Level FY October 2019 – September 2020



Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential Support

FY October 2019 – September 2020



The Council for Professional Recognition awards the Child Development Associate® Credential. A CDA assistance program is coordinated with the TECTA local offices to provide competency-based instruction, supervised field experiences, and advisement to caregivers.

Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) Tennessee State University Site

The Tennessee State University TECTA Site is housed in the Center alongside the TECTA statewide management office. The TSU TECTA Site serves half the middle Tennessee region with Orientation, training, course registration, and credential support, and more.



Fall 2019 Infant/Toddler Orientation Class



DR. ERIN LYNCH
Research Director, Center of
Excellence for Learning



Fall II 2019 Center-Based Orientation



TSU TECTA Site staff attended the
NAEYC Conference in Nashville



Spring 2020 Academic Registration at
Nashville State Community College



Ulyondia Gordon (left) and Miranda
Wilson (right) with Dr. Valora
Washington, former CEO of the Council
for Professional Recognition

Research Projects

Over the past 30 years, the Center has conducted several major research projects including the nationally lauded Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio, or STAR Study, which was a four-year study to determine the extent class size affects students' learning in Kindergarten through third grade. The follow-up Lasting Benefits Study examined the sustained benefits of K-3 small classes on students from fourth through twelfth grade including academic achievement, school participation, and graduation rates. The Center has

received two multi-million dollar National Science Foundation awards, both to study science achievement and teacher development in elementary schools.

During FY 2020, Dr. Erin Lynch, departed her role as Research Director. Dr. Celeste Brown has continued the Center's research efforts and is currently Co-PI on a Student Engagement, Retention and Success Grant (SERS) from the Tennessee Board of Regents.

Research Productivity

National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning

In collaboration with IDEALS Institute, Johns Hopkins University

Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start

Proposed Budget: \$2,705,625 for the five-year award period

Child Care and Early Education Research Connections

Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation

Proposed Budget: \$3,323,776 for the five-year award period

Becoming an Early Childhood Education Professional*

Tennessee Board of Regents

Proposed Budget: \$50,000 for one year

*Grant was awarded for FY 2021

Recent Publications from the Center

The Center published a white paper outlining pay disparities among men and women working in childcare co-authored by Dr. Erin Lynch and Dr. Celeste Brown. To read the full report, visit <http://www.tnstate.edu/learningsciences/research.aspx>

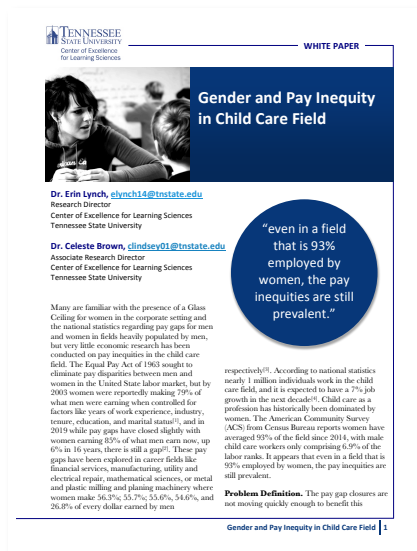
Research Team



DR. ERIN LYNCH
Research Director,
Center of Excellence for
Learning Sciences



DR. CELESTE BROWN
Associate Research
Director, Center of
Excellence for Learning
Sciences



