



TENNESSEE  
STATE UNIVERSITY

Center of Excellence  
for Learning Sciences

2022 Annual Report



Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences  
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## 2022 Annual Report Issue 8

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 2022 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.

## About this Annual Report

This annual report covers the period from July 2021 to June 2022 unless otherwise indicated. The report represents 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](http://www.tnstate.edu/learningsciences).

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# Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences (COELS)

## Here's what we've been up to in 2022

**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

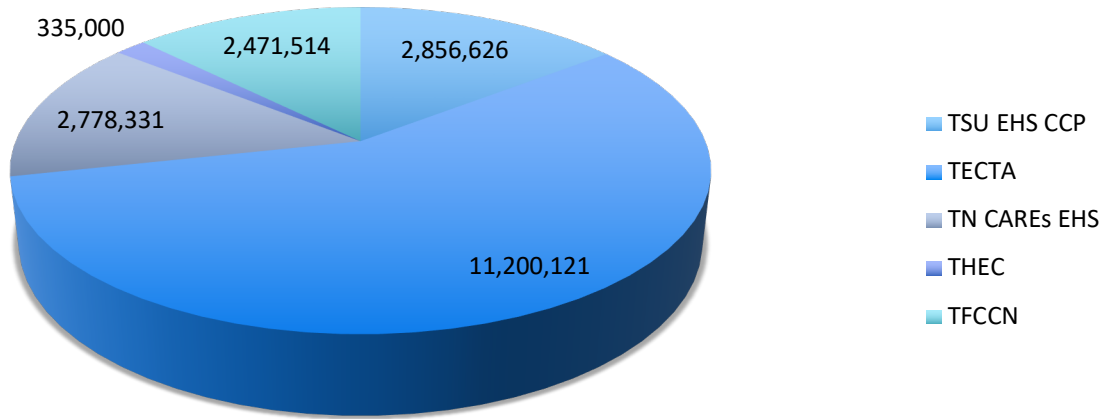
The Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences aims to build the capacities to strengthen communities through education. As a non-instructional unit of the Division of Research and Sponsored Programs, our Center is committed to providing a creative, collaborative environment and the facilities to conduct significant research studies and programs that promote the physical, educational and psychological well being of all children and their families. Through our core model of Academics-Research-Service, we strive to provide enhanced educational opportunities for all ages, conduct and disseminate research, and promote innovative training programs for staff in education, human service, social service, and other fields.

This year, the Center was awarded over \$19 million in funding, making it the second highest funded department in the University. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic, the Center has remained committed to building capacities to strengthen communities through education.

While we proudly look back on the past year, we are also looking ahead to the future of training and professional development, research studies, community service and support programs, and new learning pathways that include credentials, apprenticeship programs, and expanded online learning opportunities.

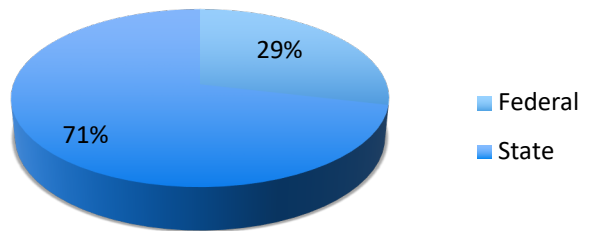
## Total Funding by Program

The Center secured a total of **\$19,641,592** for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.



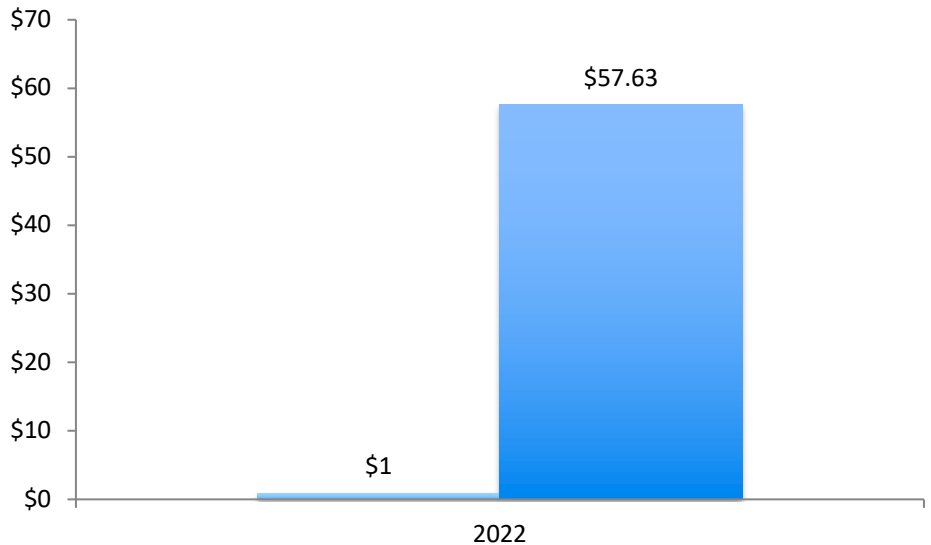
## Total Percentage by Funding Source

About one quarter (29%) of the total funding came from federal agencies. Seventy-one percent (71%) was secured from state-level 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 2022, every dollar invested by THEC provided a return of \$57.63.



# Academic and Professional Development Programs

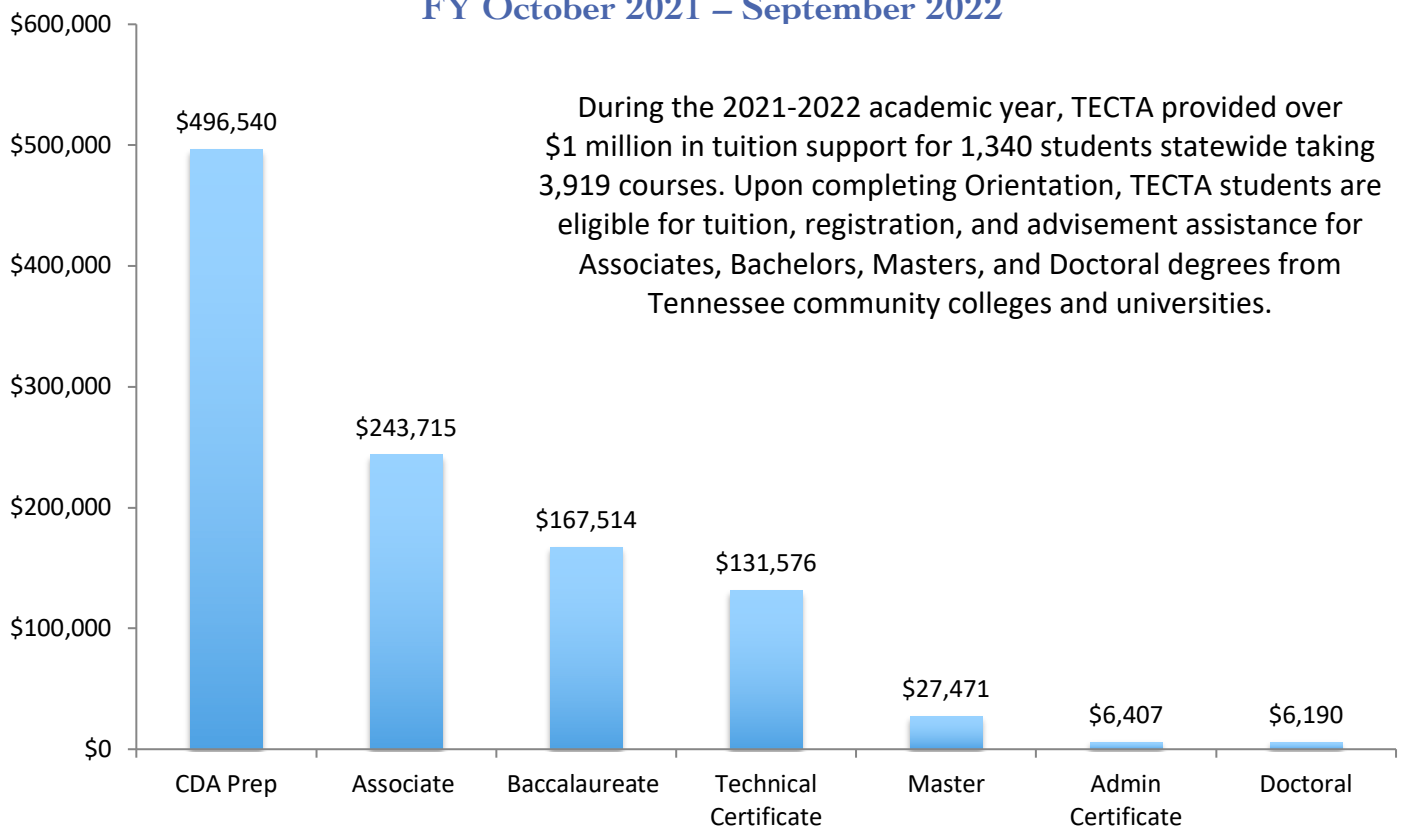
## Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) Statewide Management Office

