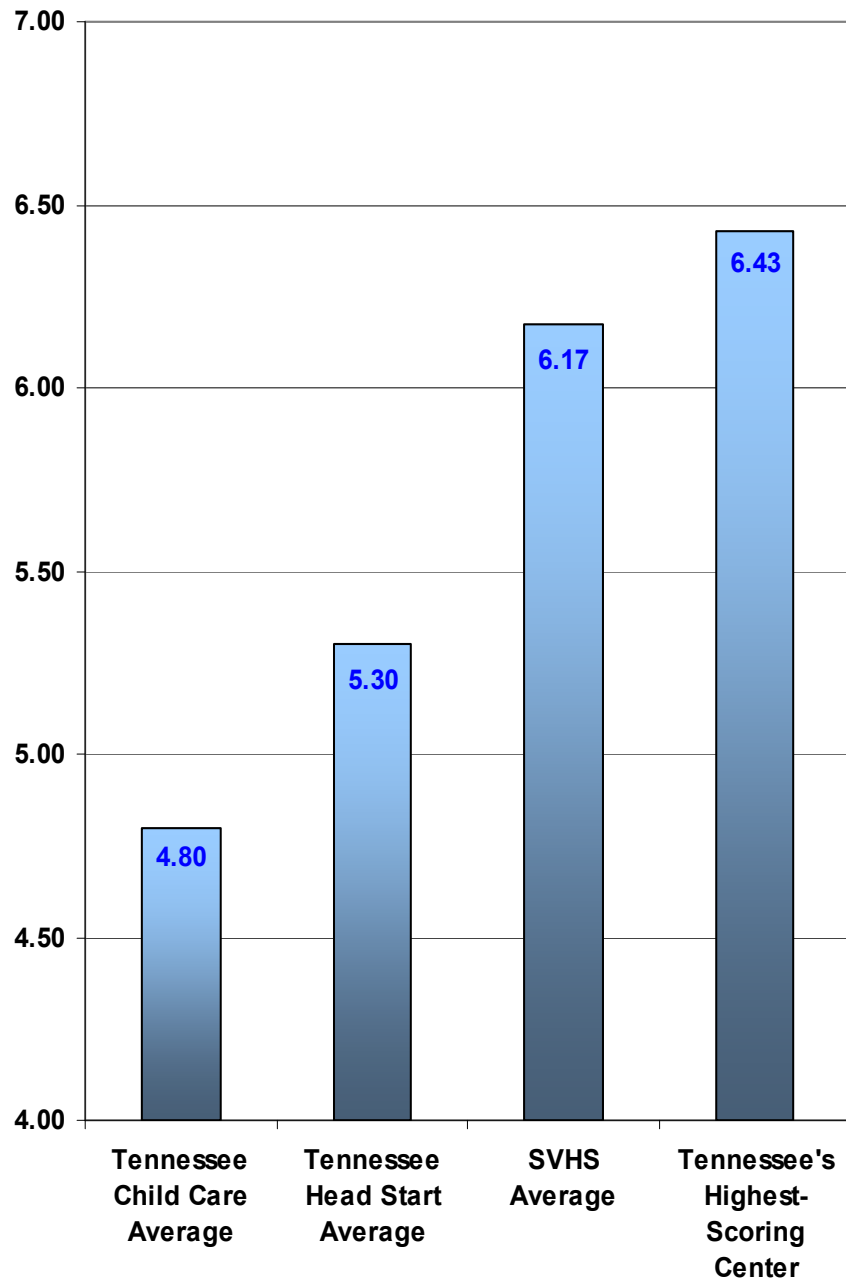


All Child Care Centers v. All Head Start Programs v. Sequatchie Valley Head Start

TENNESSEE AVERAGE ECERS SCORES 2001-08



All DHS-licensed child care centers in Tennessee are evaluated by the state using ECERS, a research-based tool developed at the University of North Carolina. ECERS stands for Early Childhood Environmental Rating System.

The tool is used to assess how well a classroom in a child care center meets three basic needs of all children: protecting health and safety; building relationships with children, parents, the extended family, and the community; and providing opportunities for stimulation and learning from experience.

In Tennessee, the scale has been used for eight years running. Each assessment (one per year per center or classroom) is conducted by independent evaluators, each of whom undergoes rigid training. The ratings range from "1" (inadequate care) to "7", excellent care. DHS believes that "a classroom that receives an overall score of '5' or higher is providing the kind of care that gives children what they need to be successful in life."

In the eight-year-history of the ECERS in Tennessee, Sequatchie Valley Head Start has not only accumulated the highest average in the state (6.17), but also has the center (Pikeville) with the highest cumulative average in the state (6.43). The average for all Head Start programs in Tennessee is 5.3 while the average for all child care centers in the state is 4.8.