- The percentage of all TennCare enrollees represented by children was 31.7% in 1997, 31.9% in 1998, 30.3% in 1999, and 30.8% in 2000.

- Like poverty, educational attainment among youth in Tennessee increased during the period studied here, between 1996 and 2000. Looking at school dropout cohort rates in 1996 compared to 2000, 16.2% of 9th grade students in Tennessee failed to finish 12th grade, compared to 14.2% in 2000. This represents a decline of 12.3% over the 5-year period.

- Data from the 1990 and 2000 Censuses show that 13.4% of Tennesseans aged 16-19 were high school dropouts in 1990, and 9.7% were dropouts in 2000. This represents a decline of 27.6% over the decade in this educational attainment measure.

  - According to the 2000 Census data, metropolitan regions had higher school dropout rates than nonmetropolitan regions at 10.9% versus 8.7%, respectively. Of TDH planning regions, Davidson and Shelby Counties were regions with the highest dropout rates, at 13.6% and 11.6%, respectively, while the South Central Regions followed with a rate of 11.2%. The lowest prevalence of dropout among 16-19 year olds in 2000 was in Knox County (6.4%) and Mid-Cumberland Tennessee (7.3%).

  - Counties with the highest school dropout rates according to this census measure were Lake (22%), Bedford (21.4%), and Johnson (18%) Counties, while the lowest dropout rates were observed for Houston (1.1%), Anderson (3.4%) and Williamson (3.8%) Counties.

Childrenís Health in Tennessee

Some critical measures of childrenís health and well-being have been improving in Tennessee. These include child death rates, teenage pregnancy and birth rates and child abuse and neglect rates.

- The child death rate (deaths per 100,000 persons aged 1-14 years) has been declining steadily in Tennessee since 1990, from 35.3 per 100,000 and 31.3 in 1992 to 22.6 in 2001. This amounts to a 36% decline overall.

- Birth rates among 15-17 year olds have also declined evenly from 1990 to 2001 by 31.2% (from 42.5 births per 1,000 females aged 15-17 years to 29.2 per 1,000, respectively), while adolescent birth rates have declined even more (by 33.9%). Adolescent birth rates declined from 17.7 per 1,000 females aged 10-17 to 11.7 per 1,000 in the period from 1990 to 2001.