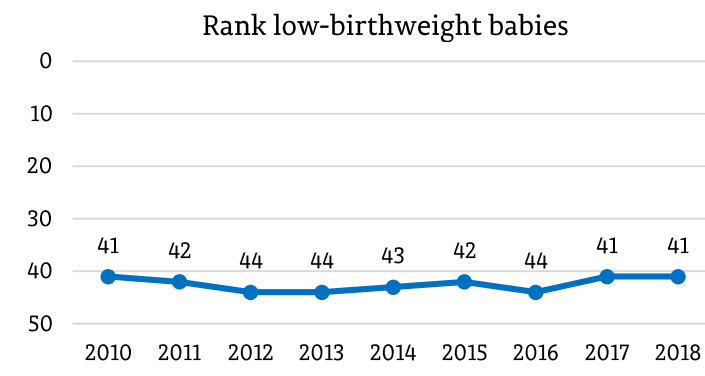
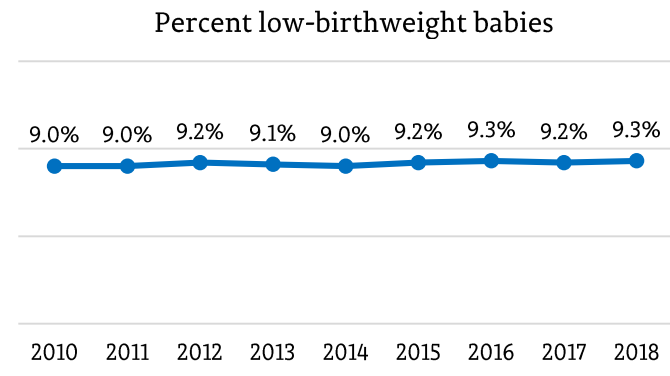


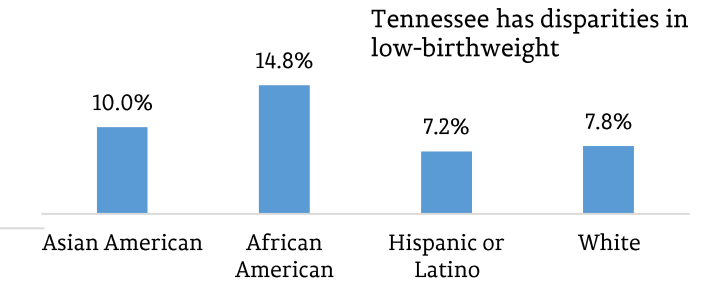
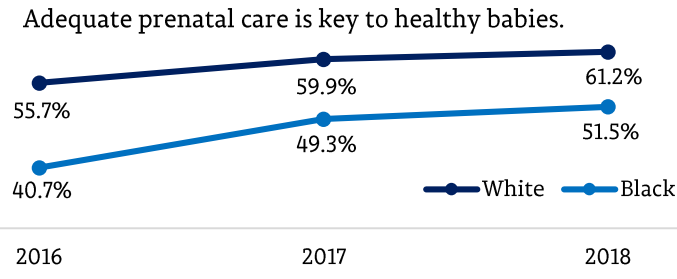
Health used to be Tennessee's strongest KIDS COUNT ranking, but this year it is the lowest. The main change since last year is in one of the indicators. In previous years, the Health domain included a measure of substance use among teens. This measure was always problematic and only ever had 4 or 5 distinct ranks among the states, but Tennessee was always near the top. It has been replaced with a measure of overweight and obesity among youth age 10 to 18. Tennessee ranks 48th on this measure. Further, several years ago Tennessee was among the best states in the percentage of children who lack health insurance. As other states have expanded Medicaid, they have closed the gap with Tennessee. This most recent data shows Tennessee moving backward on this measure, with the percent of children who lack health insurance increasing from 5 to 6.

Percent of babies born at a low-birthweight

This measure has long posed a challenge for Tennessee, as the state has ranked near the bottom throughout the years of KIDS COUNT rankings. The rate has increased since 2010.

