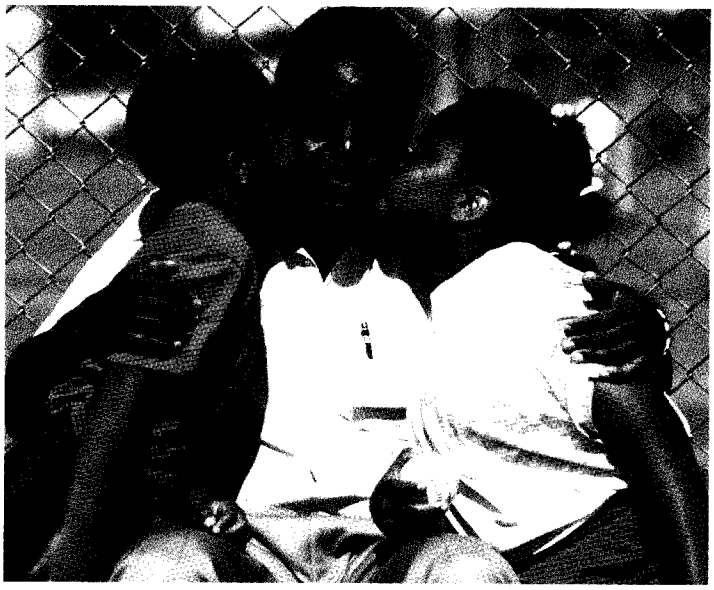
KIDS COUNT 1997



VOICES FOR ALABAMA'S CHILDREN

Contents

Alabama Kids Count is a project of VOICES for Alabama's Children. VOICES, a statewide, non-partisan child advocacy group, seeks a decent childhood for every Alabama child. To achieve this goal, VOICES will research conditions, communicate information, advocate policies and practices in the public and private sectors, and empower organizations and individuals who share our vision. The Alabama Kids Count Report contains the latest available information about Alabama's children and their families. Major funding for Alabama Kids Count is provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the nation's largest foundation dedicated exclusively to disadvantaged children. In addition to funding state Kids Count projects, the Casey Foundation publishes an annual data book that reports the condition of America's children on a state-by-state basis. In addition to the Alabama Kids Count Report, VOICES also publishes other research reports, including an annual review of legislation affecting children and families. VOICES serves as a resource for the media on child and family issues, publishes a quarterly newsletter and monthly member memos, and provides speakers to groups and organizations throughout Alabama. VOICES develops and promotes the Children's Legislative Agenda, tracks legislation during sessions, shares timely legislative information through United VOICES meetings and electronic networks, and advocates for child-friendly policies in the state legislature and administration. Finally, VOICES helps advocates become more effective by collecting our many voices into one voice, promoting networking in regional and state meetings, serving as an information resource for groups and organizations, and functioning as a catalyst for change.

The 21st century is rapidly approaching. As we anticipate its arrival, there is excited speculation about the shape it will take. There will be new technologies and new discoveries in every arena. What will Alabama look like in the new century? Alabama citizens who will be the architects of the 21st century are only children today. How well prepared will they be to build Alabama's future? The prospects for Alabama's children are grim if you compare their well-being today with the rest of America's children.

The national *1997 Kids Count Data Book* provides a profile of child well-being and ranks each of the states on the condition of their children and families. Unfortunately, Alabama does not fare well.

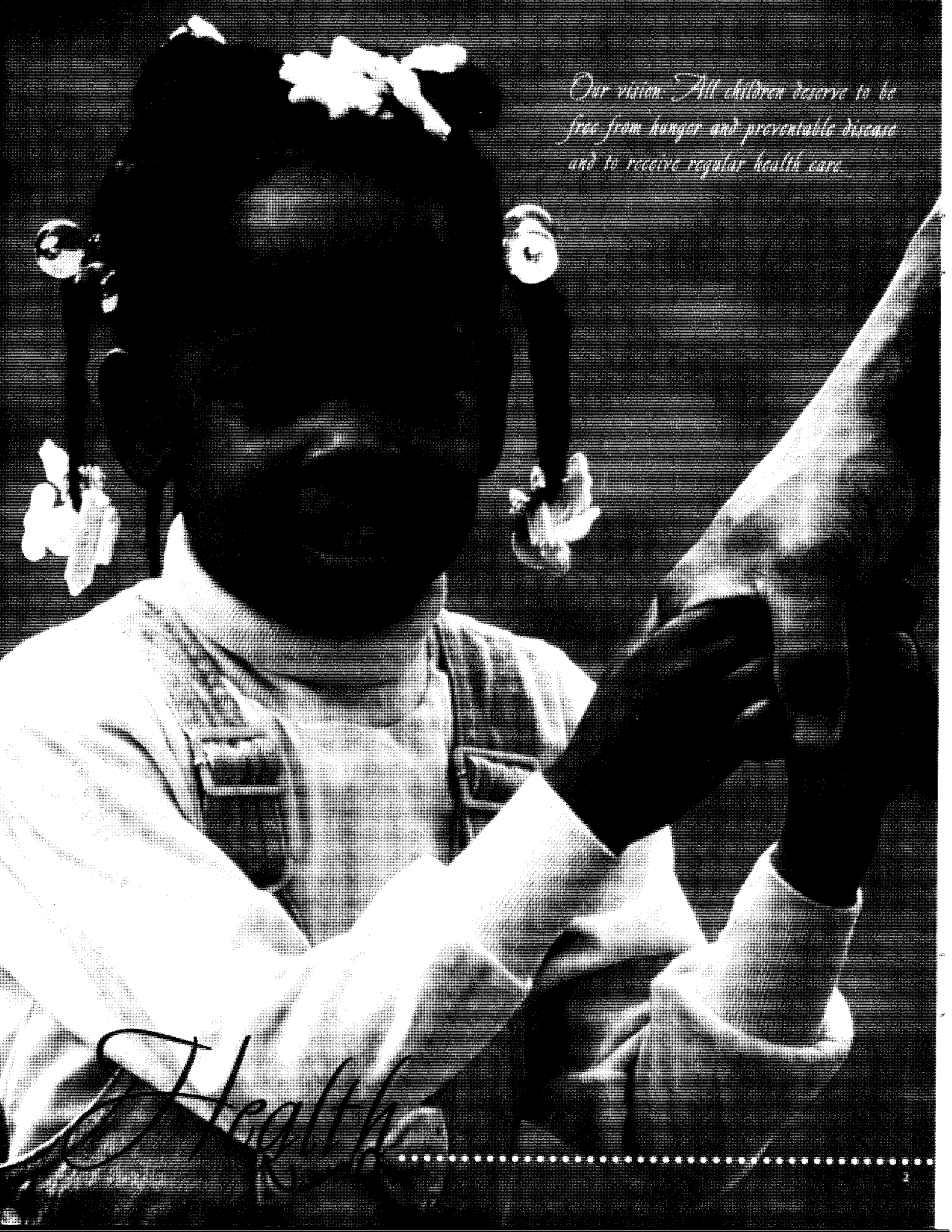
Alabama's overall ranking on child well-being is 46th. Since 1988, Alabama has never ranked better than 45th and has ranked as poorly as 48th.

Alabama ranks 47th in infant mortality, low weight births, child deaths and preventable teen deaths.

- Alabama's high and increasing teen birth rate earns us a ranking of 46th.
- Alabama ranks 38th in the percent of children in single parent families and 39th in percent of children in poverty.
- Our best national showing is in juvenile violent crime arrests, where Alabama ranks 9th. But the arrest rate has increased 147% in the last 10 years.

Everything has costs and consequences. If we choose not to address children's needs adequately, or worse, if we choose to ignore them, higher costs and tragic consequences are unavoidable. Thankfully, there are solutions to the problems kids face. The following pages list promising and proven practices that are making a difference in the lives of children every day.

When every child is healthy and well-educated, when every child lives in safety and economic security, when every child and every family is supported by a caring community, then perhaps we at VOICES can happily lock our doors and move on to other challenges. Until that day, we will continue to provide both the vision and the practical information necessary to realize this goal for all of Alabama's children.



Our vision: All children deserve to be free from hunger and preventable disease and to receive regular health care.

Health

Infant Mortality Rate

Definition

The infant mortality rate provides a general measure of Alabama's maternal and child health status. It is reported as the number of deaths to infants under one year of age per 1,000 live births.

Size of the problem

Alabama recorded 9.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 1995. This is Alabama's lowest infant mortality rate ever. This is also the first time the rate has dropped below ten. With only occasional, minor setbacks, Alabama's infant mortality rate has improved steadily since 1940.

County infant mortality rates for 1995 ranged from zero in Franklin, Geneva, Henry and Winston counties to 31.7 in Hale county.

Causes

The four leading causes of infant deaths are birth defects, sudden infant death syndrome, being born too small or too early, and respiratory distress syndrome.

Risk factors

Babies of teenage mothers have the highest infant mortality rate. Infant mortality rates are also higher for mothers with fewer years of education, unmarried mothers and mothers who smoked during pregnancy.

Consequences and costs

Each infant death is a tragedy for parents, siblings and other family members, and represents a great cost to families and society in terms of lost potential and productivity. Lifetime birth defect costs range from $75,000 to $503,000. Additional direct medical costs include charges for physician care of infants suffering birth complications and rehospitalization.

