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Child Well-Being In Mississippi at a Glance
2007 KIDS COUNT Mississippi Fact Sheet

Mississippi ranks 50th in the nation in a new state-by-state study on the well-being of America's children. The *2007 KIDS COUNT Data Book* reveals that Mississippi improved on five of the 10 measures reflecting child well-being, experienced setbacks on four and saw no change on one since 2000. The 2007 Essay discusses the need for all children in foster care to develop strong, lasting family connections. The Essay also sets an ambitious national goal to preserve, strengthen, rebuild, or find permanent families for every American child who is at risk of not having one.

Over 4,100 Mississippi children are in need of a permanent family connection.

In 2004, 4,178 children under age 18 in Mississippi lived in foster care at some point during the year, a rate of 6 per 1,000 children. That year, 116 children in the state aged out of the system without having a permanent family. Nationwide, 10 children per 1,000 under age 18 lived in foster care with 22,718 leaving the system at age 18 without a stable family environment.

Despite improvements, Mississippi in the bottom ten nationally in nine categories.

While recording improvements in half of the indicators, Mississippi was ranked worst in the nation in four categories and in the bottom ten in five others. The state had the worst rates of: low-birthweight babies, secure parental employment, child poverty, and single-parent families in the country.

Higher rate of teens staying in high school.

A bright spot in the study for Mississippi was that the teen high school dropout rate plummeted to 9 percent in 2005, a dramatic 40 percent improvement from 15 percent in 2000. This was a greater rate of improvement than the national average of 36 percent for the same period of time.

Economic indicators worsen for Mississippi families.

The percentages of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment and children living in poverty both rose by 19 percent between 2000 and 2005, contributing to Mississippi ranking worst in the nation in both categories. Also, 43 percent of the state's families lacked secure parental employment and 31 percent of its total child population lived in poverty, compared to the national rates of 34 percent and 19 percent respectively.