Service Programs and Community Partnerships

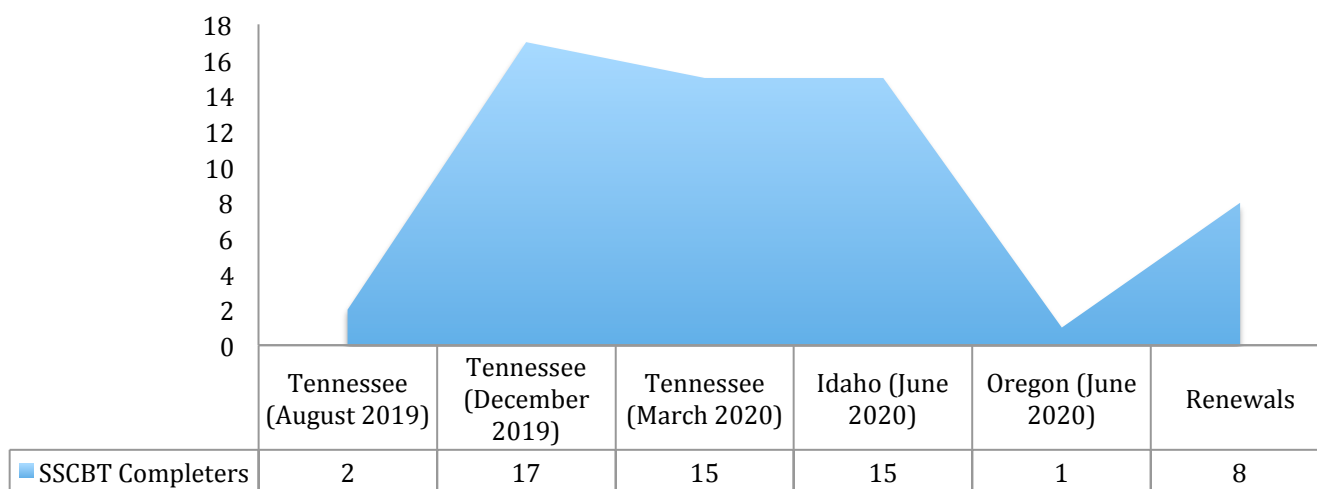
Social Services Competency Based Training (SSCBT) Program

SSCBT is a competency-based program designed to improve the knowledge and skills of human service workers in Head Start community action programs and social service agencies across the country. It is specifically designed as an intensive training for those with limited social work experience and is structured to align with the Head Start Relationship-Based Competencies for Staff Working with Families including 25 functional areas and 64 competency-based lessons. The program serves those providing family support services including case managers, home visitors, teachers, health services staff, and community workers. Undergraduate college credit is available through Tennessee State University and the Center awards the SSCBT Credential upon completion of the program wherein participants are required to renew every two years.



AMY LAIRD
Program Manager, SSCBT

SSCBT Credentials Awarded by Type
FY 2019 - 2020



Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start Program

Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start is a federally funded community-based program for low-income families with infants and toddlers and pregnant women. The Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start program has provided coordinated comprehensive, intensive, and continuous support services to enable families to attain self-sufficiency since 1995, when the

