



The Big Picture of Teen Pregnancy in Minnesota

What's going on with teen pregnancy and birth rates?

The teen pregnancy and birth rates in Minnesota and throughout the United States have been declining steadily since 1991. In fact, Minnesota has one of the lowest teen birth rates in the nation. However, Minnesota's African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian and Native American communities are experiencing some of the highest teen pregnancy and birth rates nationwide.

Nationally, the birth and pregnancy rates for teens in the United States are significantly higher than for teens living in other parts of the world. In the US, the adolescent birth rate is thirteen times higher than that of the Netherlands, six times higher than France and four times higher than Germany (National Campaign 2000).

Teen pregnancy rates

- In 1997, the overall U.S. teen pregnancy rate was 90.7 per 1,000 women aged 15-19 years, **down 22 percent** from its high point of 116.7 in 1991.
- In Minnesota, the teen pregnancy rate declined in 1997, 55.9 pregnancies per 1,000 women aged 15-19 years.

Teen birth rates

- **Did you know...**the US teen birth rate was substantially higher in the 1950s and early 60s than it is now. The highest recorded teenage birth rate was 96.3 in 1957.
- Between 1991 and 1998, the U.S. teen birth rate **declined 18 percent** from a 20-year high of 62.1 births per 1,000 females aged 15-19 to 51.1 per 1,000.
- The 1998 teen birth rate in Minnesota is also **18 percent lower** than in 1991, dropping from 37.3 to 30.6 births per 1,000 females aged 15-19.

***Note:** The teenage birth rate describes the number of births in a given year to a group of 1,000 teenagers. Total teen pregnancies include live births combined with induced abortions and fetal losses (e.g., miscarriages, stillbirths). In general, abortion and fetal loss data are not as current as the data on live births, so the most recent years for which teen birth and teen pregnancy data is available will be different. All data is from the National Vital Statistics Reports issued by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000.*

Why the recent declines in teen pregnancy and birth rates?

Because abortion rates have also declined since the early 1990s, teen pregnancy and birth rates have fallen because of a combination of other demographic and behavioral factors; namely, **fewer teens are having sex and more adolescents are using contraceptives** (Ventura, et. al. 1998, National Campaign 2000, Donovan 1998).

Research suggests that these trends are indicative of a number of factors at work, including:

- fear of AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections;
- more cautious attitudes toward casual sex;
- the availability and use of more effective, long-lasting, hormonal methods of contraception (like Depo Provera); and
- a strong economy, which provides many teens with an optimistic sense of their future.

Declines in teen sexual activity

- According to the 1998 Minnesota Student Survey, the percentage of sexually active teens in Minnesota public schools declined between 1989 and 1998 – a proportional decrease of 16 percent in the rate of sexual intercourse for female students, 25 percent for male students.

Why is teen pregnancy still an issue despite positive trends?

Despite the overall declines in teen pregnancy and teen birth rates, youth of color continue to experience higher rates than other groups. Differences in sexual activity and pregnancy are associated in part with differences between groups in economic opportunity and family stability.

- In the U.S., pregnancy rates for black and Hispanic teenagers are about **twice as high** as those for white teenagers.
- In Minnesota, youth of color are facing teen birth rates that are as much as **four to five times higher** than white teens in the same geographic area.
- The 1998 African American teen birth rate is 85.4 per 1,000 in the US and 115.4 per 1,000 in MN; **down 26.2 percent** from 1991, when the African American teen birth rate in MN was 156.3 births per 1,000 women age 15-19.
- The 1998 teen birth rate among Native Americans in MN is 92.5 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 – a **35.9 percent decline** since 1991, when the rate was 144.2 per 1,000.
- The 1998 Hispanic/Latino teen birth rate in MN was 130.2; in the US it was 93.6. This represents a **29 percent increase** since 1991 when the birth rate was 100.9 per 1,000.

The Teen Pregnancy Puzzle[®]

MOAPPP's Teen Pregnancy Puzzle[®] illustrates the complexity of the issue and the need for **comprehensive solutions based on best practice**. Interventions to prevent teen pregnancy (including repeat pregnancies among young parents) must provide all youth with a **wide spectrum of structured opportunities** that support their positive, healthy development. In order to effectively prevent teen pregnancy, **the whole community must be involved** in and committed to implementing and maintaining multi-faceted approaches. Youth and adults have a joint responsibility to prevent teen pregnancy and to ensure a positive future for generations to come.

Sources

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