

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 threaten 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.¹ 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.²

There are strong intergenerational links between maternal education among teen mothers and educational attainment, income, and well-being in the next generation.³ 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 19.⁴

There are disparities in teen birth rates by age, race, and ethnicity. Nationally, most teen births (75%) are to teens ages 18 or older. The teen birth rate is highest among American Indian or Alaska Native, Black, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander adolescents and 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 ensuring access to quality reproductive health care and education.⁷ Nationally, fewer teens are having sex and more use contraception.^{8,9}

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 declined 2% from 2021 to 2022 (from 13.9 per 1,000 to 13.6 per 1,000). Despite these declines, the U.S. teen birth rate remains higher than in other developed countries.^{10,11,12}

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.^{13,14} In Rhode Island between 2019-2023, 2.3% (1,147) of babies were born to mothers under age 20.¹⁵

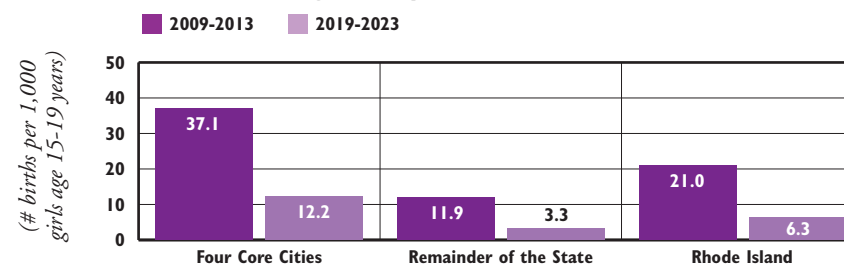
Teen Birth Rates (rate per 1,000 girls ages 15-19)		
	1991	2022
RI	44.7	8.3
US	61.8	13.6
National Rank*		7 th
New England Rank**		5 th

*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 2022: Osterman, M. J. K., Hamilton, B.E., Martin, J.A., Driscoll, A.K., Valenzuela, C.P. (2024). Births: Final data for 2022. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 73(2), 1-55.

Teen Birth Rates, Rhode Island, Five-Year Average Comparisons: 2009-2013, 2019-2023



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2009-2023.

◆ In 2022, the birth rate for U.S. teens (13.6 births per 1,000 teen girls ages 15-19) was the lowest ever recorded.¹⁶

◆ In Rhode Island, the statewide five-year average teen birth rate declined 70% between 2009-2013 and 2019-2023 from 21.0 births per 1,000 teen girls to 6.3 per 1,000. The teen birth rate in the four core cities declined 67% during that time but remains more than three times higher than in 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 2019 and 2023, the teen birth rates for Hispanic (17.4 per 1,000) and Non-Hispanic Black (7.0 per 1,000) teens were higher than the rates of their Non-Hispanic white (2.4 per 1,000) and Non-Hispanic Asian (2.0 per 1,000) peers.¹⁹

Repeat Births to Teens, Rhode Island, 2019-2023

AGE	TOTAL NUMBER OF BIRTHS	NUMBER OF REPEAT BIRTHS	PERCENT REPEAT BIRTHS
15-17	240	10	4%
18-19	907	87	10%
Total 15-19	1,145	97	8%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2019-2023.

◆ Nationally, 14% of all births to teens ages 15-19 in 2022 were repeat births.²⁰ 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.²¹

Teen Birth Rates by Location

◆ In Rhode Island between 2019 and 2023, the rate of births to teens ages 15-19 in the core cities (12.2 per 1,000) was more than three times higher than the remainder of the state (3.3 per 1,000).²²

◆ Nine percent of teen births in the core cities were repeat births, while 7% 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 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.²⁵

◆ Among 15 to 19-year-olds in Rhode Island between 2019 and 2023, the rates of chlamydia have decreased by 7% (1,849 to 1,719 per 100,000) and the rates of gonorrhea have increased by 70% (193 to 328 per 100,000).²⁶

Table 22. Births to Teens, Ages 15-19, Rhode Island, 2019-2023

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	<5	<5	*
Bristol	<5	<5	5	*
Burrillville	<5	-	7	*
Central Falls	21	51	72	13.6
Charlestown	0	0	0	0.0
Coventry	<5	-	17	3.3^
Cranston	16	54	70	7.4
Cumberland	0	15	15	2.2^
East Greenwich	0	<5	<5	*
East Providence	<5	-	29	7.2
Exeter	0	<5	<5	*
Foster	0	5	5	*
Glocester	0	0	0	0.0
Hopkinton	0	<5	<5	*
Jamestown	<5	0	<5	*
Johnston	<5	-	13	4.5^
Lincoln	<5	-	17	4.5^
Little Compton	0	0	0	0.0
Middletown	0	6	6	*
Narragansett	0	<5	<5	*
New Shoreham	<5	0	<5	*
Newport	6	25	31	5.7
North Kingstown	<5	-	11	*
North Providence	<5	-	20	4.4^
North Smithfield	0	<5	<5	*
Pawtucket	25	75	100	9.1
Portsmouth	<5	-	<5	*
Providence	103	384	487	11.3
Richmond	<5	0	<5	*
Scituate	<5	-	9	*
Smithfield	<5	<5	<5	*
South Kingstown	<5	5	9	*
Tiverton	<5	-	9	*
Warren	0	<5	<5	*
Warwick	8	35	43	4.5
West Greenwich	0	<5	<5	*
West Warwick	<5	-	37	15.5
Westerly	<5	-	13	5.0^
Woonsocket	17	79	96	18.5
Unknown	-	-	-	-
Four Core Cities	166	589	755	12.2
Remainder of State	74	316	390	3.3
Rhode Island	240	907	1,147	6.3

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2019-2023.

* 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 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.

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