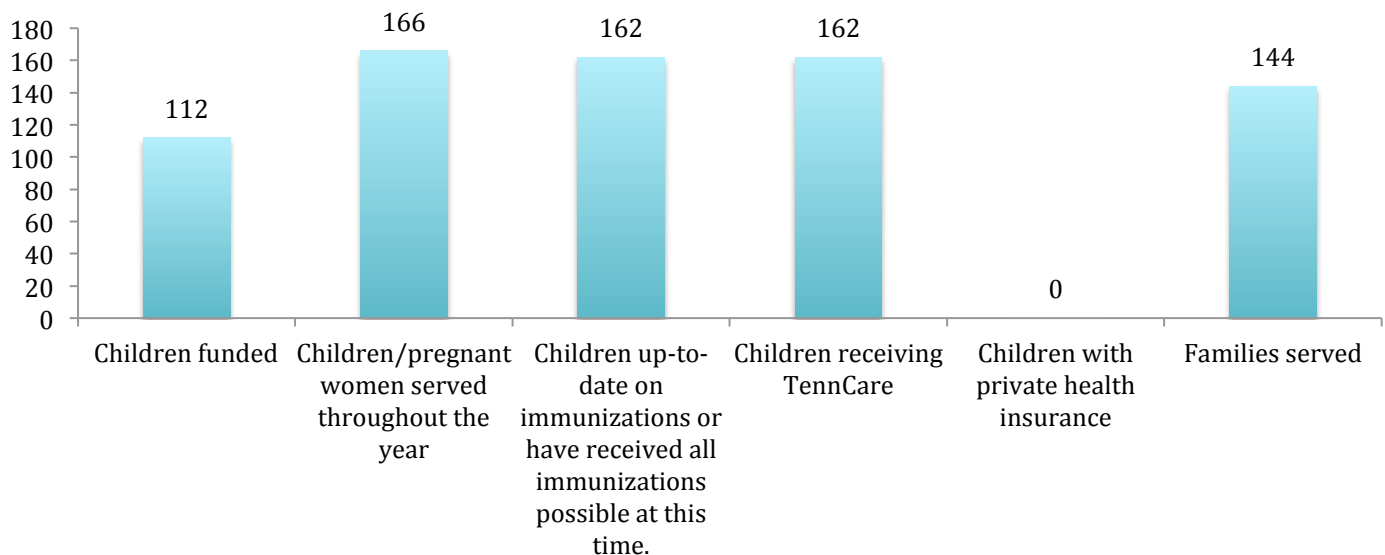
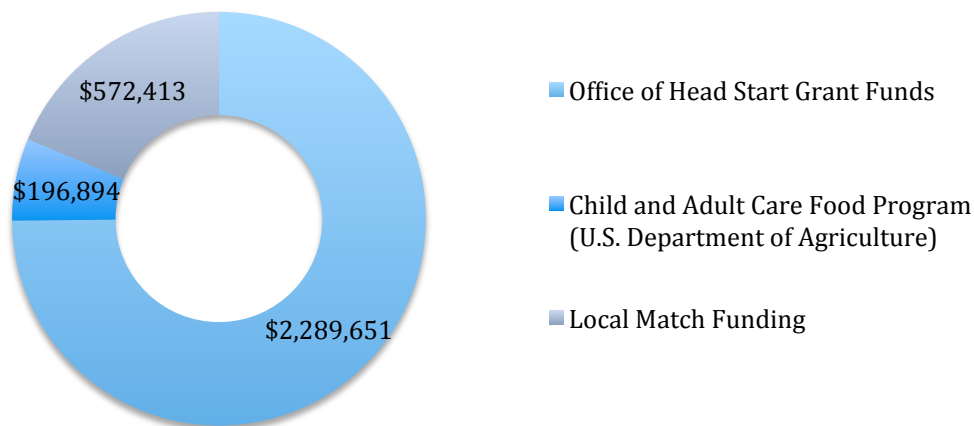
University was one of 11 programs selected nationwide to establish Early Head Start centers. The program currently supports six child care centers across Henry, Gibson, and Weakley counties in west Tennessee while recognizing the integrity and unique needs of these families and children.