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



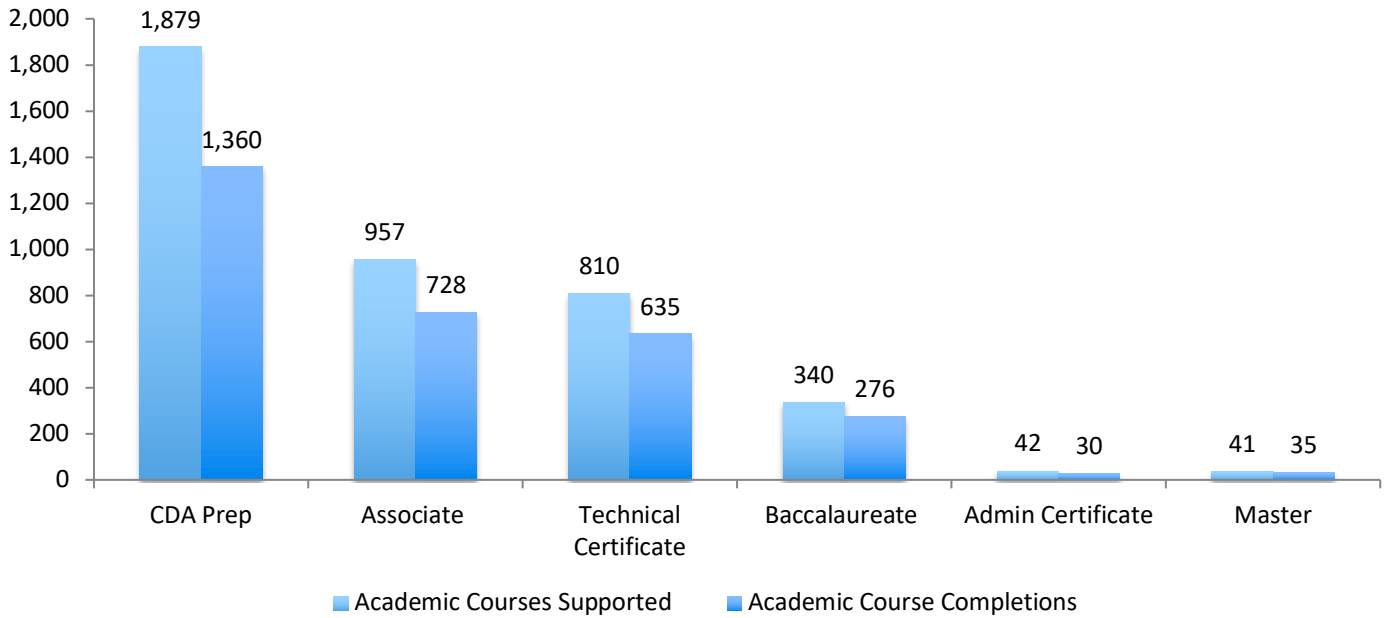
**BELVA WEATHERSBY**  
Statewide Program Director, TECTA

### TECTA Tuition Support for Higher Education FY October 2021 – September 2022



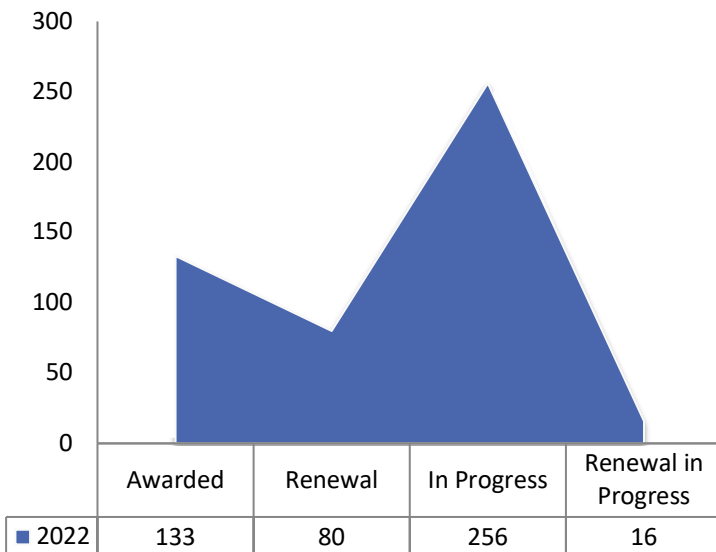
# Academic Support by Education Level

## FY October 2021 – September 2022



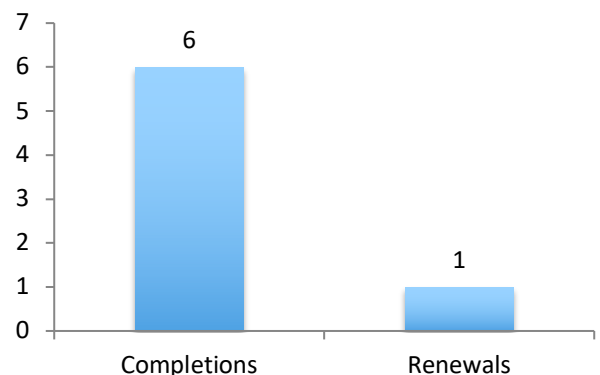
### Child Development Associate® (CDA) Credential Support FY October 2021 – September 2022

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.



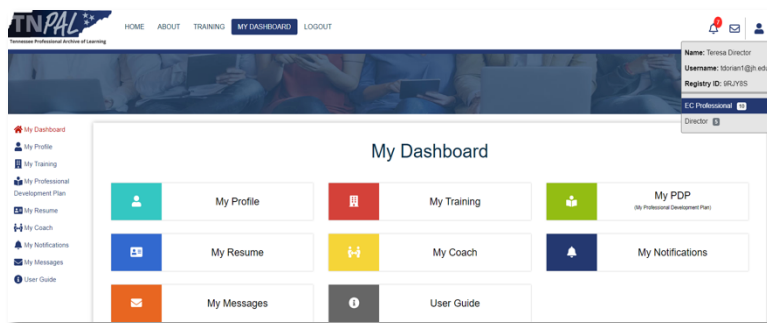
### TECPAC Credentials Awarded Statewide by Type FY October 2021 – September 2022

Since 2008 the Center has awarded over 240 Tennessee Early Childhood Program Administrator Credentials (TECPAC) to child care program directors. These 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.