Solutions

Programs to reduce low weight births and premature deliveries, such as universal access to quality prenatal care and substance abuse counseling, will lower the infant mortality rate. Continued advances in medical care will also improve the survival rates of at-risk infants.

INFANT MORTALITY

FIVE BEST COUNTIES

1 GENEVA
2 WINSTON
3 CHOCTAW
4 HENRY
5 CHEROKEE

INFANT MORTALITY

FIVE WORST COUNTIES

63 GREENE
64 HALE
65 LAMAR
66 SUMTER
67 BULLOCK

LOW WEIGHT BIRTHS

FIVE BEST COUNTIES

1 CLEBURNE
2 GENEVA
3 SHELBY
4 WINSTON
5 HOUSTON

LOW WEIGHT BIRTHS

FIVE WORST COUNTIES

63 PERRY
64 HALE
65 CONECUH
66 SUMTER
67 BULLOCK

Low Weight Births

Definition

Low birth weight, normally defined as under 5.5 pounds (2,500 grams), is a major factor in infant mortality. It is reported as a percentage of all live births.

Size of the problem

Nine percent of the infants born in Alabama during 1995 weighed less than 5.5 pounds. Low weight births have shown a generally upward trend since 1980.

Low weight births at the county level during 1995 ranged from 5.2% of births in Marshall county to 13.6% in Wilcox county.

Causes

Three factors account for nearly two-thirds of low weight births; cigarette smoking during pregnancy, low maternal weight gain and low maternal weight before pregnancy.

Risk factors

African-American women are more likely to experience low weight births. Lower socioeconomic status is also a risk factor for low weight births.

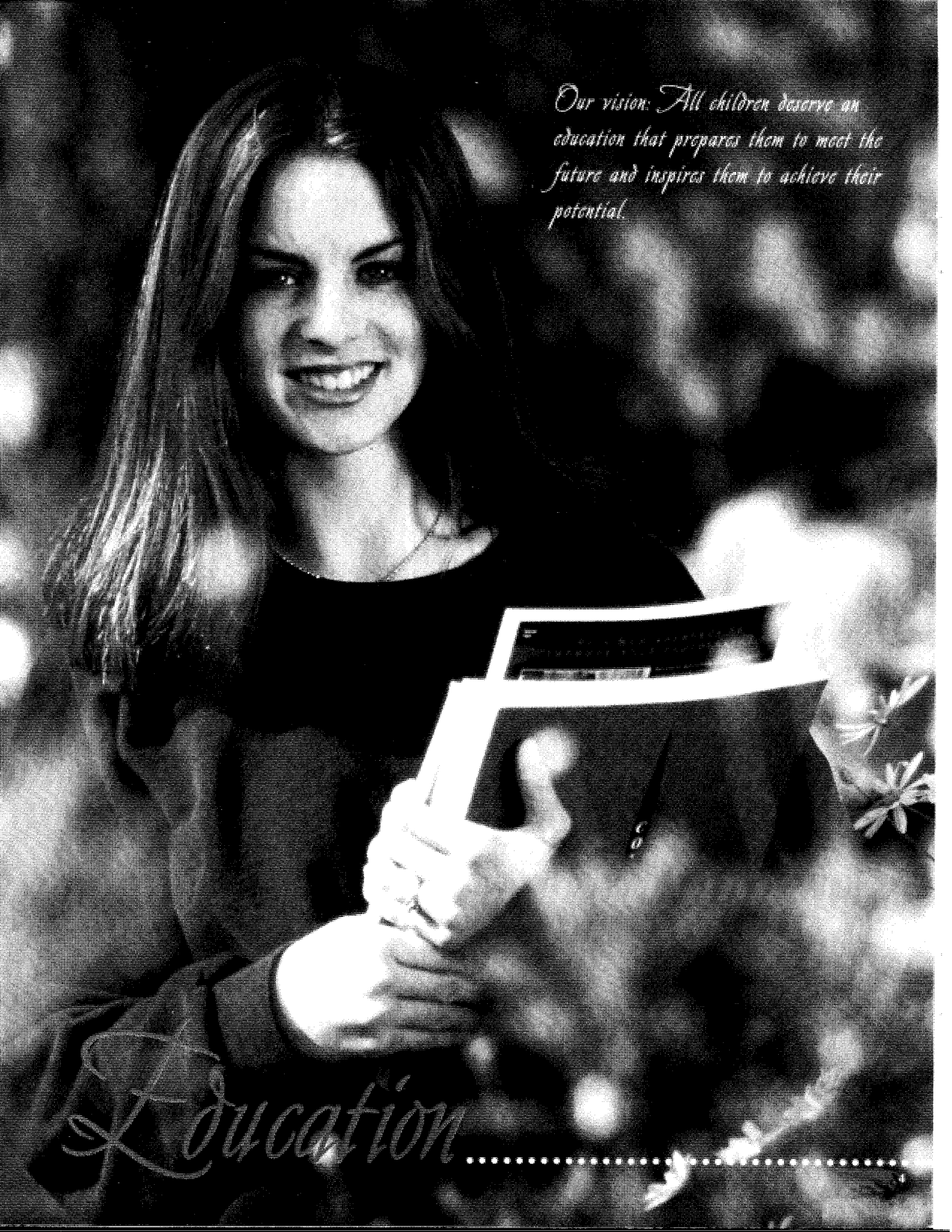
Consequences and costs

First-year health care costs for low birth weight infants are about six times higher than costs for normal birth weight infants. Although low birth weight infants make up only seven to eight percent of all births, they account for 35% of the dollars spent on health care for infants.

The ultimate costs are borne by these children who will have difficulty realizing their potential. The negative consequences of being born with low birth weight are still apparent in adolescence. Experts believe that these consequences will be lifelong.

Solutions

Improving the health of the mother will have the greatest impact on low weight births. Strategies should include promoting positive prenatal lifestyles, specifically smoking cessation during pregnancy, and increasing access to quality prenatal care that includes early risk assessment and health promotion.


Our vision: All children deserve an education that prepares them to meet the future and inspires them to achieve their potential.
Education

High School Graduation Rate

Definition
The high school graduation rate is high school diploma graduates expressed as a percentage of ninth graders enrolled four years earlier.

Size of the problem
A total of 36,268 young people graduated from Alabama's public high schools in the spring of 1995. When this total is compared to ninth grade enrollment during the 1991-1992 school year, it suggests that 63.1% of Alabama's public high school students graduated on time. This is lower than the 71.6% recorded for the class of 1987, but shows improvement from the 62.8% reported last year.

County graduation rates for 1995 ranged from 77.7% in Winston county to 42.7% in Macon county.

Causes
Declining grades and a dislike for school are the most-often cited reasons for dropping out. Marriage and pregnancy are given as reasons by female dropouts, but the prevalence of this factor is declining.

Risk factors
Dropout rates tend to be higher for minority students and low income students. However, race and socioeconomic status are probably markers for other risk factors. Characteristics common to dropouts include making poor grades, repeating a grade, being overage for their grade, or being absent frequently.

Consequences and costs
High school dropouts are much more likely to experience health, economic and social problems. With respect to lifetime wages, high school dropouts will earn $212,000 less than high school graduates, and $812,000 less than college graduates. Dropouts have a shorter active life expectancy. About one-half of the U.S. prison population are high school dropouts.

Solutions
Promising practices that help student stay in school include incentives for improved performance, tutoring or mentoring, transfer to different schools, and establishing links with appropriate community agencies to address personal or family difficulties.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

FIVE BEST COUNTIES

1 WINSTON
2 GENEVA
3 COFFEE
4 BLOUNT
5 MARION

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

FIVE WORST COUNTIES

63 RUSSELL
64 BARBOUR
65 LOWNDES
66 BULLOCK
67 MACON

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INDEX

FIVE BEST COUNTIES

1 LAUDERDALE
2 CHOCTAW
3 SHELBY
4 COLBERT
5 LEE

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INDEX

FIVE WORST COUNTIES

63 TALLADEGA
64 MACON
65 CONECUH
66 PERRY
67 COOSA

Children's Health Index

Definition
The Children's Health Index measures six birth characteristics that affect children's later school success: late or no prenatal care, low maternal weight gain, mother smoked during pregnancy, mother drank alcohol during pregnancy, three or more older siblings and closely spaced birth.

Size of the problem
An analysis of Alabama births during 1995 showed 56.9% of births had no risk factors. Children with no risks may be in a better position to do well in school than children having one or more risk factors. Just over 43% of births (43.1%) had one or more risk factors, 11.2% had two or more risk factors and 2.3% had three or more risk factors. All of these proportions have improved since 1990.