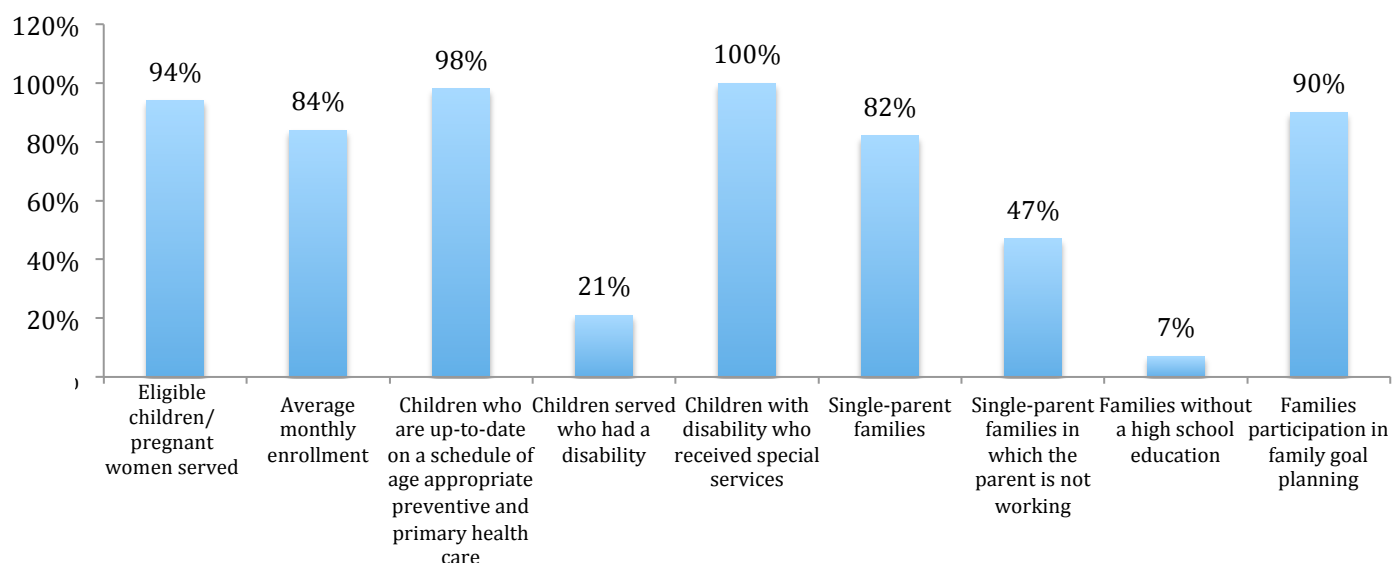
TAMARA BARNHILL
Interim Program Director,
Tennessee State University
Early Head Start Programs

Total Program Funding by Source

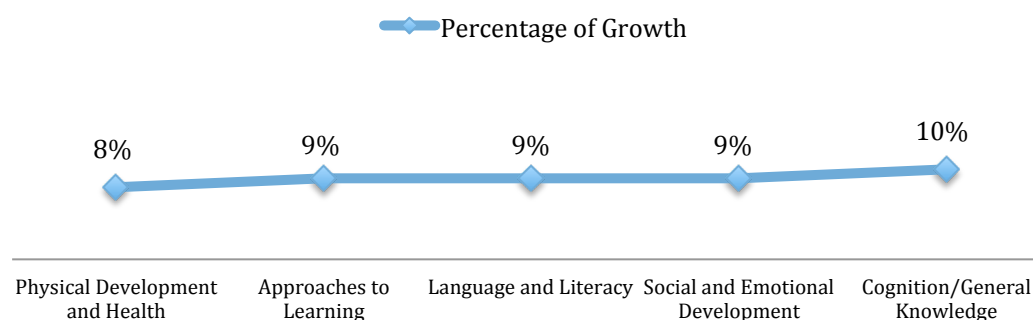
Funding for FY 2020 totaled \$3,058,958.



Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start Statistics, continued FY 2020



2019-2020 School Readiness Improvement* Percentage of Growth during the Program Year



*Percentage of growth demonstrated by children based on data from three documented assessments conducted during the 2019-2020 program year.

Tennessee State University Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership

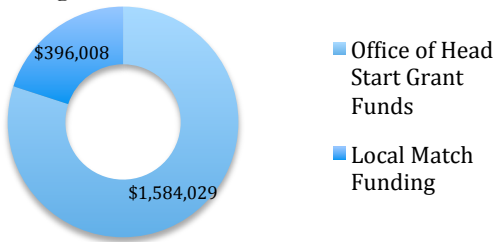
In FY 2014, Congress appropriated \$500 million to allow existing Early Head Start programs to partner with local child care centers and family child care providers serving infants and toddlers from low-income families, beginning with 275 grantees. In 2015, The Center was one of the first of these programs in the nation to be awarded funding to partner Early Head Start programs with child care centers in the

north Nashville community. This project is funded by the Office of Head Start under the direction of the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The program's goals encompass successful health, economic and educational outcomes and long-term academic success for children.