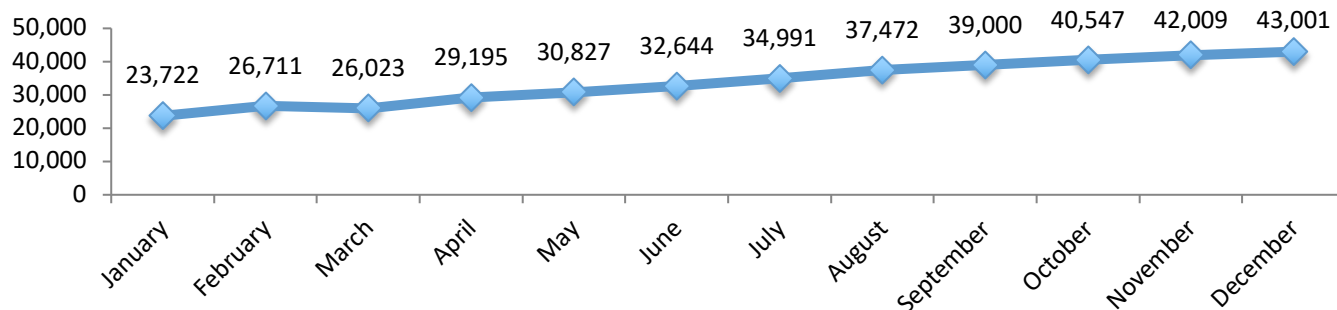


# Tennessee Professional Archive of Learning (TNPAL)

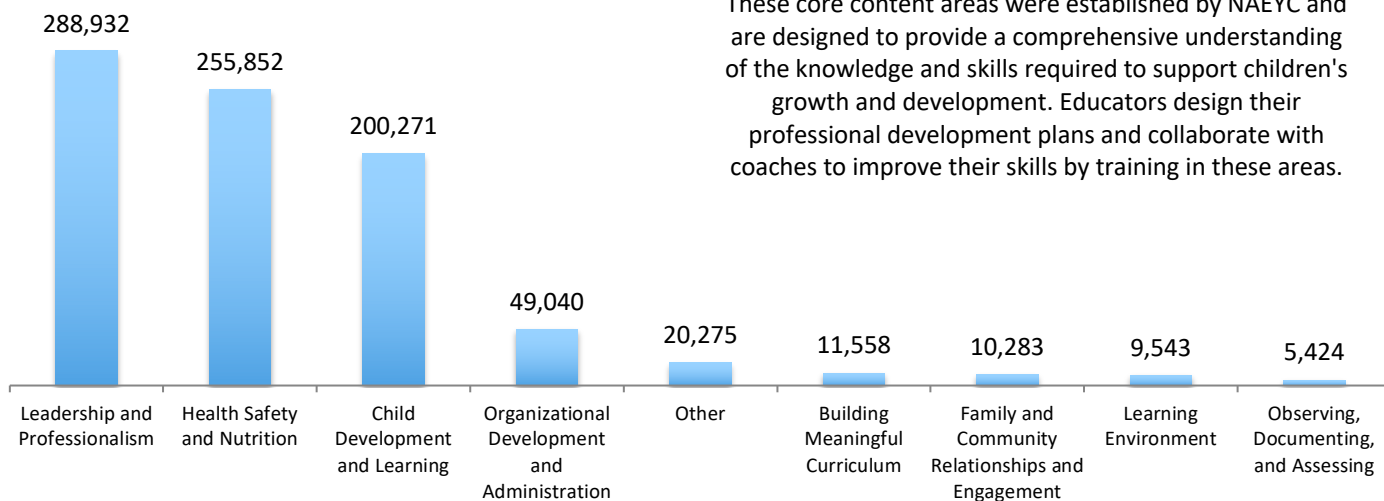
The Tennessee Professional Archive of Learning is an online registry for early childhood educators working in licensed child care programs in Tennessee. Users can create individual profiles to document and support their training and professional development, list their professional accomplishments, upload certificates and credentials, develop a professional development plan and track their progress, and more. TNPAL is the central repository for the Tennessee early childhood workforce to align professional development plans with training activities in one platform.



## Total Number of Educators and Directors using TNPAL January – December 2022



## Training Hours by Core Content Areas January – December 2022



These core content areas were established by NAEYC and are designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the knowledge and skills required to support children's growth and development. Educators design their professional development plans and collaborate with coaches to improve their skills by training in these areas.



# 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.

## Microlearning Communities

The Center of Excellence utilized funding from the 2020 SERS grant program to pilot a series of microlearning courses and an online learning community to provide a useful platform for early childhood educators who are currently engaged in or interested in academic study towards certificates, CDA credentials, and/or degrees in early childhood education. The project, ClearPath ECE, was an online learning community for child care professionals lead by Dr. Celeste Brown and Paige Holmes. During the project, the team partnered with Digital Promise on a yearlong research project titled "Exploring the Role of Micro-credentials in Rural Postsecondary Advancement." The project is documented in a publication entitled *Micro-credentials for Social Mobility in Rural Postsecondary Communities, a Landscape Report*, published by Ascendium.

Dr. Celeste Brown and Paige Holmes also participated in a webinar titled "Supporting Early Childhood Education Pathways with Microcredentials" along with ClearPath ECE participant Tabitha Bass.



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



This case study by Digital Promise profiles the ClearPath ECE microlearning pilot project. The project provided a microlearning platform for child care professionals to foster college and career readiness.



A webinar, hosted by Ascendium, was held February 22, 2022.

# Service Programs and Community Partnerships

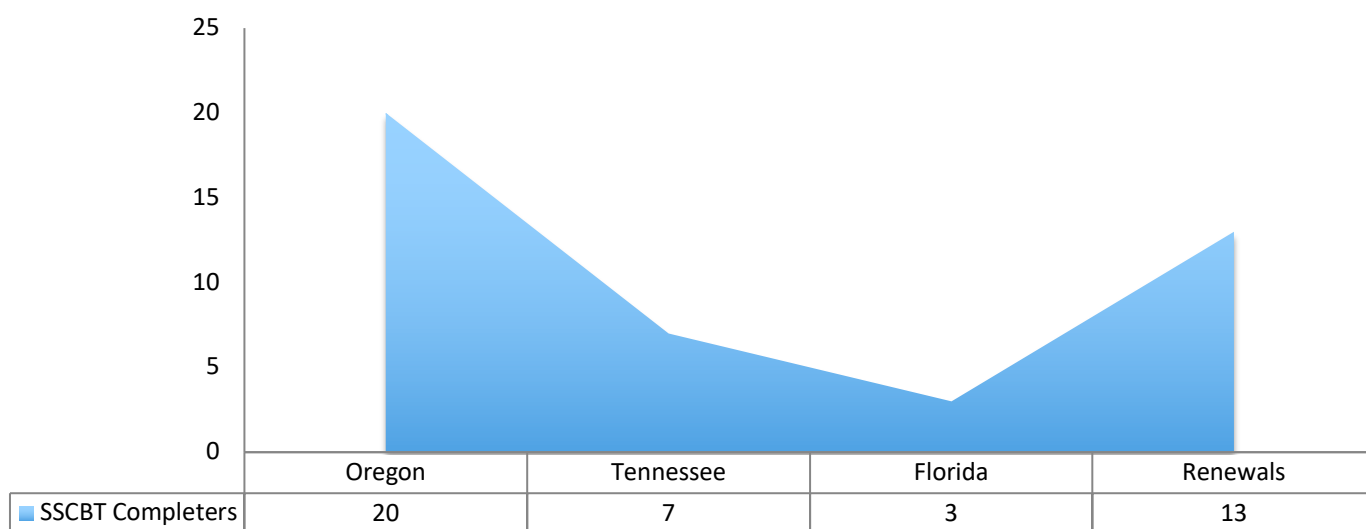
## Social Services Competency Based Training (SSCBT) Program