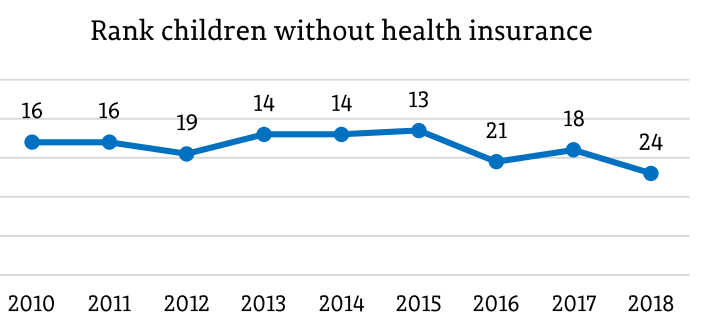
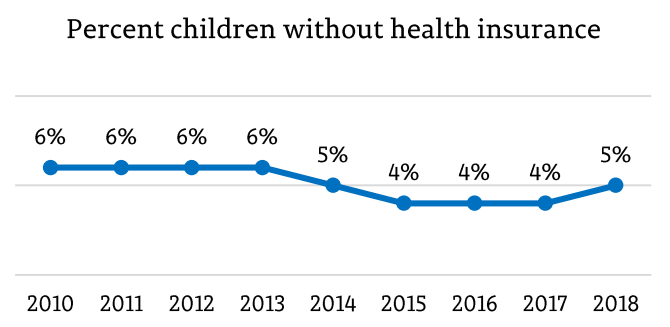


Disparities in prenatal care lead to disparities in birthweight. Closing gaps would improve Tennessee's rank.

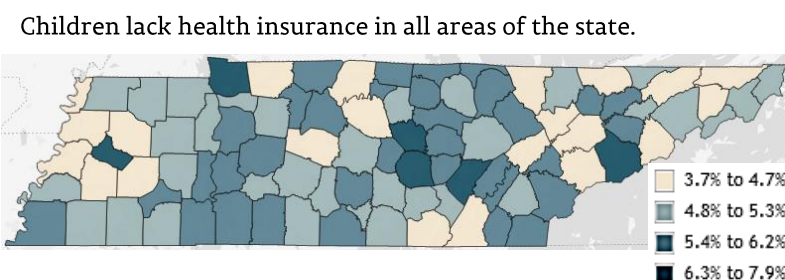


Percent of children without health insurance

Tennessee has long been a leader on this measure as the state maintained expanded coverage for children when it scaled back TennCare expansion. As other states have accepted Medicaid expansion funds, Tennessee has lost comparative position. In this last year, Tennessee went backward on this measure.



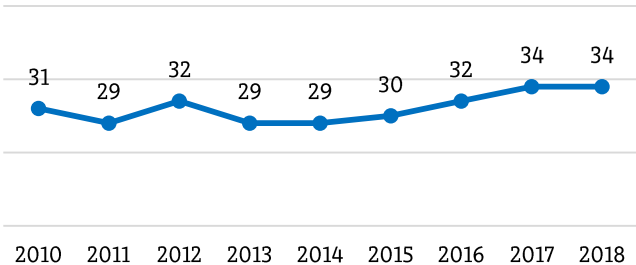
The percentage of children who lack health insurance varies some across the state, from a low of 3.7 in Montgomery County to a high of 7.9 in Warren County. Some of the state's poorest counties are better on this measure than on others, as only the lowest-income families qualify for TennCare or CHIP, even for children. Nonetheless, children who qualify for these programs often still lack insurance. Improved outreach could improve this indicator.



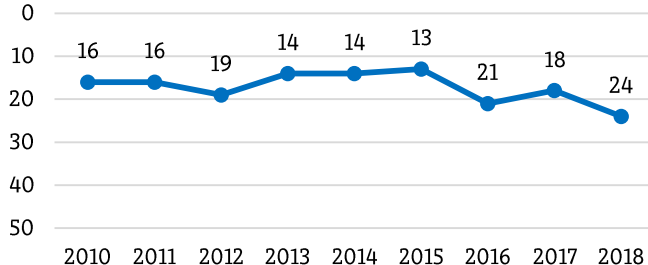
Child and teen death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1 to 19)

Tennessee's child and teen death rate has increased in the last several years. The state's rank has also fallen, as this increase has not happened nationally. This measure looks at deaths in children over the age of one year, so it does not include infant mortality. In Tennessee, both suicides and homicides have inched upward in recent years. Motor vehicle accidents still cause more child and teen deaths, but this cause has declined. Safe storage of firearms can contribute to reductions in suicides and homicides among children and youth. Firearms should be locked away, unloaded, separate from ammunition.

