

Births to Teens

DEFINITION

Births to teens is the number of births to teen girls ages 15 to 19 per 1,000 teen girls.

SIGNIFICANCE

Teen pregnancy and parenting threaten the development of teen parents as well as their children. Children of teen parents have higher rates of infant mortality, premature birth, and low birthweight. Children of teens have lower test scores, academic outcomes, and are more likely to have a teen birth themselves compared with children of older mothers.¹ There are strong intergenerational links between maternal education among teen mothers, and educational attainment, income, and well-being in the next generation.²

Teen mothers are less likely to graduate from high school or go to college.³ Teen girls in foster care are twice as likely as their peers to become pregnant by age 19.⁴

Nationally, one in six births to teens are repeat births (two or more children born before the mother is 20 years old). Repeat teen births are more likely to be preterm or low birthweight than first teen births.⁵ Teens mothers who have repeat births are more likely to experience additional negative outcomes, including increased health issues, lower educational attainment, and less economic independence.⁶

Despite downward national trends of teen births, including among all racial and ethnic groups, disparities in teen births persist. In 2018 in the U.S., the rate of teen births to Hispanic teens (26.7 births per 1,000) and non-Hispanic Black teens (26.3 per 1,000) were both more than twice the rate of births to non-Hispanic White teens (12.1 per 1,000).⁷

After peaking in 1991, the U.S. teen birth rate steadily declined and reached a historic low in 2018. Despite these declines, the U.S. teen birth rate remains higher than other developed countries.^{8,9,10}

Rhode Island's teen birth rate mirrors national trends, peaking in 1993 at a rate of 47.6 per 1,000, and reaching a historic low in 2017 at a rate of 11.4 births per 1,000 teen girls.^{11,12} In 2018 in Rhode Island, 4% (412) of babies were born to teen mothers.¹³ Nationally and in Rhode Island, fewer teens are having sex and those that are sexually active are more likely to use contraception.^{14,15}

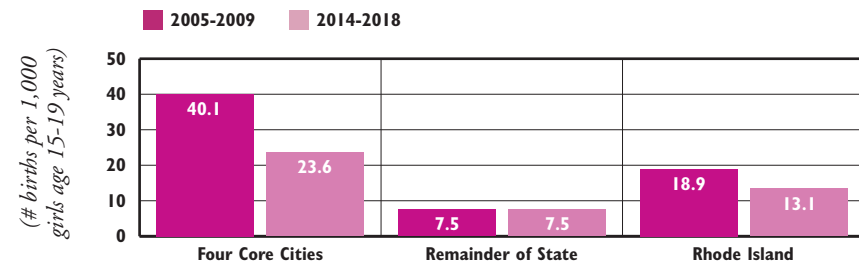
Teen Birth Rates (rate per 1,000 girls ages 15-19)		
	1991	2018
RI	44.7	11.5
US	61.8	17.4
National Rank*		8 th
New England Rank**		6 th

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: For 1991: Ventura, S. J., et al. (2014). National and state patterns of teen births in the United States, 1940-2013. *NVSR*, 63(4), 1-33. For 2018: Martin, J. A., Hamilton, B. E., Osterman, M. J. K., Driscoll, A. K., & Drake, P. (2019). Births: Final data for 2018. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 67(8), 1-49.

Teen Birth Rates, Rhode Island, Five-Year Average Comparisons: 2005-2009, 2014-2018



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2005-2018.

◆ In 2018, the birth rate for U.S. teens (17.4 births per 1,000 teen girls) was the lowest ever recorded. In Rhode Island the teen birth rate was 11.5 births per 1,000 teen girls.¹⁶

◆ The statewide five-year average teen birth rate declined 31% between 2005-2009 and 2014-2018, from 18.9 births per 1,000 teen girls to 13.1. The teen birth rate in the four core cities did not decline during that time and remains three times higher than the remainder of the state.¹⁷

◆ Despite declines among all racial and ethnic groups, disparities still exist in teen birth rates.¹⁸ In Rhode Island between 2014 and 2018, the teen birth rates for Hispanic (31.7 per 1,000), Native American (26.7 per 1,000), and Black (16.6 per 1,000) teens were higher than the rates of their White (7.5 per 1,000) and Asian (3.3 per 1,000) peers.¹⁹

Repeat Births to Teens, Rhode Island, 2014-2018

AGE	TOTAL NUMBER OF BIRTHS	NUMBER OF REPEAT BIRTHS	PERCENT REPEAT BIRTHS
15-17	598	34	6%
18-19	1,813	300	17%
TOTAL 15-19	2,411	334	14%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2014-2018.

