

Mississippi Report on Families

Mississippi ranks 50th out of 50 regarding overall child wellbeing, much of which can be attributed to the breakdown of the traditional two-parent family.

Living Arrangements:

- 45% of children in Mississippi are in single-parent households, the highest percentage in the nation.
- 55% of children in Mississippi live in a married-couple household. 7% are in father-only households, and 38% are in mother-only households.

Births:

- Mississippi is the 3rd highest of 50 states for births to unmarried women. 48.3% of the births in Mississippi are out of wedlock, preceded only by New Mexico and Louisiana.
- Mississippi has the highest rate of teen mothers (ages 15-19) in the country: 121 per 1,000
 - 22% of teen births were to women who were already mothers in 2004, indicating that many teenage moms in Mississippi get pregnant again. (We rank 46 in recurrent teen births, with 50 being the highest percentage)
- Mississippi has the highest rate of low birth weight babies (11.6%) in the country, and the highest rate of preterm births (17.9%) in the country, and one of the highest (ranking 49th of 50) rates of infant mortality (9.8 per 1,000).
- General Information:
 - Of all births in Mississippi, 52.3% are White, 43.2% are Black, 2.6% Hispanic, and 1.9% are other races.
 - 24.9% of births are to mothers with less than 12 years of education.
 - 2.7% of births are to women who receive late or no prenatal care.
 - 12% of mothers smoked during pregnancy.

Poverty:

- In Mississippi, 9% of married-couple families with related children are below poverty compared to 46% of single-parent families with related children that are below poverty.
- 31% of children in Mississippi live in poverty (highest in the nation). Further, Mississippi has the highest rate (34%) of children under age 6 living in poverty in the nation, and the highest rate of children living in extreme poverty in the nation (15%).
- Mississippi has the highest rate (50%) of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment.
- Mississippi has one of the lowest rates of female-headed families receiving governmental support in the nation (27%), only surpassed by Alabama, who has only 26% receiving governmental support.

- Highest in the nation, tied with Arkansas, for children in low-income families living in households without a telephone (15%).
- We have the lowest Median family (with child) income in the country: \$37,000.

Children, Teenagers and Young Adults:

- We have one of the highest rates (71%) of unemployed teenagers age 16 to 19 in the country (ranked 49th out of 50).
- In Mississippi, 22% of persons age 18-24 are not attending school, not working, and have no degree beyond high school, which is the highest percentage in the nation.
- 9% of teens are high school dropouts (36th out of 50)
- We are one of the lowest in the country regarding persons residing in juvenile detention and correctional facilities: 152 per 100,000
- We are the highest for teens not attending school and not working (11% of teens in Mississippi)
- We have the highest rate of teen mothers (ages 15-19) in the country: 121 per 1,000
 - 22% of Teen births were to women who were already mothers in 2004, indicating that many teenage moms in Mississippi get pregnant again. (We rank 46, with 50 being the highest percentage)
- General Information:
 - Mississippi has one of the lowest percentages of children under 18 in foster care during any time of the year. Mississippi ranks 5th in the nation, with only 6% going into foster care in a given year.
 - A large percentage of children (39%) under the age of six in Mississippi are in family-based childcare—one of the highest percentages in the country.
 - Only 2% of children from Mississippi are in immigrant families.

Prepared by Dr. Tabitha Staier, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Family Education and Policy, Mississippi State University. Information was obtained from the Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count 2007 Data, www.kidscount.org.

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