



# Every baby should celebrate a first birthday

**United Way and partners in government, nonprofits and healthcare are working together to improve the area's poor standing with infant mortality measures.**

The greater Memphis area has one of the most troubling infant mortality rates among our nation's 50 largest cities.

Babies in some zip codes die before reaching a first birthday at twice the national average.

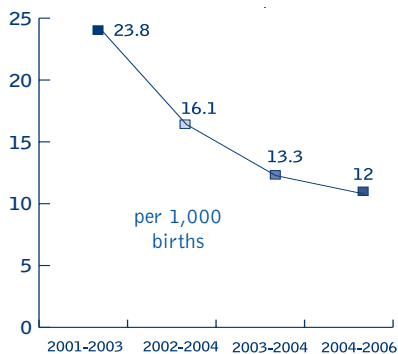


## How is Infant Mortality measured?

Infant mortality is measured by the number of deaths, per 1,000 births, of infants before they reach age 1.

Just six years ago, Memphis and Shelby County's infant mortality rate was an alarming 14.2% compared to a 9.4% for the State of Tennessee.

**THE GOOD NEWS:** Your support of our efforts to reduce the region's infant mortality rate in the Hollywood neighborhood area of zip code 38108 are making a difference. The chart below shows the dramatic decrease in the rate over a five-year period:

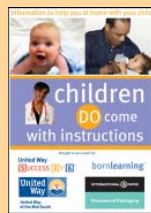


## United Way's role in the fight against infant mortality

**Step 1:** United Way and its partners identified some of the underlying problems associated with higher rates of infant mortality:

- Premature birth
- High incidence of teen pregnancies
- Disparity in healthcare services
- Poverty
- Lack of education
- Poor nutrition
- Bad choices involving drugs and alcohol

**Step 2:** United Way, its partners and volunteers responded by focusing on programs and innovative ways on what happens long before and long after prenatal care ends.



**Step 3:** The "Children Do Come with Instructions" package was created to provide valuable information to parents before and after child birth. Working through hospitals for over 5 years now, new and expecting mothers receive critical health information about caring for their newborns, helping reduce the risk of infant deaths. A version for teenagers was created thanks to underwriting from the State of Tennessee and with help from our partners at Memphis City Schools, Le Bonheur Center for Children and Parents, and The MED.

**RESULTS:** Last year, over 6,650 packages were given to local families, and mothers reported learning new, helpful information:

- **98%** learned more about how dangerous it is to shake a baby
- **82%** learned new information about car safety for their baby
- **50%** learned how to follow safe sleep practices for their baby



Dr. Linda Moses is an obstetrician gynecologist working in a North Memphis health clinic serving a neighborhood with an historically high infant mortality rate.

In 2002 United Way helped launch Hollywood Health Loop's efforts to reduce the infant mortality rate, taking part in the creation of a community-based, grassroots program called *The Moses Community Coalition* to help lower the rate in the 38108 zip code area. United Way supported the coalition through a \$50,000 grant in 2007.



**United Way of the Mid-South**

**Need help? Call 2-1-1**