

2002 Children's Report Card



WHO
ARE **O**UR
CHILDREN

Mecklenburg County,
North Carolina



Trends Related to Children and Families Spring 2002

The Children's Summit was conceived to provide a common frame of reference for evaluating the environment for children in Mecklenburg County. Child-serving agencies across the spectrum of physical, emotional, educational, judicial, spiritual, and recreational programs use different outcomes and benchmarks to measure success for children in different situations. The Children's Report Card is a reference tool for the community to examine the different factors used to measure success. The Children's Report Card presents a snapshot of the impact these programs have had on the County's children and families. By viewing a more global picture of our children's successes and challenges, we can begin to formulate more community-wide, collaborative expectations and goals.

Some trends in the Report Card show that definite progress has been made in Mecklenburg County. Other trends are either neutral or show mixed results; while still others illustrate that some aspects of child and family life have not improved or continue to worsen. There are additional charts included that are informational only. Taken in combination, the data can assist in providing a direction for continued and renewed efforts.

All graphs depicted in this document include only Mecklenburg County data, unless otherwise noted. Additionally, percentages based upon total population may be different from previous years. This is because corrections have been made to yearly population figures as a result of recent Census data releases. Unless otherwise noted, all graphs show data on a calendar year basis.

The general public, along with its elected officials, community and neighborhood associations, business and faith-based organizations, nonprofits, and all former children are encouraged to consider the issues highlighted within the Report Card. It is critical to develop and evaluate our programs and services with the goal of improving the lives of children and families in Mecklenburg County.

Thank you for being here.

The Children of Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Except where noted, the data in this report covers Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, including the municipalities of Charlotte, Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill, and Pineville.



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Providing Opportunity

Provide opportunity for a better future through education and delinquency prevention.

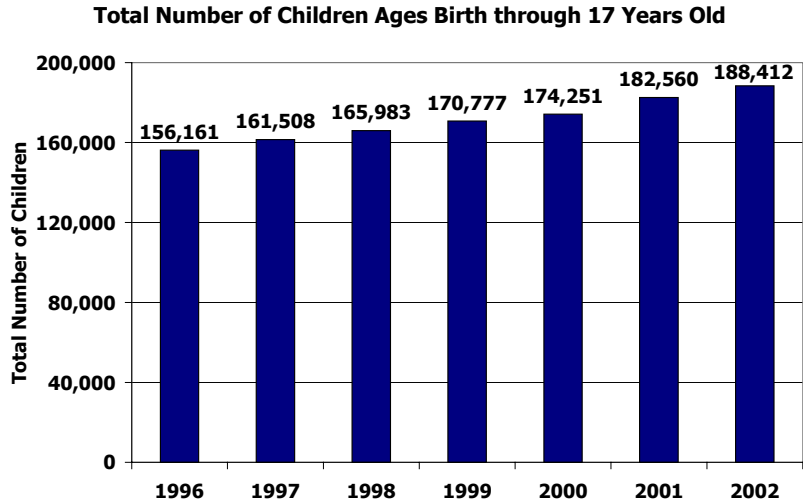
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The 2002 Children's Report Card includes the latest data available as of early May 2002. An electronic copy of the 2002 Children's Report Card in Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) format is available at <http://www.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/cohhsplan/reportcard/>



Demographics

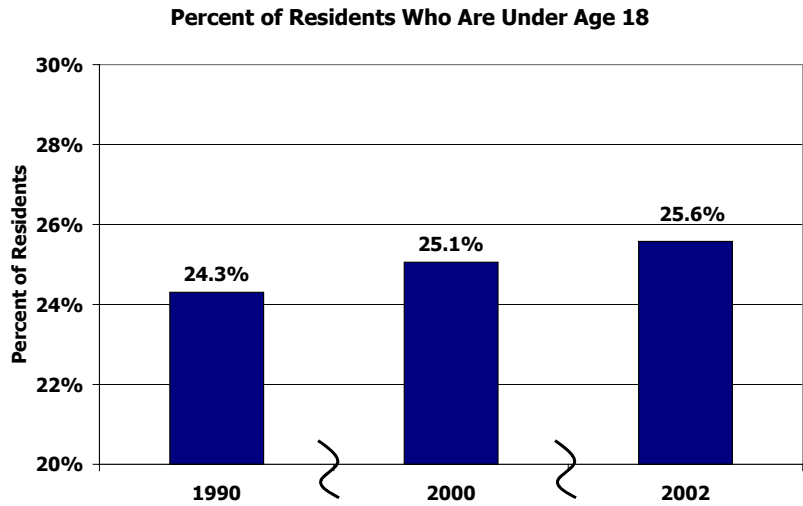
The child population in Mecklenburg County grew at an annual rate of 3.2% from 1996 to 2002.



Source: North Carolina Office of Budget, Planning, and Management; population in July of given year

Since the child population is growing, most of the data in this document are reported as percentages or rates to allow for comparability across several years.

The percent of the Mecklenburg County population under age 18 increased from the 1990 to the 2000 U.S. Census. The projection for 2002 indicates a further increase.



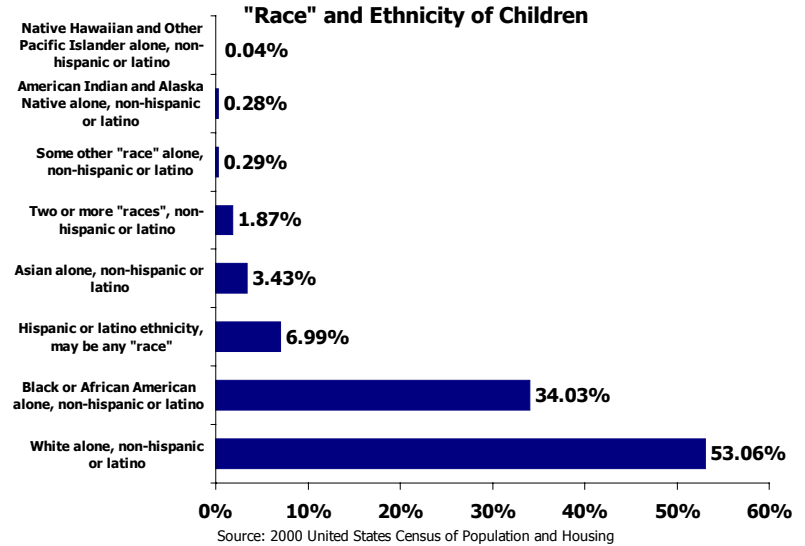
Source: Based on data provided by the North Carolina Office of Budget, Planning, and Management



Demographics



The 2000 Census was the first time that respondents could mark more than one "race" category; for this reason, "race" categories cannot be directly compared to the 1990 Census.



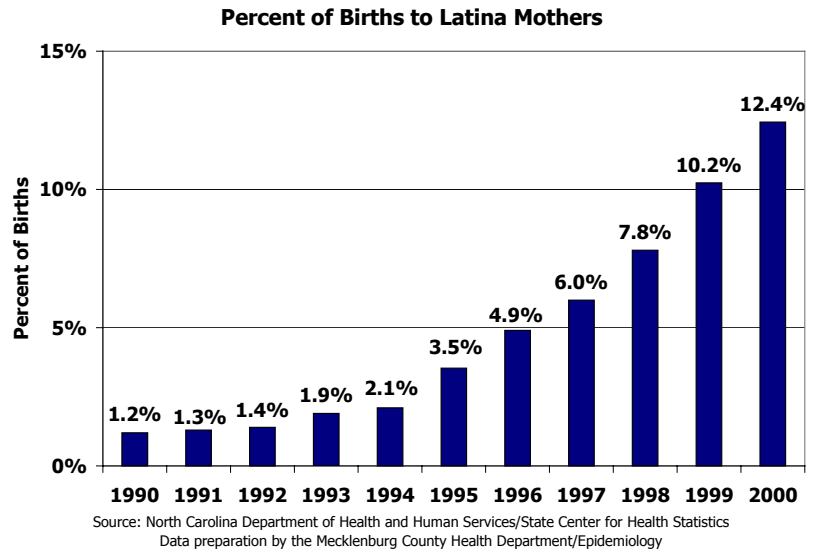
From 1990 to 2000 there was a 570% increase in the number of residents of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity in Mecklenburg County.

In 1990, 1.3% of the county population was Hispanic/Latino.

In 2000, 6.4% was Hispanic/Latino.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

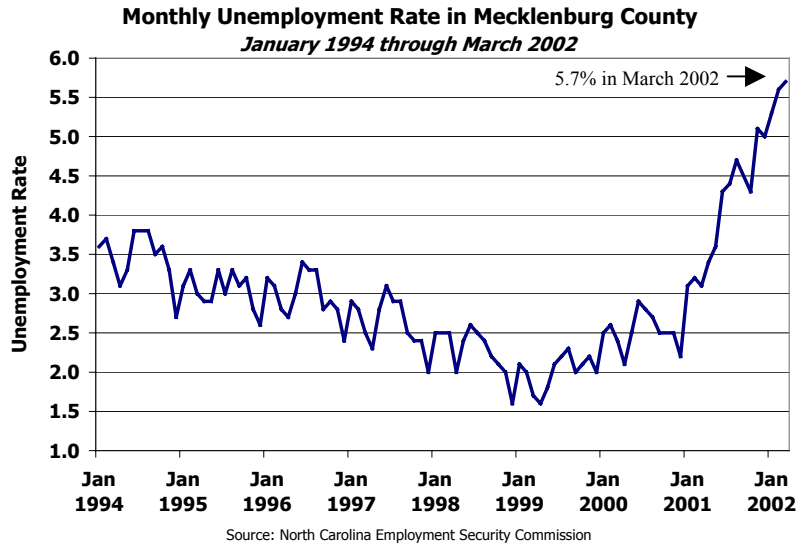
The increase in births to Latina mothers is partially due to the increase in Latino citizens in Mecklenburg County.





