

Births to Teens

DEFINITION

Births to teens is the number of births to teen girls ages 15 to 19 per 1,000 teen girls. Data are reported by the mother's place of residence, not the place of the infant's birth.

SIGNIFICANCE

The United States has the highest teen pregnancy and birth rates in the industrialized world.¹ Teen pregnancy and parenting threaten the development of teen parents as well as their children. Teen mothers are less likely to have the financial resources, social supports and parenting skills needed for healthy child development.² Babies born to teen mothers are more likely to be born prematurely and have low birth weight. Children of teen parents are more likely to experience learning and behavior problems in school, live in poverty, enter the foster care system, drop out of high school, spend time in prison and become teen parents themselves.^{3,4}

While teen pregnancy occurs in families of all income levels, teen pregnancy and childbearing are strongly associated with poverty. As many as 83% of adolescents who give birth are from poor or low-income families. There is a strong intergenerational pattern of early childbearing. At least one-third of parenting adolescents (both

teen mothers and fathers) are themselves children born to adolescent mothers.⁵

Poor academic achievement is a key predictor of teen pregnancy and childbearing. Many teens have already dropped out of school before they become pregnant.⁶ Nationally, fewer than half of teen mothers (40%) graduate from high school and only 2-3% attain a college degree before age 30. Reduced educational attainment among teen parents puts them at increased risk of unemployment, low-wage jobs and poverty.⁷

Of all births to Rhode Island teens ages 15 to 19 between 2002 and 2006, 70% occurred in the core cities. In 2006 in Rhode Island, there were 1,135 babies born to mothers under age 20, accounting for 9.2% of all babies born in the state.⁸

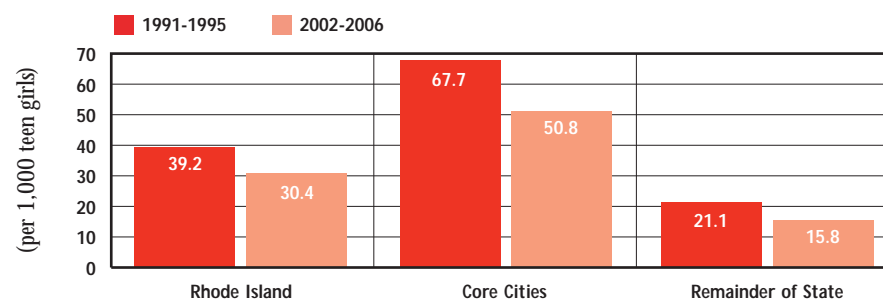
Teen Birth Rates (per 100,000 girls ages 15-19)		
	1991	2005
RI	44.7	31.4
US	61.8	40.5
National Rank*		13th
New England Rank**		6th

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2007). Births: Final data for 2005. *National Vital Statistics Reports* 56(6). Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Births to Teens Ages 15-19, Rhode Island, Core Cities and Remainder of State, 1991-1995 and 2002-2006



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 1991-1995 and 2002-2006. Data for 2006 are provisional.

- ◆ Since the early 1990s, the teen birth rate for Rhode Island girls ages 15 to 19 has declined by 22%, mirroring the national trend.⁹ Between 1991 and 2005, the U.S. teen birth rate fell 34% from a peak high to a 65-year record low.¹⁰ However, U.S. teen birth rates rose 3% in 2006.¹¹
- ◆ The recent decline in both teen pregnancy and birth rates has been attributed to reduced sexual activity overall among teens and improved use of contraception among those teens who are sexually active.¹²

Repeat Births to Teens, Rhode Island, 2002-2006

Age	Total Number of Births	Number of Repeat Births	Percent
12-14	89	1	1%
15-17	1,885	176	9%
18-19	3,784	886	23%
Total	5,758	1,063	18%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2002-2006. Data for 2006 are provisional.

- ◆ Nationally, repeat teen births have been declining – from about 25% of all teen births in 1990 to 20% in 2004. Once a teenager has a baby, she is at increased risk of having another as a teen. A repeat birth during the teen years compounds educational, economic and health problems for both the mothers and the children.¹³

Table 22.