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 July 2021 – June 2022



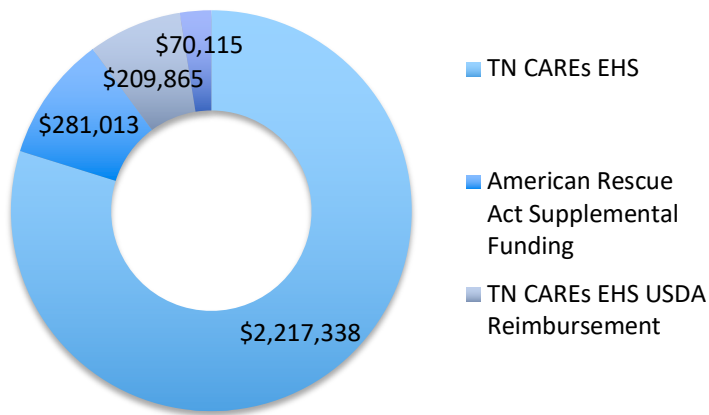
# Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start Program

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.

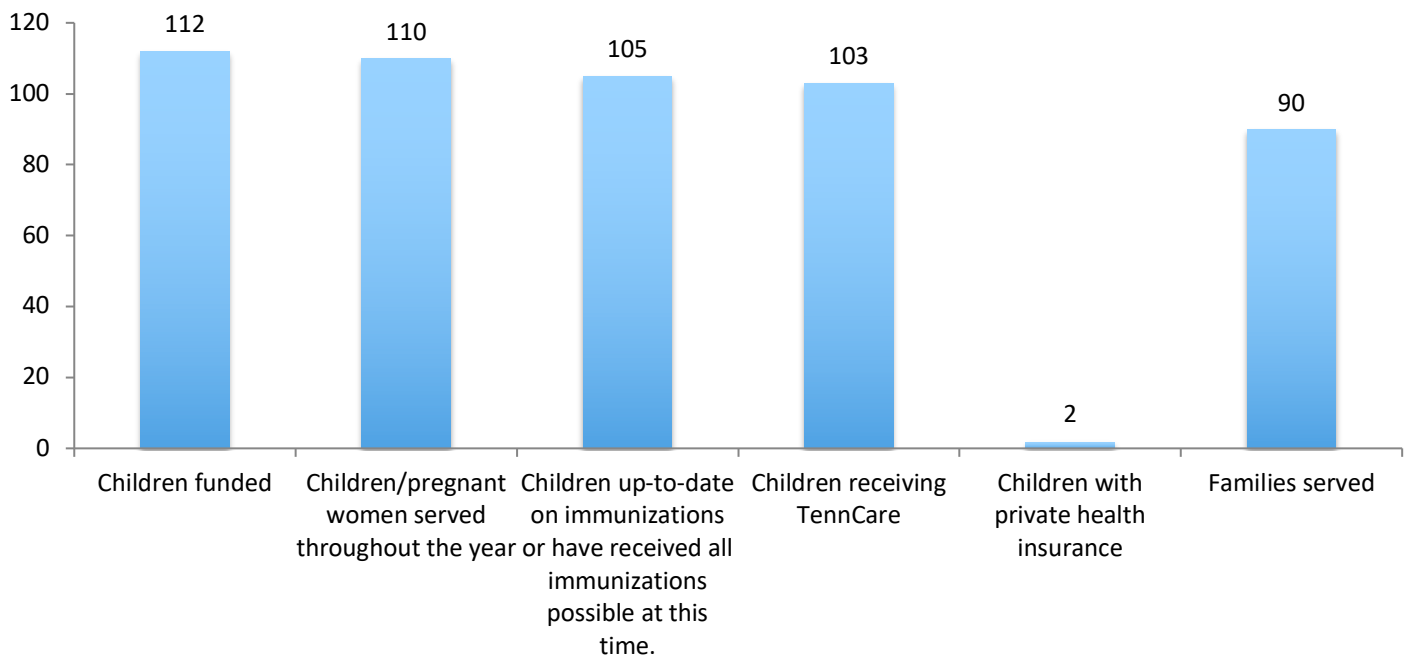
## Total Program Funding by Source

Funding for FY 2022 totaled \$2,778,331

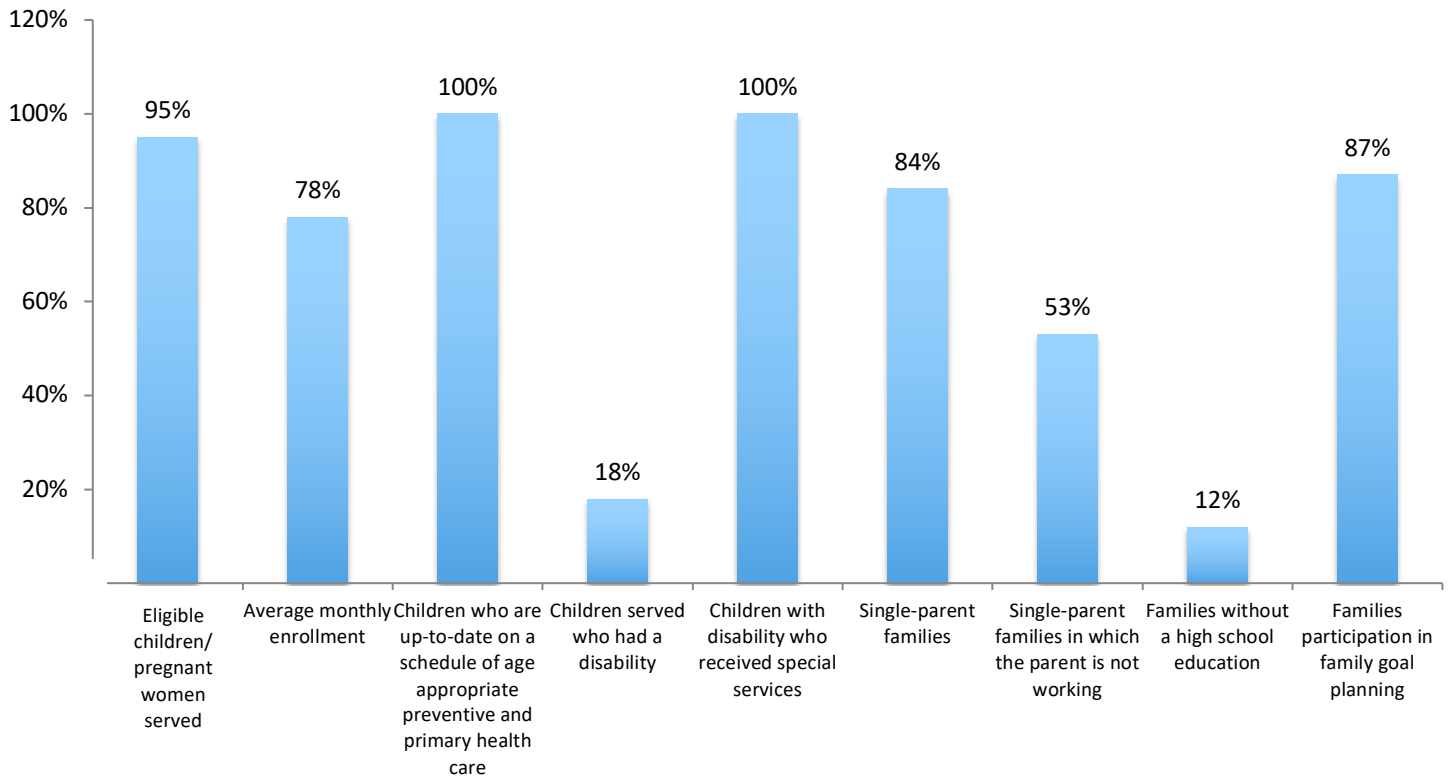


**TAMARA BARNHILL**  
Program Director,  
Tennessee State University  
Early Head Start Programs

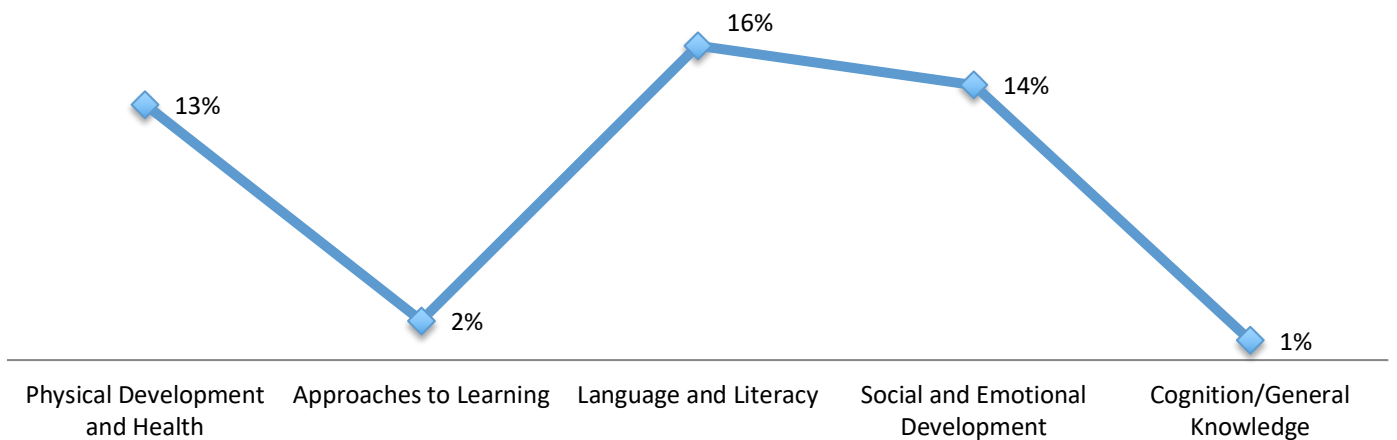
## Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start Statistics FY 2022



## Tennessee CAREs Early Head Start Statistics, continued FY 2022



### 2021-2022 School Readiness Improvement Percentage of Growth during the Program Year