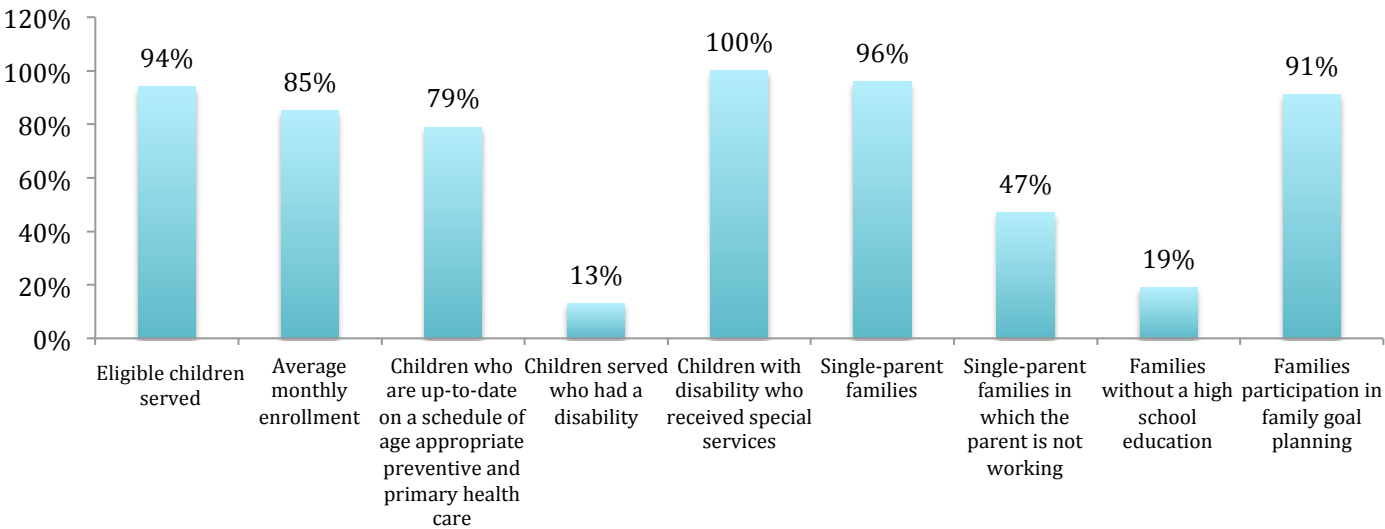
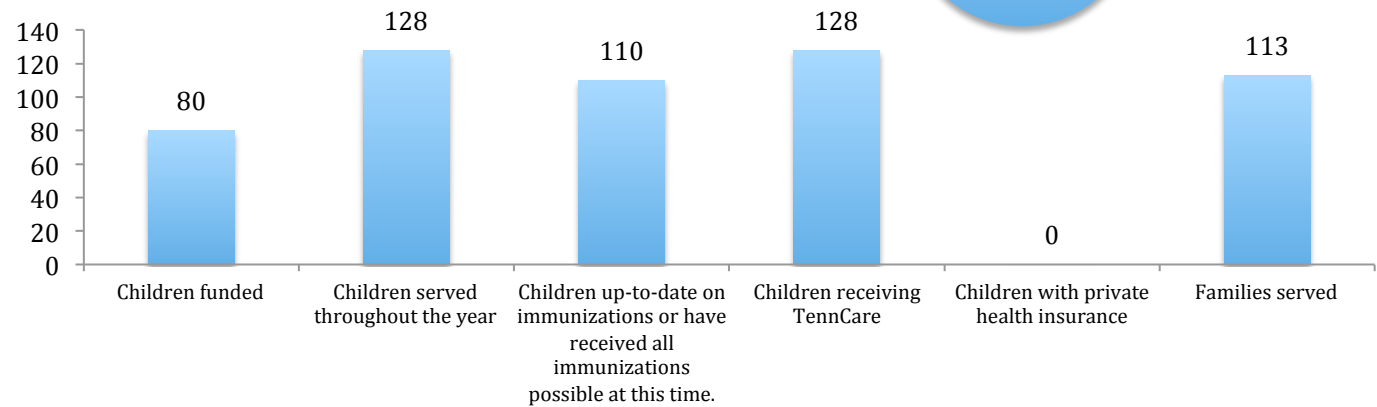
Tennessee State University Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership, continued