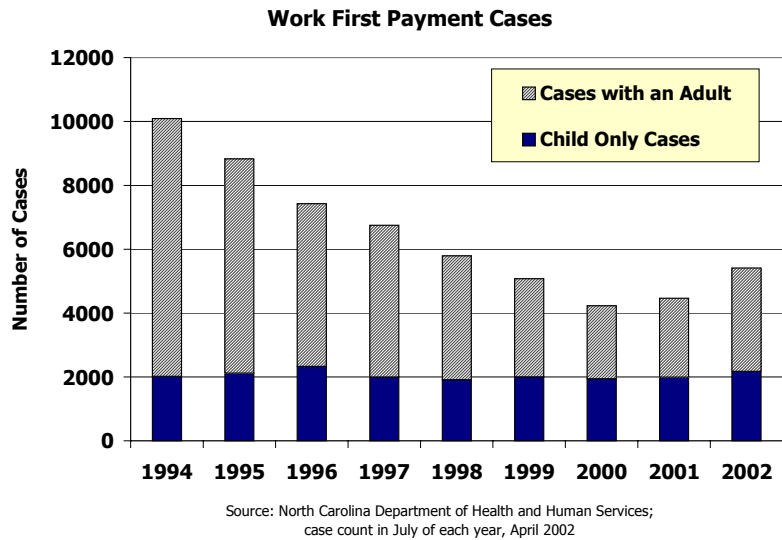
Employment and Public Assistance

March 2002 had the highest unemployment rate in Mecklenburg County since June 1992.



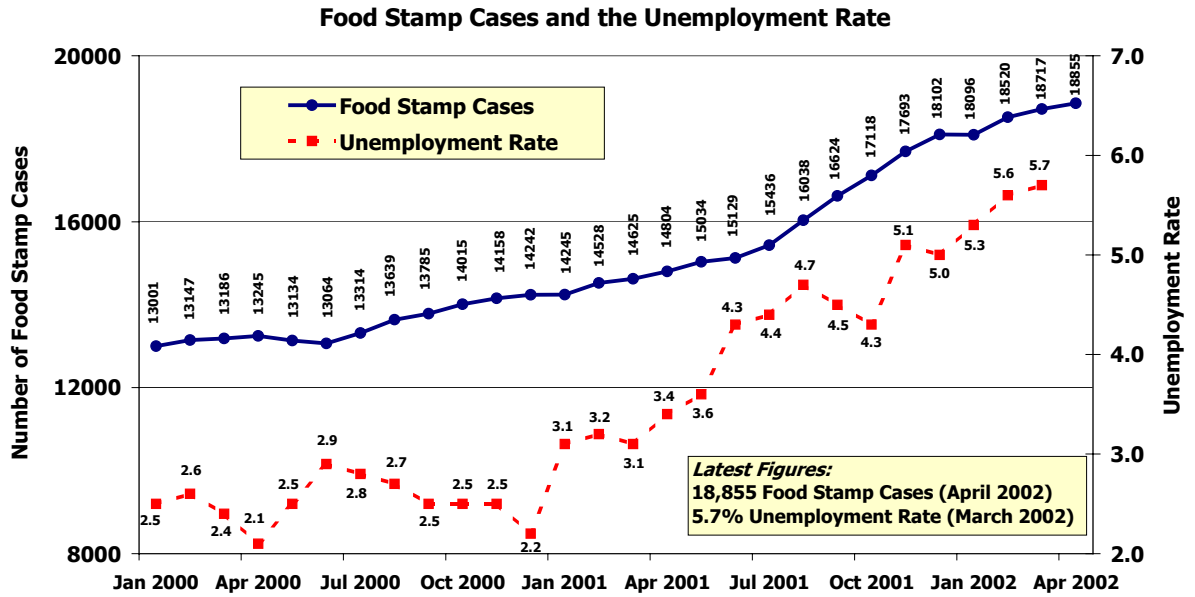
Child-only Work First cases do not include any adults and are not subject to work and time limit requirements.

The increase in the number of Work First cases since May 2000 has been primarily in cases including an adult.





Effect of Unemployment on Food Stamps



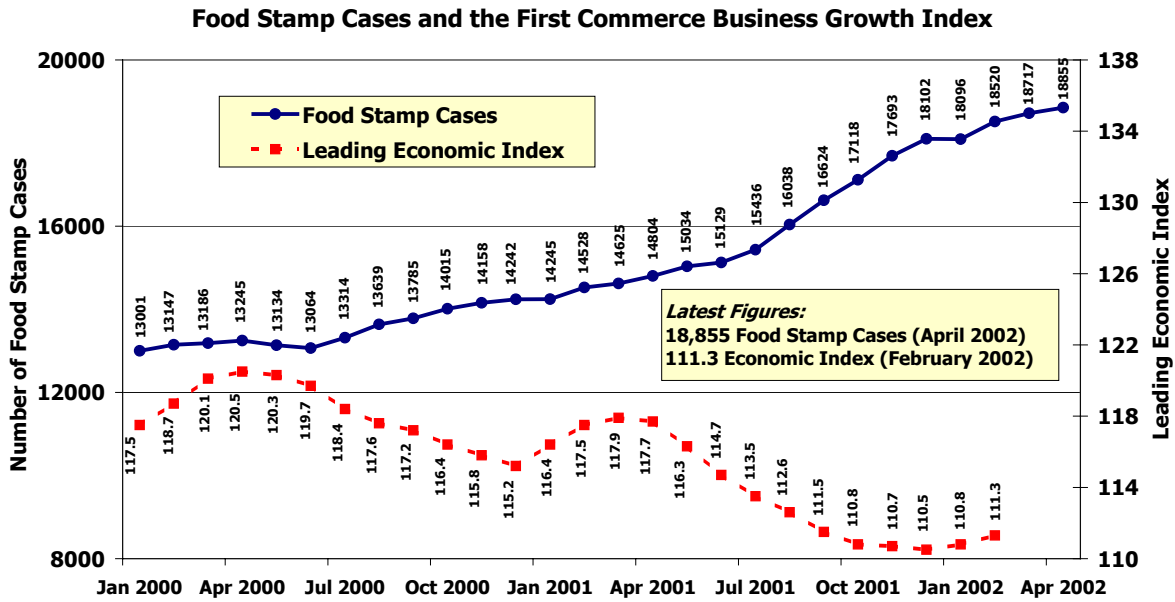
Source: North Carolina Employment Security Commission; North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

As the unemployment rate has risen in Mecklenburg County, so has the number of Food Stamp cases. Short-term changes in public assistance caseloads are a reflection of current and short-term strength in the local job market.

A family is eligible for food stamps at 130% of poverty level. The 2002 Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines establish poverty for a family of three at \$15,020 annual income (excluding cash assistance, food stamps, subsidized child care, and housing assistance).



Effect of the Economy on Food Stamps



Source: Dr. Harrison Campbell and the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce; North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

As the local economy has declined (as measured by the First Commerce Business Growth Index), the number of Food Stamp cases has risen. Persons who are more economically vulnerable are less likely to qualify for substantial unemployment benefits and more likely to supplement their income with aid from one or more public assistance programs.

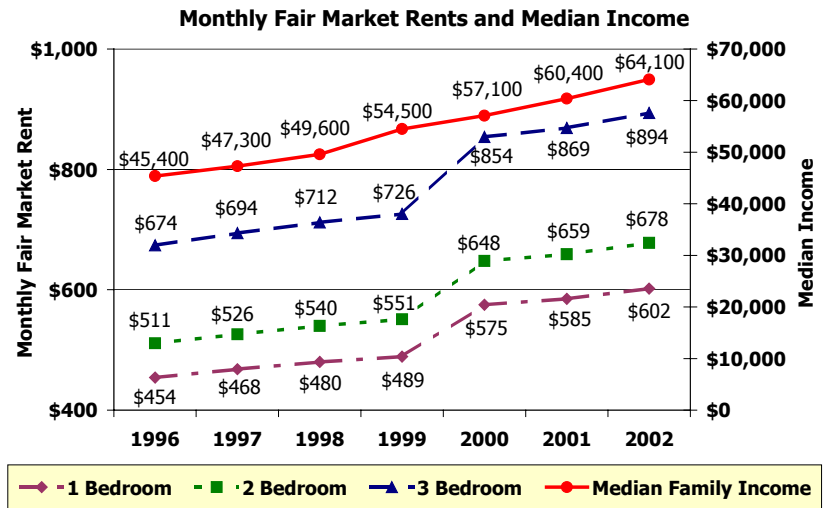
Supported by the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and developed by Harrison Campbell of the UNC-Charlotte Department of Geography and Earth Sciences, the First Commerce Bank Business Growth Index serves as an economic barometer for the Charlotte area. Using seasonally adjusted local data, it is designed to provide analysts and decision makers in the private and public sectors with timely information about the current and short-term health of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg economy.



Housing Costs



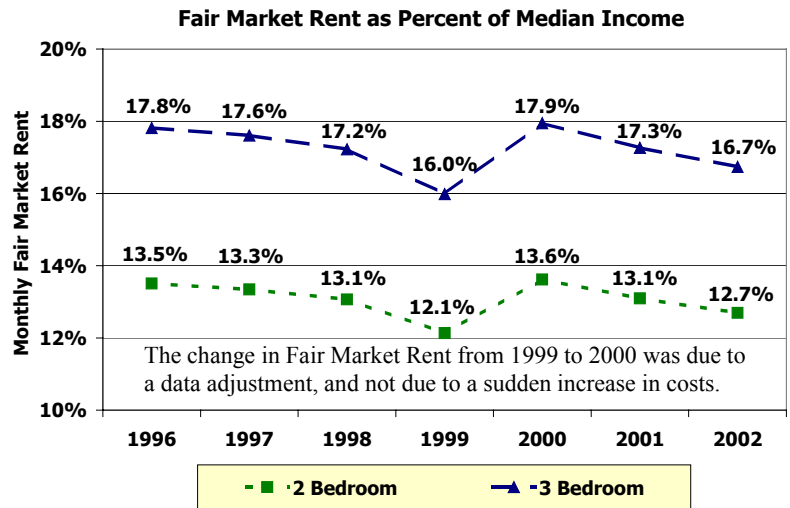
Median income is the mid-point of the income of all families in Mecklenburg County, with one-half of families having higher incomes and one-half of families having lower incomes.



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Fair Market Rent is the gross rent estimate below which 40% of standard quality privately owned rental housing units can be obtained; this includes rent and the cost of utilities, except telephone. Rental units less than two years old are excluded. The U.S. Housing and Urban Development recommends that monthly housing expenses be no greater than 30% of gross income. For a family to afford a two bedroom apartment, one parent would have to earn \$13.49 per hour.

Housing affordability for the average family has been improving. (However, 1,520 children stayed at the Salvation Army Women and Children's Shelter at some point during the year in 1999).