# Tennessee State University Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership

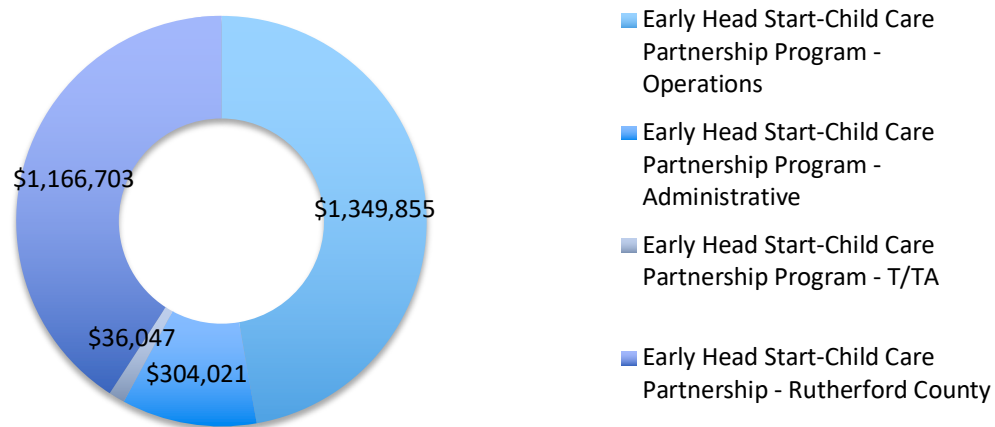
In FY 2014, Congress appropriated \$500 million to allow existing Early Head Start programs to partner with local child care centers and family child care providers serving infants and toddlers from low-income families, beginning with 275 grantees.

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 and later

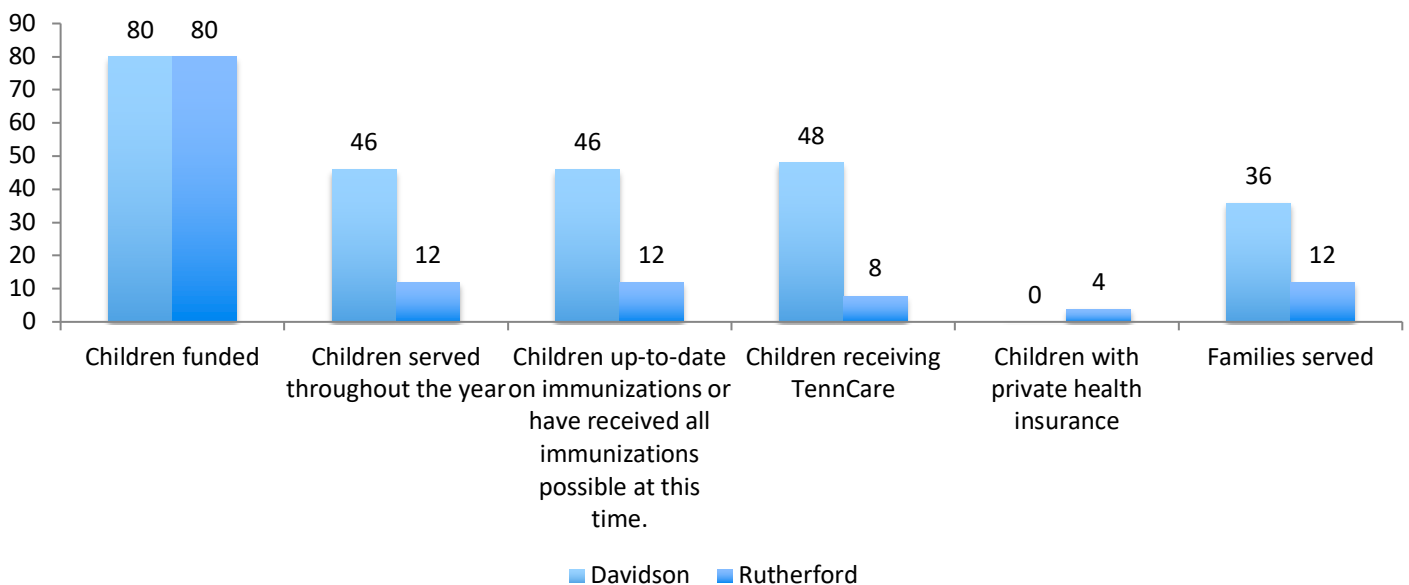
expanded to centers in Rutherford County. This project is funded by the Office of Head Start under the direction of the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The program’s goals encompass successful health, economic and educational outcomes and long-term academic success for children.

