

TEEN BIRTH RATE

What does this indicator measure?

The *Teen Birth Rate* is the average rate of births per 1,000 girls ages 15-17 who gave birth in the three-year period between 1999-2001.

Why is this indicator important?

The teen birth rate is a measure of the risks to two generations – teen mothers and their babies. Teen childbearing has a negative impact on young women, their children, and society in general. It is estimated that the combination of lost tax revenues and increased spending on public assistance, health care, foster care, and the criminal justice system related to teen births costs the U.S. about \$7 billion annually.¹

Teen Birth Rate and Family Economic Security

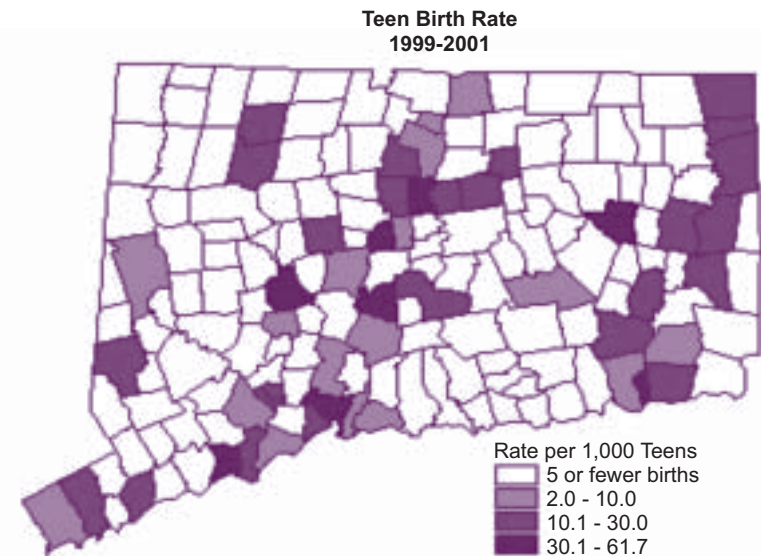
Unless a teen mother has substantial financial, emotional and social support after the birth of her child, she and her baby are at risk of the negative effects of poverty over the course of their lives.

- ▶ Only 4 in 10 women (41%) who become mothers before they are 18 years of age ever complete high school. This limits the mother's employment options, putting her at long-term risk of low-wage earnings.²
- ▶ Births to teenagers are strongly linked to poverty and single parenthood. Teen mothers are much more likely to go on welfare than women who postpone childbearing. The male partners of teen mothers tend to be older than teen-age themselves. Only 20% to 30% of the babies' fathers marry the mothers of their children.³
- ▶ Teen births can lead to significant health consequences. Teen mothers are more likely to lack adequate prenatal care, to deliver prematurely, and to have low-birthweight babies, raising the probabilities of infant death, blindness, deafness, chronic respiratory problems, mental retardation, mental illness, cerebral palsy, and hyperactivity among their children.⁴

- ▶ The children of teenage mothers are more likely to perform poorly in school. They are 50% more likely to repeat a grade, have lower performance on standardized tests, and are less likely to complete high school than the children of older mothers.⁵
- ▶ Babies born to teen mothers are at higher risk of abuse and neglect, including death.⁶
- ▶ About one-fourth of teenage mothers have a second child within 24 months of the first birth, and daughters of teen mothers are 22% more likely to become teen mothers themselves.⁷

How are Connecticut children and families faring?

In recent years, teen pregnancy, birth, and abortion rates have declined steadily, in all states and in all racial groups. In Connecticut, the 1991 teen birth rate was 26.3 per 1,000 15- to 17-year-old girls; in 1998, it decreased to 21.4 per 1,000 girls.⁸ As can be seen in the Teen Birth Rate table, the 1999-2001 average rate in Connecticut declined to 17 per 1,000 15- to 17-year-old girls.



Despite this statewide decline, very high teen birth rates continue in some of Connecticut's larger cities and in some smaller towns in eastern Connecticut.