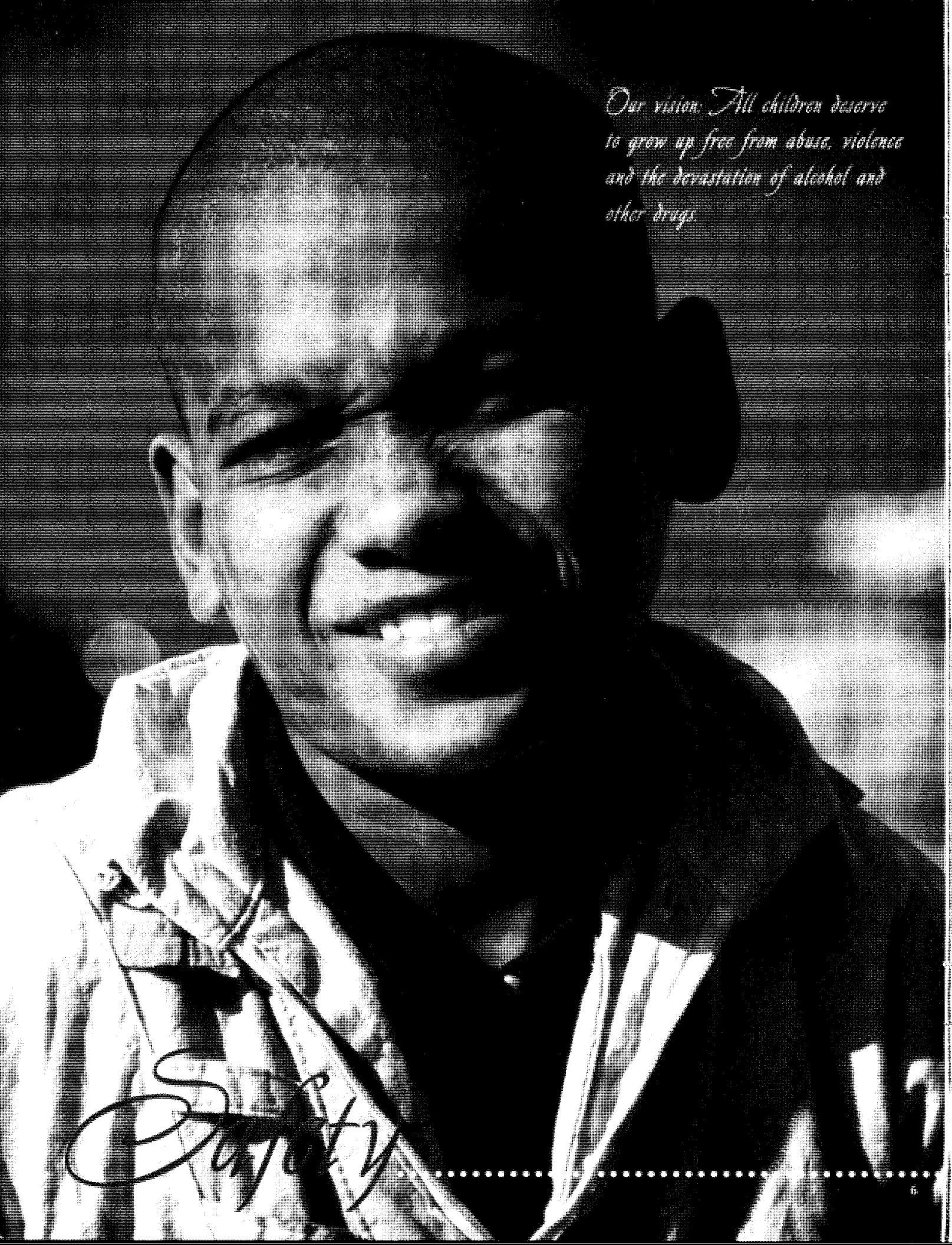
The proportion of births with no risk factors ranged from 68.7% in Lauderdale county to 41.3% of births in Coosa county.

Causes
Several of these risk factors are associated with low birth weight, which increases the risk of developmental delays and learning disabilities. Prenatal exposure to alcohol by itself can cause learning difficulties. Large family size and closely spaced births are associated with lower academic achievement, possibly because of the competing demands for parents' time.

Risk factors
Analysis of birth certificate data from 1995 indicate that unmarried women and women with less than a high school education were more likely to experience births with a higher number of risk factors.

Consequences and costs
The potential for school success is improved if children arrive at school healthy and developmentally ready to participate actively in classroom activities. As a group, children who fall behind in the early grades never catch up, and are at increased risk for dropping out of school, as well as other negative outcomes associated with poor school performance. School-based programs designed to make up differences in levels of readiness can cost up to an additional $800 per pupil.

Solutions
Educational outreach to pregnant women may improve the birth circumstances of their children, especially programs that encourage women to stop smoking and drinking during pregnancy, to seek prenatal care early, and to maintain a beneficial prenatal diet.



Our vision: All children deserve to grow up free from abuse, violence and the devastation of alcohol and other drugs.

CHILD DEATH RATE

Definition

The child death rate tracks deaths from all causes to children aged 1 to 14. It is reported as the number of deaths per 100,000 children aged 1 to 14.

Size of the problem

During 1995, 319 Alabama children aged 1 to 14 died. Alabama's child death rate for 1995 was 38.3 deaths per 100,000 children aged 1 to 14. Over the last ten years, Alabama's child death rate has shown no real trend up or down.

County child death rates for 1995 varied from zero in Bibb, Coosa, Lowndes and Marion counties to 90 deaths per 100,000 in Barbour county.

Causes

Accidents are the leading cause of death for Alabama's young children. More children die each year from injuries received in motor vehicle crashes, choking, burns, falls, drowning and poisoning than all contagious diseases added together. Alabama children also die as a result of abuse or neglect.

Risk factors

Child injury rates are greatest among children of low socioeconomic status. Males are also at greater risk for most injuries. The risk of childhood injury depends on the developmental level of the child, their exposure to dangers, protective measures taken and the level of adult supervision.

Consequences and costs

Child deaths represent lost potential due to premature death. Non-fatal injuries leave children temporarily or permanently disabled, result in time lost from school, decrease children's ability to participate in activities and increase burdens on the health care system. Costs per child injured are estimated at $12,700 (medical costs, future earnings and quality of life).

Solutions

Simple strategies to prevent injuries offer the best hope of reducing child deaths. Wider use of bicycle helmets, car seats and similar safety devices could prevent most injuries. Systematic review of all child deaths could lead to additional prevention strategies as well as providing a full accounting of deaths due to abuse or neglect.

CHILD DEATH RATE

FIVE BEST COUNTIES

1 COOSA
2 BLOUNT
3 CHAMBERS
4 LOWNDES
5 MORGAN

CHILD DEATH RATE

FIVE WORST COUNTIES

63 WILCOX
64 HENRY
65 CLEBURNE
66 CHEROKEE
67 BULLOCK

CHILDREN REPORTED ABUSED OR NEGLECTED

FIVE BEST COUNTIES

1 SHELBY
2 MONTGOMERY
3 GREENE
4 SUMTER
5 MADISON

CHILDREN REPORTED ABUSED OR NEGLECTED

FIVE WORST COUNTIES

63 CLAY
64 LAWRENCE
65 BARBOUR
66 GENEVA
67 CHEROKEE

CHILDREN REPORTED ABUSED OR NEGLECTED

Definition

Many Alabama children are threatened by intentional physical injury, sexual abuse, psychological or emotional harm, and general, medical and educational neglect. Alabama Kids Count tracks the number of children reported as victims of child abuse or neglect per 1,000 children under age 20.

Size of the problem

More than 38,000 children were reported abused or neglected in Alabama during 1995. A total of 25,704 reports involving 38,559 child victims were filed with Alabama's Department of Human Resources. About 32 out of every 1,000 children in Alabama were reported abused or neglected.

County rates of reported child abuse ranged from 16 per 1,000 children in Elmore county to just over 69 per 1,000 in Clay county.

Causes

Child abuse or neglect usually results from a combination of factors related to the parents' background and behavior, external crises and stresses, and the child's background and behavior.

Risk factors

Children face greater risk of abuse or neglect if their parents were abused or neglected as children, have a criminal, mental illness or substance abuse history, suffer from low self-esteem, social isolation or depression, or have poor coping or problem-solving skills. Risk is also increased by external stresses like marital discord, multiple separations, threats of divorce, recent significant loss, poor work stability, recent or frequent moves and overcrowded living conditions.

Consequences and costs

In addition to the consequences suffered by child victims of abuse or neglect, direct costs related to child maltreatment include child welfare services for investigations, in-home services, and placement. Indirect long-term costs of failing to prevent abuse or neglect include teen pregnancy, substance abuse treatment, income maintenance programs, medical assistance, job training, police, and prison expenses.

Solutions

Abuse or neglect can be prevented by promoting the general welfare of children and strengthening families by working to increase families' economic self-sufficiency, enhancing communities and their resources, and identifying and providing services to families at risk for abuse.

Juvenile Violent Crime Court Referral Rate

Definition

The juvenile violent crime court referral rate counts cases disposed of by Alabama's juvenile court system involving juveniles referred to the court for murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, or simple assault. It is reported as referrals per 100,000 youths aged 10-17.

Size of the problem

During 1995, 3,648 youths were referred to the juvenile court system for violent crimes. This yields a court referral rate of almost 746 referrals per 100,000 youths.

County juvenile violent crime court referral rates ranged from zero in Winston county to 1,624 referrals per 100,000 youths in Bibb county.

Causes

A recent American Society of Criminology report offers a compelling explanation for the rise in juvenile violence. The introduction of crack cocaine in the mid-1980s changed drug buying habits by increasing the number of transactions. Youths were recruited to handle the higher number of transactions, and their need for protection led to a proliferation of guns among youth. As more young people began to carry guns, violence escalated.