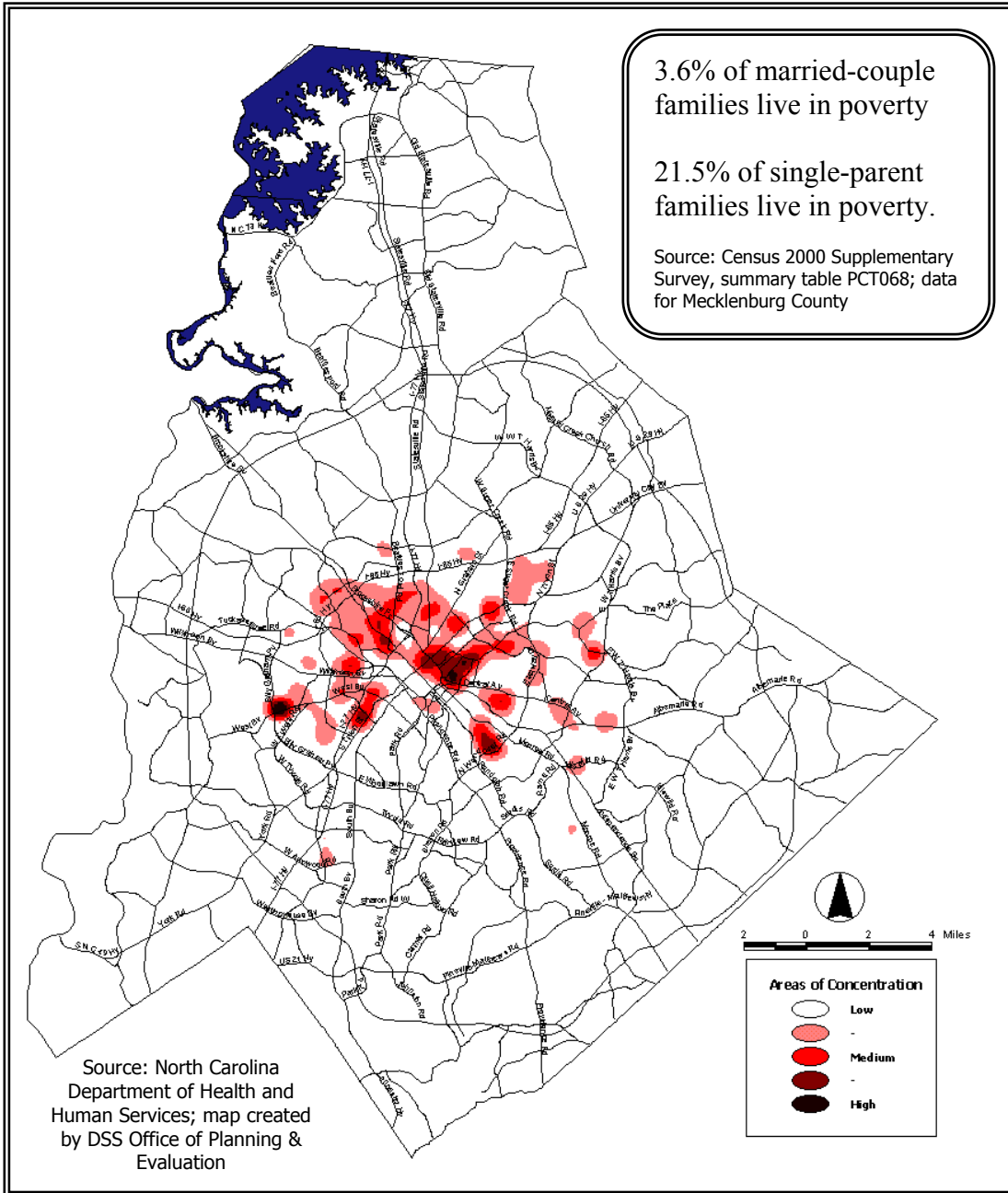
Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Safe, stable housing can have a significant impact on a child's school performance and self-esteem.





Concentrations of Poverty



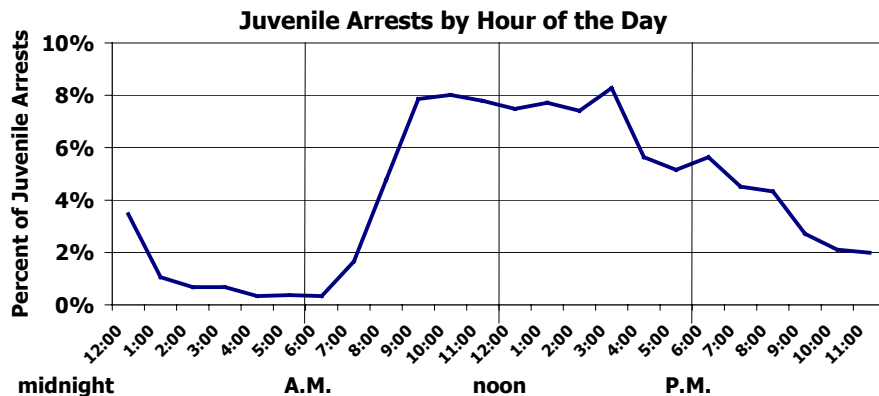
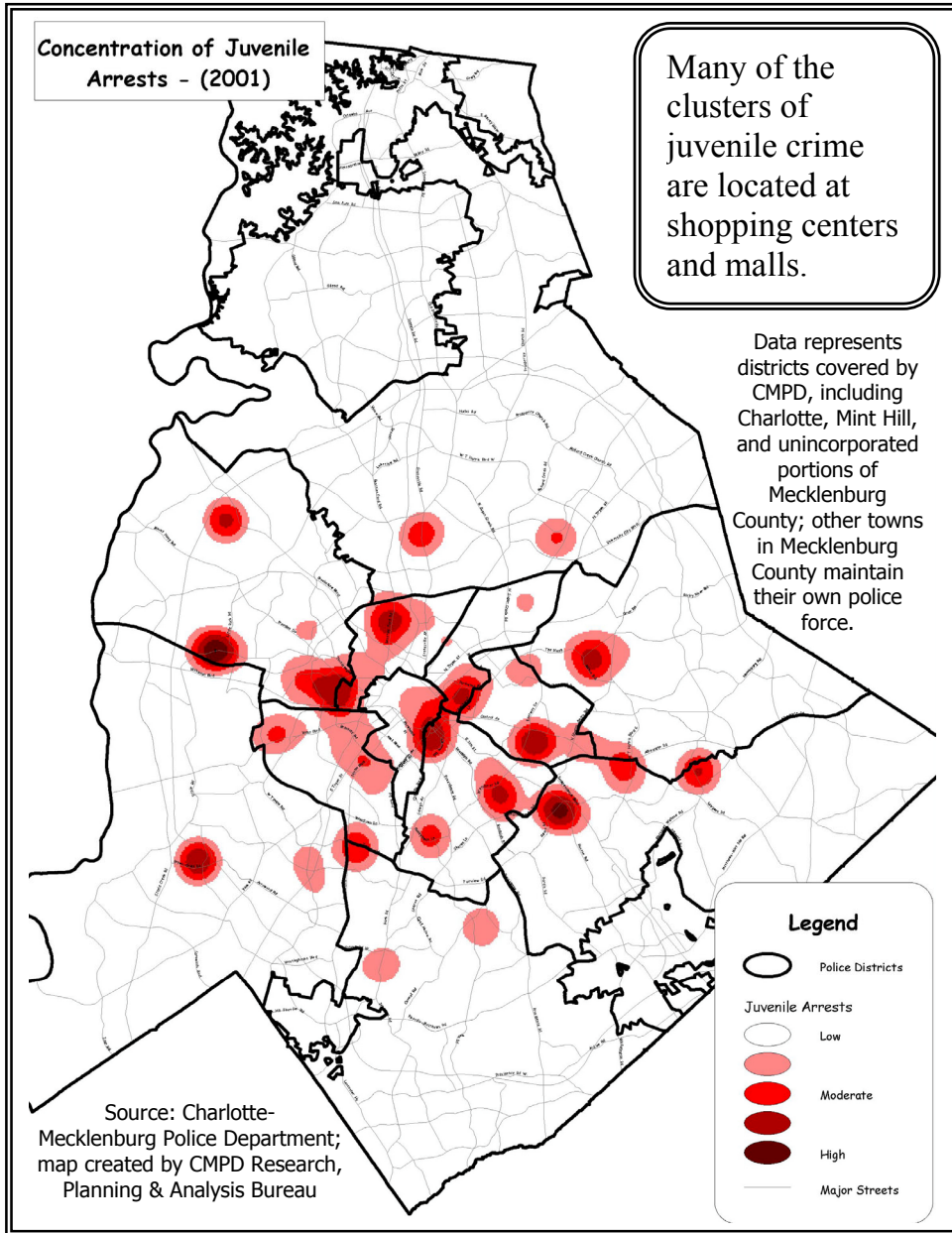
The poverty concentrations in the map are based upon food stamp recipient concentrations. There are recipients who reside in other parts of the County, but these are the areas of greatest concentration.

The United States Census Bureau estimates that about 69,000 residents in Mecklenburg County live in families with incomes below the Health & Humans Services Poverty Guidelines. This is about 10% of the population of the county. (Source: Census 2000 Supplementary Survey)





Concentrations of Juvenile Crime

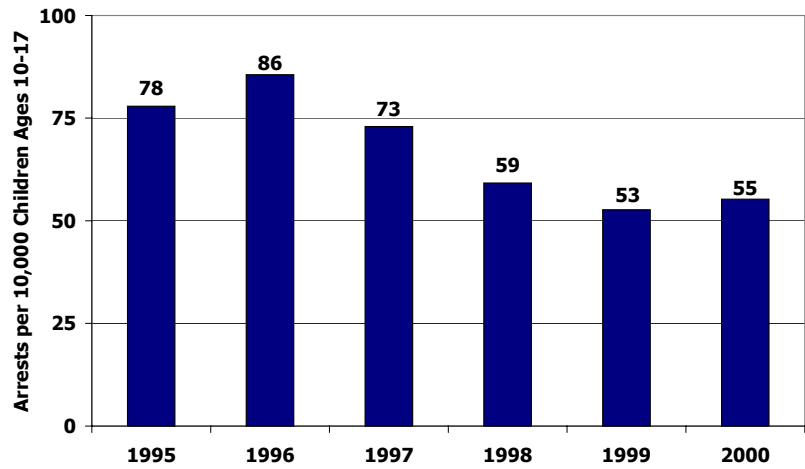




Juvenile Crime

Violent crimes are defined as murder/non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Juvenile Arrest Rate for Violent Crimes per 10,000 persons ages 10 to 17



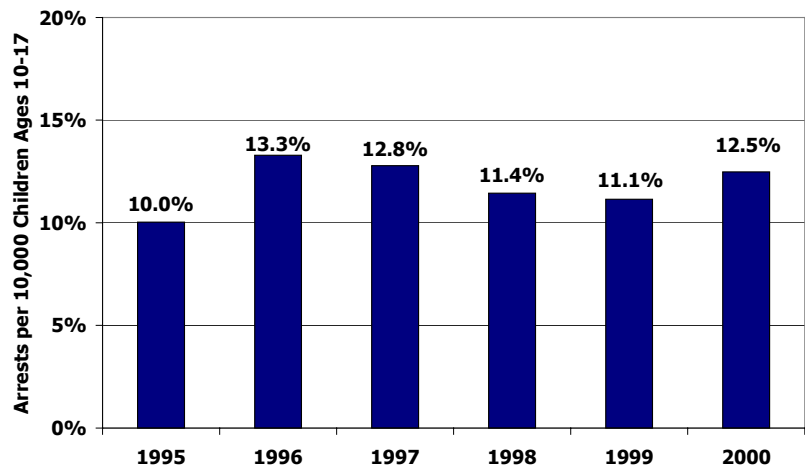
Source: North Carolina Department of Justice

The Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office operates two programs for juvenile offenders. The RISE program is a 60 day or longer program that serves 12-15 year olds. The Youthful Offender Program targets 16 & 17 year olds and served 415 juveniles in fiscal year 2001. The North Carolina criminal justice system considers 16 & 17 year olds as adults.