What can be done: Teen pregnancy prevention

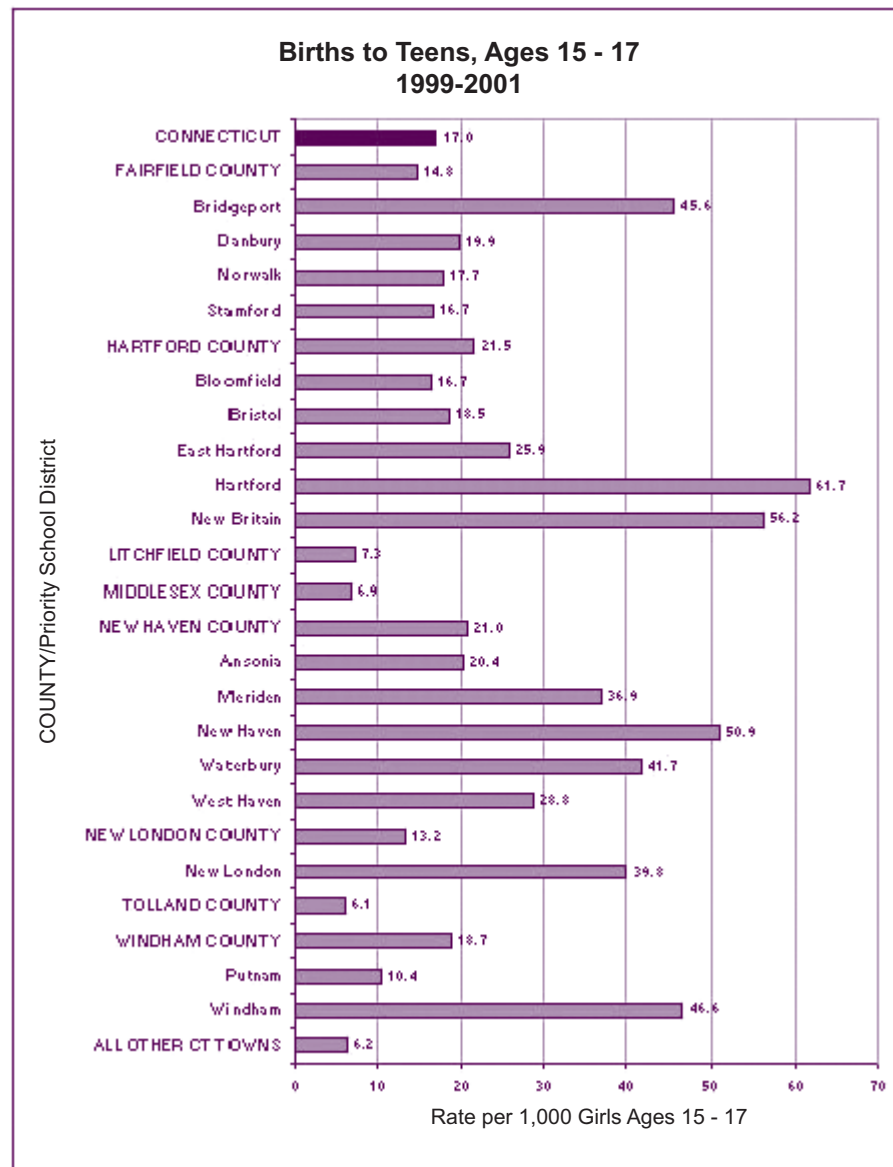
- ▶ Multi-pronged pregnancy prevention programs that focus on both abstinence and contraception are needed to further reduce teen pregnancy. Among high-risk groups, programs should address poverty, lack of opportunity, family dysfunction, and social and cultural factors.
- ▶ Programs also need to address sexual and/or physical abuse as studies reveal that young women who give birth as teens have experienced higher rates of abuse and involuntary sex.
- ▶ Programs that train parents and other adults to talk with their children about sex, without being embarrassed or judgmental, can reduce births to teens.⁹
- ▶ A study conducted in eastern Connecticut reported that focus group participants unanimously stated a need for more structured activities for teens as a preventive measure.¹⁰
- ▶ Home visiting programs that have been shown to reduce repeat pregnancies among teen mothers should be promoted.

Both declines in sexual activity and increases in the use of birth control are responsible for the reduction in the teen pregnancy rate in Connecticut. Although this decline is encouraging, we must not become complacent regarding this issue. The number of adolescents is increasing, so the absolute number of births to teenagers may increase. In fact, we must redouble our efforts to reduce teen pregnancy if we are to break the cycle of poverty and underachievement that results from kids having kids.

Where can I get more information?