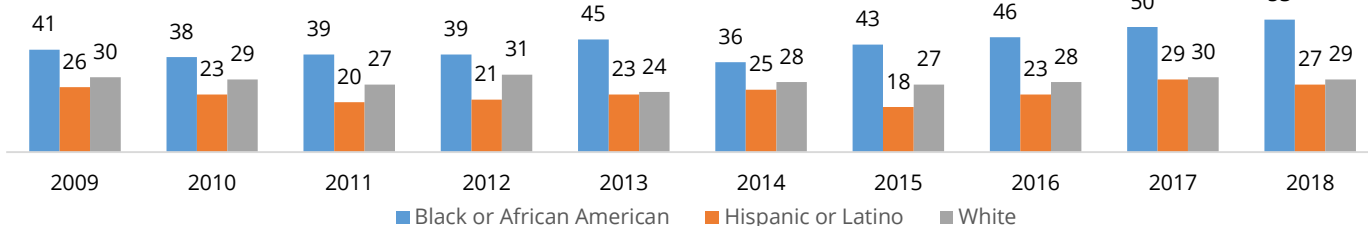
Child and teen death rate



Rank of child and teen death rate



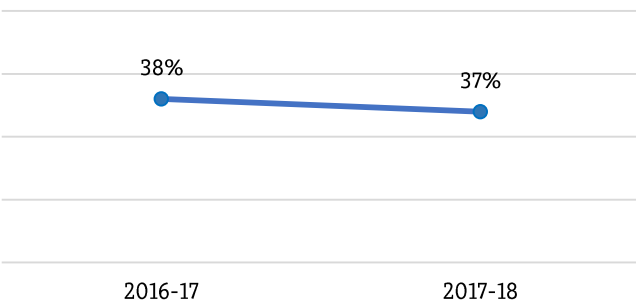
Death rates among children and teens show racial disparity, with African American youth at the highest risk



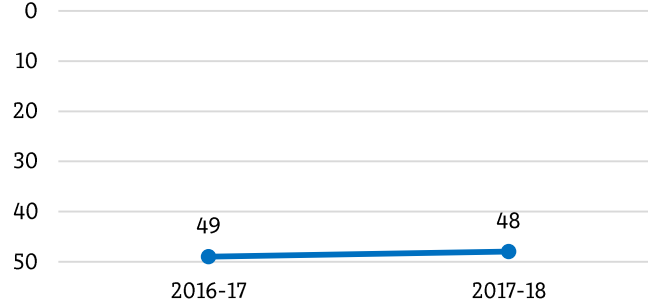
Percent of children and teens ages 10 to 17 who are overweight or obese

This is a new indicator in the KIDS COUNT rankings, and Tennessee does not shine on it. The ranking is based on 2018 data, slightly better for Tennessee than the 2017 data, which was also supplied. While Tennessee's rate does not compare favorably to other states, child and youth obesity is a problem nationally. Various policies have been tried across the country, but few have shown any success. Childhood obesity significantly increases the risk of adult obesity and the many health problems that accompany it. Studies have shown that afterschool physical activity programs, taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages and bans on fast food advertising to children have shown small effects on childhood obesity, but not the kinds of effects needed to reverse this trend. This is an important public health problem, and it is not well understood.

Percent of children and teens who are overweight or obese



Rank children and teens who are overweight or obese



Coordinated School Health connects physical, emotional and social health with education. CSH operates in all Tennessee school districts and measures the incidence of overweight and obesity among children in public schools. While this tends to correlate with poverty, the metropolitan areas with high levels of poverty (Shelby, Davidson and Hamilton Counties, for instance) have among the lowest rates. Five counties show more than half of their children are overweight or obese: Benton, Grainger, Meigs, Tipton and Hancock.

Metropolitan areas have among the lowest rates of childhood overweight and obesity among Tennessee public school children.