## Total Program Funding by Source

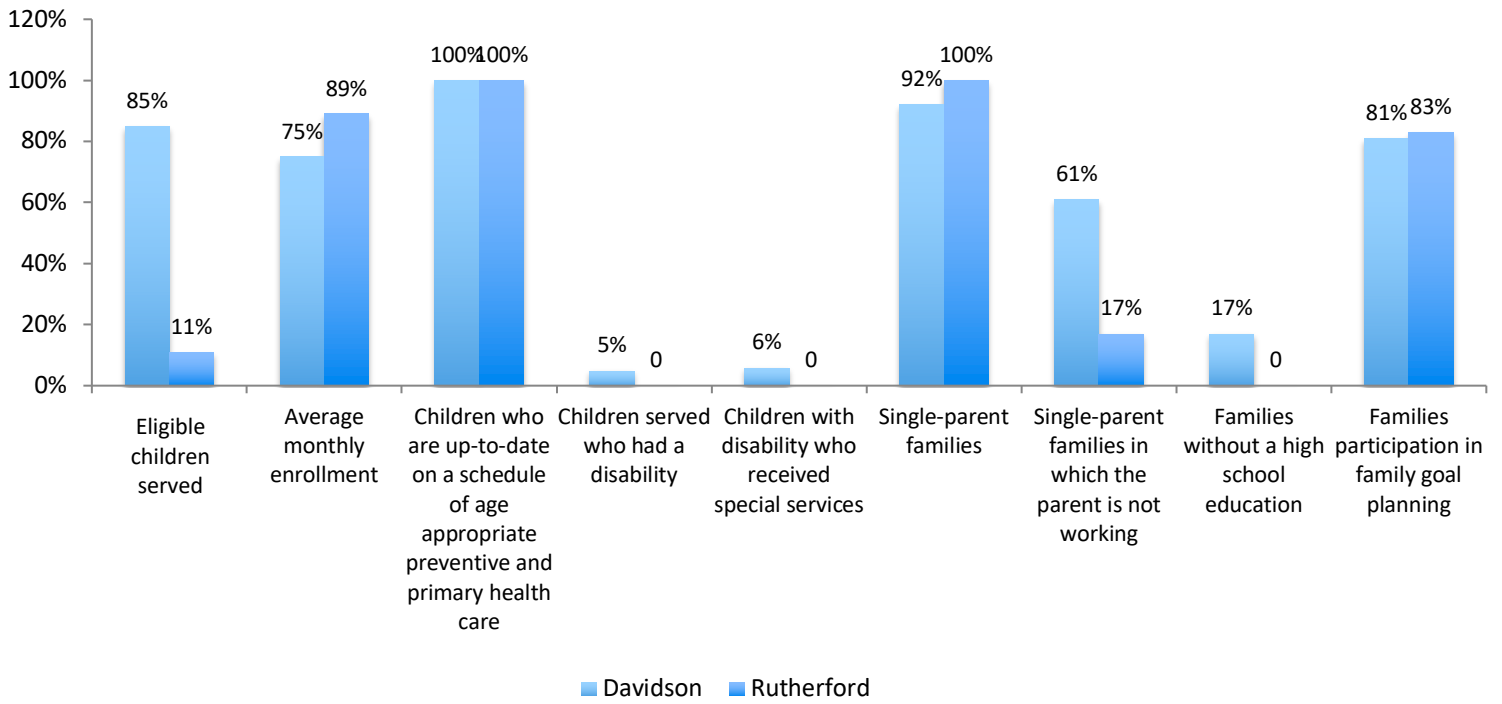
Funding for FY 2022 totaled \$2,856,626



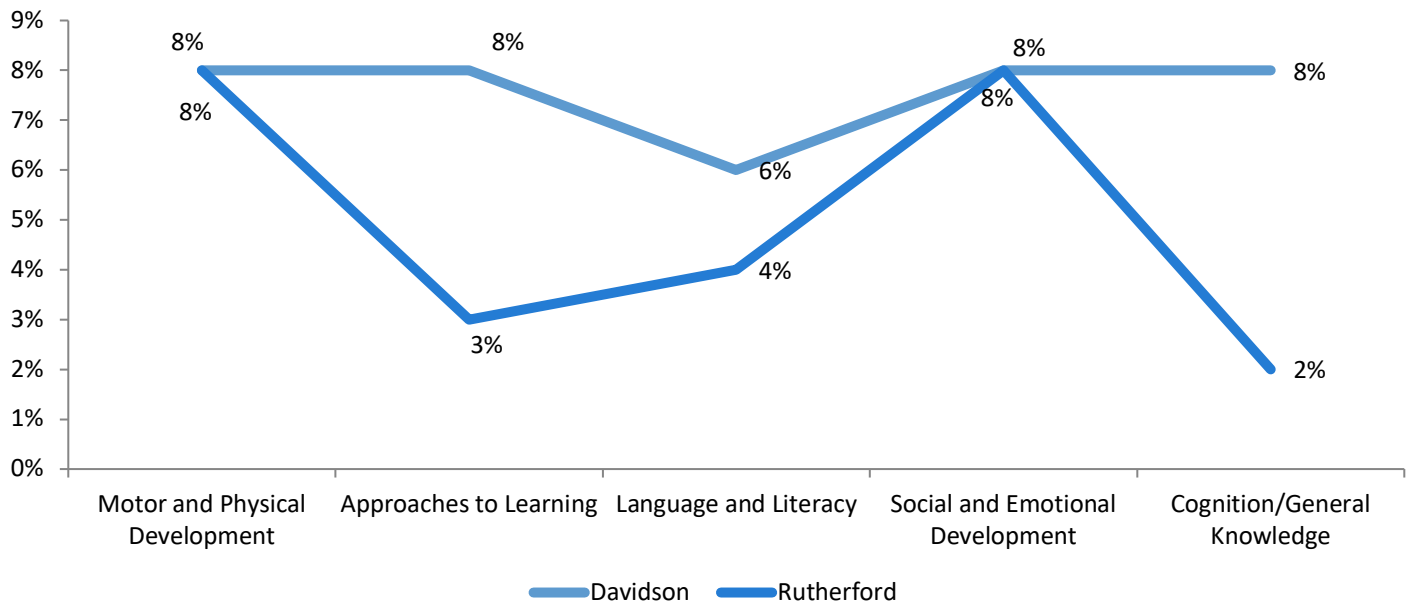
## Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Statistics FY 2022



## Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Statistics, continued FY 2022



## 2021-2022 School Readiness Improvement Percentage of Growth during the Program Year



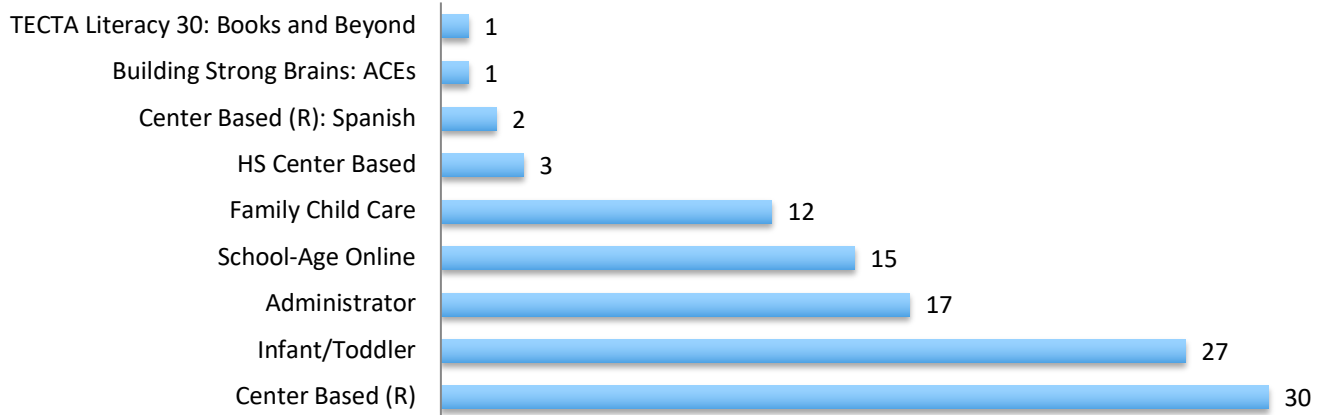
# Training and Technical Assistance Programs

