

Single-Parent Families

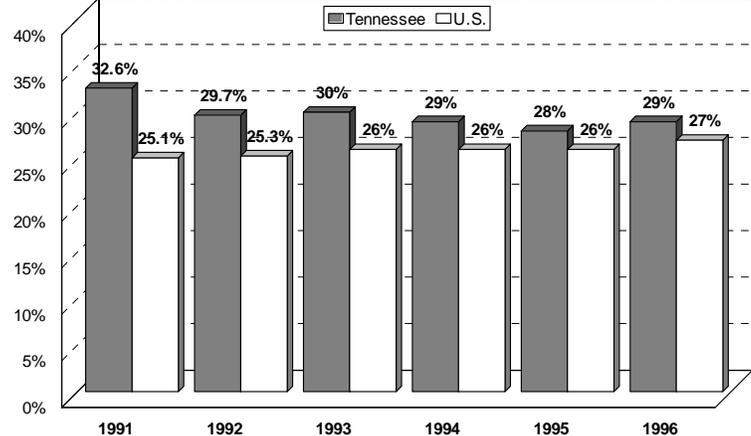
The percentage of children living in single parent families in Tennessee was higher than the national average every year from 1991 to 1996 (1999 National Kids Count Data Book).

Total births to white teen mothers remain higher (n=2,525) than total births to African-American teens (n=1,686).

In the category live births to unmarried mothers by race, there was an 11 percent increase in births to white teen mothers from 1993 to 1997 and a 1 percent decrease in births to African-American teen mothers.

Percent of Families with Children Headed by a Single Parent

Comparison Between Tennessee and the U.S. Average



Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation (1994-1999), Kids Count Data Book: State Profiles of Child Well-Being. Baltimore: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Figures Shown Here Represent Three-Year Averages.

Although the percentage of single females with children is dropping, Tennessee ranked worse than 39 other states. Percentages still need to be lower to ensure that children are given opportunities to grow up in healthy financially stable environments.

Single-parent families remain disadvantaged relative to two-parent families in economic status, health, and housing conditions. Children living with a never-married mother are the most economically disadvantaged of all children, reports Bianchi in the 1995 publication *Single-Parent Families: Diversity, Myths and Realities*.

A high divorce rate and high non-marital birth rate indicate that a record number of children are growing up without their fathers actively involved in their lives. For the first time in our history, the average child can expect to live a significant portion of his or her life in a home without a father, as reported in *Father Facts*.

Child support is a financially distressing aspect of failed marriages. Nationally, it has been estimated that \$34 billion in court-ordered child support has not been paid, according to M.J. White's *Collecting Child Support is a Federal Matter*. There are 800,000 children on government assistance due to unpaid child support, White reported.