

# 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, particularly younger teen mothers, have difficulty finishing high school and continuing on to college. Only 38% of mothers who give birth before age 18 have a high school diploma by age 22, compared with 89% of young women who had not given birth as a teen. Less than 2% of teen mothers who give birth before age 18 finish college by age 30.<sup>1</sup>

Two-thirds of families headed by teen mothers live in poverty. About one-quarter of teen mothers have a second child within 24 months of the first baby, creating even greater challenges for the mothers to finish school, find and keep a job, and escape poverty.<sup>2</sup> Teen girls in foster care are more than twice as likely as their peers to get pregnant by age 19.<sup>3</sup>

Children of teen parents are at increased risk for low birthweight, preterm delivery, infant mortality, child maltreatment, and placement in foster care.<sup>4,5</sup> They score lower on standardized

tests, are more likely to repeat a grade, and are less likely to complete high school compared with children of older mothers. Sons of teen mothers are twice as likely to spend time in prison and daughters of teen mothers are three times more likely to become teen mothers themselves.<sup>6,7</sup>

Despite improvements in recent years, the U.S. teen birth rate remains higher than many other developed countries.<sup>8</sup> After peaking in 1991, the U.S. teen birth rate reached an historic low in 2015, with decreases among all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Rhode Island's teen birth rate mirrors national trends, peaking in 1993 and reaching an historic low in 2015.<sup>9,10</sup> Nationally and in Rhode Island, fewer teens are having sex and those that are sexually active are more likely to use contraception.<sup>11,12</sup>

In 2015 in Rhode Island, 539 babies were born to mothers under age 20, accounting for 5% of all babies born.<sup>13</sup>

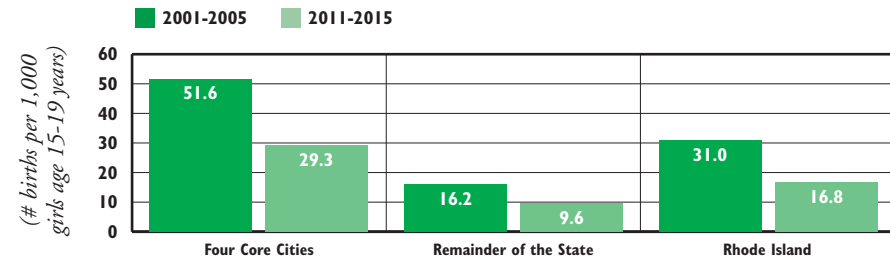
Teen Birth Rates (rate per 1,000 girls ages 15-19)		
	1991	2015
RI	44.7	14.3
US	61.8	22.3
National Rank*		7th
New England Rank**		5th

\*1st is best; 50th is worst

\*\*1st is best; 6th is worst

Sources: For 2015: Martin, J. A., et al. (2017). Births: Final data for 2015. *NVSR*, 66(1), 1-69. For 1991: Ventura, S. J., et al. (2014). National and state patterns of teen births in the United States. *NVSR*, 63(4), 1-33.

## Teen Birth Rates, Rhode Island, Five-Year Averages Comparisons: 2001-2005, 2011-2015



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2001-2015. Data for births in 2015 are provisional.

- ◆ The statewide five-year average teen birth rate declined 46% between 2001-2005 and 2011-2015, from 31.0 births per 1,000 teen girls to 16.8. The teen birth rate in the four core cities also declined by 43% during that time.<sup>14</sup>
- ◆ In 2015, the birth rate for U.S. teens (22.3 births per 1,000 teen girls) and Rhode Island teens (14.3 births per 1,000 teen girls) were the lowest ever recorded.<sup>15,16</sup>
- ◆ Despite declines among all racial and ethnic groups, disparities still exist in teen birth rates.<sup>17</sup> In Rhode Island between 2011 and 2015, the teen birth rates for Hispanic (42.6) and Black (30.2) teens were higher than the rates of their White (10.5) and Asian (9.6) peers.<sup>18</sup>

## Repeat Births to Teens, Rhode Island, 2011-2015

AGE	TOTAL NUMBER OF BIRTHS	NUMBER OF REPEAT BIRTHS	PERCENT REPEAT BIRTHS
15-17	916	48	5.2%
18-19	2,431	446	18.3%
<b>TOTAL 15-19</b>	<b>3,347</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>14.6%</b>

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2011-2015.

