

Statistics on Teen Pregnancy

- Nearly 750,000 teens became pregnant in the United States in 2002. This resulted in approximately 425,000 births, 215,000 abortions and 110,000 miscarriages. [a]
- More than 10% of teen births nationwide, numbering 50,000 in 2002, took place here in California. [a] And some 3,100 of these births occurred in Orange County. [b]
- Despite a steady decline since 1991 [3], California still had the seventh highest teen pregnancy rate in the nation in 2000. Its rate of 96 pregnancies per 1,000 women aged 15-19 was well in excess of the national rate of 84 per 1,000. [a]
- But because a steep seven-year decline in California poverty rates abruptly ended in 2001, and is soon expected to reverse, California's decline in teen birth rates is threatened. [c]
- Based on this and other demographic changes, the California Department of Finance now predicts a 23% increase in the number of teen births by 2008. [c]
- Of the total number of teen pregnancies in the 15-19 year age group, about 65% involve 18-19 year olds and 35%, 15-17 year olds. [a]
- Although accounting for less than 2% of the adolescent total, 10-14 year olds in the United States delivered over 7,300 live births in 2002. [d] Nearly 900 of these births took place in California. [h]
- Approximately 34% of teenage girls become pregnant at least once before reaching the age of 20. At this level, the United States has the highest rate of teen pregnancy in the fully industrialized world. [f]
- Approximately 20% of teen births in California are to girls who have already had a baby in their teens. [g] And 25% of teen mothers have their second child within two years of the first. [e]
- The likelihood of a second birth among teens that have already had one baby is five times greater than for those who have not yet given birth. [h]
- In 2003, some 90% of births to females 15-17 years old were to unmarried mothers, compared with 62% in 1980. This is an increase of 45%. [i]
- Nearly 80% of the teen fathers do not marry the teen mothers of these children. [k] Furthermore, only 30% of teen mothers who *do* marry after their child is born remain in those marriages. [e] [j]
- Teen pregnancy is closely linked to single parenthood, and the growth in single parent families remains the most important reason for increased poverty among children. [f]
- Non-marital childbearing is the driving force behind the growth in the number of single parents, and half of first non-marital births are to teens. [f]
- Research shows that children born to single mothers are more likely to drop out of school, to give birth out-of-wedlock, to divorce or separate, and to be dependent on welfare. [b]
- Children of teen parents are more likely to be abused and neglected than children of older mothers. One study found more than twice as many such incidents reported to authorities for families headed by a teen mother. [f]
- Children of teens often receive inadequate parenting from mothers and fathers who are too young to master the demanding job of being parents. [f]
- Children in single-parent families are more likely to become pregnant as teenagers than their peers who grow up with two parents. [j]

- Less than 40% of teen mothers that begin their families before age 18 ever earn a high school diploma. Only 1.5% earn a college degree by age 30. [f]
- Teen mothers that do not finish high school tend not to have the skills necessary to qualify for a good-paying job. [k]
- Almost 50% of all teen mothers and more than 75% of unmarried teen mothers begin receiving welfare within five years of the birth of their first child. [k]
- More than 25% of teen mothers live in outright poverty while in their twenties and early thirties, compared to only 7% of women who postpone childbearing. The poverty rate is particularly high among the more than 60% of teen mothers who live on their own and are not employed. [e]
- The younger the teen mother was when she had her first child, the more likely it is that she will be living in poverty. [e]
- In 2001, only 30% of teenage mothers received child support. [f]
- Less than three percent of teens who give birth are willing to relinquish their child for adoption. This decision is not at all in the child's best interests since teen mothers are almost always forced to raise their children in impoverished, single-parent homes. [i]
- Some research suggests that teen fathers, the other victims of teen pregnancy, have lower levels of education and, in turn, 10-15% lower annual earnings than teens that do not father children. [j]
- Children born to teen mothers are 30% more likely to be a low birth weight baby and have a 50% higher rate of infant mortality than children born to mothers over 20 years old. [b] [e]
- Low birth weight raises the risk of other health problems for the child, including blindness, deafness, chronic respiratory problems, mental illness, cerebral palsy and mental retardation. [j] [k]
- Pregnant teens experience greater emotional stress and are more frequent users of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs compared to other pregnant women, behaviors that are associated with low birth weight. [e]
- Pregnant teens are among the age group most likely to receive *no* pre-natal care or to receive inadequate care. And the younger the teen, the lower the level of care. [m]
- Teens are at higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) than other age groups, because they are more likely to have unprotected sex with multiple partners. About one quarter of new STD cases each year occur among teens. [n]
- The annual cost to taxpayers for teen births in California, in 2001, was estimated to be \$1.5 billion. The total cost to California society, which includes total losses in earnings and privately paid medical costs, was estimated to be \$3.3 billion per year. [c]
- The annual costs in Orange County in 2001, taxpayer and societal, were estimated to be \$100 million and \$223 million, respectively. [c]
- Because of severe budget challenges currently facing California, state funding for existing teen pregnancy prevention and reproductive health programs are at risk. [c]

References

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