Birth, marriage, death, disease, and accidents are among the vital statistics collected to help measure the health and well-being of the population. Dekalb County had 581 births in 1996, a change of 13 births from five years earlier in 1992 (2.3 percent increase). Of those live births, 100 were to teen mothers under age 20 — or 17.2 percent of all births in the county. Most births occurred to women between the ages of 20 to 29 (55.2 percent) and 30 to 39 (26.7 percent). There were 1 births to women age 40 and older in 1996, and 3 in 1992. The number of teen pregnancies in 1995 was 94, compared to 86 (14.1 percent) in 1990. There were 438 marriages in 1996, and 393 in 1990.

Dekalb County had 327 deaths in 1996. Of those deaths, 88 (26.9 percent) were due to heart disease and 79 (24.2 percent) due to cancer. Motor vehicle accidents claimed 15 lives in 1996. No data were available on immunizations by age 2 for Dekalb County.

Sadly, in fiscal year 1997, 194 Dekalb County children were reported abused and 436 neglected; of those, 41 were substantiated as physical abuse, 49 as sexual abuse, and 191 as neglect. The percent of cases substantiated was 46.4 percent for abuse and 43.8 percent for neglect. The rate of abuse and neglect per 1,000 children under age 18 in Dekalb County was 27.5 in 1997, compared to 29.1 in 1996.

Questions to ponder...
Are low-cost health services such as immunization for children available to the working poor? What programs can help children and teens at risk? Are services available to help mothers of newborns? Do schools or other organizations provide education to children on drug and alcohol abuse? Is there a safety-net available to abuse victims?