It is generally recognized that a good civil registration system, which the author describes as one with "complete vital registration of births and deaths, with minimal delayed registration, good reporting of age at death, adequate identification of cause of death through medical certification, and a high degree of geographic disaggregation" meets most needs for measures of child mortality. However, few developing countries have adequate civil registration systems. Consequently, a variety of alternate methods for providing measures of child mortality have been developed in recent decades for use until such time there is a flow of adequate vital statistics in the developing countries. This paper reviews the available methods for measuring childhood mortality, and ascertains the extent to which they meet the needs for mortality data for children. This article first appeared in Population Index, 57(3) Fall 1991, and is reprinted here with the kind permission of Population Index, Office of Population Research, Princeton University, 21 Prospect Avenue, Princeton, New Jersey 08544.

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Knowledgebase