

# 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

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.<sup>1</sup> Babies born to teen mothers, particularly very young teen mothers, are more likely to be born prematurely, have low birth weight, and die during the neonatal period than babies born to adult women. 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>2,3</sup>

While teen pregnancy occurs in families of all income levels, teen pregnancy and childbearing are strongly associated with poverty. As much 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.<sup>4</sup>

Poor academic achievement is a key predictor of teen pregnancy and childbearing. Many teens have already dropped out of school before they become pregnant.<sup>5</sup> Nationally, less than half of teen mothers 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.<sup>6</sup>

Of all births to Rhode Island teens ages 15 to 19 from 2001-2005, 70% occurred in the core cities. In 2005 in Rhode Island, there were 1,117 babies born to teen mothers accounting for 9% of all babies born in the state.<sup>7</sup>

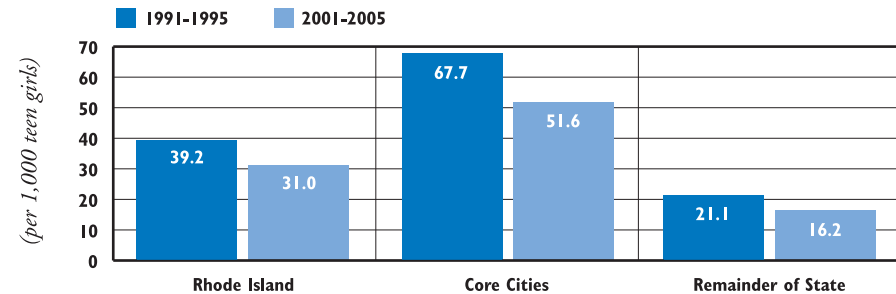
| Teen Birth Rates<br>(per 100,000 teens ages 15-19) |      |      |
|--|------|------|
|  | 1991 | 2004 |
| <b>RI</b>  | 44.7 | 32.9 |
| <b>US</b>  | 61.8 | 41.1 |
| <b>National Rank*</b>                              | 15th |      |
| <b>New England Rank**</b>                          | 6th  |      |

\*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, R., & Kirmeyer, S. (2006). Births: Final data for 2004. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 55(1). Hyattsville, MD: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## Births to Teens Ages 15-19, Rhode Island, Core Cities and Remainder of State, 1991-1995 and 2001-2005



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 1991-1995 and 2001-2005. Data for 2004-2005 are provisional.

- ◆ Over the past decade, teen birth rates for Rhode Island girls ages 15 to 19 declined by 21%.<sup>8</sup>
- ◆ The United States has seen a 33% decline in the teen birth rate (girls ages 15-19) and a 36% decline in the teen pregnancy rate since the early 1990s. Despite this, the United States continues to have the highest teen pregnancy and birth rates in the industrialized world.<sup>9</sup> The decline in both teen pregnancy and birth rates over the past 15 years has been attributed to reduced sexual activity among teens overall and improved use of contraception among sexually active teens.<sup>10</sup>

## Repeat Births to Teens, Rhode Island, 2001-2005

| Age          | Total Number of Births | Number of Repeat Births | Percent    |
|--------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| 12-14        | 102                    | 1                       | 1%         |
| 15-17        | 1,922                  | 174                     | 9%         |
| 18-19        | 3,857                  | 919                     | 24%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>5,881</b>           | <b>1,094</b>            | <b>19%</b> |

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2001-2005. Data for 2004-2005 are provisional.

- ◆ Once a teenager has a baby, she is at increased risk of having another. Nationally, about 25% of teen mothers have a second birth before age 20. A repeat birth during the teen years further impedes a mother's ability to finish school and become economically self-sufficient.<sup>11</sup>

Table 22.