- ◆ Nationally, 17% of all births to teens ages 15-19 in 2013 were repeat births. Since 1991, repeat teen births have declined 23% nationwide.<sup>19</sup> To continue to reduce repeat teen births, pregnant and parenting teens should be connected with evidence-based family home visiting programs that address a broad range of needs and routinely offer effective postpartum contraception.<sup>20</sup>

## Teen Birth Rates by Age and Location

◆ In Rhode Island between 2011 and 2015, the rate of births to teens ages 15-17 in the core cities (19.4 per 1,000) was more than four times higher than the remainder of state (4.3 per 1,000). The birth rate for teens ages 15-17 in Central Falls was 30.5, compared to Woonsocket at 21.3, Providence at 19.9, Pawtucket at 13.4, and the state rate of 8.9.<sup>21</sup>

◆ The rate of births to Rhode Island teens ages 18-19 was more than twice as high in the core cities (37.0 per 1,000) than the remainder of state (16.7 per 1,000) between 2011 and 2015. The birth rate for teens ages 18-19 in Central Falls was 116.6, compared to Woonsocket at 90.4, Pawtucket at 53.5, Providence at 26.9, and the state rate of 25.3.<sup>22</sup>

◆ Health care providers can play a key role in reducing teen births by integrating comprehensive reproductive health counseling to all women and men of reproductive age, to help reduce unintended pregnancies.<sup>23</sup>

Table 26. Births to Teens, Ages 15-19, Rhode Island, 2011-2015

CITY/TOWN	# OF BIRTHS TO GIRLS AGES 15-17	# OF BIRTHS TO GIRLS AGES 18-19	# OF BIRTHS TO GIRLS AGES 15-19	BIRTH RATE PER 1,000 GIRLS AGES 15-19
Barrington	1	3	4	NA
Bristol	7	18	25	4.5
Burrillville	5	25	30	12.5
Central Falls	67	169	236	64.7
Charlestown	4	18	22	19.2
Coventry	12	42	54	9.4
Cranston	41	116	157	12.4
Cumberland	10	21	31	5.8
East Greenwich	0	10	10	4.1
East Providence	26	71	97	14.5
Exeter	6	13	19	13.5
Foster	2	5	7	9.1
Glocester	3	8	11	6.4
Hopkinton	5	7	12	9.9
Jamestown	0	1	1	NA
Johnston	11	43	54	13.3
Lincoln	5	21	26	7.4
Little Compton	0	1	1	NA
Middletown	11	21	32	14.4
Narragansett	2	4	6	2.3
New Shoreham	0	1	1	NA
Newport	21	53	74	14.4
North Kingstown	9	27	36	8.1
North Providence	16	55	71	16.0
North Smithfield	5	8	13	7.0
Pawtucket	96	242	338	29.0
Portsmouth	7	6	13	4.3
Providence	364	871	1,235	24.4
Richmond	2	10	12	11.2
Scituate	1	8	9	5.2
Smithfield	3	10	13	2.5
South Kingstown	2	28	30	2.1
Tiverton	5	8	13	6.0
Warren	4	15	19	14.0
Warwick	37	86	123	11.0
West Greenwich	2	8	10	9.0
West Warwick	32	109	141	36.5
Westerly	11	40	51	16.6
Woonsocket	81	226	307	48.7
Unknown	0	3	3	NA
Four Core Cities	608	1,508	2,116	29.3
Remainder of State	308	920	1,228	9.6
Rhode Island	916	2,431	3,347	16.8

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2011-2015. Data for births in 2015 are provisional and 2014 birth data do not include births among Rhode Island residents that occurred out of state.

The denominators for girls ages 15-19 are from the Census 2010 Summary File 1, which are then multiplied by five.

NA: Rates should not be calculated due to small numbers and the lack of statistical reliability.

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 15-17. 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.

Unknown: Births were Rhode Island residents, but specific city/town information was unavailable.

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

### References

<sup>1</sup> 2016 public policy agenda. (2016). Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

<sup>2</sup> Teen pregnancy, poverty, and income disparity. (2010). Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

<sup>35</sup> Teen childbearing and child welfare. (2013). Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

<sup>411</sup> Teen births. (2016). Washington, DC: Child Trends.

<sup>6</sup> Unplanned pregnancies and future opportunities. (2016). Washington, DC: National Conference of State Legislatures.

(continued on page 182)