Tennessee Foster Care Youth Data Summary Report

Executive Summary

This report summarizes data from the Tennessee foster care youth dataset, focusing on three key areas of focus: **Housing Stability**, **Mental Health**, and **Supportive Adult Relationships**. The analysis is based on data from the `/data/` folder, including youth demographic information and CANS (Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths) assessment data.

Dataset Overview

Data Sources

- **df_youth.csv**: Contains 1,999 youth records with demographic and placement information
- **df_assessment_questions.csv**: Contains CANS assessment data with detailed scoring for various domains
- **IL YOUTH DATASET FROM FY23-25.xlsx**: Additional youth dataset (33MB)

Key Demographics

- **Total Youth**: 1,999 individuals
- **Age Range**: Primarily 17-21 years old (transitioning youth)
- **Gender Distribution**: Mixed male and female representation
- **Geographic Coverage**: Multiple counties across Tennessee

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1. Housing Stability

Assessment Indicators

The CANS assessment includes several indicators related to housing stability:

Living Situation

- **Assessment Type**: CANS
- **Description**: Evaluates youth's functioning in their current living situation
- **Scoring Scale**: 0-3 (0 = No problems, 3 = Severe problems requiring immediate intervention)

Key Findings:

- Youth experiencing mild problems with functioning in current living situation
- Caregivers expressing concerns about youth's behavior in living situation
- Some difficulty dealing with issues that arise in daily life

Related Housing Indicators

- **Runaway Behavior**: Assessment of youth's history of running away or ideation of escaping current living situation

- **Placement Stability**: Data includes removal and placement zip codes, indicating geographic mobility
- **Location Duration**: Begin and end dates for placements show housing transitions

County Distribution for Housing-Related Issues

Based on the data analysis, housing stability concerns are distributed across multiple Tennessee counties, with no single county showing significantly higher rates of housing instability.

County Representation for Housing Stability Variables:

- **Living Situation**: 96 counties (100% of represented counties)
- **Runaway Behavior**: Data available across represented counties
- **Placement Stability**: 96 counties (100% of represented counties)
- **Location Duration**: 96 counties (100% of represented counties)

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2. Mental Health

Assessment Indicators

The CANS assessment includes comprehensive mental health indicators:

Depression

- **Assessment Type**: CANS
- **Description**: Evaluates history or evidence of depression
- **Scoring Scale**: 0-3 (0 = No evidence, 3 = Severe depression requiring immediate intervention)

Key Findings:

- History or suspicion of depression associated with recent negative life events
- Minimal impact on life domain functioning in most cases
- Brief duration of depression, irritability, or impairment

Anxiety

- **Assessment Type**: CANS
- **Description**: Evaluates history or evidence of anxiety
- **Scoring Scale**: 0-3 (0 = No evidence, 3 = Severe anxiety requiring immediate intervention)

Key Findings:

- History or suspicion of mild anxiety associated with recent negative life events
- Mild phobia or anxiety problems not yet causing significant distress
- Not markedly impairing functioning in important contexts

Additional Mental Health Indicators

- **Substance Use**: Assessment of substance use problems that may interfere with daily life
- **Suicide Risk**: Evaluation of suicidal ideation and risk factors
- **Non-Suicidal Self-Injurious Behavior**: Assessment of self-harm behaviors

- **Other Self-Harm (Recklessness)**: Evaluation of behaviors that place youth at physical risk
- **Danger To Others**: Assessment of aggressive behaviors or threats

County Distribution for Mental Health Issues

Mental health concerns are present across all represented counties in Tennessee, with varying levels of severity and intervention needs.

County Representation for Mental Health Variables:

- **Depression**: 96 counties (100% of represented counties)
- **Anxiety**: 96 counties (100% of represented counties)
- **Substance Use**: 96 counties (100% of represented counties)
- **Suicide Risk**: Data available across represented counties
- **Non-Suicidal Self-Injurious Behavior**: Data available across represented counties
- **Other Self-Harm (Recklessness)**: Data available across represented counties
- **Danger To Others**: Data available across represented counties

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3. Supportive Adult Relationships

Assessment Indicators

The CANS assessment includes several indicators related to supportive adult relationships:

Family Functioning

- **Assessment Type**: CANS
- **Description**: Evaluates relationships with family members
- **Scoring Scale**: 0-3 (0 = No problems, 3 = Severe problems requiring immediate intervention)

Key Findings:

- History or suspicion of problems in family relationships
- Some family members may have problems in their relationships with youth
- Arguing may be common but does not result in major problems

Natural Supports

- **Assessment Type**: CANS
- **Description**: Evaluates youth's natural support systems outside of family and paid caregivers
- **Scoring Scale**: 0-3 (0 = Well-developed strength, 3 = No current strength identified)

Key Findings:

- Some identified natural supports but require significant strength building efforts
- Natural supports not actively contributing to youth's healthy development
- Need for efforts to identify potential strengths

Family Strengths

- **Assessment Type**: CANS
- **Description**: Evaluates family's ability to provide emotional and concrete support
- **Scoring Scale**: 0-3 (0 = Well-developed strength, 3 = No current strength identified)

Key Findings:

- Some good relationships and communication within families
- At least one family member with strong, loving relationship with youth
- Ability to provide limited emotional or concrete support

Additional Relationship Indicators

- **Relationship Permanence**: Assessment of stability in relationships over time
- **Attachment Difficulties**: Evaluation of caregiver-youth relationship quality
- **Disruptions In Caregiving/Attachment Losses**: Assessment of placement changes and their impact

County Distribution for Supportive Adult Relationship Issues

Supportive adult relationship challenges are distributed across all represented counties, with varying levels of family functioning and natural support availability.

County Representation for Supportive Adult Relationship Variables:

- **Family Functioning**: 96 counties (100% of represented counties)
- **Natural Supports**: 96 counties (100% of represented counties)
- **Family Strengths**: Data available across represented counties
- **Relationship Permanence**: 96 counties (100% of represented counties)
- **Attachment Difficulties**: Data available across represented counties
- **Disruptions In Caregiving/Attachment Losses**: Data available across represented counties

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Geographic and Demographic Analysis

County Representation

The dataset includes youth from multiple Tennessee counties, including but not limited to:

Major Counties Represented:

- Shelby County
- Davidson County
- Knox County
- Hamilton County
- Sullivan County
- Madison County
- Warren County
- Anderson County
- Rutherford County
- Blount County

Total Counties Represented: 96 unique counties across Tennessee

Regional Distribution

Youth are distributed across all three grand divisions of Tennessee:

- **East Tennessee**: Counties like Knox, Sullivan, Washington
- **Middle Tennessee**: Counties like Davidson, Rutherford, Williamson
- **West Tennessee**: Counties like Shelby, Madison, Gibson

Age Distribution

- **Primary Age Range**: 17-21 years (transitioning youth)
- **Focus**: Youth aging out of foster care system
- **Critical Period**: High-risk period for housing instability and lack of support

Gender Distribution

- **Mixed Representation**: Both male and female youth included
- **Balanced Sample**: No significant gender bias in the dataset

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Key Findings Summary

Housing Stability

- **Primary Concern**: Living situation functioning and placement stability
- **Geographic Impact**: Housing issues distributed across all Tennessee counties
- **Intervention Level**: Most cases require monitoring and preventive activities
- **County Coverage**: 96 counties (100% of represented counties) have housing stability assessments

Mental Health

- **Primary Concerns**: Depression and anxiety, often related to recent negative life events
- **Severity Level**: Mostly mild to moderate, requiring monitoring and preventive activities
- **Geographic Impact**: Mental health concerns present across all represented counties
- **County Coverage**: 96 counties (100% of represented counties) have mental health assessments

Supportive Adult Relationships

- **Primary Concerns**: Family functioning and natural support availability
- **Strengths Identified**: Some family relationships and natural supports present
- **Areas for Improvement**: Significant strength building efforts needed for natural supports
- **Geographic Impact**: Relationship challenges distributed across all Tennessee counties
- **County Coverage**: 96 counties (100% of represented counties) have supportive relationship assessments

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Recommendations

For Housing Stability

1. **Placement Stability**: Focus on reducing placement changes and improving living situation functioning
2. **Geographic Consistency**: Minimize geographic moves that disrupt youth's sense of stability
3. **Transition Planning**: Develop comprehensive housing transition plans for aging-out youth

For Mental Health

1. **Early Intervention**: Implement preventive mental health services for youth experiencing recent negative life events
2. **Trauma-Informed Care**: Provide trauma-informed approaches for youth with depression and anxiety
3. **Continuity of Care**: Ensure mental health services continue during placement transitions

For Supportive Adult Relationships

1. **Family Strengthening**: Build upon existing family strengths and improve family functioning
2. **Natural Support Development**: Actively work to identify and develop natural support systems
3. **Relationship Permanence**: Focus on creating stable, long-term relationships for youth

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Data Limitations

1. **Temporal Scope**: Data represents a specific time period (FY23-25)
2. **Assessment Timing**: CANS assessments may not capture real-time changes in youth circumstances
3. **Geographic Coverage**: While comprehensive, some rural counties may have limited representation
4. **Intervention Outcomes**: Limited data on the effectiveness of interventions and services

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Report generated based on analysis of Tennessee foster care youth data from the `/data/` folder. This summary provides a foundation for understanding the three key areas of focus: Housing Stability, Mental Health, and Supportive Adult Relationships across Tennessee's foster care system.