Risk factors

Research consistently identifies inadequate parenting as the strongest factor contributing to delinquency. Abuse and rejection by parents, coupled with parental criminality and drug abuse, prenatal deficiency, lack of education, poor supervision and deficient discipline, increase the likelihood that adolescents will engage in criminal behavior.

Consequences and costs

Alabama's state and local governments spent almost $825 million in direct justice system costs in fiscal 1992. In addition to increasing these direct costs, juvenile violent crime exacts immeasurable social costs: greater fear and uneasiness in our own communities, an erosion of trust, and a perception of disintegrating society.

Solutions

The earlier a child commits an offense, the more likely it is that delinquent behavior will continue and worsen over time. Juveniles' first contact with the justice system must be met with consistent interventions designed to induce law-abiding behavior as soon as possible.

JUVENILE VIOLENT CRIME COURT REFERRAL RATE

FIVE BEST COUNTIES

1 WINSTON
2 DEKALB
3 BLOUNT
4 WALKER
5 CONECUH

JUVENILE VIOLENT CRIME COURT REFERRAL RATE

FIVE WORST COUNTIES

63 TALLAPOOSA
64 DALE
65 DALLAS
66 BIBB
67 GREENE

7JUVENILE VIOLENT CRIME ARREST RATE

TEN BEST COUNTIES*

1 BIBB
2 BLOUNT
3 CHOCTAW
4 CLAY
5 COOSA
6 GREENE
7 LAMAR
8 MARION
9 WILCOX
10 WINSTON

JUVENILE VIOLENT CRIME ARREST RATE

FIVE WORST COUNTIES

63 COFFEE
64 LEE
65 DALLAS
66 JEFFERSON
67 MOBILE

Juvenile Violent Crime Arrest Rate

Definition

The juvenile violent crime arrest rate tracks arrests of juveniles for the crimes of murder, forcible rape, robbery or aggravated assault. It is reported as arrests per 100,000 youths age 10 to 17.

Size of the problem

There were 1,232 arrests of juveniles for violent crimes in 1995. Alabama's juvenile violent crime arrest rate of 252 arrests per 100,000 youths aged 10 to 17 is more than three times the rate measured in 1988. About half of the arrests were for aggravated assault and almost 44% were for robbery. There were 40 arrests for rape and 33 arrests for murder.

County juvenile violent crime arrest rates ranged from zero in 17 counties to 620 arrests per 100,000 youths in Mobile county.

Causes

The continuing problem of drug abuse, the increasing availability of weapons and the growth of gangs have contributed to rising juvenile violence. In addition, the number of children at risk for becoming delinquent continues to increase.

Risk factors

Kids are more likely to be delinquent when they have friends who get into trouble, do poorly in school, live in high-crime neighborhoods, have weak family attachments, or are not consistently disciplined or supervised. When a child is physically abused or neglected early in life, they are at greater risk to become a violent juvenile offender.

Consequences and costs

The cost of crime most directly affects victims and victims' families. Using figures from a recent National Institute of Justice analysis, victims' costs for violent crimes committed by juveniles in Alabama approached $120 million in 1995. This total includes productivity losses, medical care, property losses, mental health care, and quality of life losses, but does not include criminal justice system costs and other social costs.

Solutions

Prevention is the most cost-effective means of dealing with delinquency. Community-based programs that counteract local risk factors can divert children from future violence. Evaluations show that successful programs are long-term, comprehensive, age-appropriate efforts. Home visitation, enriched preschool, and programs that teach parenting skills have been most successful.

**Ten counties reported a three-year (1993-1995) average arrest rate of zero.*

Preventable Teen Death Rate

Definition

Preventable teen deaths refer to deaths of 15- to 19-year olds that result from accidents, homicides or suicides. The rate is expressed as deaths per 100,000 teens aged 15 to 19.

Size of the problem

During 1995, 296 Alabama teens aged 15 to 19 died as a result of homicide, suicide or accident—94 deaths per 100,000 teens. Although the overall preventable teen death rate is changing little, the teen homicide rate has quadrupled in ten years, and the teen suicide rate has risen 62%.

County preventable teen death rates ranged from zero in ten counties to almost 484 per 100,000 in Greene county.

Causes

Motor vehicle crashes, the primary cause of preventable teen deaths, are usually linked to immaturity and lack of driving experience. Causes of increasing teen violence include easy access to handguns and drugs, poverty and unemployment, negative peer and family influences, the lack of positive role models and media's glamorization of violence.

Risk factors

Teenagers as a group are more willing to take risks, less likely to use safety belts, and more susceptible to the effects of alcohol. Risk factors for suicide include a history of substance abuse, a history of psychiatric disorders, exposure to suicide, disruption of the family and exposure to violence.

Consequences and costs

Any preventable premature death represents a tragic loss to families and friends. The monetary cost of a violent death to victims' families has been estimated to be about $3 million for productivity and quality of life losses. Alabama's 296 preventable teen deaths in 1995 represented the loss of 17,000 potential years of life.

Solutions

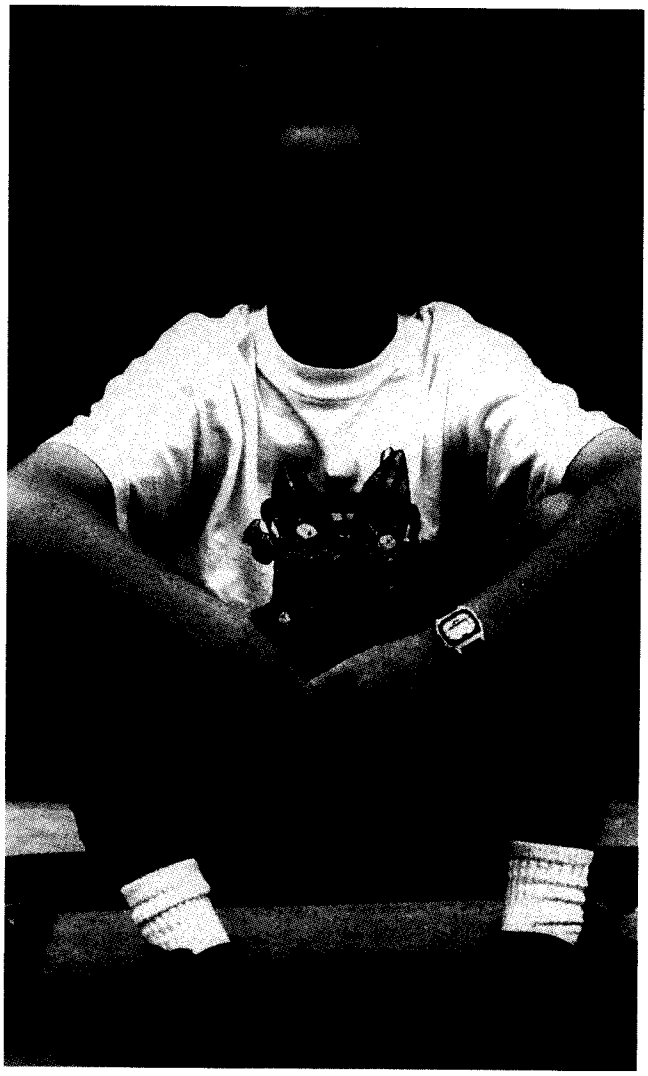
Programs and policies designed to increase seat belt usage and discourage alcohol use will have an impact on deaths resulting from motor vehicle accidents. Successful teen violence prevention efforts include teaching alternatives to aggression, mentoring programs, targeted media messages, and individual and group counseling. Suicide prevention begins with closer parent-child relationships and alertness to changes in behavior.