Juvenile Share of Total Violent Crime Arrests

In the year 2000, 12.5% of arrests for violent crimes were of juveniles.

There were 399 juveniles arrested for violent crimes in 2000.



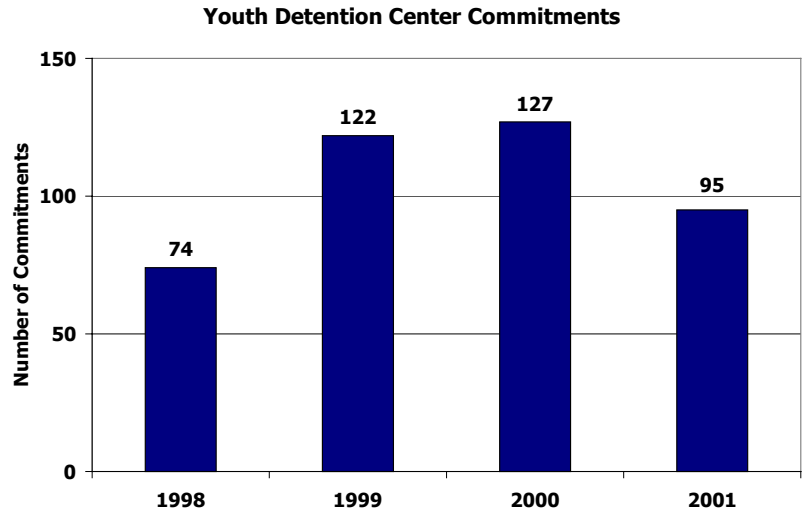
Source: North Carolina Department of Justice



Juvenile Crime



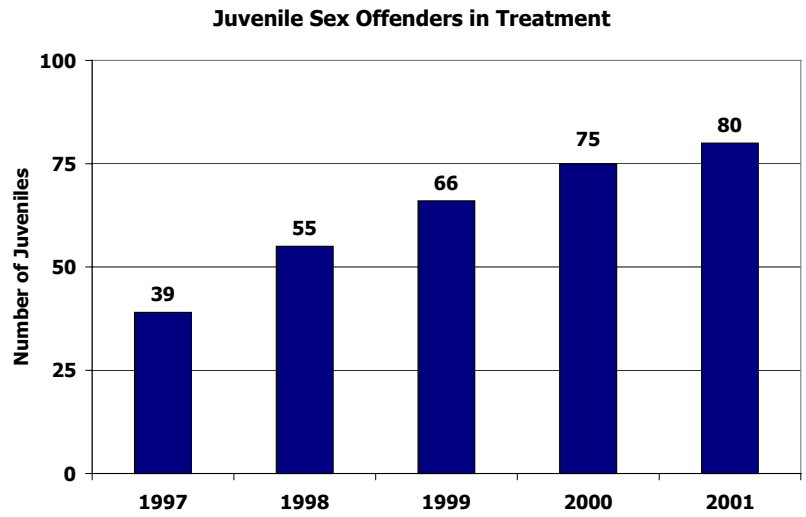
In 1999 the Juvenile Code was revised to develop community based alternatives to training schools [Youth Detention Centers].



Source: Mecklenburg County Court Services; fiscal years are represented

The number of RISE enrollees diagnosed with substance abuse problems was 18 of 24, or 75% of recent enrollees.

Although 2001 shows an increase in the number of offenders in treatment, the increase is less than in previous years and may reflect more treatment and not more offenses.



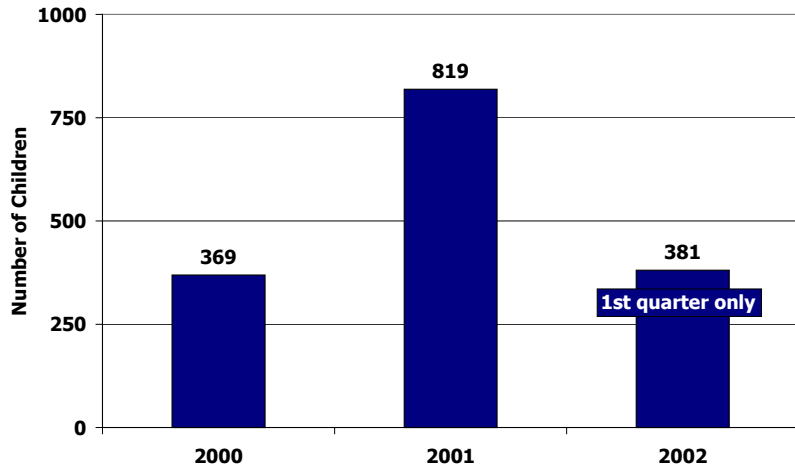
Source: Area Mental Health - Child and Adolescent Services; fiscal years are represented



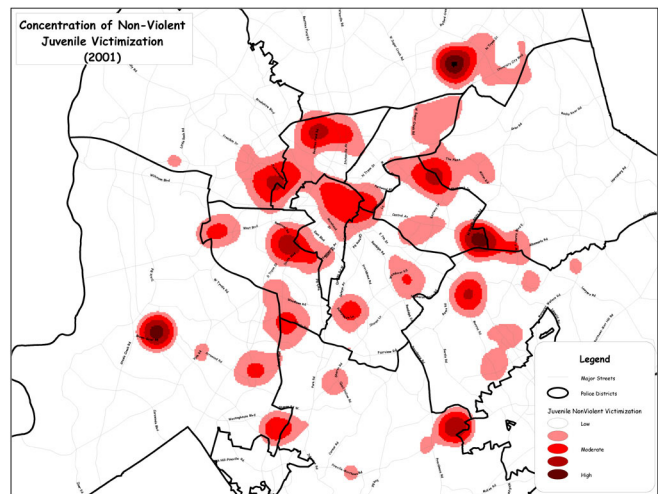
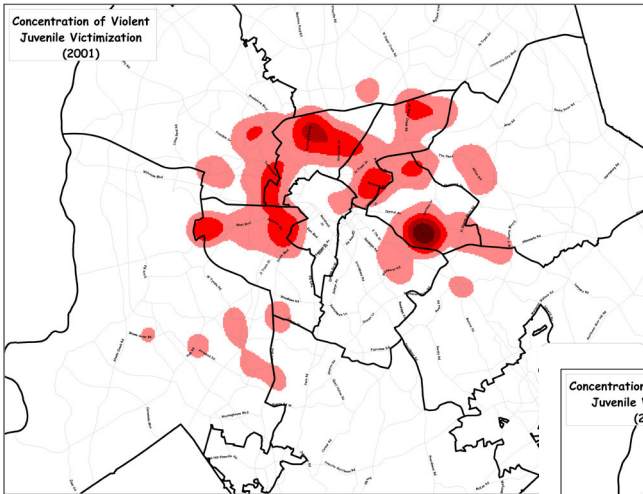
Juvenile Victims of Crime

CD-CP Partners is a program that serves children who are victims or witnesses of violence and/or at risk of abuse and neglect. The project currently operates in 4 of 12 Charlotte-Mecklenburg police districts.

Children Referred to Child Development-Community Policing Partners



Source: Area Mental Health Authority; calendar years are represented



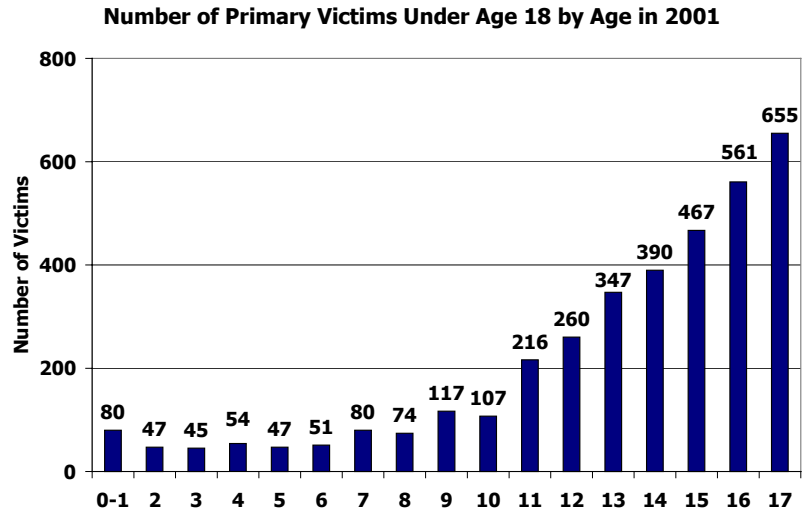
Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department; map created by CMPD Research, Planning & Analysis Bureau.
Data represents Charlotte, Mint Hill, and unincorporated portions of Mecklenburg County.





