

# 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3,4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup> Reduced educational attainment among teen parents puts them at increased risk of unemployment, low-wage jobs and poverty.<sup>7</sup>

In 2009 in Rhode Island, there were 1,049 babies born to mothers under age 20, accounting for 9% of all babies born in the state.<sup>8</sup> Researchers estimate that approximately 11% of Rhode Island girls (vs. 18% of all girls in the U.S.) will become teen mothers.<sup>9</sup>

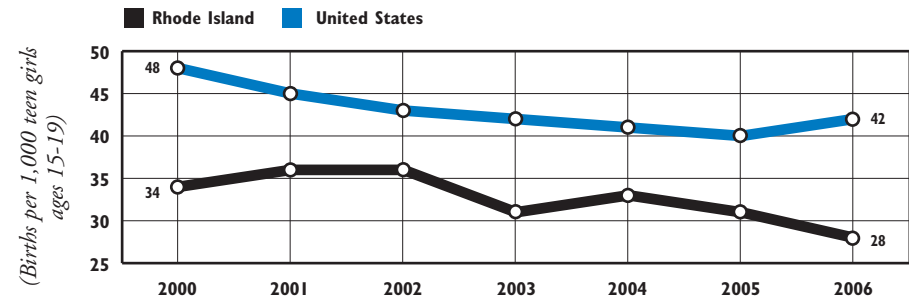
Teen Birth Rates (rate per 1,000 girls ages 15-19)		
	1991	2006
RI	44.7	27.8
US	61.8	41.9
National Rank*		9th
New England Rank**		6th

\*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.

## Birth Rates for Teens Ages 15-19, Rhode Island and United States, 2000-2006



Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Center. (2009). *Teen births by age group: 15-19, United States and Rhode Island: 1990-2006*. Retrieved January 20, 2010 from [www.kidscount.org/datacenter](http://www.kidscount.org/datacenter)

◆ In Rhode Island, the teen birth rate fell by 18% between 2000 and 2006. The U.S. teen birth rate declined by 13%, with rates increasing between 2005 and 2006 after steady declines over the previous decade.<sup>10,11</sup>

◆ Of the 5,711 births to Rhode Island teens ages 15 to 19 between 2004 and 2008, 70% (3,984) were to teens in the core cities, the six communities with the highest child poverty rates.<sup>12</sup>

## Repeat Births to Teens, Rhode Island, 2004-2008

Age	Total Number of Births	Number of Repeat Births	Percent Repeat Births
12-14	89	1	1%
15-17	1,860	164	9%
18-19	3,851	861	22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,800</b>	<b>1,026</b>	<b>18%</b>

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2004-2008. Data for 2008 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, developmental and health problems for both the mothers and the children.<sup>13</sup> In 2006, Rhode Island ranked 8th nationally (tied with Louisiana, New Mexico and Alaska) for the highest percentage of repeat teen births.<sup>14</sup>

Table 24.

## Births to Teens, Ages 15-19, Rhode Island, 2004-2008

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	8	10.9	10	3.5
Bristol	7	3.8	33	8.9	40	7.2
Burrillville	5	2.8	24	22.9	29	10.2
Central Falls	115	61.3	214	136.3	329	95.5
Charlestown	4	6.0	14	NA	18	18.1
Coventry	35	10.9	74	43.8	109	22.2
Cranston	94	13.6	166	41.2	260	23.8
Cumberland	17	5.4	51	34.9	68	14.8
East Greenwich	4	2.8	5	10.0	9	4.7
East Providence	50	11.0	121	52.5	171	24.9
Exeter	4	5.5	4	NA	8	7.8
Foster	2	NA	10	NA	12	17.9
Glocester	6	5.2	22	37.0	28	16.1
Hopkinton	8	9.2	16	NA	24	18.8
Jamestown	0	0.0	2	NA	2	2.7
Johnston	24	10.5	52	39.7	76	21.1
Lincoln	10	4.6	34	36.2	44	14.1
Little Compton	0	NA	8	NA	8	NA
Middletown	13	9.5	34	50.0	47	22.9
Narragansett	4	3.2	15	13.8	19	8.1
New Shoreham	0	NA	0	NA	0	NA
Newport	48	24.1	88	25.7	136	25.1
North Kingstown	14	5.3	45	37.2	59	15.2
North Providence	26	10.5	62	42.0	88	22.3
North Smithfield	5	4.9	11	NA	16	10.8
Pawtucket	227	33.3	440	96.9	667	58.7
Portsmouth	6	3.6	15	24.8	21	9.2
Providence	796	46.7	1,435	48.7	2,231	48.0
Richmond	12	14.7	20	NA	32	28.8
Scituate	3	2.5	8	15.5	11	6.4
Smithfield	5	2.9	18	6.6	23	5.1
South Kingstown	10	3.6	42	5.0	52	4.7
Tiverton	5	3.7	20	27.4	25	12.0
Warren	10	10.0	25	43.1	35	22.2
Warwick	79	10.0	192	48.4	271	22.8
West Greenwich	3	5.6	11	NA	14	16.8
West Warwick	45	18.3	116	69.7	161	39.1
Westerly	28	12.9	70	63.3	98	29.9
Woonsocket	134	31.6	326	115.6	460	65.2
<i>Core Cities</i>	<i>1,365</i>	<i>39.6</i>	<i>2,619</i>	<i>60.2</i>	<i>3,984</i>	<i>51.1</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>495</i>	<i>7.7</i>	<i>1,232</i>	<i>27.9</i>	<i>1,727</i>	<i>15.9</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>1,860</i>	<i>18.9</i>	<i>3,851</i>	<i>44.0</i>	<i>5,711</i>	<i>30.7</i>

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2004-2008. Data for 2008 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

- <sup>1,4,7</sup> Hoffman, S. D. (2006). *By the numbers: The public costs of teen childbearing*. Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.
- <sup>2,10</sup> Martin, J. A., et al. (2009). Births: Final data for 2006. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 57(7). Hyattsville, MD: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- <sup>3,5</sup> Klein, J. D. & The Committee on Adolescence. (2005). Adolescent pregnancy: Current trends and issues. *Pediatrics*, 116(1), 281-286.
- <sup>6</sup> *Why it matters: Teen pregnancy and education*. (2009). Washington, DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.
- <sup>8</sup> Rhode Island Department of Health, KIDS NET Database, 2009.
- <sup>9</sup> Perper, K. & Manlove, J. (2009). *Estimated percentage of females who will become teen mothers: Differences across states*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.
- <sup>11</sup> Hamilton, B. E., Martin, J. A. & Ventura, S. J. (2009). Births: Preliminary data for 2007. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 57(12). Hyattsville, MD: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

(continued on page 166)