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Jason Foundation and Tennessee Department of Children's Services Announce Collaboration

Hendersonville, Tenn., May 23, 2023 - [The Jason Foundation, Inc.](#) (JFI), a nationally recognized leader in suicide awareness and prevention, and the [Tennessee Department of Children's Services](#) (DCS) announced today a collaboration aiming to reduce suicidal ideation and behavior among youth in the foster care system. The Jason Foundation produced the educational seminar "[Preventing Suicide Among Foster Care Youth: A Training for Foster, Adoptive, and Other Out-of-Home Caregivers](#)," released earlier this year. The Tennessee Department of Children's Services has adopted the module as part of the training and education required by prospective and current foster families within the state. The seminar will also be made available to DCS staff.

While suicide is a significant public health crisis for the general population, the risk for suicidal ideation and behavior increases for youth in care because of the complex circumstances they often face.

- At any given time, nationally there are estimated to be approximately 400,000 youth in care.
- Youth in care may have complex medical, mental, and behavioral health concerns stemming from a trauma history.
- Children who are adopted wait an average of almost three years in our country.

This training module discusses facts, myths, and signs regarding suicide risk for youth involved with the child welfare system. Specialized topics such as trauma and adverse childhood experiences are also discussed. Material is presented by a professional speaker and people with lived experience (former foster youth, foster and adoptive families, and experts in the field). Suggested protective factors and recommendations are provided for caregivers.

The announcement follows Tennessee Governor Bill Lee's recognition of May as Foster Care Month in Tennessee. May is also recognized as Mental Health Month. Across the nation, individuals and organizations alike are raising awareness of mental health well-being and the importance of open communication on the subject.

"Every child deserves to know they are loved and that they belong, and this year, Tennessee is making historic investments to ensure that foster children have our strongest support," said Gov. Lee. "We thank The Jason Foundation for partnering with the Department of Children's Services to provide additional resources for foster families and caregivers across our state."

"We're fortunate to have The Jason Foundation anchored in our state where we can partner with Tennesseans doing great work preventing youth and children from tragic circumstances of suicide. The Jason Foundation formulated evidence-based practices coupled with empathic, compassionate, strong, resilient voices who prepare foster families to best serve the needs of custodial youth," added Tennessee DCS Commissioner Margie Quin.

“The Jason Foundation is excited to be working with the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services and many other state entities to provide additional resources for families across our state,” remarked Clark Flatt, President for The Jason Foundation. “This newly formed collaboration has the opportunity to save young lives and truly make a difference within the foster care community.”

The Jason Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to fighting the “silent epidemic” of youth and young adult suicide through educational programs for young people, educators, parents, and other community groups. Visit The Jason Foundation’s website for more information.

www.jasonfoundation.com