

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 academic achievement, have more health issues, and are more likely to have a teen birth themselves compared with children of older mothers.¹

There are strong intergenerational links between maternal education among teen mothers, and educational attainment, income, and well-being in the next generation.² Teen mothers are less likely to graduate from high school.³ Teen girls in foster care are twice as likely as their peers to become pregnant by age 19.⁴

Disparities exist in the teen birth rate by age, race, and ethnicity. Nationally, most teen births are to teens aged 18 or older. In 2019, 76% of teen births in the United States were to 18- and 19-year-old mothers. The teen birth rate is higher among Native American, Black, and Hispanic adolescents compared to teens overall, and the teen birth rate is lowest among Asian adolescents.^{5,6}

Effective teen pregnancy prevention programs address the social

determinants of health, and work within the community to support the health of adolescents. This includes access to quality reproductive health care and education.⁷

After peaking in 1991, the U.S. teen birth rate declined almost every year and reached a historic low in 2020 when the birth rate for teens overall declined 8% from 2019 to 2020 (from 16.7 per 1,000 to 15.4 per 1,000). Despite these declines, the U.S. teen birth rate remains higher than other developed countries.^{8,9,10}

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 2020 at a rate of 9.4 births per 1,000 teen girls.^{11,12} In Rhode Island between 2016-2020, 4% (465) of babies were born to teen mothers.¹³ Nationally, fewer teens are having sex and those that are sexually active are more likely to use contraception.^{14,15}

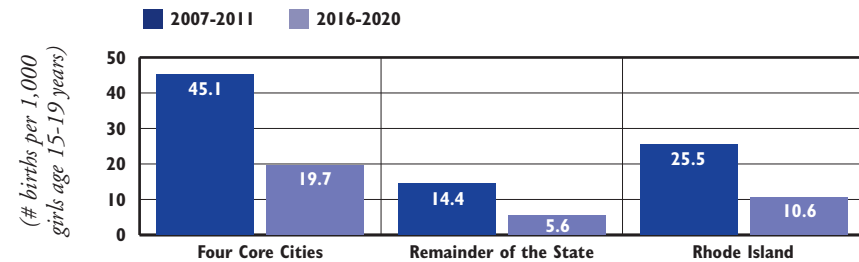
Teen Birth Rates (rate per 1,000 girls ages 15-19)		
	1991	2020
RI	44.7	9.4
US	61.8	15.4
National Rank*		7th
New England Rank**		5th

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th 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 2020, Martin, J. A., Hamilton, B. E., Osterman, M. J. K., Driscoll, A. K. & Drake, P. (2022). Births: Final data for 2020. *NVSR*, 70(17), 1-24.

Teen Birth Rates, Rhode Island, Five-Year Average Comparisons: 2007-2011, 2016-2020



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2007-2020.

- ◆ In 2020, the birth rate for U.S. teens (15.4 births per 1,000 teen girls) was the lowest ever recorded.¹⁶
- ◆ In Rhode Island, the statewide five-year average teen birth rate declined 58% between 2007-2011 and 2016-2020, from 25.5 births per 1,000 teen girls to 10.6. 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.¹⁷
- ◆ Despite declines among all racial and ethnic groups, disparities still exist in teen birth rates.¹⁸ In Rhode Island between 2016 and 2020, the teen birth rates for Hispanic (28.3 per 1,000), Native American (15.9 per 1,000), and Black (14.6 per 1,000) teens were higher than the rates of their white (6.4 per 1,000) and Asian (3.2 per 1,000) peers.¹⁹

Repeat Births to Teens, Rhode Island, 2016-2020

AGE	TOTAL NUMBER OF BIRTHS	NUMBER OF REPEAT BIRTHS	PERCENT REPEAT BIRTHS
15-17	465	33	7%
18-19	1,482	216	15%
Total 15-19	1,947	249	13%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2016-2020.

- ◆ Nationally, 16% of all births to teens ages 15-19 in 2019 were repeat births.²⁰ 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.²¹

Teen Birth Rates by Location

◆ In Rhode Island between 2016 and 2020, the rate of births to teens ages 15-19 in the core cities (19.7 per 1,000) was more than three times higher than the remainder of the state (5.6 per 1,000).²²

◆ Three percent of teen births in the core cities were repeat births, while 8% of teen births in the rest of the state were repeat births.²³

◆ Health care providers can play a key role in reducing teen births, by integrating comprehensive reproductive health counseling into health care for all people of reproductive age, to help reduce unintended pregnancies.²⁴

◆ 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.²⁵

◆ Among 15 to 19-year-olds in Rhode Island between 2009 and 2020, the rates of chlamydia have increased by 8% (1,442 to 1,564 per 100,000) and the rates of gonorrhea have almost tripled (81 to 236 per 100,000).²⁶

Table 27. Births to Teens, Ages 15-19, Rhode Island, 2016-2020

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	1	7	8	*
Burrillville	3	13	16	5.6 [^]
Central Falls	35	98	133	36.1
Charlestown	0	9	9	*
Coventry	3	19	22	4.0 [^]
Cranston	25	79	104	9.9
Cumberland	3	22	25	5.0
East Greenwich	0	2	2	*
East Providence	14	46	60	13.6
Exeter	0	2	2	*
Foster	1	4	5	*
Glocester	0	2	2	*
Hopkinton	0	8	8	*
Jamestown	0	1	1	*
Johnston	3	17	20	5.0 [^]
Lincoln	3	17	20	6.6 [^]
Little Compton	0	0	0	0.0
Middletown	1	9	10	*
Narragansett	2	1	3	*
New Shoreham	0	0	0	0.0
Newport	13	37	50	8.7
North Kingstown	5	14	19	4.6 [^]
North Providence	13	38	51	13.2
North Smithfield	2	5	7	*
Pawtucket	45	154	199	21.2
Portsmouth	1	3	4	*
Providence	205	539	744	16.3
Richmond	0	3	3	*
Scituate	5	7	12	7.6 [^]
Smithfield	2	4	6	*
South Kingstown	2	11	13	0.8 [^]
Tiverton	4	10	14	12.7 [^]
Warren	2	11	13	10.5 [^]
Warwick	13	70	83	9.2
West Greenwich	0	4	4	*
West Warwick	11	42	53	15.6
Westerly	2	21	23	7.1
Woonsocket	44	143	187	33.2
Unknown	2	8	10	*
Four Core Cities	329	934	1,263	19.7
Remainder of State	136	548	684	5.7
Rhode Island	465	1,482	1,947	10.6

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2016-2020.

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

[^] 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

^{1,3,10,14} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). *About teen pregnancy*. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

^{2,5,15,20} U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Office of Adolescent Health. (n.d.). *Trends in teen pregnancy and childbearing*. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from www.hhs.gov

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

^{6,9} *Teen Birth Trends: In Brief*. (2020). Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.

^{7,18} Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). *Social determinants and eliminating disparities in teen pregnancy*. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

(continued on page 183)