

# 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, worse academic outcomes, and are more likely to have a teen birth themselves compared with children of older mothers.<sup>1</sup> There are strong intergenerational links between maternal education among teen mothers, and educational attainment, income, and well-being in the next generation.<sup>2</sup>

Teen mothers are less likely to graduate from high school or go to college.<sup>3</sup> Teen girls in foster care are twice as likely as their peers to become pregnant by age 19.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

Despite downward national trends of teen births, including among all racial and ethnic groups, disparities in teen births persist. In 2019 in the U.S., the rate of teen births to Hispanic teens (25.3 births per 1,000) and non-Hispanic Black teens (25.8 per 1,000), were both more than twice the rate of births to non-Hispanic white teens (11.4 per 1,000).<sup>7</sup>

After peaking in 1991, the U.S. teen birth rate steadily declined and reached a historic low in 2019. Despite these declines, the U.S. teen birth rate remains higher than other developed countries.<sup>8,9,10</sup>

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 2019 at a rate of 10.0 births per 1,000 teen girls.<sup>11,12</sup> In 2019 in Rhode Island, 4% (358) of babies were born to teen mothers.<sup>13</sup> Nationally and in Rhode Island, fewer teens are having sex and those that are sexually active are more likely to use contraception.<sup>14,15</sup>

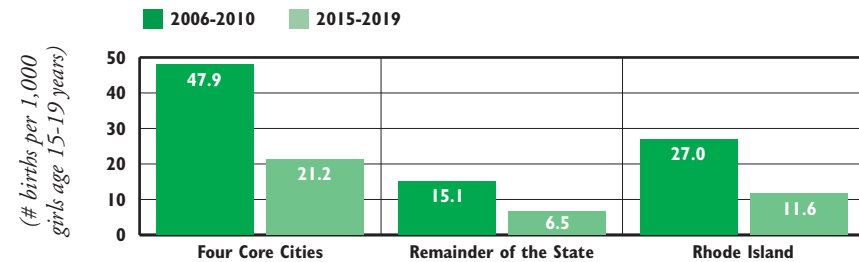
Teen Birth Rates (rate per 1,000 girls ages 15-19)		
	1991	2019
RI	44.7	10.0
US	61.8	16.7
National Rank*		6 <sup>th</sup>
New England Rank**		6 <sup>th</sup>

\*1<sup>st</sup> is best; 50<sup>th</sup> is worst

\*\*1<sup>st</sup> is best; 6<sup>th</sup> 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 2019: Martin, J. A., Hamilton, B. E., Osterman, M. J. K., Driscoll, A. K., & Drake, P. (2021). Births: Final data for 2019. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 70(2), 1-51.

## Teen Birth Rates, Rhode Island, Five-Year Average Comparisons: 2006-2010, 2015-2019



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2006-2019.

- ◆ In 2019, the birth rate for U.S. teens (16.7 births per 1,000 teen girls) was the lowest ever recorded. In Rhode Island, the teen birth rate was 10.0 births per 1,000 teen girls.<sup>16</sup>
- ◆ The statewide five-year average teen birth rate declined 57% between 2006-2010 and 2015-2019, from 27.0 births per 1,000 teen girls to 11.6. The teen birth rate in the four core cities declined 56% during that time but remains more than three times higher than the remainder of the state.<sup>17</sup>
- ◆ Despite declines among all racial and ethnic groups, disparities still exist in teen birth rates.<sup>18</sup> In Rhode Island between 2015 and 2019, the teen birth rates for Hispanic (29.5 per 1,000), Native American (27.9 per 1,000), and Black (14.9 per 1,000) teens were higher than the rates of their white (6.4 per 1,000) and Asian (3.3 per 1,000) peers.<sup>19</sup>

## Repeat Births to Teens, Rhode Island, 2015-2019

AGE	TOTAL NUMBER OF BIRTHS	NUMBER OF REPEAT BIRTHS	PERCENT REPEAT BIRTHS
15-17	528	32	6%
18-19	1,616	254	16%
<b>TOTAL 15-19</b>	<b>2,144</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>13%</b>

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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>



## Teen Birth Rates by Location

◆ In Rhode Island between 2015 and 2019, the rate of births to teens ages 15-19 in the core cities (21.2 per 1,000) was more than three times higher than the remainder of the state (6.5 per 1,000).<sup>22</sup>

◆ Ten percent of teen births in the core cities were repeat births, while 18% of teen births in the rest of the state were repeat births.<sup>23</sup>

◆ 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.<sup>24</sup>

◆ 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.<sup>25</sup>

◆ Among 15 to 19-year-olds in Rhode Island between 2008 and 2019, the rates of chlamydia have increased by 33% (1,388 to 1,848 per 100,000) and the rates of gonorrhea have increased by 118% (89 to 193 per 100,000).<sup>26</sup>

Table 27. Births to Teens, Ages 15-19, Rhode Island, 2015-2019

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	11	13	1.9 <sup>^</sup>
Burrillville	5	16	21	7.3 <sup>^</sup>
Central Falls	37	107	144	39.1
Charlestown	0	12	12	10.9 <sup>^</sup>
Coventry	7	21	28	5.1
Cranston	30	81	111	10.6
Cumberland	2	23	25	5.0
East Greenwich	0	3	3	*
East Providence	16	44	60	13.6
Exeter	2	2	4	*
Foster	1	5	6	*
Glocester	0	3	3	*
Hopkinton	1	9	10	*
Jamestown	0	1	1	*
Johnston	5	24	29	7.3
Lincoln	2	17	19	6.3 <sup>^</sup>
Little Compton	0	0	0	0.0
Middletown	4	11	15	10.6 <sup>^</sup>
Narragansett	2	1	3	*
New Shoreham	0	0	0	0.0
Newport	14	37	51	8.8
North Kingstown	6	17	23	5.6 <sup>^</sup>
North Providence	17	48	65	16.9
North Smithfield	2	5	7	*
Pawtucket	48	169	217	23.1
Portsmouth	1	3	4	*
Providence	225	572	797	17.5
Richmond	0	4	4	*
Scituate	3	9	12	7.6 <sup>^</sup>
Smithfield	2	4	6	*
South Kingstown	2	20	22	1.4 <sup>^</sup>
Tiverton	4	10	14	12.7 <sup>^</sup>
Warren	3	13	16	12.9 <sup>^</sup>
Warwick	18	73	91	10.0
West Greenwich	0	4	4	*
West Warwick	15	50	65	19.1
Westerly	2	24	26	8.0
Woonsocket	48	153	201	35.7
Unknown	2	8	10	*
Four Core Cities	358	1,001	1,359	21.2
Remainder of State	170	615	785	6.5
Rhode Island	528	1,616	2,144	11.6

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2015-2019.

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

<sup>^</sup> 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 Census 2010 Summary File 1, which are then multiplied by five.

In the 2012 *Factbook*, the denominators for the city/town table were updated with population data from Census 2010. *Factbooks* prior to 2012 used population data from Census 2000. Changes in rates are affected by the updated population data.

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*.

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

### References

<sup>1,14</sup> *Teen births: Indicator of child and youth well-being.* (2016). Washington, DC: Child Trends.

<sup>2,10,20</sup> U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Office of Adolescent Health. (2016). *Trends in teen pregnancy and childbearing.* Retrieved March 1, 2021, from www.hhs.gov

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). *About teen pregnancy.* Retrieved April 19, 2021, from cdc.gov

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

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