

# 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.<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 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. Teen girls in foster care are twice as likely as their peers to become pregnant by age 19.<sup>2</sup>

Nationally, most teen births (75%) are to teens ages 18 or older. There are disparities in teen birth rates by age, race, and ethnicity. The teen birth rate is highest among American Indian or Alaska Native, Black, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander teens and lowest among Asian teens.<sup>3,4</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>5</sup> Nationally, fewer teens are having sex and more use contraception.<sup>2,6</sup>

After peaking in 1991, the U.S. teen birth rate has declined almost every year and reached a historic low in 2023. Nationally, the birth rate for teens declined 4% from 2022 to 2023 (from 13.6 per 1,000 to 13.1 per 1,000).<sup>7</sup> Despite these declines, the U.S. teen birth rate remains higher than in other developed countries.<sup>2,7,8</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 2023 at a rate of 7.5 births per 1,000 teen girls.<sup>7,9</sup> In Rhode Island between 2020-2024, 2.1% (1,060) of babies were born to mothers under age 20.<sup>10</sup>

Teen Birth Rates (rate per 1,000 girls ages 15-19)		
	1991	2023
RI	44.7	7.5
US	61.8	13.1
National Rank*		6th
New England Rank**		6th

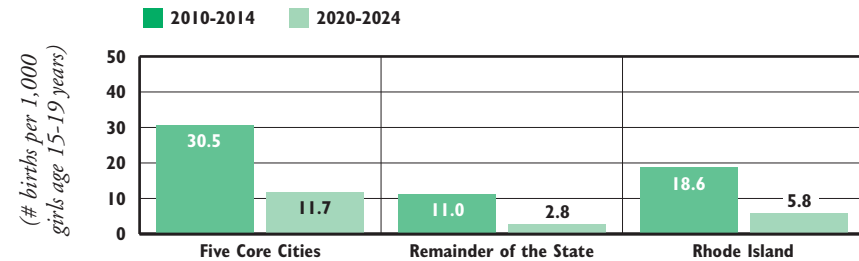
\*1st is best; 50th is worst

\*\*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 2023: Osterman, M., Hamilton, B., Joyce, M., Driscoll, A., & Valenzuela, C. (2025). *Births: Final data for 2023*. National Center for Health Statistics (U.S.).



## Teen Birth Rates, Rhode Island, Five-Year Average Comparisons: 2010-2014, 2020-2024



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2010-2024.

◆ In 2023, the birth rate for U.S. teens (13.1 births per 1,000 teen girls ages 15-19) was the lowest ever recorded.<sup>7</sup>

◆ In Rhode Island, the statewide five-year average teen birth rate declined 69% between 2010-2014 and 2020-2024 from 18.6 births per 1,000 teen girls to 5.8 per 1,000. The teen birth rate in the five core cities declined 62% during that time but remains more than four times higher than in the remainder of the state.<sup>10</sup>

◆ Despite declines among all racial and ethnic groups, disparities still exist in teen birth rates.<sup>6</sup> In Rhode Island between 2020 and 2024, the teen birth rates for Hispanic (16.1 per 1,000) and Non-Hispanic Black (6.0 per 1,000) teens were higher than the rates of their non-Hispanic white (2.0 per 1,000) and non-Hispanic Asian (2.0 per 1,000) peers.<sup>10</sup>



## Repeat Teen Births

◆ In Rhode Island, from 2020 to 2024, there were 1,060 births to teen girls ages 15 to 19. Of these births, 88 (8.3%) were repeat teen births or births to teen girls who had previously given birth.<sup>10</sup>

◆ Nationally, 14% of all births to teens ages 15-19 in 2022 were repeat births.<sup>3</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>11</sup>



## Teen Birth Rates by Location

◆ In Rhode Island between 2020 and 2024, the rate of births to teens ages 15-19 in the core cities (11.7 per 1,000) was more than four times higher than the remainder of the state (2.8 per 1,000).<sup>10</sup>

◆ 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.<sup>10</sup>

◆ 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.<sup>12</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>13</sup>

◆ Among 15 to 19-year-olds in Rhode Island between 2020 and 2024, the rates of chlamydia have increased by 2% (1,564 to 1,598 per 100,000) and the rates of gonorrhea have increased by 4% (236 to 246 per 100,000).<sup>14</sup>

Table 23. Births to Teens, Ages 15-19, Rhode Island, 2020-2024

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	<5	<5	<5	*
Bristol	<5	<5	<5	*
Burrillville	<5	<5	7	*
Central Falls	20	43	63	11.9
Charlestown	0	0	0	0.0
Coventry	0	15	15	2.9 <sup>^</sup>
Cranston	13	48	61	6.5
Cumberland	0	12	12	1.8 <sup>^</sup>
East Greenwich	<5	<5	<5	*
East Providence	<5	-	25	6.2
Exeter	<5	<5	<5	*
Foster	<5	<5	<5	*
Glocester	0	0	0	0.0
Hopkinton	<5	<5	<5	*
Jamestown	<5	<5	<5	*
Johnston	<5	-	16	5.5 <sup>^</sup>
Lincoln	5	12	17	4.5 <sup>^</sup>
Little Compton	0	0	0	0.0
Middletown	0	7	7	*
Narragansett	<5	<5	<5	*
New Shoreham	<5	<5	<5	*
Newport	<5	-	22	4.1 <sup>^</sup>
North Kingstown	<5	<5	12	2.5 <sup>^</sup>
North Providence	<5	-	17	3.7 <sup>^</sup>
North Smithfield	<5	<5	<5	*
Pawtucket	27	74	101	9.2
Portsmouth	<5	<5	<5	*
Providence	98	343	441	10.2
Richmond	<5	<5	<5	*
Scituate	<5	<5	6	*
Smithfield	<5	<5	<5	*
South Kingstown	<5	<5	11	*
Tiverton	<5	<5	7	*
Warren	<5	<5	<5	*
Warwick	7	33	40	*
West Greenwich	<5	<5	<5	*
West Warwick	8	38	46	19.3
Westerly	<5	-	13	5.0 <sup>^</sup>
Woonsocket	23	72	95	18.3
Five Core Cities	172	550	722	11.7
Remainder of State	62	276	338	2.8
Rhode Island	234	826	1,060	5.8

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2020-2024.

\* 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*.

Five core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

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