Total Program Funding by Source

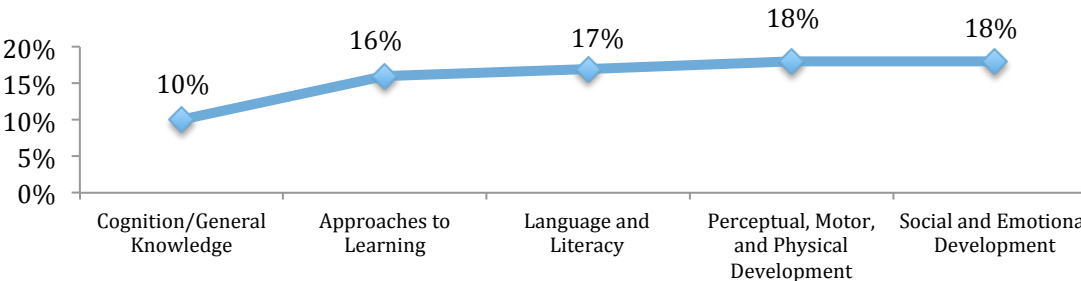
Funding for FY 2020 totaled \$1,980,037.



Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start Statistics
FY 2020



2019-2020 School Readiness Improvement*
Percentage of Growth during the Program Year



*Percentage of growth demonstrated by children based on data from three documented assessments conducted during the 2019-2020 program year.

Training and Technical Assistance Programs

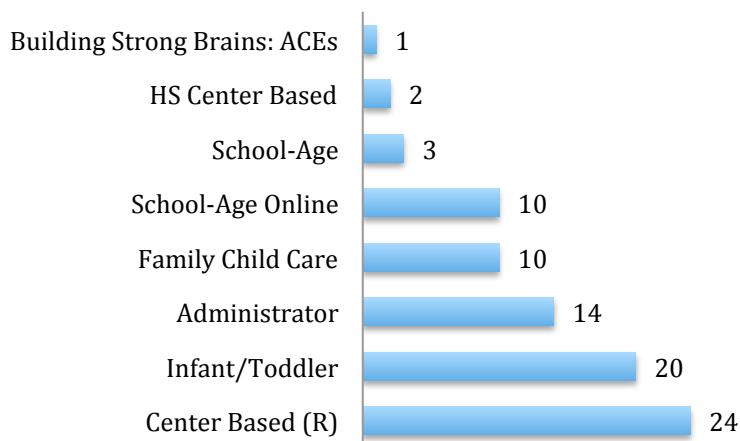
TECTA Orientation

TECTA Orientation is a free 30-hour training program with a curriculum centered on five specializations: Center-Based, Infant/Toddler, Family Child Care, School-Age, and Administrator. TECTA Orientation teaches core knowledge and best practices through in-person and online modules that

incorporate professional core competencies based on state and national standards of quality. Completion of the Orientation program provides an academic pathway to Early Childhood Education coursework with tuition support at state colleges and universities.

