

# 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 can impact the development of teen parents as well as their children. Infants of teen parents have higher rates of prematurity, low birthweight, and infant mortality than those born to women in their twenties and thirties.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

There are strong links between maternal education and educational attainment, income, and well-being in the next generation.<sup>3</sup> Teen mothers are less likely to graduate from high school. Teen girls in foster care are twice as likely as their peers to become pregnant by age 19.<sup>4</sup>

There are disparities in teen birth rates by age, race, and ethnicity. Nationally, most teen births (76%) are to teens ages 18 or older. The teen birth rate is highest among American Indian or Alaska Native, Black, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian and lowest among Asian adolescents.<sup>5,6</sup>

Effective teen pregnancy prevention programs address the social determinants of health and work within

the community to support the health of adolescents. This includes ensuring access to quality reproductive health care and education.<sup>7</sup> Nationally, fewer teens are having sex and more use contraception.<sup>8,9</sup>

After peaking in 1991, the U.S. teen birth rate has declined almost every year and reached a historic low in 2022. Nationally, the birth rate for teens overall declined 3% from 2021 to 2022 (from 13.9 per 1,000 to 13.5 per 1,000). Despite these declines, the U.S. teen birth rate remains higher than in other developed countries.<sup>10,11,12</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 2021 at a rate of 7.8 births per 1,000 teen girls.<sup>13,14</sup> In Rhode Island between 2018-2022, 3.2% (1,662) of babies were born to mothers under age 20.<sup>15</sup>

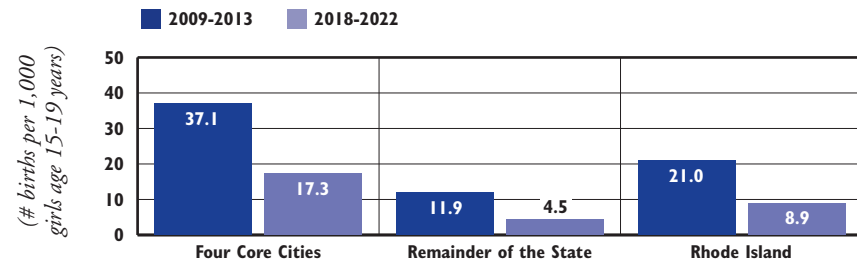
Teen Birth Rates (rate per 1,000 girls ages 15-19)		
	1991	2021
RI	44.7	7.8
US	61.8	13.9
National Rank*		5th
New England Rank**		5th

\*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 2021: Osterman, M. J. K., Hamilton, B. E., Martin, J. A., Driscoll, A. K., & Valenzuela, C. (2023). Births: Final data for 2021. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 72(1), 1-52.

## Teen Birth Rates, Rhode Island, Five-Year Average Comparisons: 2009-2013, 2018-2022



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2009-2022.

★ In 2022, the birth rate for U.S. teens (13.5 births per 1,000 teen girls ages 15-19) was the lowest ever recorded.<sup>16</sup>

★ In Rhode Island, the statewide five-year average teen birth rate declined 58% between 2009-2013 and 2018-2022, from 21.0 births per 1,000 teen girls to 8.9 per 1,000. The teen birth rate in the four core cities declined 53% 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 2018 and 2022, the teen birth rates for Hispanic (24.3 per 1,000) and Non-Hispanic Black (9.8 per 1,000) teens were higher than the rates of their Non-Hispanic white (3.7 per 1,000) and Non-Hispanic Asian (3.3 per 1,000) peers.<sup>19</sup>

## Repeat Births to Teens, Rhode Island, 2018-2022

AGE	TOTAL NUMBER OF BIRTHS	NUMBER OF REPEAT BIRTHS	PERCENT REPEAT BIRTHS
15-17	411	24	6%
18-19	1,251	161	13%
<b>Total 15-19</b>	<b>1,662</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>11%</b>

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2018-2022.