Birth to Teens, Ages 15-19, Rhode Island, 2002-2006

CITY/TOWN	NUMBER OF BIRTHS TO GIRLS AGES 15-17	BIRTH RATE PER 1,000 GIRLS AGES 15-17	NUMBER OF BIRTHS TO GIRLS AGES 18-19	BIRTH RATE PER 1,000 GIRLS AGES 18-19	NUMBER OF BIRTHS TO GIRLS AGES 15-19	BIRTH RATE PER 1,000 GIRLS AGES 15-19
Barrington	2	0.9	3	4.1	5	1.7
Bristol	10	5.4	38	10.2	48	8.6
Burrillville	8	4.5	35	33.3	43	15.2
Central Falls	110	58.7	222	141.4	332	96.4
Charlestown	7	10.4	15	NA	22	22.1
Coventry	36	11.2	68	40.2	104	21.2
Cranston	92	13.4	178	44.2	270	24.7
Cumberland	19	6.1	39	26.7	58	12.6
East Greenwich	6	4.2	6	12.0	12	6.3
East Providence	43	9.4	126	54.7	169	24.6
Exeter	5	6.9	8	NA	13	12.7
Foster	2	NA	8	NA	10	14.9
Glocester	5	4.4	20	33.6	25	14.4
Hopkinton	7	8.0	15	NA	22	17.2
Jamestown	1	1.8	3	NA	4	5.5
Johnston	24	10.5	44	33.6	68	18.9
Lincoln	8	3.7	36	38.3	44	14.1
Little Compton	0	NA	6	NA	6	NA
Middletown	8	5.8	35	51.5	43	21.0
Narragansett	5	4.0	17	15.6	22	9.3
New Shoreham	0	NA	0	NA	0	NA
Newport	52	26.1	85	24.8	137	25.3
North Kingstown	15	5.6	42	34.7	57	14.7
North Providence	29	11.7	61	41.4	90	22.8
North Smithfield	3	3.0	14	NA	17	11.4
Pawtucket	220	32.3	430	94.7	650	57.2
Portsmouth	8	4.8	17	28.1	25	10.9
Providence	803	47.1	1,408	47.8	2,211	47.5
Richmond	5	6.1	9	NA	14	12.6
Scituate	3	2.5	10	19.4	13	7.5
Smithfield	3	1.7	18	6.6	21	4.7
South Kingstown	12	4.4	41	4.9	53	4.7
Tiverton	6	4.5	22	30.1	28	13.5
Warren	8	8.0	28	48.3	36	22.8
Warwick	75	9.5	182	45.9	257	21.6
West Greenwich	3	5.6	8	NA	11	13.2
West Warwick	44	17.9	108	64.9	152	36.9
Westerly	29	13.4	73	66.1	102	31.1
Woonsocket	169	39.9	306	108.5	475	67.3
Core Cities	1,398	40.6	2,559	58.8	3,957	50.8
Remainder of State	487	7.6	1,225	27.8	1,712	15.8
Rhode Island	1,885	19.1	3,784	43.2	5,669	30.4

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2002-2006. Data for 2006 are provisional. The denominators are the number of girls in each age group according to Census 2000, multiplied by five to compute rates over five years.

Factbooks published before 2007 reported only on births to girls ages 15 to 17. In recent years, the definition of teen childbearing has been expanded to include teens ages 18-19 because researchers are finding that babies born to slightly older teens do not have much better outcomes than those born to teens in younger age groups.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

NA: Rates were not calculated for cities and towns with less than 100 teen girls in the age category, as rates for small denominators are statistically unreliable.

References

^{1,4,7} Hoffman, S. D. (2006). *By the numbers: The public costs of teen childbearing*. Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

² *KIDS COUNT data book: State profiles in child well-being 2004*. (2004). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

^{3,5} Klein, J. D. & the Committee on Adolescence (2005). Adolescent pregnancy: Current trends and issues. *Pediatrics*, 116, 281-286.

⁶ *Why the education community cares about preventing teen pregnancy: Notes from the field*. (2006). Washington, DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

^{8,9} Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 1991-2006. Data for 2006 are provisional.

^{10,12} Martin, J. A., Hamilton, B. E., Sutton, P. D., Ventura, S. J., Menacker, F., Kirmeyer, S. & Munson, M. L. (2007). *Births: Final data for 2005. National Vital Statistics Reports*, 56(6). Hyattsville, MD: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

¹¹ Hamilton, B. E., Martin, J. A. & Ventura, S. J. (2007). *Births: Preliminary data for 2006. National Vital Statistics Reports*, 56(7). Hyattsville, MD: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

¹³ Schelar, E., Franzetta, K. & Manlove, J. (2007). *Repeat teen childbearing: Differences across states and by race and ethnicity*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.