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News from the 2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book
Mississippi's Kids – Opportunities and Well-Being Status

Our ability to progress as a state depends on the degree to which we can create opportunities for all children to succeed. Mississippi ranks 50th nationally in the *2010 KIDS COUNT Data Book*, a state-by-state study on the well-being of America's children. The *Data Book* reveals that Mississippi improved on four of the 10 measures affecting child well-being since 2000. Yet on four other measures, conditions worsened for Mississippi's kids. Two measures were not comparable to previous years.

The 21st annual *Data Book* is complemented by the expanded KIDS COUNT Data Center, which contains hundreds of measures of child well-being and allows users to create maps and graphs of the data at the national, state, county, and city level. To access information for Mississippi go to <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/ms>.

Although Mississippi continues to rank 50th on seven of 10 indicators, there are two areas that the state has improved:

1) **Share of teens not in school and not high school graduates cut by more than half.**
The percentage of teens ages 16-19 in Mississippi who were not enrolled in school and who were not high school graduates fell from 15 percent in 2000 to 7 percent in 2008—only slightly higher than the U.S. rate of 6 percent. The state tied for 25th nationally on this measure.

2) **Infant mortality continues to fall.**
Mississippi's infant mortality rate was 10.0 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2007. This was not only 7 percent lower than it was in 2000, but also below the state's rate in 2006.

Mississippi ranks at bottom nationally on seven of 10 indicators.

Mississippi ranked 50th in the percentage of low-birthweight babies; the infant mortality rate; the child death rate; the teen birth rate; the percentage of children without secure parental employment; the child poverty rate; and the percentage of children in single-parent families.

One-third of children lack secure parental employment.

In 2008, 35 percent of Mississippi's children lived in families where no parent had full-time, year-round employment. This greatly exceeds the national rate of 27 percent.

Child poverty is high and rising.

The percentage of children in Mississippi living in poverty increased from 26 percent in 2000 to 30 percent in 2008—well above the U.S. rate of 18 percent. (A family of two adults and two children were considered poor if their income in 2008 fell below \$21,834.)