Juvenile Victims of Crime

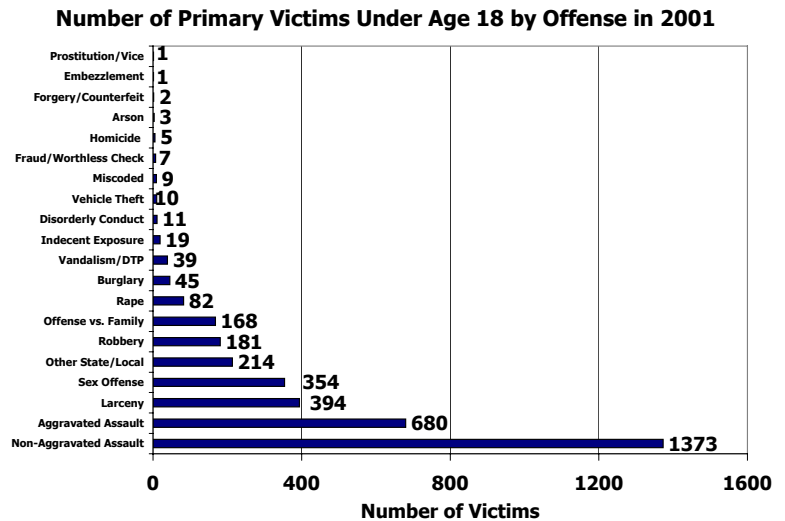
Victimization increases with the age of the child.



Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Dept.; data represents Charlotte and unincorporated areas of Mecklenburg County

The numbers on this page are estimates based on Uniform Crime Reporting offense classifications and counting procedures. In the case of incidents that involve multiple offenses, the incident is classified using the "highest" crime involved. In the case of multiple victims, if a child was only a victim of a "lower" crime in an incident, the child is not counted in these figures.

Assault and theft are the most frequent crimes committed against children.



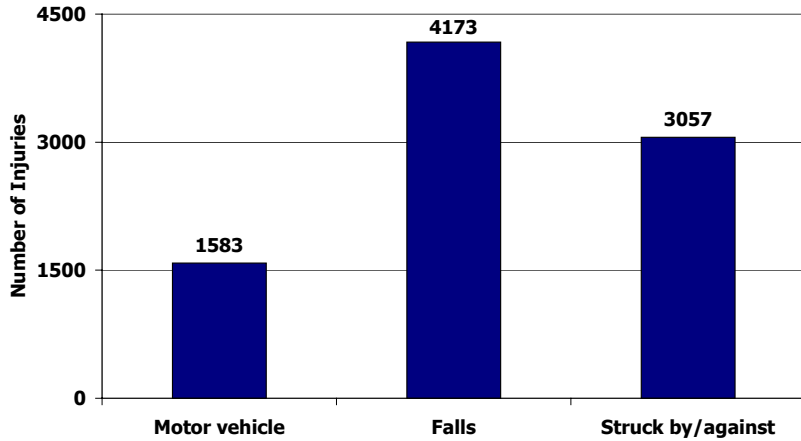
Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Dept.; data represents Charlotte and unincorporated areas of Mecklenburg County



Injuries and Fatalities

Injuries caused by being struck against include sports related injuries.

Non-Fatal Child Injuries Requiring Emergency Room Visit



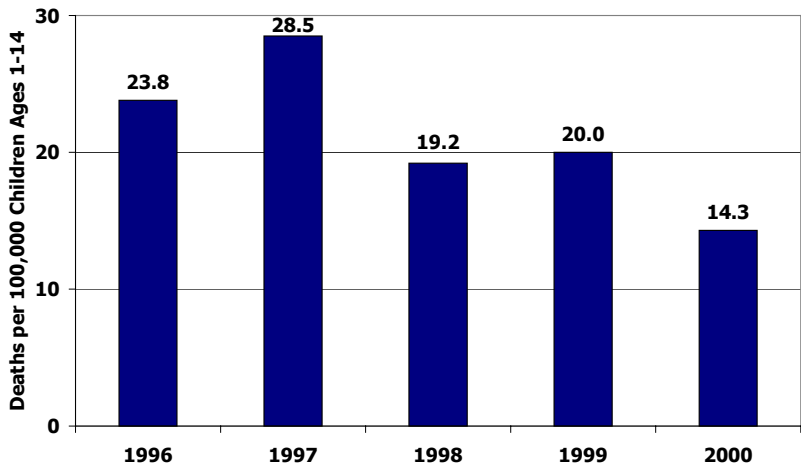
Source: Carolinas Health Care System Emergency Department Data, Mecklenburg County, 1999 and Presbyterian Healthcare/Novant Health Emergency Department Data, Mecklenburg County, 1999

*1999 Child Fatalities – Total 107 children
Preventable fatalities – 15 children.
Motor vehicle accidents killed 10 of the 15 children.*

Source: Mecklenburg County Community Child Fatality Prevention and Protection Team

Mortality Rate per 100,000 Children Ages 1 through 14 Years Old

There was a decline in the number of fatalities in 2000.



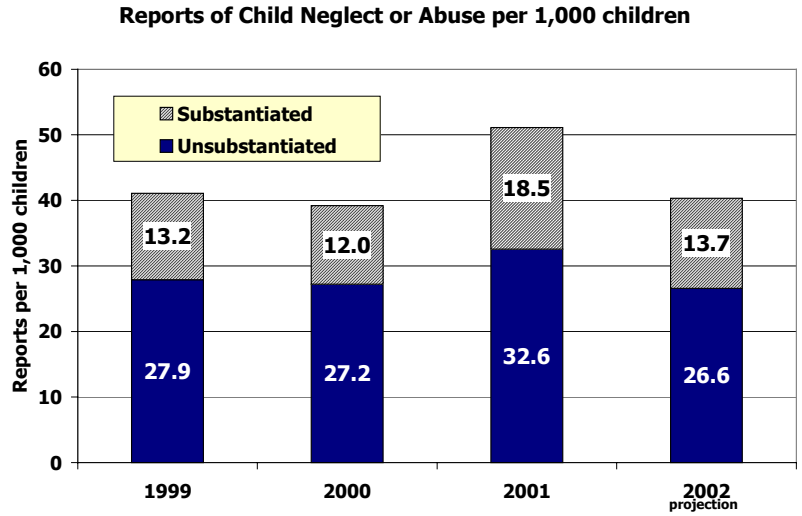
Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, State Center for Health Statistics





Neglect and Abuse; Adoption and Foster Care

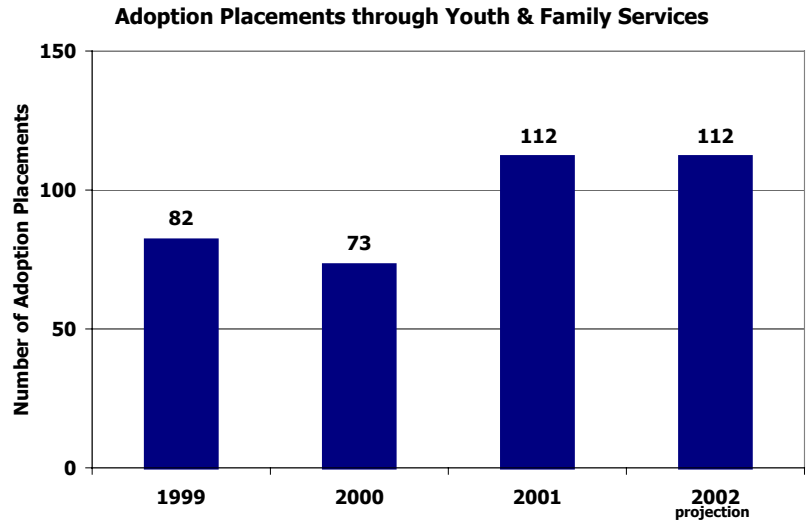
The 2002 figure is projected for the entire year based on year-to-date figures.



Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services; years are July-to-June fiscal years

The majority of reports made to Child Protective Services in Mecklenburg County are for child neglect. Abuse is involved in about 7% of substantiated cases.

The number of adoptions through Youth & Family Services has been increasing. The 2002 figure is a projection. These figures do not include private adoptions.



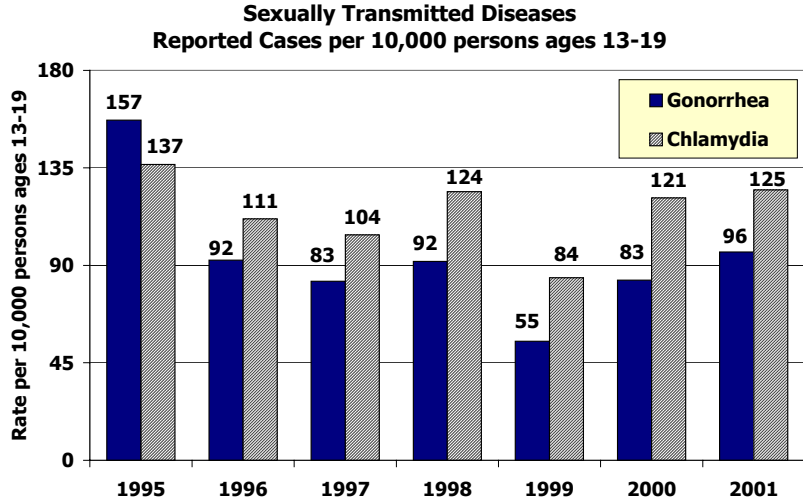
Source: Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services; years are July-to-June fiscal years

There are about 560 children currently residing in Foster Homes in Mecklenburg County.



STDs

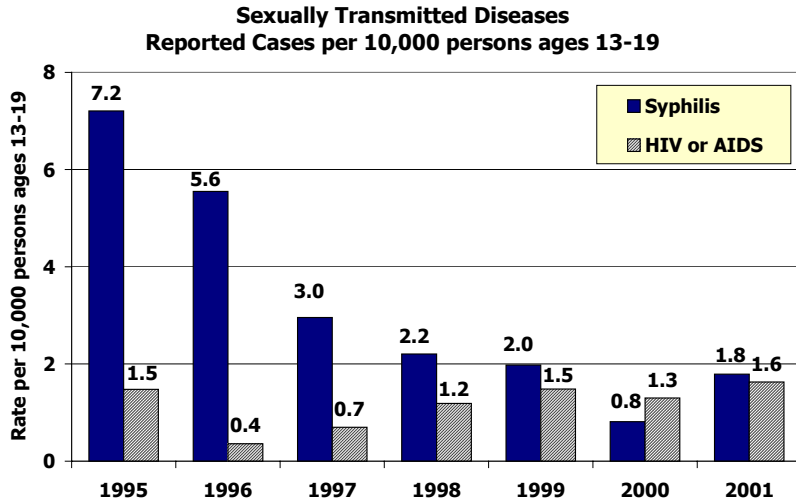
Patients are more likely to seek treatment for gonorrhea while they may have chlamydia and have no symptoms.



Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services/State Center for Health Statistics
Data preparation by the Mecklenburg County Health Department/Epidemiology

Among teens in 2001, there were 591 reported cases of Gonorrhea, 767 reported cases of Chlamydia, 11 cases of Syphilis, and 10 cases of HIV or AIDS. Health professionals indicate that the reasons for the dip in Gonorrhea and Chlamydia which occurred in 1999 are unknown.

Since 1995, there has been a dramatic decline in the rate of Syphilis infection in teens.



Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services/State Center for Health Statistics
Data preparation by the Mecklenburg County Health Department/Epidemiology



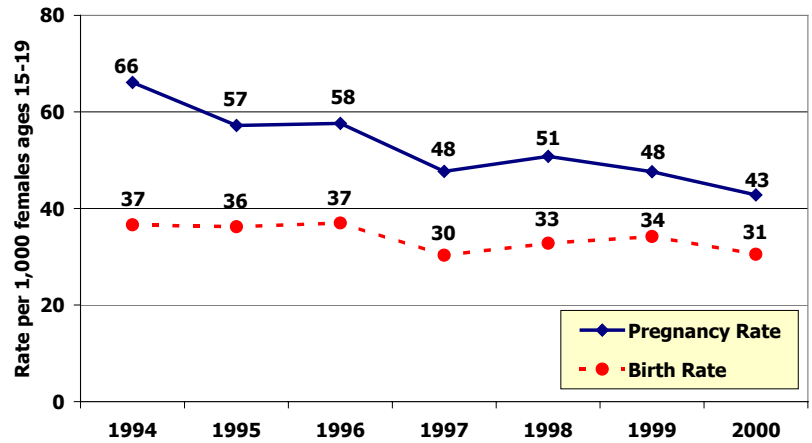


Teen Pregnancy

The pregnancy and birth rate for teens has declined.

In 2000, there were 374 births to girls ages 15-17.

Pregnancy and Birth Rates per 1,000 females ages 15-17

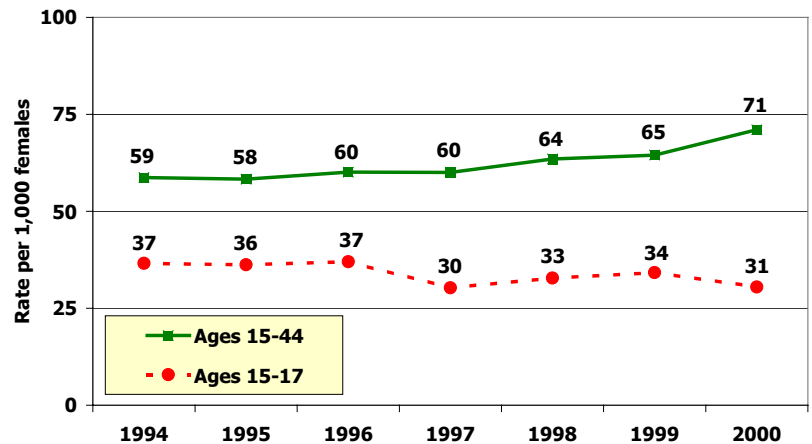


Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services/State Center for Health Statistics
Data preparation by the Mecklenburg County Health Department/Epidemiology

Data is collected based upon patient residence, not on location of health services provided.

The national standard for fertility comparisons is females 15 years to 44 years of age.

Birth Rates per 1,000 females ages 15-17 compared to 1,000 females ages 15-44



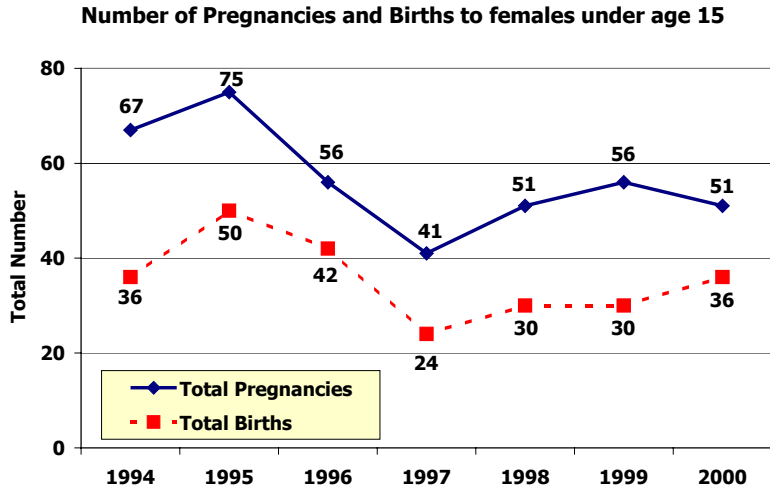
Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services/State Center for Health Statistics
Data preparation by the Mecklenburg County Health Department/Epidemiology

While the overall birth rate has been increasing, the teen birth rate has been declining.



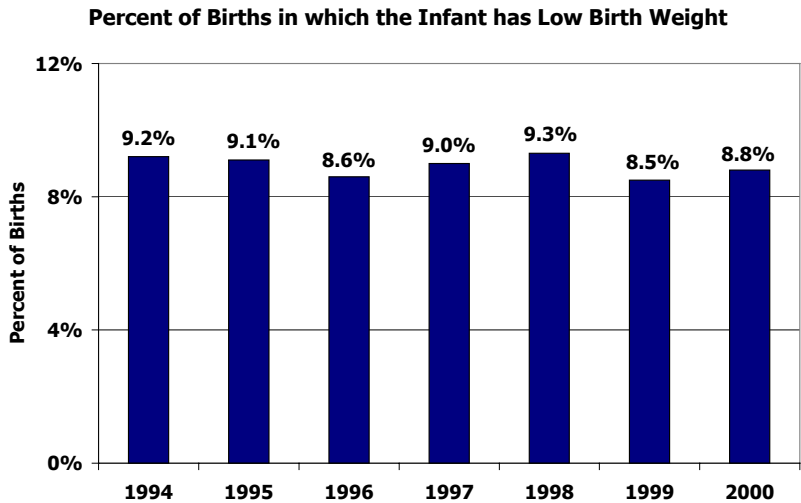
Pregnancy and Birth Rates

In 2000, the total pregnancies to females under age 15 declined while the total births to this population increased.



Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services/State Center for Health Statistics
Data preparation by the Mecklenburg County Health Department/Epidemiology

Babies born at 2500 grams or less, about 5 ½ pounds, are considered low birth weight.



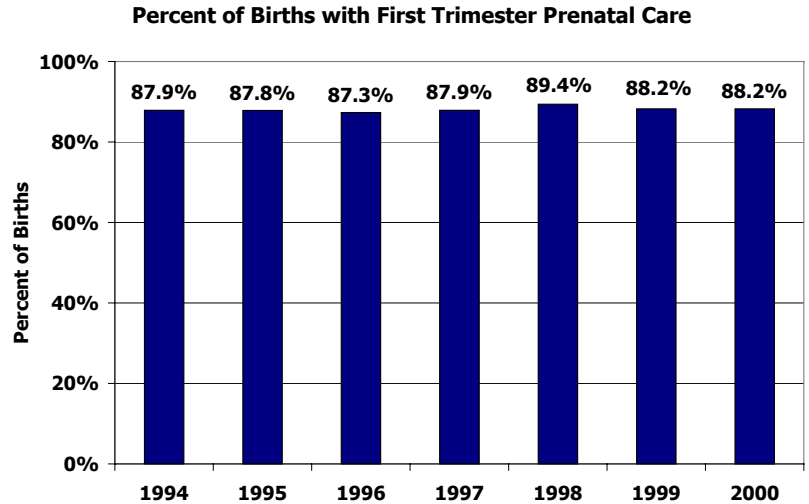
Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services/State Center for Health Statistics
Data preparation by the Mecklenburg County Health Department/Epidemiology



Prenatal Care and Infant Mortality



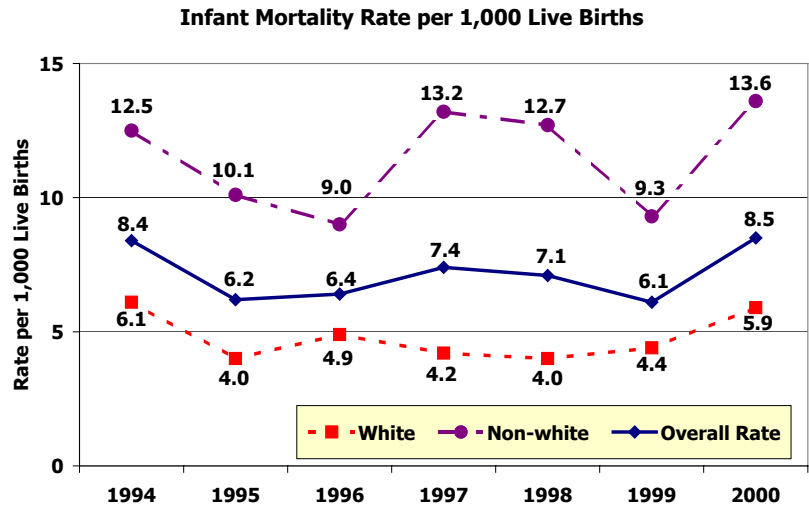
In recent years there has been little change in the overall percent of women receiving care during the first trimester of pregnancy.



Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services/State Center for Health Statistics
Data preparation by the Mecklenburg County Health Department/Epidemiology

While some mothers may choose not to receive first trimester prenatal care, other mothers may not have access to first trimester prenatal care.

The infant mortality rate increased in 2000. However, most of the year-to-year change in the rate is not attributed to a specific cause and changes in recent years do not reflect a trend.