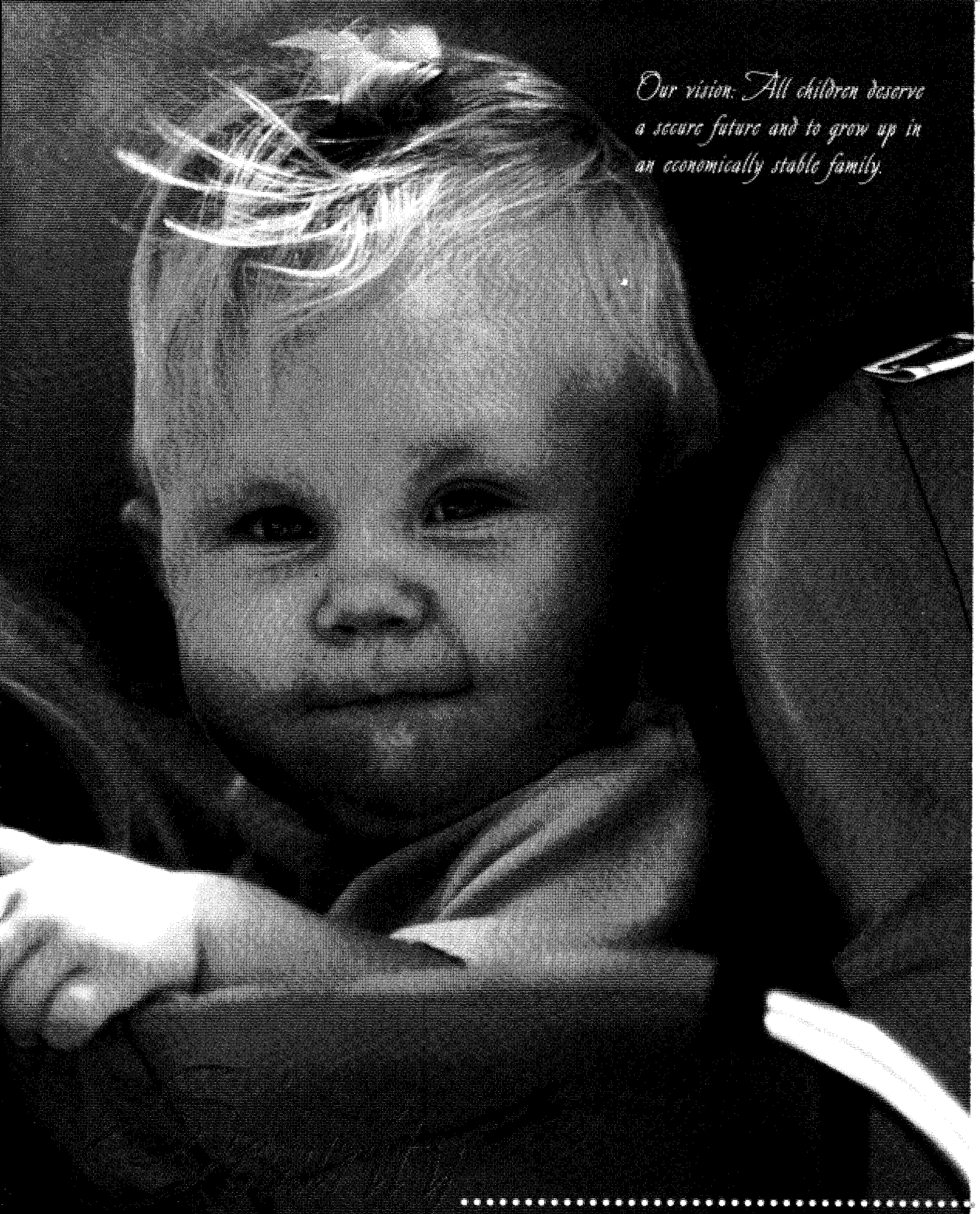
PREVENTABLE TEEN DEATH RATE
FIVE BEST COUNTIES

1 WINSTON
2 MACON
3 CLEBURNE
4 BULLOCK
5 DALE

PREVENTABLE TEEN DEATH RATE
FIVE WORST COUNTIES

63 FRANKLIN
64 GREENE
65 WILCOX
66 PERRY
67 GENEVA





Our vision: All children deserve a secure future and to grow up in an economically stable family.

BIRTHS TO UNMARRIED TEENS

Definition

This indicator tracks the number of live births to unmarried teenage women (aged 10-19) and is expressed as a percentage of all live births.

Size of the problem

During 1995, a total of 7,887 babies were born to unmarried teens—13.1% of all births. The percentage of births that were to unmarried teens has risen steadily from 9.9% of births in 1985.

Births to unmarried teens in 1995 ranged from 5.5% in Cleburne and Shelby counties to 28.1% in Perry county.

Causes

Most studies confirm that getting pregnant and giving birth is an emotional, not a rational, process. Evidence linking welfare benefits and births to teens is not consistent and suggests that welfare is not an important factor in teens' decisions. Some studies suggest that as many as 85% of teen pregnancies are unintended.

Risk factors

Risk factors associated with teenage childbearing include school problems (low grades, low educational aspirations), behavior problems (early smoking, use of illegal drugs, alcohol use, delinquency, discipline problems at school), poverty at both the family and community level, and family problems (early sexual abuse, frequent residential moves, parental divorce and inadequate parenting).

Consequences and costs

Children born to teenage mothers tend to have lower birth weights and experience higher rates of premature delivery and infant mortality. They have higher rates of injury and hospitalization before age five. Children born to teens are more likely to have academic and behavioral problems in school and they are more likely to become teenage parents themselves.

Solutions

Successful school-based teen pregnancy reduction programs (such as "Reducing the Risk" and "Be Proud! Be Responsible!") target specific risk behaviors, personalize risk information, address social and media influences and provide practice in communication skills that help with refusal and negotiation. The goal is to delay onset of sexual activity or increase the use of contraceptives.

BIRTHS TO UNMARRIED TEENS

FIVE BEST COUNTIES

1 CLEBURNE
2 SHELBY
3 BLOUNT
4 WINSTON
5 CULLMAN

BIRTHS TO UNMARRIED TEENS

FIVE WORST COUNTIES

63 DALLAS
64 WILCOX
65 GREENE
66 BULLOCK
67 PERRY

VULNERABLE FAMILIES

FIVE BEST COUNTIES

1 CLEBURNE
2 LAMAR
3 FRANKLIN
4 SHELBY
5 MARION

VULNERABLE FAMILIES

FIVE WORST COUNTIES

63 WILCOX
64 PERRY
65 BARBOUR
66 LOWNDES
67 BULLOCK

VULNERABLE FAMILIES

Definition

Vulnerable families refer to families begun when unmarried teenage mothers who have not finished high school give birth to their first child. The combination of these three risk factors (having less than 12 years of schooling, being unmarried, being under age 20 at the time of a first birth) puts these new families at great risk for instability, break up, poverty and dependence on public assistance.

Size of the problem

During 1995, 4,319 vulnerable families were begun in Alabama. Out of 26,922 first births, 53.1% had at least one risk factor, 30.3% had at least two risk factors and 16% had all three risk factors. The percent of births with all three risk factors improved from 17% in 1994. There were fewer teen mothers and fewer mothers with less than a high school education. However, the number of unmarried mothers increased.

County percentages of first births with all three risk factors ranged from 5.8% in Cleburne county to 31.9% in Bullock county.

Causes

The proportion of teens who are unmarried has been increasing over time, particularly among 18- and 19-year-olds. In general, people are engaging in sexual activity earlier and marrying later.

Risk factors

Risk factors associated with both teen pregnancy and dropping out of high school include poor educational performance and low socioeconomic status. Adolescents who practice high risk behaviors (drinking, drug use) are more likely to engage in sexual activity.

Consequences and costs

Women who give birth as teenagers are less likely to finish high school or college. They are more likely to be unemployed. When they are working, they will likely earn less than women who were not teenage mothers. Most lack the supports and skills to adequately provide for their children.

Solutions

Alabama teens need expanded options for their future: improved education, occupational and economic opportunities. More than 80% of teenagers who give birth live in poor or low-income families. Strategies that successfully address family and community poverty will also reduce teen births. Programs that help pregnant teens finish school will improve their economic prospects.

CHILDREN RECEIVING AFDC

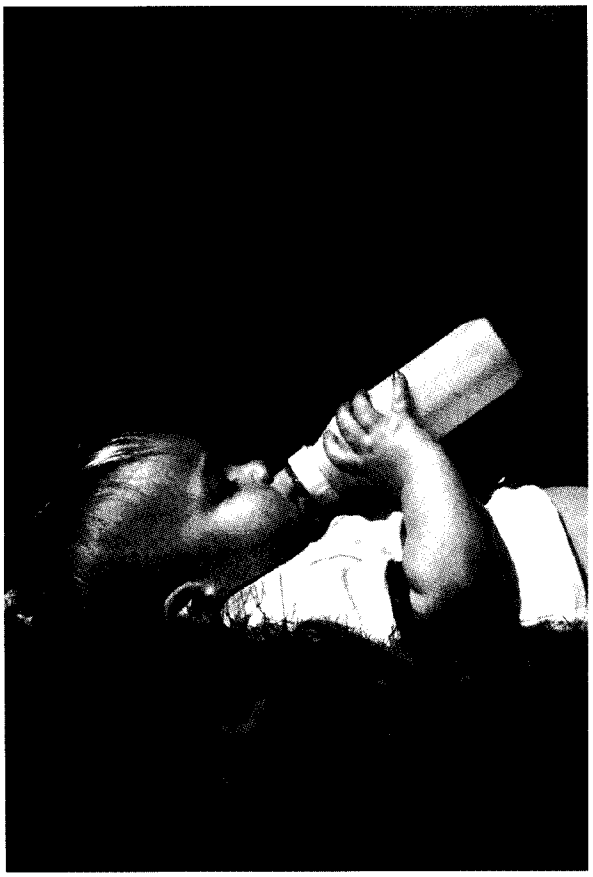
FIVE BEST COUNTIES

1 SHELBY
2 CULLMAN
3 COLBERT
4 BALDWIN
5 DEKALB

CHILDREN RECEIVING AFDC

FIVE WORST COUNTIES

63 BULLOCK
64 MACON
65 DALLAS
66 PERRY
67 WILCOX



CHILDREN RECEIVING AFDC

Definition

This indicator tracks the number of children in families receiving AFDC payments expressed as a percentage of children under 20. The AFDC program (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) has now been replaced by TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families).

Size of the problem

During 1996, 6.6% of Alabama's children were living in families that received AFDC benefits. Statewide, both the total number and the percentage of children receiving AFDC has declined steadily since 1993.