More information can be found using the following sources:

- ▶ The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy at: www.teenpregnancy.org
- ▶ The Alan Guttmacher Institute at: www.agi-usa.org
- ▶ The Annie E. Casey Foundation at: www.aecf.org



Endnotes

- ¹ The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (1998). *When Teens Have Sex: Issues and Trends*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- ² National Campaign to End Teen Pregnancy. (2002). *Not Just Another Single Issue: Teen Pregnancy Prevention's Link to Other Critical Social Issues*. Washington, DC.
- ³ Maynard, R. A. (Ed.). (1997). *Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.
- ⁴ The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (1998).
- ⁵ National Campaign to End Teen Pregnancy. (2002).
- ⁶ The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (1998).
- ⁷ National Campaign to End Teen Pregnancy. (2002).
- ⁸ Ventura, S. J., Curtin, S. C., & Mathews, T. J. (2000). Variations in Teenage Birth Rates, 1991-1998: National and State Trends. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 48(6).
- ⁹ Plain Talk/Hablando Claro. (1998). *Counseling Teens in Responsible Life Patterns Regarding Parenting and Safe Sex*. Retrieved on February 11, 2004, from <http://www.hartnet.org/hha/initiatives/Plain%20Talk%20HTML.htm>
- ¹⁰ Andrews, E. (2001). *Health Resource Capacity Assessment for Putnam, Connecticut*. New Haven, CT: Connecticut Health Policy Project. Retrieved on February 20, 2004 from <http://www.cthealthpolicy.org>

What we need to know

- Department of Public Health population estimates of the number of 15- to 17-year-old girls by town, for non-Census years
- Annual teen pregnancy number by town

Teen Birth Rate

Source:

Connecticut Department of Public Health, 2000 and 2001 unpublished data, and 1999 *Registration Reports*, provisional data.
 U.S. Census Bureau. *2000 Census. Summary File 1, Table P12.*

Teen Birth Rate - 1999-2001

Location	# of Girls Ages 15-17	# of Births	Rate per 1,000	Location	# of Girls Ages 15-17	# of Births	Rate per 1,000
Fairfield County							
Bethel	47,787	709	14.8	Norwalk	3,552	63	17.7
Bridgeport	1,218	-	-	Redding	501	-	-
Brookfield	8,832	403	45.6	Ridgefield	1,467	-	-
Danbury	1,059	-	-	Shelton	2,109	14	6.6
Darien	3,561	71	19.9	Sherman	246	-	-
Easton	936	-	-	Stamford	5,262	88	16.7
Fairfield	435	-	-	Stratford	2,637	40	15.2
Greenwich	2,631	-	-	Trumbull	2,070	-	-
Monroe	3,033	8	2.6	Weston	603	-	-
New Canaan	1,278	-	-	Westport	1,410	-	-
New Fairfield	1,368	-	-	Wilton	1,137	-	-
Newtown	900	-	-				
	1,542	-	-				
Hartford County							
Avon	49,977	1,076	21.5	Manchester	2,982	45	15.1
Berlin	939	-	-	Marlborough	324	-	-
Bloomfield	1,149	-	-	New Britain	3,897	219	56.2
Bristol	1,020	17	16.7	Newington	1,392	7	5.0
Burlington	3,354	62	18.5	Plainville	843	-	-
Canton	534	-	-	Rocky Hill	795	-	-
East Granby	525	-	-	Simsbury	1,665	-	-
East Hartford	300	-	-	Southington	2,334	8	3.4
East Windsor	2,784	72	25.9	South Windsor	1,590	-	-
Enfield	525	-	-	Suffield	729	-	-
Farmington	2,544	19	7.5	West Hartford	3,456	47	13.6
Glastonbury	1,410	-	-	Wethersfield	1,221	-	-
Granby	1,869	-	-	Windsor	1,803	15	8.3
Hartford	651	-	-	Windsor Locks	678	6	8.8
Hartland	8,472	523	61.7				
	192	-	-				
Litchfield County							
Barkhamsted	10,884	79	7.3	Norfolk	78	-	-
Bethlehem	237	-	-	North Canaan	246	-	-
Bridgewater	312	-	-	Plymouth	732	-	-
Canaan	108	-	-	Roxbury	138	-	-
Colebrook	108	-	-	Salisbury	231	-	-
Cornwall	63	-	-	Sharon	195	-	-
Goshen	81	-	-	Thomaston	462	-	-
Harwinton	195	-	-	Torrington	1,905	25	13.1
Kent	342	-	-	Warren	72	-	-
Litchfield	93	-	-	Washington	186	-	-
Morris	531	-	-	Watertown	1,455	-	-
New Hartford	138	-	-	Winchester	570	15	26.3
New Milford	336	-	-	Woodbury	450	-	-
	1,620	10	6.2				
Middlesex Co.							
Chester	8,268	57	6.9	East Hampton	753	-	-
Clinton	198	-	-	Essex	327	-	-
Cromwell	819	-	-	Haddam	438	-	-
Deep River	747	-	-	Killingworth	315	-	-
Durham	264	-	-	Middlefield	201	-	-
East Haddam	420	-	-	Middletown	2,091	28	13.4
	477	-	-				

