

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. Babies born to teen mothers are at increased risk for low birthweight, prematurity, and death in infancy.² 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 teen mothers are from poor or low-income families. There is a strong intergenerational pattern of early childbearing. At least one-third of teen

parents (both teen mothers and fathers) were the children of adolescent mothers themselves.⁵

Poor school achievement, attendance and involvement are predictors of teen pregnancy and childbearing. Childbirth is the leading cause of dropping out of school among teen girls. Nationally, fewer than half of teen mothers (40%) ever graduate from high school and fewer than 2% earn a college degree before age 30.⁶ Reduced educational attainment among teen parents puts them at increased risk of unemployment, low-wage jobs and poverty.⁷

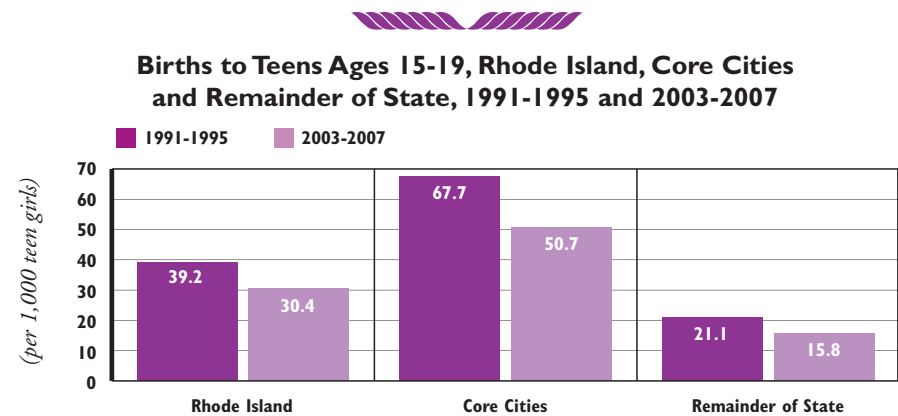
In 2007 in Rhode Island, there were 1,206 babies born to mothers under age 20, accounting for almost 10% of all babies born in the state.⁸ Rhode Island ranks 22nd in the U.S. for births to younger teens ages 15 to 17.⁹

Teen Birth Rates (per 1,000 girls ages 15-19)		
	1991	2006
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: Martin, J.A., Hamilton, B.E., Sutton, P.D., Ventura, S. J., Menacker, F., Kirmeyer, S., & Matthews, T.J. (2009). *Births: Final data for 2006. National Vital Statistics Reports*, 57(7). Hyattsville, MD: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 1991-1995 and 2003-2007. Data for 2007 are provisional.

- ◆ Of all births to Rhode Island teens ages 15 to 19 between 2003 and 2007, 70% occurred in the core cities, the six communities with the highest child poverty rates.¹⁰
- ◆ Since the early 1990s, the teen birth rate for Rhode Island girls ages 15-19 has declined by 22%, mirroring the overall national trend.¹¹ Between 1991 and 2005, the U.S. teen birth rate fell by 34%. However, U.S. teen birth rates rose by 3% in 2006.¹²
- ◆ The decline in both teen pregnancy and birth rates has been attributed to improved use of contraception among those teens who are sexually active (accounting for 86% of the decline) and reduced sexual activity (accounting for 14% of the decline).¹³

Repeat Births to Teens, Rhode Island, 2003-2007

Age	Total Number of Births	Number of Repeat Births	Percent
12-14	84	1	1%
15-17	1,882	170	9%
18-19	3,782	849	22%
Total	5,748	1,020	18%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2003-2007. Data for 2007 are provisional.

- ◆ 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.¹⁴

Table 22.

Birth to Teens, Ages 15-19, Rhode Island, 2003-2007

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	5	6.8	7	2.4
Bristol	8	4.3	30	8.1	38	6.8
Burrillville	7	3.9	26	24.8	33	11.6
Central Falls	111	59.2	227	144.6	338	98.1
Charlestown	7	10.4	15	NA	22	22.1
Coventry	29	9.0	68	40.2	97	19.8
Cranston	99	14.4	170	42.2	269	24.6
Cumberland	22	7.0	47	32.2	69	15.0
East Greenwich	5	3.5	5	10.0	10	5.2
East Providence	45	9.9	127	55.1	172	25.0
Exeter	4	5.5	5	NA	9	8.8
Foster	2	NA	11	NA	13	19.4
Glocester	4	3.5	20	33.6	24	13.8
Hopkinton	6	6.9	13	NA	19	14.8
Jamestown	1	1.8	2	NA	3	4.1
Johnston	24	10.5	49	37.4	73	20.2
Lincoln	7	3.2	37	39.4	44	14.1
Little Compton	0	NA	7	NA	7	NA
Middletown	12	8.8	32	47.1	44	21.5
Narragansett	5	4.0	16	14.7	21	8.9
New Shoreham	0	NA	0	NA	0	NA
Newport	51	25.6	83	24.2	134	24.7
North Kingstown	12	4.5	42	34.7	54	14.0
North Providence	29	11.7	63	42.7	92	23.3
North Smithfield	4	3.9	14	NA	18	12.1
Pawtucket	222	32.6	419	92.3	641	56.4
Portsmouth	7	4.2	18	29.8	25	10.9
Providence	817	47.9	1,394	47.3	2,211	47.5
Richmond	6	7.4	15	NA	21	18.9
Scituate	4	3.3	10	19.4	14	8.1
Smithfield	4	2.3	21	7.7	25	5.6
South Kingstown	12	4.4	37	4.4	49	4.4
Tiverton	5	3.7	23	31.5	28	13.5
Warren	8	8.0	25	43.1	33	20.9
Warwick	71	9.0	192	48.4	263	22.1
West Greenwich	3	5.6	12	NA	15	18.0
West Warwick	44	17.9	113	67.9	157	38.1
Westerly	33	15.2	70	63.3	103	31.5
Woonsocket	150	35.4	319	113.1	469	66.4
<i>Core Cities</i>	<i>1,395</i>	<i>40.5</i>	<i>2,555</i>	<i>58.7</i>	<i>3,950</i>	<i>50.7</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>487</i>	<i>7.6</i>	<i>1,227</i>	<i>27.8</i>	<i>1,714</i>	<i>15.8</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>1,882</i>	<i>19.1</i>	<i>3,782</i>	<i>43.2</i>	<i>5,664</i>	<i>30.4</i>

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2003-2007. Data for 2007 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 with 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.
- ^{2,9,12} Martin, J. A., Hamilton, B. E., Sutton, P. D., Ventura, S. J., Menacker, F., Kirmeyer, S. & Matthews, T. J. (2009). *Births: Final data for 2006. National Vital Statistics Reports, 57(7)*. Hyattsville, MD: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- ^{3,5} Klein, J. D. & the Committee on Adolescence (2005). Adolescent pregnancy: Current trends and issues. *Pediatrics, 116* (1), 281-286.
- ⁶ *Why it matters: Teen pregnancy and education*. (2008). Washington, DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.
- ^{8,10,11} Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 1991-2007. Data for 2007 are provisional.
- ¹³ Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health. (December 4, 2006). U.S. teen pregnancy rates decline as a result of improved contraceptive use. *Science Daily*. Retrieved January 8, 2009 from www.sciencedaily.com
- ¹⁴ Schelar, E., Franzetta, K., & Manlove, J. (2007). *Repeat teen childbearing: Differences across states and by race and ethnicity*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.