Total TECTA Orientations Held Statewide by Type

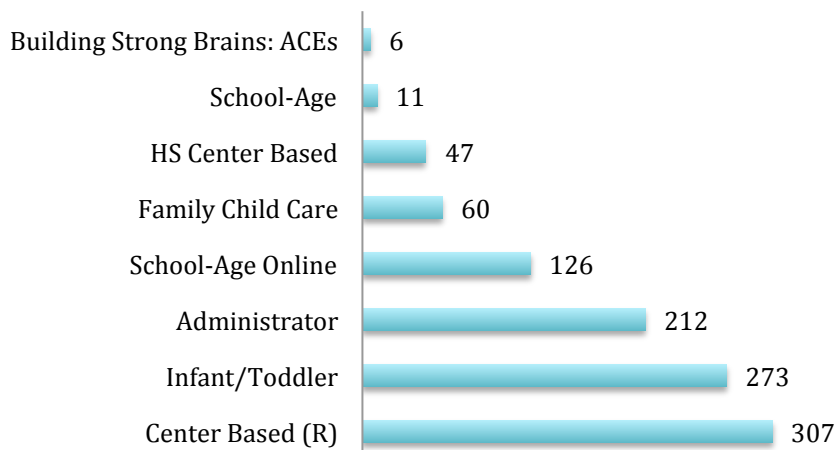
FY October 2019 – September 2020



Infant/Toddler Orientation, Fall 2019, TSU TECTA Site

Total TECTA Orientation Completions Statewide by Type

FY October 2019 – September 2020



Center-Based Orientation, Fall 2019, Williamson County, TSU TECTA Site

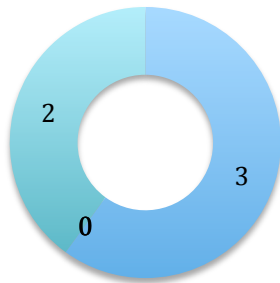
Tennessee Early Childhood Program Administrator Credential (TECPAC)

Since 2008 the Center has awarded over 220 Tennessee Early Childhood Program Administrator Credentials (TECPAC) to child care program directors. These Early Childhood program directors demonstrate specific competencies for effective leadership and management based on academic achievement, effective experience, program assessments, and a portfolio assessment. The Center awards the Administrator Credential upon completion of the Academy and assessments of the child care facilities.



RHONDA LAIRD
TECPAC Program Manager

Total TEC PAC Credentials Awarded Statewide by Type* FY October 2019 – September 2020

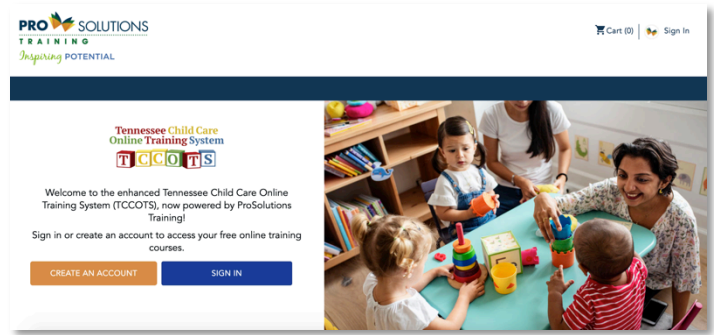


■ Provisional ■ Standard ■ Advanced ■ Master ■ Renewals

*The TEC PAC program participants reduced by five students this year due to them either closing their programs or leaving the field as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tennessee Child Care Online Training System (TCCOTS)

The Tennessee Child Care Online Training System, or TCCOTS, is a learning portal designed by Early Childhood professionals that combines high-quality Early Childhood content with the convenience of an online training program. Under the Contractual Agreement with the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TN-DHS) and the Center/TECTA, TCCOTS is a service that provides the TN-DHS licensed child care workforce with online professional development opportunities.