Methodology:

The number of births to 15- to 17-year-old females per 1,000 15- to 17-year-old girls in a town or county. The rate is calculated by summing the number of births to 15- to 17-year-old girls over three years and dividing by the number of girls, then multiplying by 1,000. The number of girls is obtained by taking the number of females 15- to 17-years old from the 2000 Census and multiplying by three (for the number of years).

This indicator is different than the total number of babies born to women under age 18, as a percentage of all live births.

The birth rate of 18- to 19 year-old girls was not reported because the number of 18- to 19-year-old girls is skewed in towns with colleges.

Five or fewer births are not reported due to confidentiality.

“# of births” includes all births for counties, including those not reported for towns with fewer than 6 births.

Births to girls under age 15 have been excluded because there are very few births to girls of that age in Connecticut (about 60 a year). The inclusion of females under age 15 in the denominator would dramatically lower the rate, giving an underestimate of the risk to teenagers.

Key:

- = Number not reported, rate not calculated.

Teen Birth Rate - 1999-2001							
Location	# of Girls Ages 15-17	# of Births	Rate per 1,000	Location	# of Girls Ages 15-17	# of Births	Rate per 1,000
Middlesex Co. contd.							
Old Saybrook	489	-	-	Westbrook	279	-	-
Portland	450	-	-				
New Haven Co.							
Ansonia	978	20	20.4	New Haven	6,996	356	50.9
Beacon Falls	336	-	-	North Branford	885	-	-
Bethany	324	-	-	North Haven	1,266	-	-
Branford	1,347	7	5.2	Orange	774	-	-
Cheshire	1,683	-	-	Oxford	645	-	-
Derby	570	10	17.5	Prospect	534	-	-
East Haven	1,464	12	8.2	Seymour	924	-	-
Guilford	1,464	-	-	Southbury	834	-	-
Hamden	2,970	26	8.8	Wallingford	2,346	16	6.8
Madison	1,242	-	-	Waterbury	6,258	261	41.7
Meriden	3,303	122	36.9	West Haven	2,739	79	28.8
Middlebury	456	-	-	Wolcott	915	-	-
Milford	2,691	15	5.6	Woodbridge	603	-	-
Naugatuck	2,028	16	7.9				
New London Co.							
Bozrah	162	-	-	New London	1,305	52	39.8
Colchester	894	6	6.7	North Stonington	381	-	-
East Lyme	1,044	-	-	Norwich	2,205	47	21.3
Franklin	132	-	-	Old Lyme	399	-	-
Griswold	684	14	20.5	Preston	327	-	-
Groton	1,818	28	15.4	Salem	249	-	-
Lebanon	507	-	-	Sprague	177	-	-
Ledyard	1,185	11	9.3	Stonington	978	-	-
Lisbon	276	-	-	Voluntown	180	-	-
Lyme	102	-	-	Waterford	1,044	8	7.7
Montville	1,125	12	10.7				
Tolland County							
Andover	198	-	-	Somers	546	-	-
Bolton	312	-	-	Stafford	747	-	-
Columbia	264	-	-	Tolland	855	-	-
Coventry	735	-	-	Union	33	-	-
Ellington	753	-	-	Vernon	1,431	24	16.8
Hebron	537	-	-	Willington	288	-	-
Mansfield	735	-	-				
Windham County							
Ashford	258	-	-	Pomfret	285	-	-
Brooklyn	429	-	-	Putnam	579	6	10.4
Canterbury	351	7	19.9	Scotland	84	-	-
Chaplin	129	-	-	Sterling	213	-	-
Eastford	129	-	-	Thompson	615	8	13.0
Hampton	99	-	-	Windham	1,179	55	46.6
Killingly	993	26	26.2	Woodstock	543	-	-
Plainfield	1,101	20	18.2				
CONNECTICUT							
	193,086	3,274	17.0				