## TECTA Orientation

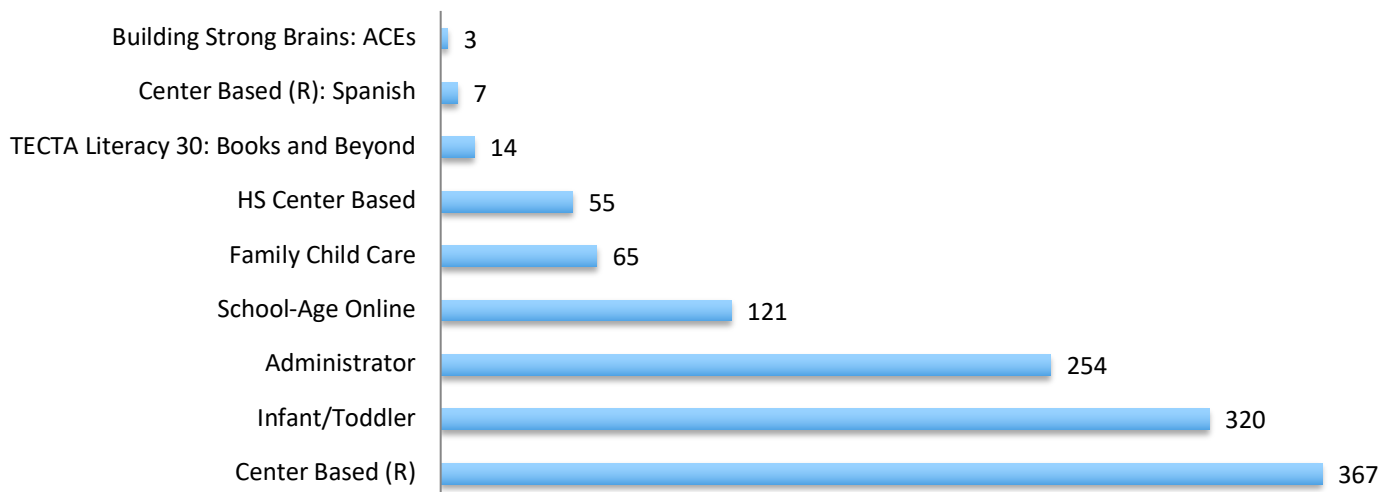
TECTA Orientation is a free 30-hour training program with a curriculum centered on five specializations: Center-Based, Infant/Toddler, Family Child Care, School-Age, and Administrator. TECTA Orientation teaches core knowledge and best practices through in-person and online modules

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 2021 – September 2022

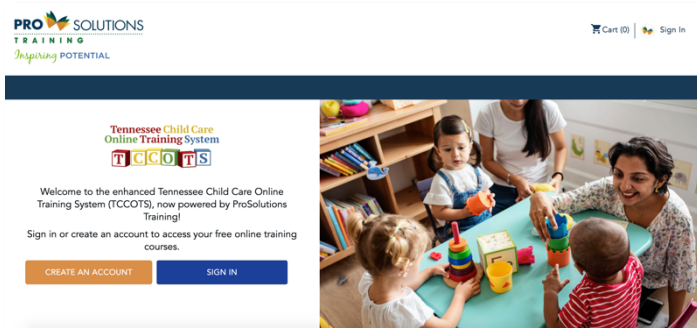


**Total TECTA Orientation Completions Statewide by Type**  
FY October 2021 – September 2022



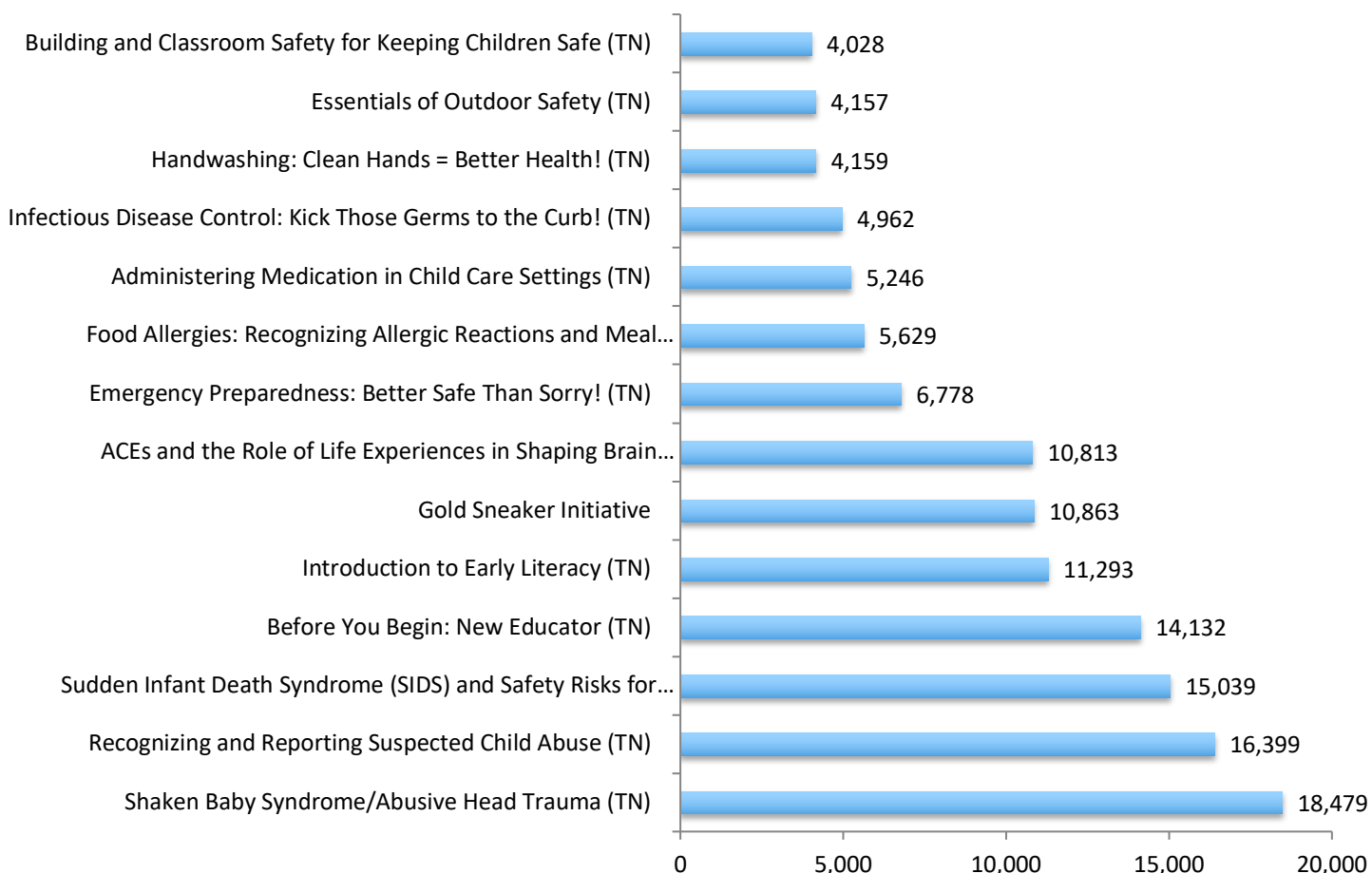
# Tennessee Child Care Online Training System (TCCOTS)

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 managed by ProSolutions that provides the TN-DHS licensed child care workforce with online professional development.



A total of 198,041 certificates were issued on the platform across 61 modules in both English and Spanish. Access to TCCOTS training is available at [www.tccots.com](http://www.tccots.com).