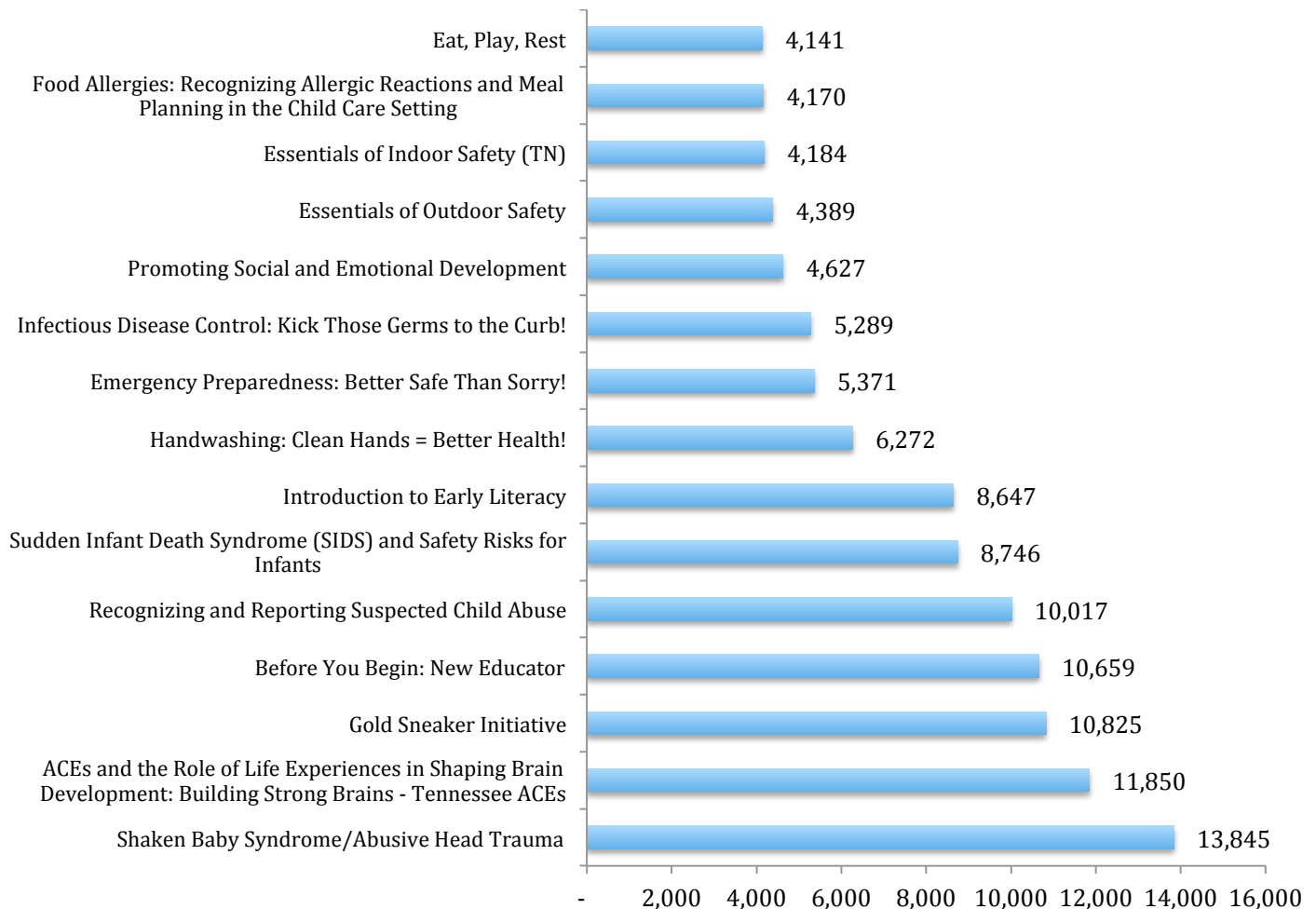


This fiscal year, the TECTA team began transporting all TCCOTS trainings to the ProSolutions training platform. A total of 173,737 certificates were issued on the platform across 75 modules in both English and

Spanish. Access to TCCOTS training is available at www.tccots.com.

TCCOTS Statewide Training Completions

Completion Certificates Issued > 4,000 by Module in FY 2020



Tennessee State University 2020 Employee Recognition

These COELS employees were recognized for their years of service in 2020.



Tiphannie Erwin
5 Years



Candice Murphy
5 Years



Brenda Siebe
25 Years



Miranda Wilson
5 Years

The Center also welcomed several new employees.



Travonda Davenport
TECTA Assistant
Program Director –
Family Child Care
Network



Jamie Farrell
TECTA Family Child
Care Specialist



Donita Flippin
TECTA Assistant
Coordinator for
Special Projects



Dr. Monique McCallister
Compliance Coordinator

Not Pictured:

Jalen Hussey
TECTA Data Coordinator

Dia Mimms
TECTA Curriculum Coordinator



TENNESSEE
STATE UNIVERSITY

Center of Excellence
for Learning Sciences



TSU-21-086(B)-10a-61085 - Tennessee State University is an AA/EEO employer.

Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences

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