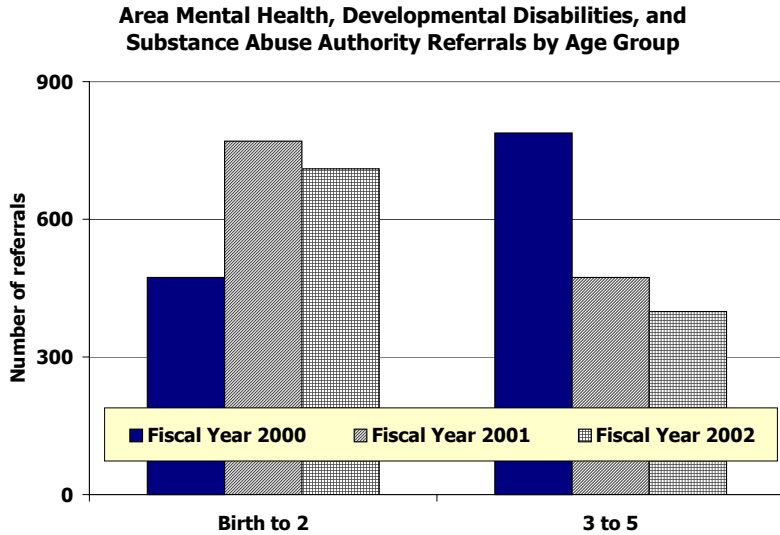


Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services/State Center for Health Statistics
Data preparation by the Mecklenburg County Health Department/Epidemiology



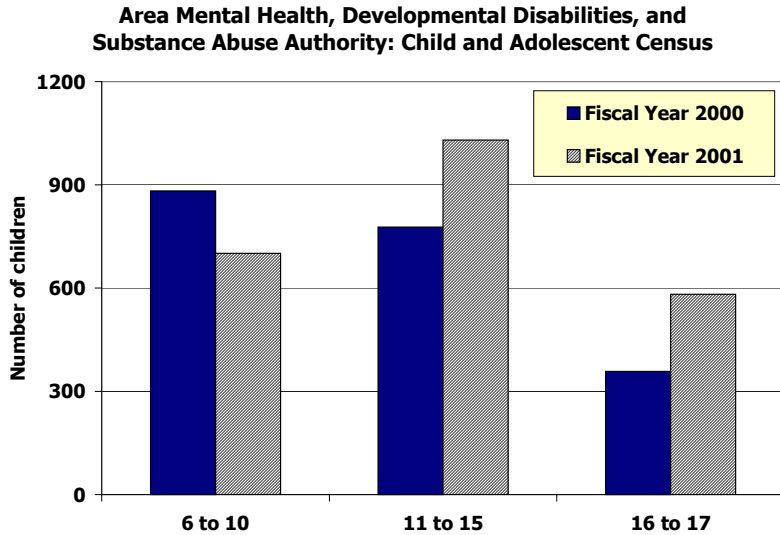
Mental Health

Area Mental Health strives for early identification. Earlier intervention leads to better treatment outcomes.



Referrals of children ages 3-5 have decreased due to participation by Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system in evaluation, particularly of speech/language development.

Services to children ages 6-10 declined in 2001, while services to the other two age groups increased.

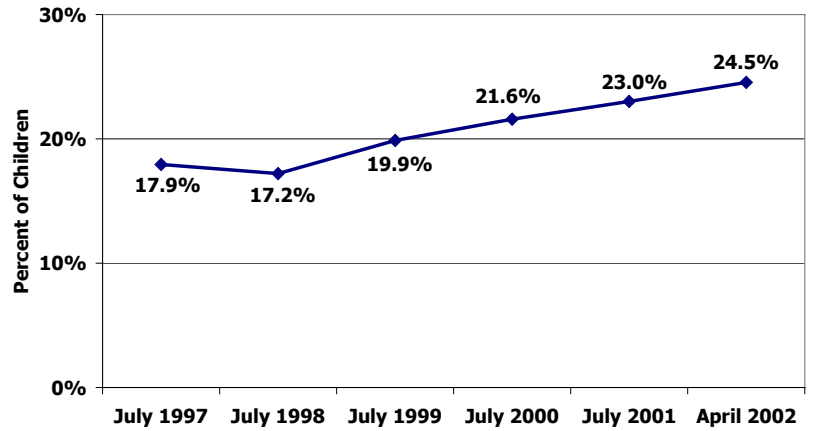


Medicaid



The percent of children receiving government funded health care has been increasing.

Percent of Children Receiving Medicaid or NC Health Choice

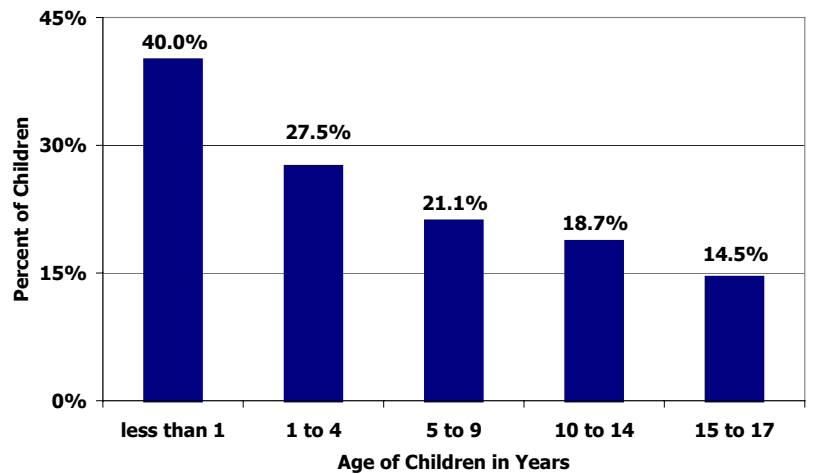


Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Eligibility is determined by family income as a percent of the Health & Human Services Poverty Guidelines. Children under age 1 can have family income up to 185% of the poverty limit, children 1-5 up to 133%, and older children up to 100%. Children in families earning up to 200% can receive NC Health Choice, but the family must pay part of the premium.

The percent of children receiving Medicaid varies by age, largely because the income limits vary by age.

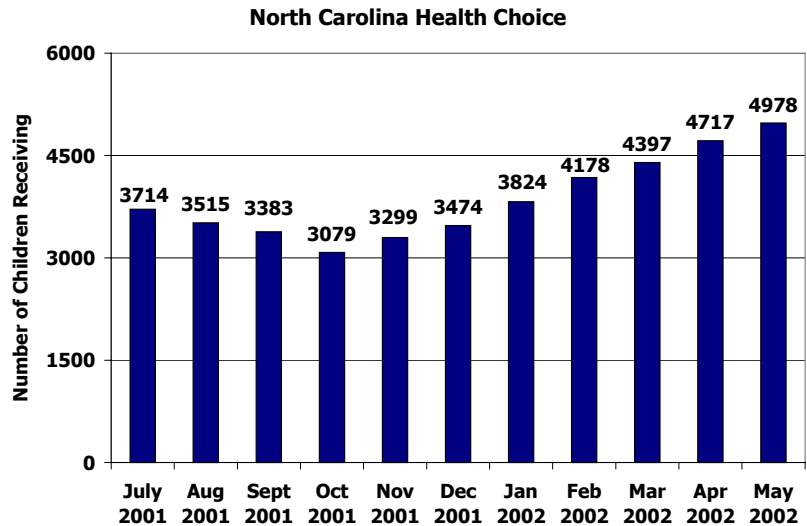
Percent of Children Receiving Medicaid by Age Group



Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services; as of April 2002



Enrollment declined from February to October 2001 due to limited funding. Enrollment was reactivated in October 2001.



NC Health Choice is government subsidized, but is not an entitlement program and is provided in accordance with allocated funding.

2002 Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines

Size of Family	48 Contiguous States and D.C.	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$ 8,860	\$11,080	\$10,200
2	11,940	14,930	13,740
3	15,020	18,780	17,280
4	18,100	22,630	20,820
5	21,180	26,480	24,360
6	24,260	30,330	27,900
7	27,340	34,180	31,440
8	30,420	38,030	34,980
For each additional person, add	3,080	3,850	3,540

Annual gross income is listed above; does not include the value of food stamps, child care, or housing public assistance.

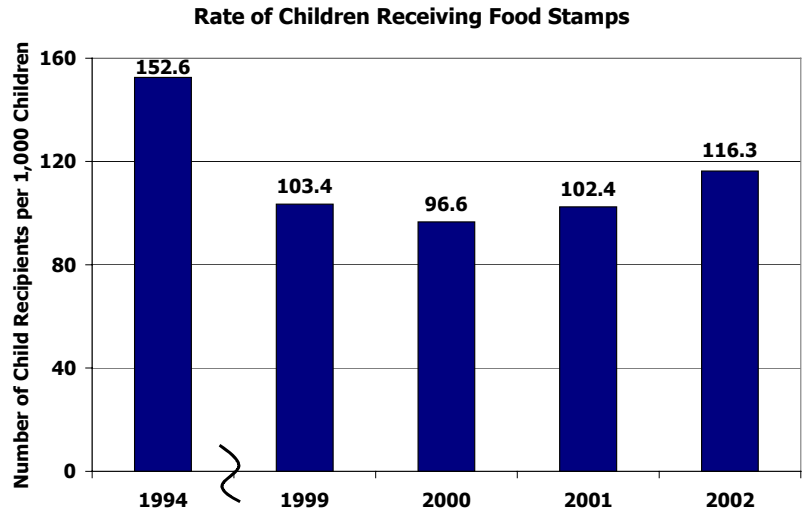
SOURCE: *Federal Register*, Vol. 67, No. 31, February 14, 2002, pp. 6931-6933.



Nutrition



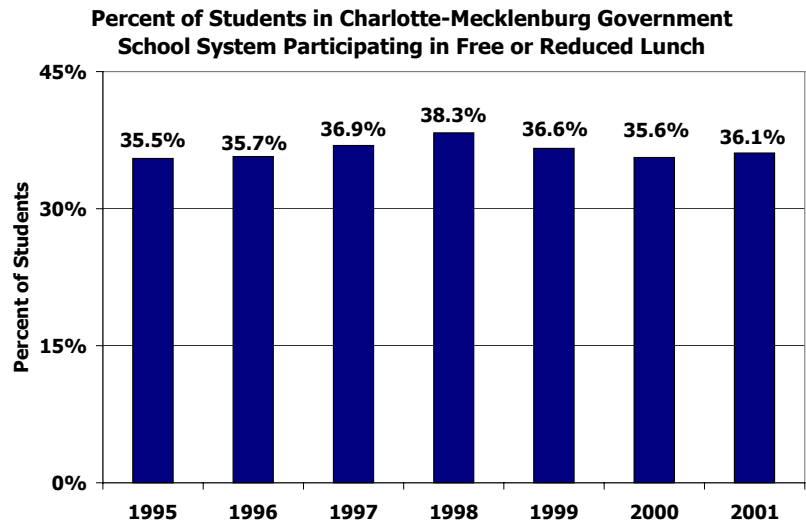
As the unemployment rate has increased during the last two years, so has the number of children receiving Food Stamps.