County percentages ranged from 1.4% in Shelby county to 20.2% in Wilcox county.

Causes

AFDC provides modest cash grants to families with little or no income. AFDC was set up as a transitional safety net to protect children from the effects of extreme poverty and to help families survive financial crises such as divorce, unemployment or illness. AFDC benefits for a mother and two children are $164 a month, or an annual income of $1968. She gets no AFDC benefits if her income exceeds $1968.

Risk factors

Families most at risk for needing AFDC/TANF benefits are female-headed, single-parent households. The average Alabama family on welfare is a mother with 1.55 children. Mothers receiving benefits tend to be younger; almost half do not have a high school diploma. Most are jobless.

Consequences and costs

AFDC payments to 43,032 Alabama families in February, 1996, totaled almost $6.4 million , an average payment of $148.61 per family. Alabama's benefits are the second-lowest in the U.S., and their real value has declined 33% since 1970. To the extent that AFDC benefits reduce the detrimental effects of poverty on children, expenditures should more properly be viewed as investments that offset future costs in education, law enforcement and health care.

Solutions

More jobs, job training opportunities, improved transportation and access to quality child care will reduce the need for welfare. Continuing to improve child support collections will help children while reducing AFDC expenditures.

FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS

Definition

This indicator refers to the number of persons receiving food stamps expressed as a percentage of total population.

Size of the problem

As of February, 1996, 12.1% of all Alabamians were receiving food stamps. The percentage of persons receiving food stamps increased between 1990 and 1993, but has declined since.

Percentages of county residents receiving food stamps ranged from 3.6% in Shelby county to 38.8% in Wilcox county.

Causes

The Food Stamp program is designed to improve the nutrition of low income people by providing coupons to cover part or all of their household's food budget. Food stamp benefits can be used only for the purchase of food. Strict eligibility requirements are based on financial and non-financial factors.

Risk factors

Over half of food stamp recipients are children aged 17 and under, and over 80 percent of benefits go to households with children. Ninety-seven percent of food stamp benefits go to households with incomes below the federal poverty level. Food stamp benefits are available to all who need it and meet eligibility standards, regardless of their age or family composition.

Consequences and costs

In February, 1996, 519,071 Alabamians received an average of $71.49 each in food stamp benefits— a total of $37.1 million. This benefit level equates to about 79 cents per meal. The federal government pays 100% of the benefits portion of the program and half of the administrative costs. Households participating in the program, on average, buy more food than low-income house- holds that don't participate in the program.

Solutions

Families will always face short-term economic crises from time to time. Half of all food stamp recipients leave the program within six months, primarily because of an increase in earnings. Programs that enhance people's ability to remain employed, such as job training, child care assistance and transportation enhancement, will help reduce the need for food stamp benefits.

FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS

FIVE BEST COUNTIES

1 SHELBY
2 MORGAN
3 BALDWIN
4 CULLMAN
5 CLAY

FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS

FIVE WORST COUNTIES

63 DALLAS
64 LOWNDES
65 GREENE
66 WILCOX
67 PERRY

CHILDREN IN POVERTY

FIVE BEST COUNTIES

1 SHELBY
2 MORGAN
3 MARSHALL
4 BLOUNT*
4 LIMESTONE*
*Two counties tied

CHILDREN IN POVERTY

FIVE WORST COUNTIES

63 DALLAS
64 LOWNDES
65 WILCOX
66 GREENE
67 PERRY

CHILDREN IN POVERTY

Definition

Children in poverty refers to children living in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold. The poverty threshold for a family of four (two adults, two children) was $14,654 in 1993.

Size of the problem

Statewide in 1993, more than 187,000 children aged 5 to 17 (24%) were living in poverty. The number of children living in poverty is increasing—in 1989, 175,000 (22%) were living in families with incomes below the poverty threshold.

The percentage of children in poverty ranged from 10.1% in Shelby county to 50.5% in Perry county.

Causes

Poverty is strongly related to educational level. Families are much more likely to be poor if parents have less than a high school education. Families begun by teenagers are more likely to be poor. Single parent families are more likely to be living in poverty, especially if the lone parent is the mother.

Risk factors

Children are more likely to be poor than any other age group. Studies of movement in and out of poverty show that children are less likely to exit poverty, more likely to enter poverty and more likely to be chronically poor.

Consequences and costs

Poverty hinders the physical and intellectual development of children and reduces their chances of becoming productive adults. Research has found that five-year-olds who have lived in poverty for as little as one year have significantly lower IQ scores than children whose families were never poor. Children who live in poverty are less likely to graduate from high school. Their physical development is affected too: they are more likely to be short for their age and to be underweight.

Solutions

Reducing the formation of vulnerable families has the most potential to reduce the number of children living in poverty. Teens who complete at least a high school education and who get married before having children are less likely to be poor. Improved job training and apprenticeship programs combined with affordable, high-quality child care will also help move families out of poverty.

COUNTY DATA

The numbers below represent rates or percentages.

