



## Mission

The Urban Child Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to the well-being and health of children from conception to three years old in Memphis and Shelby County. We are a data-driven, result-oriented coalition of community researchers, strategists, and practitioners who share a common goal of turning research into actionable knowledge. The Urban Child Institute is working to become a recognized leader in child advocacy research, a trustworthy community partner, and a resource for expertise, advice, and collaboration for those who want to improve the lives of children in Memphis, Tennessee.

*The State of Children in Memphis & Shelby County* was created by the Institute and first published in 2006. The purpose was to collect, in one document, the best available data on children in Memphis and Shelby County. Many individuals and organizations had benefited from pieces of that data, but the 2006 *Data Book* was the first time that the data had been assembled in a single document and with professional analysis. This 2010 volume builds upon previous editions and includes several new features:

- a heightened focus on our community's youngest children, specifically those from birth to age three.
- an expanded discussion of early brain development that draws upon the most up-to-date neuroscientific research.
- new sources of data, including the Early Childhood Development Public Opinion Poll, reports provided by Memphis City Schools, and data and analysis from Porter-Leath's Early Head Start program.
- a Data Appendix in which we provide a more detailed examination of the sources, strengths, and limitations of the data used throughout the book.

We have also continued our special interest section this year with a focus on the importance of breastfeeding.

The data have been organized in seven segments. The segments are:

1. *Baby's Brain Begins Now*: an overview of brain development from conception to age three.
2. *Demographics*: a necessary overview of important statistics on Memphis and Shelby County.
3. *Health*: an examination of the risks related to birth outcomes, followed by our special interest section on breastfeeding.
4. *Family and Home Environment*: a report on Shelby County parents' knowledge about child development.
5. *Education*: a discussion of the importance of early childhood learning experiences.
6. *Community*: examines the effects of neighborhood influences on children's well-being.
7. *Best Practices*: a profile of Porter-Leath's Early Head Start program.

We at The Urban Child Institute hope that this document will be useful for government leaders, education and medical professionals, grant writers, and all community stakeholders who desire positive changes in Memphis and Shelby County.

The more we know about the importance of early childhood development, the better able we will be to promote the well-being of our youngest citizens.

## Introduction

Since its first edition in 2006, the *Data Book* has examined the risks faced by young children in Memphis and Shelby County. We have shown that these risks do not affect all children equally: a child's chances of enjoying health and well-being depend largely on her family's race, income, and address.

The new 2010 *Data Book* confirms that little has changed in the past year. Mortality, poverty, and underachievement among our community's children continue to exceed national averages. However, among the causes for concern we also found signs of hope.

On the positive side:

- Shelby County's infant mortality rate declined for the second year in a row.
- The rate of low birth-weight births declined for the third year in a row.
- Following a steep three-year rise, the percentage of mothers receiving no prenatal care dropped this year.

On the negative side:

- The gap in infant mortality between black babies and white babies continued to increase.
- Births to teens and births to single mothers continued to increase.
- Half of our children are poor or low-income.

Here are some other highlights of the 2010 *Data Book*:

- More families who rent are paying at least 35 percent of their incomes for housing (see the chapter on Demographics).
- Education pays: median income for high school graduates is 38 percent higher than that of dropouts (Demographics chapter).
- The percentage of mothers who smoke during pregnancy remains lower than in 2000, and is consistently lower than the rate for Tennessee (see the Health chapter).
- According to the 2009 Early Childhood Development Public Opinion Poll, parents understand that children's experiences in their first three years influence early brain development. However, they don't seem to think that public investments should target this age group (Family and Home Environment chapter).
- Pre-kindergarten boosts children's cognitive development. Children who attend Memphis City Schools' Pre-K program in the year before kindergarten begins are more prepared for school than children who spend the year in other types of care (Education chapter).
- Neighborhoods have important effects on development. Neighborhood characteristics are associated with child outcomes, including health, educational attainment, early parenthood, and adult earnings (see the Community chapter).
- Early Head Start programs such as the one founded by Porter-Leath improve children's cognitive development and parents' effectiveness (see the chapter on Best Practices).

## Acknowledgments

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The 2010 *Data Book* can be viewed and downloaded at [www.theurbanchildinstitute.org](http://www.theurbanchildinstitute.org)

## Shelby County at a Glance

Indicator (Year of Latest Date in Parentheses)	Raw number of latest year	Raw number of previous year	Increased (+) Decreased (-) Same (=)	Change Better (B) Worse (W)
<b>Population</b>				
Total Population (2008)	906,825	910,100	-	W
Child Population (2008)	245,101	249,093	-	W
Child Population Under 6 (2008)	81,333	84,744	-	W
Child Population Under 3 (2008)	44,810	40,451	+	B
Live Births (2008)*	15,045	15,234	-	W
<b>Family</b>				
Families (2008)	219,926	220,560	-	W
Families with Children (2008)	119,824	117,509	+	B
Married Parent Families with Children (2008)	63,209	59,856	+	B
Single Parent Families with Children (2008)	56,615	57,653	-	B
Live Births to Unmarried Mothers (2008)*	9,228	8,954	+	W
Live Births to Teen Mothers (2008)*	2,334	2,352	-	B
<b>Economic Security</b>				
Median Family Income (2008)	\$58,055	\$56,803	+	B
Median Family Income of Families with Children (2008)	51,259	\$48,558	+	B
Total Population Below Poverty (2008)	159,631	178,796	-	B
Children Below Poverty (2008)	67,002	74,895	-	B
People who Moved within the County (2008)	139,989	129,876	+	W
<b>Education</b>				
Pre-K or Child Care Enrollment (2008)	14,974	17,196	-	W
Undergraduate College Enrollment (2008)	45,734	45,394	+	B
Memphis City Schools Graduation Rate (2009)**	62.1	66.9	-	W
Memphis City Schools Cohort Dropout Rate (2009)**	25.9	19.3	+	W
Memphis City Schools Composite ACT Achievement(2009)**	17.5	17.7	-	W
<b>Child Health</b>				
Low Birth Weight Live Births (2008)*	1,648	1,698	-	B
Infant Death (2007)*	193	209	-	B

Notes: Unless otherwise specified, all data is from U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey.

\* Tennessee Department of Health, Vital Statistics.

\*\* Tennessee Department of Education, Report Card.