## TCCOTS Statewide Training Completions Completion Certificates Issued > 4,000 by Module in FY 2022





# Tennessee Family Child Care Network (TFCCN)

The Tennessee Family Child Care Network (TFCCN) is a comprehensive program that provides a range of services to support family child care providers, helping them to provide quality care that promotes children's growth and development. TFCCN is dedicated to improving the quantity and quality of child care in Tennessee and to providing families with access to safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate care. To encourage the growth of licensed family child care programs TFCCN offers ongoing technical assistance to ensure that providers maintain quality standards, delivers support and assistance to providers becoming licensed and/or accredited, and offers high-quality

training and resources through a staff of regional Advisors and Specialists.

TFCCN values communication and collaboration among providers, allowing them to share best practices and support each other through peer-to-peer mentoring and other support services.



**TRAVONDA DAVENPORT**  
Program Director, TFCCN

## TFCCN Quality Improvement Initiatives FY October 2021 – September 2022

These continuing education opportunities include professional trainings and conferences.

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Total FCC Support Group Meetings Held	76
Total Providers at FCC Support Group Meetings	1,378
Total Roundtable Discussions Held	13
Total No. Providers at Roundtable Discussions	219
Total No. Providers receiving NAFCC Accreditation	7
Total No. Providers at Technical CDA Classes	45
Total Providers at Regional Conferences	184
Total Providers at State Conference	330
Total Providers at Baby Jam Summit	23

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## Family Child Care Engagement

FY October 2021 – September 2022

Advisors offer support and outreach to new providers and unregulated providers, including those in rural areas. TFCCN works with providers to start the licensing process, beginning with attending the DHS Pre-licensure Orientation.

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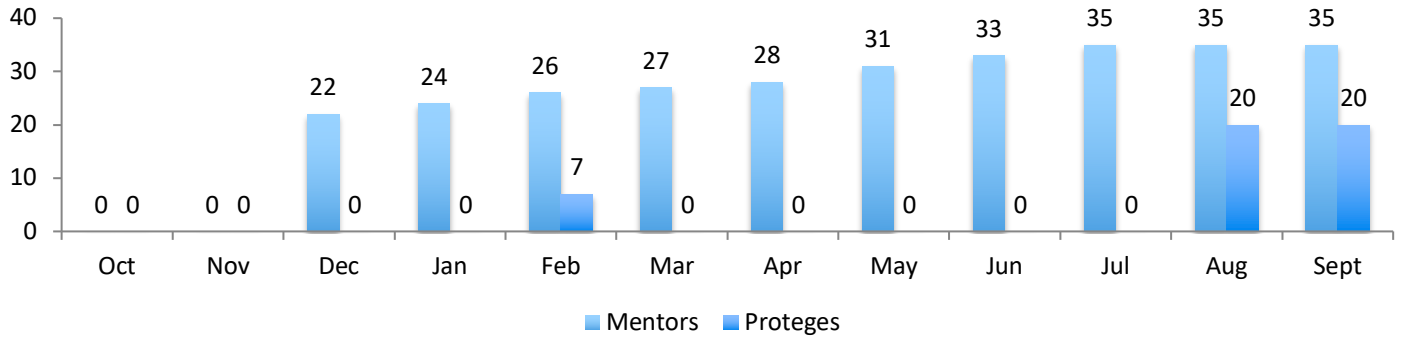
Total New FCC Provider Touches	524
Unregulated FCC Provider Touches	1,311
Rural FCC Provider Touches	8,099
Total Providers Referred to Pre-licensure Orientation	66

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# Tennessee Family Child Care Network (TFCCN), continued

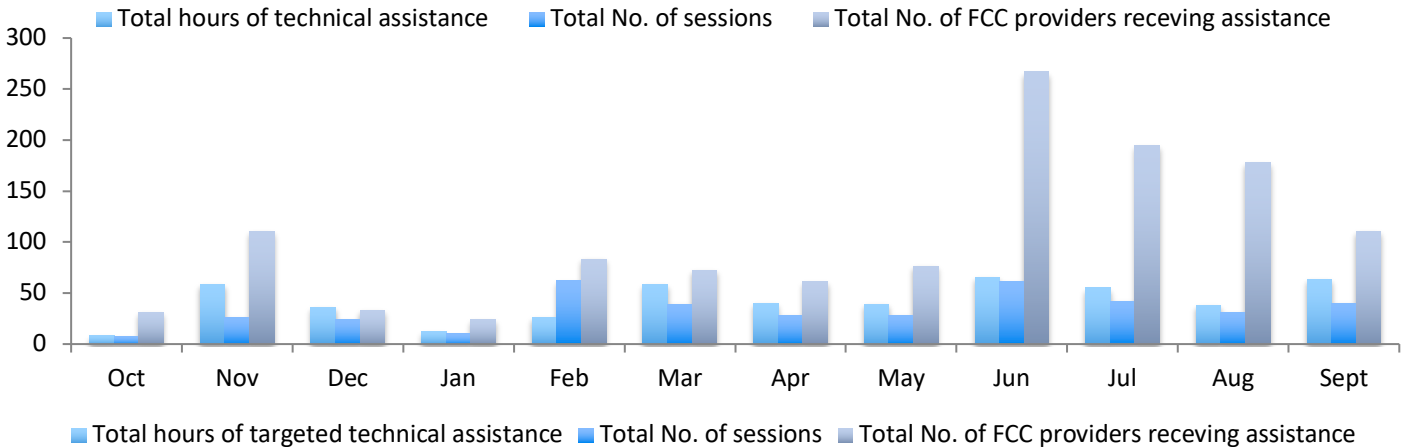
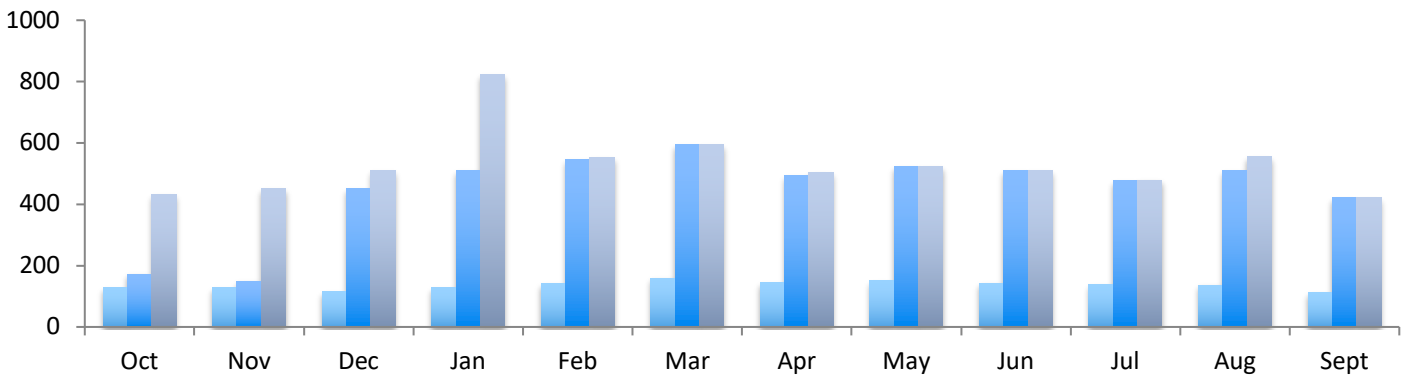
## TFCCN Peer to Peer Mentoring FY October 2021 – September 2022

TFCCN offers training and supports using a relationship-based peer mentoring approach, where seasoned family child care providers offer guidance and expertise in high-quality home-based early childhood education.



## TFCCN Technical Assistance and Targeted Technical Assistance FY October 2021 – September 2022

Technical Assistance is customized support to develop or strengthen processes, knowledge application, or implementation of services. Targeted Technical Assistance is technical assistance in response to referrals from the State or requests by a child care agency with specific, targeted areas for improvement.





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