County	IM 1995	LBW 1995	GRDS 1995	CHI 1995	CD 1995	RAN 1995	JVCA 1995	CR 1995	PTD 1995	BUT 1995	VF 1995	AFDC 1996	FS 1995	POV 1993
Autauga	7.3	8.6%	63.4%	57.7%	23.1	18.7	180.0	540.0	64.9	10.9%	11.9%	3.7%	9.1%	19.1%
Baldwin	12.8	8.1%	57.1%	58.4%	21.5	32.8	170.9	386.3	146.9	9.4%	11.8%	2.1%	5.9%	17.0%
Barbour	7.7	9.0%	47.3%	49.7%	90.1	61.8	63.0	819.2	203.2	17.6%	29.1%	9.6%	20.7%	29.8%
Bibb	7.3	6.2%	52.0%	55.0%	0.0	35.1	0.0	1,623.9	0.0	11.7%	14.9%	3.7%	11.1%	24.9%
Blount	13.2	9.6%	74.4%	56.8%	24.8	31.4	0.0	165.6	98.3	6.3%	9.6%	3.6%	8.5%	16.5%
Bullock	19.2	10.9%	45.1%	53.8%	77.5	39.9	71.2	427.4	0.0	27.6%	31.9%	16.5%	24.1%	41.2%
Butler	6.6	12.3%	59.7%	56.3%	40.4	41.6	108.1	180.2	119.5	17.5%	21.1%	6.0%	17.2%	34.3%
Calhoun	6.6	8.0%	70.2%	56.3%	27.3	42.8	270.8	962.0	10.4	10.9%	12.1%	6.2%	12.0%	22.6%
Chambers	11.1	7.9%	55.5%	52.3%	28.0	33.5	183.9	1,034.3	0.0	19.5%	19.6%	6.5%	12.4%	25.9%
Cherokee	12.6	6.7%	71.3%	57.8%	54.3	66.7	84.6	169.1	134.2	9.2%	13.9%	3.2%	10.1%	18.4%
Chilton	17.1	6.9%	68.8%	49.6%	57.6	28.2	24.0	192.4	79.8	11.8%	12.1%	3.6%	11.7%	20.2%
Choctaw	4.0	9.3%	63.0%	66.1%	58.9	28.9	0.0	461.9	0.0	17.3%	14.4%	8.8%	17.7%	31.0%
Clarke	11.5	11.2%	61.2%	54.0%	48.6	28.0	52.6	341.9	167.5	14.7%	12.4%	11.9%	20.7%	29.8%
Clay	16.9	9.6%	72.5%	53.9%	40.5	69.2	0.0	323.0	0.0	11.2%	12.0%	4.1%	8.0%	19.0%
Cleburne	18.2	6.7%	70.1%	58.8%	38.8	60.4	131.3	722.3	0.0	5.5%	5.8%	3.6%	9.1%	17.1%
Coffee	9.2	6.1%	75.0%	56.6%	49.9	27.7	391.0	555.6	97.9	10.5%	10.2%	5.1%	8.6%	18.7%
Colbert	7.6	11.7%	73.0%	62.4%	10.4	24.0	127.3	963.8	207.9	12.5%	15.8%	1.7%	8.5%	19.3%
Conecuh	4.6	12.5%	52.1%	45.4%	34.0	44.8	0.0	403.5	295.3	15.3%	23.3%	12.1%	27.9%	34.7%
Coosa	8.3	12.4%	51.9%	41.3%	0.0	48.8	0.0	616.3	116.8	14.0%	15.3%	5.7%	9.7%	20.6%
Covington	4.1	8.5%	67.9%	54.5%	28.4	30.5	143.1	405.4	155.3	14.6%	17.0%	5.0%	13.5%	28.7%
Crenshaw	5.9	6.5%	67.6%	57.4%	75.0	42.1	62.1	869.6	0.0	18.3%	14.9%	6.7%	14.3%	28.3%
Cullman	5.3	7.2%	73.2%	55.9%	51.3	41.3	74.9	312.2	99.5	6.1%	10.0%	2.0%	6.2%	17.6%
Dale	13.1	8.1%	66.2%	58.0%	73.7	31.6	349.3	1,240.0	27.6	10.3%	12.8%	5.3%	14.3%	22.2%
Dallas	11.5	9.6%	55.0%	55.7%	53.4	30.1	411.4	1,462.8	73.3	22.5%	22.1%	17.0%	29.2%	45.6%
DeKalb	6.4	9.5%	68.9%	57.6%	27.9	32.1	0.0	45.3	49.0	7.6%	11.5%	2.8%	8.5%	19.4%
Elmore	7.4	9.4%	59.8%	56.8%	54.4	16.1	108.0	1,295.9	121.5	10.7%	13.1%	4.4%	8.1%	19.0%
Escambia	12.4	7.5%	69.0%	53.8%	42.6	33.4	135.4	812.6	105.2	18.0%	18.9%	5.5%	16.0%	31.0%
Etowah	12.6	10.6%	65.0%	52.5%	60.6	38.9	106.1	574.5	68.7	13.4%	16.9%	4.3%	11.5%	21.2%
Fayette	4.3	12.0%	66.1%	55.0%	29.4	34.3	234.1	889.5	218.2	11.5%	14.5%	4.8%	13.0%	21.2%
Franklin	0.0	10.3%	73.8%	61.8%	36.9	45.6	124.6	186.9	252.9	6.6%	7.1%	4.2%	10.5%	22.2%
Geneva	0.0	7.3%	75.9%	53.3%	65.8	58.1	36.0	827.0	280.0	10.1%	10.6%	4.5%	12.4%	23.1%
Greene	13.4	11.4%	59.5%	53.9%	80.2	18.1	0.0	1,180.6	483.7	22.8%	21.9%	12.1%	32.5%	48.1%
Hale	31.7	12.3%	65.3%	49.2%	26.1	32.8	0.0	934.6	150.3	20.2%	22.7%	7.1%	24.1%	39.9%
Henry	0.0	11.5%	69.3%	56.8%	32.5	41.4	52.2	730.3	169.6	17.2%	17.5%	7.8%	16.4%	24.2%
Houston	5.0	8.3%	65.2%	59.0%	34.4	48.3	190.9	1,175.6	82.1	14.0%	20.2%	4.7%	11.8%	23.0%
Jackson	7.8	8.8%	63.2%	53.1%	31.6	36.2	0.0	523.5	82.2	8.5%	12.3%	3.0%	9.8%	18.6%
Jefferson	11.6	9.8%	64.7%	59.4%	33.1	28.9	528.1	1,246.3	137.2	13.9%	16.3%	8.4%	10.9%	24.1%
Lamar	21.5	8.6%	69.5%	60.8%	68.1	19.6	0.0	602.1	0.0	8.1%	6.9%	2.9%	12.7%	20.6%
Lauderdale	5.6	9.1%	71.9%	68.7%	20.0	29.6	134.7	381.6	102.2	8.2%	10.9%	2.7%	8.0%	16.9%
Lawrence	4.4	6.6%	65.3%	59.4%	30.5	63.2	0.0	949.3	155.1	12.3%	14.7%	3.6%	10.0%	22.4%
Lee	6.1	7.9%	63.0%	61.8%	6.4	38.5	312.7	660.2	50.0	11.4%	15.7%	3.8%	8.3%	21.4%
Limestone	5.4	7.8%	68.2%	56.1%	18.2	22.9	62.8	376.5	175.5	8.2%	11.8%	4.0%	8.9%	16.5%
Lowndes	14.5	9.7%	47.0%	54.4%	0.0	28.4	0.0	252.4	83.4	21.7%	30.7%	13.7%	31.1%	47.8%
Macon	19.7	8.7%	42.7%	47.7%	43.3	29.0	59.0	412.7	0.0	20.5%	21.7%	16.9%	30.1%	43.7%
Madison	6.0	8.4%	68.5%	60.7%	39.4	18.5	188.3	681.7	57.2	9.2%	11.5%	6.3%	8.3%	18.0%
Marengo	14.4	8.0%	69.9%	59.5%	38.1	19.7	64.2	642.3	156.9	17.2%	23.1%	10.1%	20.8%	34.1%
Marion	9.2	6.4%	73.9%	55.8%	0.0	42.9	0.0	481.2	91.5	6.7%	8.4%	2.9%	8.9%	20.4%
Marshall	7.4	5.2%	69.2%	54.0%	84.2	43.4	35.6	510.4	148.6	9.5%	13.8%	3.4%	8.1%	15.8%
Mobile	11.0	9.4%	49.0%	53.7%	38.6	34.1	620.1	1,121.2	58.5	16.0%	21.7%	10.1%	17.4%	32.5%
Monroe	17.7	11.1%	57.9%	48.7%	18.1	25.3	120.1	210.1	189.1	17.7%	25.5%	6.2%	17.8%	26.3%
Montgomery	9.4	9.9%	61.4%	57.0%	51.1	19.7	311.8	728.9	59.3	15.7%	19.0%	10.3%	16.1%	26.1%
Morgan	8.3	8.1%	64.4%	57.6%	19.0	33.9	50.5	345.0	127.6	11.1%	14.8%	3.2%	6.2%	15.7%
Perry	19.0	10.0%	57.6%	45.0%	33.9	18.1	150.4	100.3	215.8	28.1%	27.0%	17.7%	38.4%	50.5%
Pickens	16.1	11.9%	71.4%	59.7%	66.8	37.7	0.0	384.6	200.1	23.2%	24.5%	8.7%	20.4%	33.6%
Pike	9.0	9.5%	65.3%	53.8%	38.2	41.6	332.4	609.4	103.0	16.4%	19.0%	8.3%	18.5%	30.2%
Randolph	10.7	8.9%	67.3%	52.5%	76.9	42.7	43.2	1,295.9	136.0	16.1%	25.0%	6.2%	12.5%	22.5%
Russell	6.9	9.0%	48.2%	49.8%	58.9	42.5	243.4	521.6	0.0	17.5%	23.4%	8.5%	15.1%	28.3%
St. Clair	10.3	5.8%	62.7%	53.6%	26.2	41.1	15.2	364.9	49.5	9.6%	13.8%	3.7%	9.3%	18.8%
Shelby	10.5	8.3%	72.0%	64.4%	34.6	17.1	66.5	29.6	61.5	5.5%	7.3%	1.4%	3.6%	10.1%
Sumter	26.4	12.8%	59.9%	49.8%	26.8	18.7	40.8	203.9	119.8	24.2%	25.0%	14.1%	29.5%	41.0%
Talladega	9.6	9.7%	60.7%	48.4%	57.8	58.2	103.3	878.3	111.4	17.6%	20.4%	7.9%	15.1%	27.8%
Tallapoosa	8.7	10.6%	58.7%	58.9%	54.1	41.4	239.1	1,282.3	102.0	18.9%	24.6%	6.5%	13.0%	23.1%
Tuscaloosa	14.4	9.8%	65.9%	58.1%	28.1	22.7	36.8	536.6	41.5	13.6%	15.6%	6.3%	11.4%	21.9%
Walker	10.2	9.3%	59.7%	52.0%	38.4	19.3	37.3	124.2	180.3	12.4%	14.6%	4.1%	7.9%	21.6%
Washington	7.6	6.5%	71.6%	52.7%	25.7	52.4	349.3	917.0	72.8	15.6%	15.7%	9.7%	16.2%	25.5%
Wilcox	8.5	13.6%	61.7%	55.7%	87.5	21.5	0.0	187.3	161.2	22.5%	26.8%	20.2%	38.8%	48.0%
Winston	0.0	6.7%	77.7%	54.2%	47.1	19.5	0.0	0.0	61.9	7.4%	11.3%	2.9%	7.3%	18.4%
Alabama	**9.8**	**9.0%**	**63.1%**	**56.9%**	**38.3**	**32.0**	**251.9**	**745.8**	**94.5**	**13.1%**	**16.0%**	**6.6%**	**12.1%**	**24.0%**

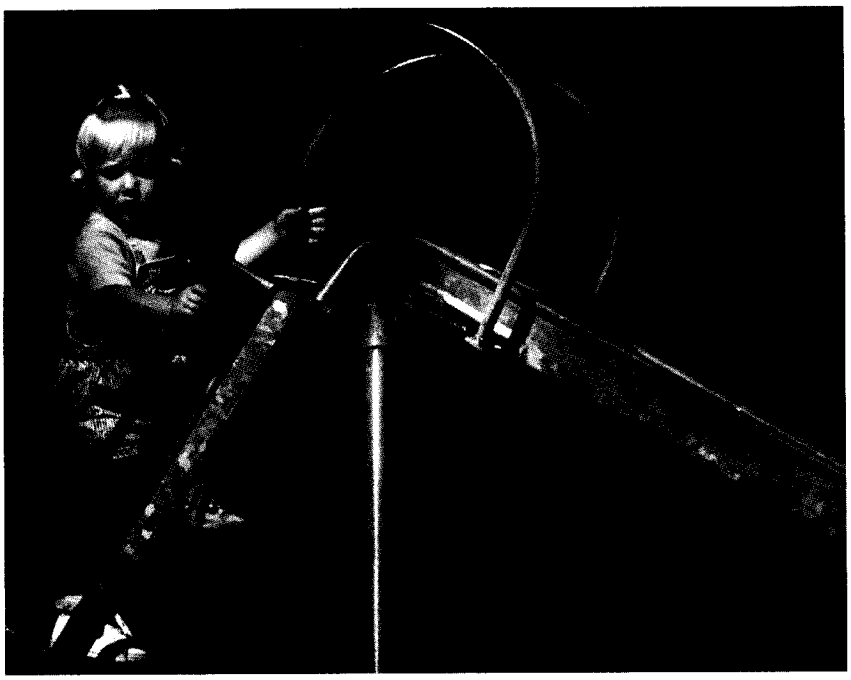
Key to headings is provided on page 16.