◆ Nationally, 17% of all births to teens ages 15-19 in 2016 were repeat births.²⁰ To continue to reduce repeat teen births, pregnant and parenting teens should be connected to patient-centered primary care that address a variety of needs and integrate a range of tailored services for young mothers and families.²¹



Teen Birth Rates by Location

◆ In Rhode Island between 2014 and 2018, the rate of births to teens ages 15-19 in the core cities (21.0 per 1,000) was three times higher than the remainder of the state (7.0 per 1,000).²²

◆ Thirteen percent of teen births in the core cities were repeat births, while 15% of teen births in the rest of the state were repeat births.²³

◆ Health care providers can play a key role in reducing teen births, by integrating comprehensive reproductive health counseling into health care for all women and men of reproductive age, to help reduce unintended pregnancies.²⁴

◆ In 2019, 13.4% of Rhode Island high school students who reported ever having sexual intercourse used no method (or were not sure) to prevent pregnancy, and 45% did not use a condom, the last time they had sexual intercourse.²⁵

◆ Among 15 to 19-year-olds in Rhode Island between 2008 and 2017, the rates of chlamydia have increased by 36% (1,388 to 1,880 per 100,000) and the rates of gonorrhea have increased by 147% (89 to 219 per 100,000).²⁶

Table 27. Births to Teens, Ages 15-19, Rhode Island, 2014-2018

CITY/TOWN	# OF BIRTHS AGES 15-17	# OF BIRTHS AGES 18-19	# OF BIRTHS AGES 15-19	BIRTH RATE PER 1,000 AGES 15-19
Barrington	0	2	2	*
Bristol	2	13	15	2.2
Burrillville	6	22	28	9.8
Central Falls	44	122	166	45.1
Charlestown	1	18	19	17.2 [^]
Coventry	5	21	26	4.8
Cranston	30	84	114	10.9
Cumberland	4	24	28	5.6
East Greenwich	0	5	5	*
East Providence	18	52	70	15.9
Exeter	4	6	10	11.7 [^]
Foster	3	4	7	*
Glocester	0	7	7	*
Hopkinton	1	6	7	*
Jamestown	0	1	1	*
Johnston	5	30	35	8.8
Lincoln	3	19	22	7.3
Little Compton	0	0	0	0
Middletown	7	13	20	14.2 [^]
Narragansett	3	3	6	*
New Shoreham	0	0	0	*
Newport	15	36	51	8.8
North Kingstown	8	24	32	7.8
North Providence	15	53	68	17.7
North Smithfield	2	7	9	*
Pawtucket	55	192	247	26.3
Portsmouth	2	6	8	*
Providence	250	629	879	19.3
Richmond	1	8	9	*
Scituate	1	9	10	*
Smithfield	1	3	4	*
South Kingstown	2	20	22	1.4 [^]
Tiverton	4	11	15	13.6 [^]
Warren	2	15	17	13.7 [^]
Warwick	24	80	104	11.5
West Greenwich	1	6	7	*
West Warwick	19	65	84	24.7
Westerly	4	19	23	7.1
Woonsocket	54	168	222	39.5
Unknown	2	10	12	*
Four Core Cities	403	1,111	1,514	23.6
Remainder of State	195	702	897	7.5
Rhode Island	598	1,813	2,411	13.1

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2014-2018.

* The data are statistically unreliable and rates are not reported and should not be calculated.

[^] The data are statistically unstable and rates or percentages should be interpreted with caution.

The denominators for girls ages 15 to 19 are from the 2014-2018 American Community Survey.

Factbooks published before 2007 reported only births to girls ages 15 to 17. The definition of teen childbearing was expanded to include teens ages 15-19 to align with reports from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics.

Births to teens ages 14 and younger are collected by the Rhode Island Department of Health but are not reported in the Factbook.

Unknown births include three births with missing maternal residence data.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

References

^{1,14} Teen births: Indicator of child and youth well-being. (2016). Washington, DC: Child Trends.

^{2,10,20} U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Office of Adolescent Health. (2016). *Trends in teen pregnancy and childbearing*. Retrieved March 1, 2019, from www.hhs.gov

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). *About teen pregnancy*. Retrieved March 1, 2019, from cdc.gov

⁴ Brooks, K. (2019). *Teen pregnancy and foster care*. Washington, DC: National Center for Health Research.

⁵ Dee, D., et al. (2017). Trends in repeat births and use of postpartum contraception among teens – United States, 2004-2015. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 66(16), 422-426.

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