## Birth to Teens, Ages 15-19, Rhode Island, 2001-2005

| 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                | 1                                    | 0.5                                   | 5                                    | 6.8                                   | 6                                    | 2.1                                   |
| Bristol                   | 11                                   | 5.9                                   | 40                                   | 10.8                                  | 51                                   | 9.1                                   |
| Burrillville              | 10                                   | 5.6                                   | 38                                   | 36.2                                  | 48                                   | 16.9                                  |
| Central Falls             | 109                                  | 58.1                                  | 216                                  | 137.6                                 | 325                                  | 94.3                                  |
| Charlestown               | 7                                    | 10.4                                  | 11                                   | N/A                                   | 18                                   | 18.1                                  |
| Coventry                  | 33                                   | 10.3                                  | 67                                   | 39.6                                  | 100                                  | 20.4                                  |
| Cranston                  | 92                                   | 13.4                                  | 182                                  | 45.2                                  | 274                                  | 25.1                                  |
| Cumberland                | 22                                   | 7.0                                   | 39                                   | 26.7                                  | 61                                   | 13.3                                  |
| East Greenwich            | 7                                    | 4.9                                   | 7                                    | 14.0                                  | 14                                   | 7.3                                   |
| East Providence           | 41                                   | 9.0                                   | 142                                  | 61.6                                  | 183                                  | 26.6                                  |
| Exeter                    | 4                                    | 5.5                                   | 10                                   | N/A                                   | 14                                   | 13.7                                  |
| Foster                    | 2                                    | N/A                                   | 11                                   | N/A                                   | 13                                   | 19.4                                  |
| Glocester                 | 5                                    | 4.4                                   | 16                                   | 26.9                                  | 21                                   | 12.1                                  |
| Hopkinton                 | 10                                   | 11.5                                  | 15                                   | N/A                                   | 25                                   | 19.5                                  |
| Jamestown                 | 3                                    | 5.3                                   | 3                                    | N/A                                   | 6                                    | 8.2                                   |
| Johnston                  | 25                                   | 10.9                                  | 46                                   | 35.1                                  | 71                                   | 19.7                                  |
| Lincoln                   | 13                                   | 5.9                                   | 36                                   | 38.3                                  | 49                                   | 15.7                                  |
| Little Compton            | 0                                    | N/A                                   | 5                                    | N/A                                   | 5                                    | N/A                                   |
| Middletown                | 6                                    | 4.4                                   | 39                                   | 57.4                                  | 45                                   | 22.0                                  |
| Narragansett              | 3                                    | 2.4                                   | 17                                   | 15.6                                  | 20                                   | 8.5                                   |
| New Shoreham              | 0                                    | N/A                                   | 0                                    | N/A                                   | 0                                    | 0.0                                   |
| Newport                   | 60                                   | 30.2                                  | 92                                   | 26.8                                  | 152                                  | 28.0                                  |
| North Kingstown           | 13                                   | 4.9                                   | 42                                   | 34.7                                  | 55                                   | 14.2                                  |
| North Providence          | 28                                   | 11.3                                  | 64                                   | 43.4                                  | 92                                   | 23.3                                  |
| North Smithfield          | 2                                    | 2.0                                   | 14                                   | N/A                                   | 16                                   | 10.8                                  |
| Pawtucket                 | 214                                  | 31.4                                  | 437                                  | 96.3                                  | 651                                  | 57.3                                  |
| Portsmouth                | 8                                    | 4.8                                   | 15                                   | 24.8                                  | 23                                   | 10.1                                  |
| Providence                | 820                                  | 48.1                                  | 1,434                                | 48.7                                  | 2,254                                | 48.4                                  |
| Richmond                  | 6                                    | 7.4                                   | 12                                   | N/A                                   | 18                                   | 16.2                                  |
| Scituate                  | 4                                    | 3.3                                   | 13                                   | 25.2                                  | 17                                   | 9.8                                   |
| Smithfield                | 6                                    | 3.4                                   | 19                                   | 7.0                                   | 25                                   | 5.6                                   |
| South Kingstown           | 15                                   | 5.5                                   | 35                                   | 4.2                                   | 50                                   | 4.5                                   |
| Tiverton                  | 7                                    | 5.2                                   | 24                                   | 32.9                                  | 31                                   | 14.9                                  |
| Warren                    | 8                                    | 8.0                                   | 25                                   | 43.1                                  | 33                                   | 20.9                                  |
| Warwick                   | 74                                   | 9.4                                   | 182                                  | 45.9                                  | 256                                  | 21.6                                  |
| West Greenwich            | 2                                    | 3.7                                   | 7                                    | N/A                                   | 9                                    | 10.8                                  |
| West Warwick              | 45                                   | 18.3                                  | 108                                  | 64.9                                  | 153                                  | 37.1                                  |
| Westerly                  | 31                                   | 14.3                                  | 79                                   | 71.5                                  | 110                                  | 33.6                                  |
| Woonsocket                | 175                                  | 41.3                                  | 310                                  | 109.9                                 | 485                                  | 68.7                                  |
| <b>Core Cities</b>        | <b>1,423</b>                         | <b>41.3</b>                           | <b>2,597</b>                         | <b>59.7</b>                           | <b>4,020</b>                         | <b>51.6</b>                           |
| <b>Remainder of State</b> | <b>499</b>                           | <b>7.8</b>                            | <b>1,260</b>                         | <b>28.6</b>                           | <b>1,759</b>                         | <b>16.2</b>                           |
| <b>Rhode Island</b>       | <b>1,922</b>                         | <b>19.5</b>                           | <b>3,857</b>                         | <b>44.0</b>                           | <b>5,779</b>                         | <b>31.0</b>                           |

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2001-2005. Data for 2004-2005 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.

Previous Factbooks reported only on births to girls ages 15 to 17. In recent years, the definition of teen childbearing has been expanded nationally 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</sup> *KIDS COUNT data book: State profiles in child well-being 2004*. (2004). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- <sup>2,4,10</sup> Klein, J.D. & the Committee on Adolescence (2005). Adolescent pregnancy: Current trends and issues. *Pediatrics*, 116, 281-286.
- <sup>3,6,9</sup> Hoffman, S.D. (2006). *By the numbers: The public costs of teen childbearing*. Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.
- <sup>5</sup> *Why the education community cares about preventing teen pregnancy: Notes from the field*. (2006). Washington, DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.
- <sup>7,8</sup> Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database, 1991-2005. Data for 2004-2005 are provisional.
- <sup>11</sup> *Science says: Another chance: Preventing additional births to teen mothers*. (2004). Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.