Source: North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services; rate in July of each year, April of 2002

The 1998 increase in the percent of students receiving free or reduced price lunch is attributed to the addition of Bright Beginnings, a pre-K program for at-risk children, a large portion of whom receive free and reduced price lunch.

More than 1/3 of children in the CMS system qualify for free or reduced lunch.



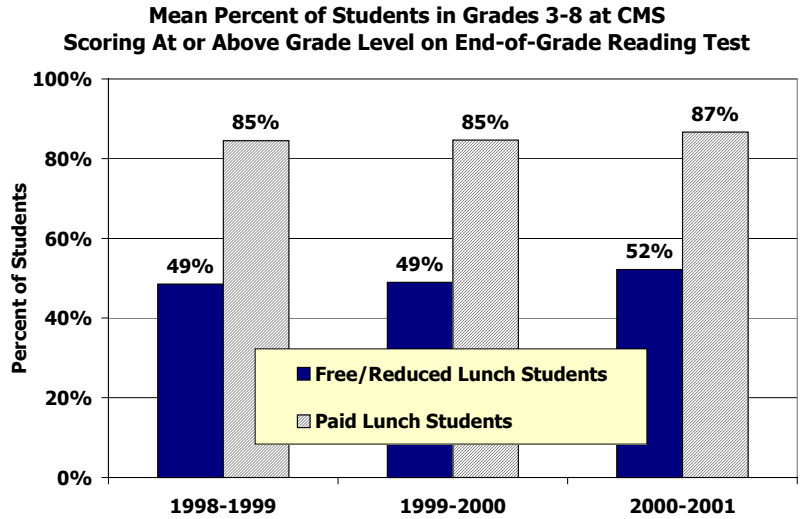
Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools; percentage as of the 20th day of school in autumn of the given year

Caution must be used when making comparisons to other school districts. About 16% of school age children in Mecklenburg County attend a private or home school, a higher percentage than any other county in North Carolina.



Education

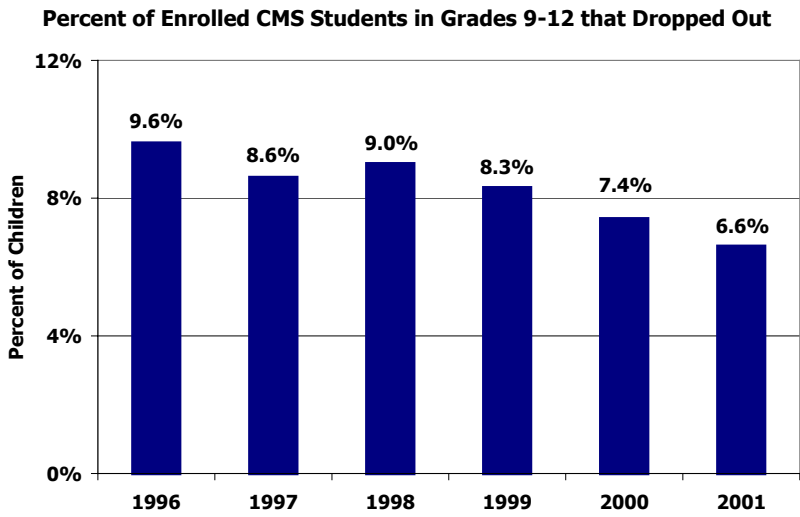
There is a significant achievement gap between children in low income families and other students.



Source: Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Schools

The status of CMS students in the ninth grade during the 1997-1998 school year was examined in August 2001. It was found that 52.6% had graduated, 3.0% were still in school, 15.2% had transferred out of CMS, and 29.0% had dropped out.

The yearly CMS dropout rate has been declining in recent years, but still remains large.



Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government School System; year is the school year, ending in May of given year

In late May 2002, Substance Abuse Prevention Services of the Carolinas will release a report about current drug use by CMS students in grades 7-12.

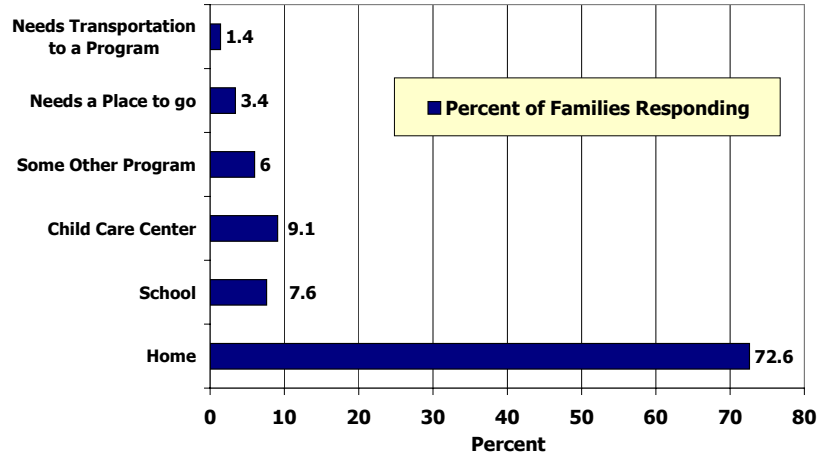


Child Care and After School Activity



The survey was sent home with K-8th grade students.

Where Children Spend Their Time After School



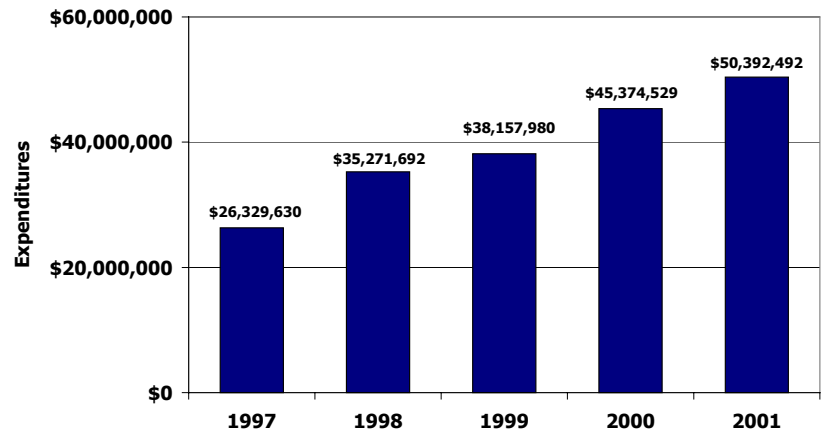
Source: Partners in Out-of-School Time Survey with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, November 2001

Average Monthly Number of Children Receiving Child Care Subsidies
 1996-1997: **6,584**
 1997-1998: **8,687**
 1998-1999: **8,903**
 1999-2000: **10,517**
 2000-2001: **10,822**

Child Care Subsidy Expenditures

Subsidized child care helps lower-income parents remain employed.

 CCRI administers Mecklenburg County's child care subsidy program.



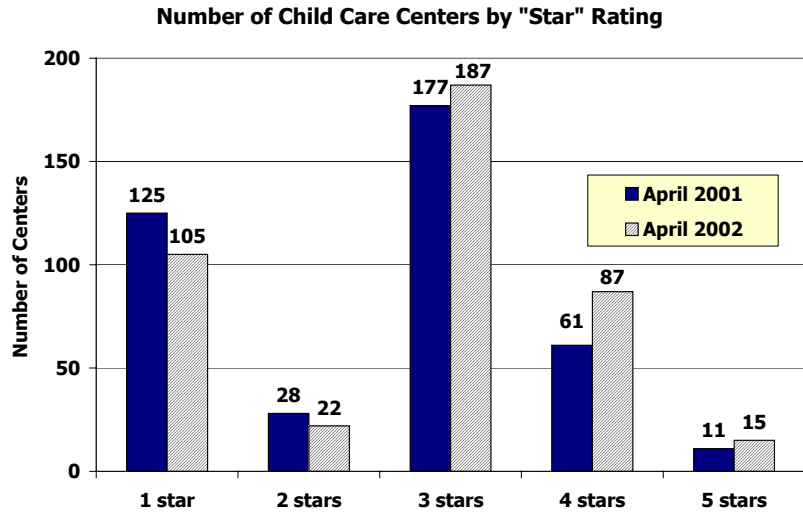
Source: Child Care Resources, Inc.; July-to-June fiscal years are shown

Funding is provided by the State of North Carolina, Mecklenburg County, Smart Start of Mecklenburg County, City of Charlotte, and Charlotte Housing Authority.



Child Care

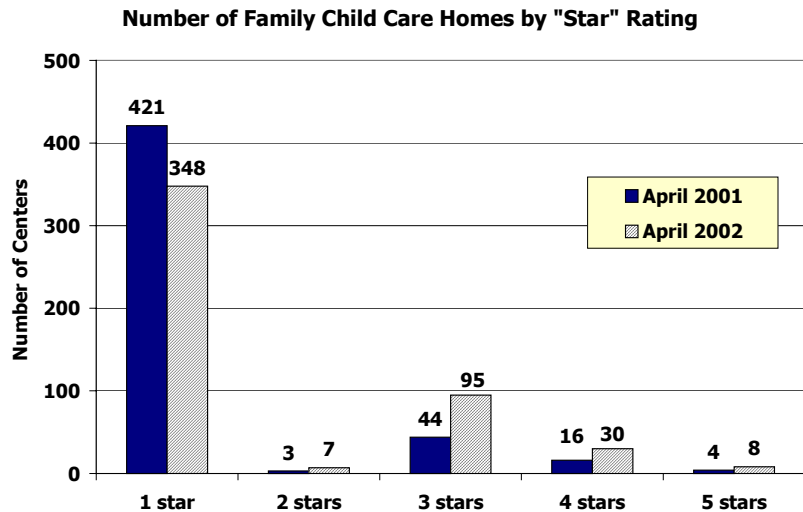
Licensing as a center is required when six or more children are cared for in a residence, or when three or more children are cared for in a building other than a residence.



Source: Child Care Resources, Inc.

In September 2000, North Carolina began a star rated licensing system to distinguish between child care programs that operate at minimum licensing standards (one star) and those that exceed minimum licensing standards (between two and five stars). Religious-sponsored child care programs and summer camps are exempt from the star rating system.

A family child care home is licensed to care for 3 to 5 preschool age children, including preschoolers living in the home. In addition, three school-age children may be enrolled, not counting the provider's own school-age children.



Source: Child Care Resources, Inc.