★ Nationally, 15% of all births to teens ages 15-19 in 2020 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 addresses a variety of needs and integrates a range of tailored services for young mothers and families.<sup>21</sup>



## Teen Birth Rates by Location

★ In Rhode Island between 2018 and 2022, the rate of births to teens ages 15-19 in the core cities (17.3 per 1,000) was more than three times higher than the remainder of the state (4.5 per 1,000).<sup>22</sup>

★ Twelve percent of teen births in the core cities were repeat births, while 9% 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 2023, 68.5% of Rhode Island high school students reported never having sexual intercourse. Of survey respondents who were sexually active 56.3% reported using a condom, and 11.1% used no method to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sexual intercourse.<sup>25</sup>

★ Among 15 to 19-year-olds in Rhode Island between 2012 and 2022, the rates of chlamydia have decreased by 5% (1,760 to 1,675 per 100,000) and the rates of gonorrhea have increased by 60% (144 to 230 per 100,000).<sup>26</sup>

Table 25. Births to Teens, Ages 15-19, Rhode Island, 2018-2022

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	0	4	4	*
Burrillville	2	9	11	*
Central Falls	26	78	104	21.3
Charlestown	0	5	5	*
Coventry	3	20	23	4.2 <sup>^</sup>
Cranston	26	74	100	9.6
Cumberland	2	21	23	3.7
East Greenwich	0	2	2	*
East Providence	12	40	52	13.0
Exeter	0	2	2	*
Foster	1	6	7	*
Glocester	0	1	1	*
Hopkinton	0	4	4	*
Jamestown	1	0	1	*
Johnston	5	13	18	4.2 <sup>^</sup>
Lincoln	4	13	17	4.6 <sup>^</sup>
Little Compton	0	0	0	0.0
Middletown	1	7	8	*
Narragansett	1	1	2	*
New Shoreham	0	0	0	0.0
Newport	11	34	45	7.2
North Kingstown	3	10	13	2.5 <sup>^</sup>
North Providence	9	28	37	7.3
North Smithfield	0	3	3	*
Pawtucket	43	127	170	19.0
Portsmouth	3	3	6	*
Providence	188	491	679	15.5
Richmond	1	2	3	*
Scituate	4	8	12	8.4 <sup>^</sup>
Smithfield	2	5	7	*
South Kingstown	4	6	10	*
Tiverton	2	8	10	*
Warren	1	4	5	*
Warwick	14	42	56	5.9
West Greenwich	1	1	2	*
West Warwick	9	40	49	16.7
Westerly	3	15	18	7.1 <sup>^</sup>
Woonsocket	27	114	141	25.5
Unknown	2	8	10	*
Four Core Cities	284	810	1,094	17.3
Remainder of State	125	433	558	4.5
Rhode Island	411	1,251	1,662	8.9

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2018-2022.

\* 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 CDC Wonder Database, 1-year estimate for race/ethnicity and American Community Survey RI 5-year estimates for city/towns

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</sup> March of Dimes. (2012). *Teenage pregnancy*.

<sup>2,4,8,12</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). *About teen pregnancy*. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from cdc.gov

<sup>3,5,9,18,20</sup> U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Office of Adolescent Health. (n.d.). *Trends in teen pregnancy and childbearing*.

<sup>6,11</sup> *Teen Birth Trends: In Brief*. (2022). Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.

<sup>7</sup> Office of Population Affairs. (n.d.). *About the teen pregnancy prevention program*.

<sup>10,16</sup> Hamilton, B. E., Martin, J. A., & Osterman, M. J. K. (2023). Births: Provisional Data for 2022. *NVSS Vital Statistics Rapid Release, no 28*. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

<sup>13</sup> Ventura, S. J., Hamilton, B. E. & Mathews, T.J. (2014). National and state patterns of teen births in the United States, 1940-2013. *National Vital Statistics Reports, 63(4)*, 1-33.

<sup>14</sup> Osterman, M. J. K., Hamilton, B. E., Martin, J. A., Driscoll, A. K., & Valenzuela, C. (2023). Births: Final data for 2021. *National Vital Statistics Reports, 72(1)*, 1-52.

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