COUNTY RANKINGS

The numbers below represent county rankings for each indicator from best (1) to worst (67). Rankings are based on three-year averages.

COUNTY	IM 1995	LBW 1995	GRDS 1995	CHI 1995	CD 1995	RAN 1995	JVCA 1995	CR 1995	PTD 1995	BUT 1995	VF 1995	AFDC 1996	FS 1996	POV 1993
Autauga	27	25	39	20	9	6	54	28	15	26	16	22	24	18
Baldwin	38	12	56	16	24	29	49	33	33	18	14	4	3	7
Barbour	24	55	64	59	39	65	30	53	53	53	65	51	54	49
Bibb	20	6	60	36	31	31	1	66	55	32	33	16	33	40
Blount	47	30	4	25	2	39	1	3	22	3	6	13	11	4
Bullock	67	67	66	45	67	52	57	32	4	66	67	63	58	61
Butler	34	60	50	29	44	53	36	10	32	55	49	42	52	57
Calhoun	25	16	15	30	54	43	60	56	14	31	19	36	31	34
Chambers	45	50	57	55	3	51	59	57	42	59	46	43	36	42
Cherokee	5	36	14	19	66	67	16	12	54	8	26	12	20	11
Chilton	52	24	23	60	37	25	14	8	57	28	18	25	34	21
Choctaw	3	37	41	2	38	17	1	31	50	47	27	50	49	52
Clarke	40	57	46	42	52	20	26	13	56	48	21	59	56	49
Clay	32	46	9	43	53	63	1	22	60	27	17	17	5	16
Cleburne	61	1	16	15	65	60	27	38	3	1	1	14	18	8
Coffee	26	18	3	28	25	27	63	35	38	20	8	29	9	14
Colbert	10	49	8	4	28	15	38	40	52	21	38	3	16	19
Conecuh	42	65	59	65	7	50	20	5	61	41	56	58	60	58
Coosa	23	58	61	67	1	59	1	37	24	35	34	34	22	23
Covington	8	20	26	38	14	21	40	21	59	36	41	30	41	48
Crenshaw	57	10	27	23	48	61	18	43	34	40	32	44	42	46
Cullman	14	8	7	32	40	41	22	11	12	5	7	2	4	9
Dale	28	9	29	18	60	36	62	64	5	22	22	33	40	30
Dallas	37	38	58	35	50	24	65	65	27	63	53	65	63	63
DeKalb	33	15	22	21	6	30	11	2	36	9	13	5	15	20
Elmore	22	39	49	27	56	7	39	60	26	25	23	28	14	16
Escambia	9	31	21	46	42	56	45	55	41	49	43	37	46	52
Etowah	58	42	36	53	41	48	32	54	44	34	40	26	29	25
Fayette	39	48	30	37	36	38	43	29	62	30	28	32	38	25
Franklin	35	29	6	6	17	58	33	23	63	6	3	21	28	30
Geneva	1	2	2	50	57	66	19	52	67	16	9	27	37	36
Greene	54	63	52	44	49	3	1	67	64	65	52	60	65	66
Hale	64	64	32	61	51	40	28	44	17	60	54	45	59	59
Henry	4	35	19	26	64	28	37	51	45	46	42	47	47	39
Houston	36	5	35	13	21	57	52	59	7	39	47	31	30	35
Jackson	56	34	40	51	22	45	17	19	46	13	20	9	23	13
Jefferson	59	51	37	12	30	16	66	61	48	38	39	48	26	38
Lamar	65	27	18	7	62	12	1	27	47	11	2	6	32	23
Lauderdale	7	28	11	1	16	37	48	24	31	12	10	8	7	6
Lawrence	11	23	33	11	29	64	12	45	29	23	30	15	25	32
Lee	13	17	42	5	20	35	64	25	10	24	36	19	8	27
Limestone	12	13	25	31	13	13	46	14	43	10	15	20	17	4
Lowndes	44	59	65	39	4	19	34	18	8	58	66	61	64	64
Macon	62	61	67	64	59	23	51	47	2	61	51	64	62	62
Madison	15	19	24	8	23	5	55	49	11	17	12	40	13	10
Marengo	51	56	17	10	18	9	53	48	58	56	55	57	57	56
Marion	53	21	5	33	11	49	1	30	23	7	5	7	19	22
Marshall	18	11	20	41	46	33	21	26	37	15	25	18	10	3
Mobile	48	45	62	48	35	34	67	62	19	45	50	56	51	54
Monroe	49	52	54	62	58	22	41	15	21	51	62	38	48	44
Montgomery	55	44	45	24	33	2	61	50	30	44	44	55	44	43
Morgan	31	7	38	22	5	32	35	17	35	19	31	11	2	2
Perry	63	40	55	66	8	18	42	34	66	67	64	66	67	67
Pickens	30	62	13	9	15	26	15	20	51	57	58	54	55	55
Pike	29	33	34	47	12	55	47	36	16	50	45	49	53	51
Randolph	50	47	28	54	27	54	24	58	28	42	60	35	35	33
Russell	21	32	63	58	45	44	56	46	6	43	57	52	45	46
St. Clair	19	14	43	49	10	42	13	9	20	14	24	23	21	15
Shelby	17	3	10	3	34	1	25	6	25	2	4	1	1	1
Sumter	66	66	48	57	43	4	29	7	9	62	60	62	61	60
Talladega	41	43	47	63	32	62	31	39	49	54	48	46	43	45
Tallapoosa	46	53	53	14	47	47	58	63	39	52	59	41	39	36
Tuscaloosa	60	41	31	17	19	8	50	41	13	37	35	39	27	29
Walker	43	26	51	56	26	14	23	4	40	29	29	24	12	28
Washington	16	22	12	52	61	46	44	42	18	33	37	53	50	41
Wilcox	6	54	44	34	63	11	1	16	65	64	63	67	66	65
Winston	2	4	1	40	55	10	1	1	1	4	11	10	6	11

Key to headings is provided on page 16.



Definitions and Sources

IM Infant mortality: Number of deaths to live born infants under one year of age per 1,000 live births. Alabama Department of Public Health.

LBW Low weight births: Percentage of all live births recorded as low birth weight (under 5.5 pounds). Alabama Department of Public Health.

GRDS High school graduates: Number of high school diploma recipients expressed as a percentage of ninth graders enrolled four years earlier. Alabama Department of Education.

CHI Children's Health Index: Percent of births with none of six birth characteristics that affect children's later school success. Alabama Department of Public Health.

CD Child deaths: Number of deaths from all causes to children aged 1 to 14 per 100,000 children of those ages. Alabama Department of Public Health.

RAN Children reported abused or neglected: Number of children reported as victims of child abuse or neglect per 1,000 children under 20. Alabama Department of Human Resources.

JVCA Juvenile violent crime arrests: Number of arrests of person under age 18 for homicide, forcible rape, robbery or aggravated assault per 100,000 persons aged 10-17. Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center.

CR Juvenile violent crime court referrals: Number of cases adjudicated by the juvenile court system involving persons under 18 years of age referred to the court for murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault or simple assault per 100,000 persons aged 10-17. Alabama Department of Youth Services.

PTD Preventable teen deaths: Number of deaths from homicide, suicide or accidents to persons aged 15-19 per 100,000 persons of those ages. Alabama Department of Public Health.

BUT Births to unmarried teens: Number of live births to unmarried females aged 10-19 expressed as a percentage of all live births. Alabama Department of Public Health.

VF Vulnerable Families Index: Percent of first births to unmarried teenage mothers who had not finished high school. Alabama Department of Public Health.

AFDC Children Receiving AFDC: Number of children in families receiving AFDC payments expressed as a percentage of children under 20. Alabama Department of Human Resources.

FS Food stamp recipients: Number of persons receiving food stamps expressed as a percentage of total population. Alabama Department of Human Resources.

POV Children in poverty: Related children age 5 to 17 living in families whose income was below the federal poverty threshold expressed as a percentage of total children age 5 to 17.

Alabama Kids Count 1997 Report
Content and statistical analysis: Arthur W. Turner—Research Director, VOICES for Alabama's Children ■ Design: Dee Coggin ■ Published by VOICES for Alabama's Children—Linda Tilly, Executive Director

VOICES for Alabama's Children Board of Directors

The *Alabama Kids Count 1997 Data Book* is a comprehensive look at the status of Alabama's children. It presents information for the entire state and for each of Alabama's 67 counties.

Each county's page includes the most current data for 14 indicators of child and family well-being, with:

- current numbers and rates
- historical data
- rankings for each indicator
- county-state comparisons

Demographic information includes population projections for 1997 and counts from the 1990 Census. Demographics for every county include:

- total county population
  county child population
- age and ethnic breakdowns for the county's child population

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