

DATA BRIEF: A Look at Utah's Teen Birth Trends

INTRODUCTION



When teens give birth, the consequences are far reaching and often times negative for both the mother and child, and society as a whole. Teen moms are more likely to not finish high school,¹ to have mothers who completed fewer years of schooling and to have mothers or older sisters who also gave birth as adolescents,² and to eventually go on welfare.³ Children born to teenage parents are more likely to be of low birth-weight and to suffer from inadequate health care, more likely to leave high school without graduating, and more likely to be poor.⁴ And according to a report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation:

“Experts estimate that the combination of lost tax revenues and increased spending on public assistance, child health care, foster care, and the criminal justice system totals about \$7 billion annually for teen births.”⁵

In a new report just released by the Urban Institute, “Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy”, the authors indicate that children of teen mothers score lower than children of older parents in assessments of health, cognitive ability, and behavior. And while many of the differences between children born to teens and children born to older parents disappears when researchers control for background factors such as teen’s education, her mother’s education, and whether she grew up with both parents; some negative effects still remain including:

- babies born of teen mothers are still more likely to have low birth-weight, and
- have lower odds of completing high school.⁶

In light of the negative impact of teen parenthood it is important to have good information concerning births to teens and to track trends in this important area of child well-being. While Utah has enjoyed a declining teen birth rate for many years, the last few years have shown a slight increase in the rate. As you will see in the graphs on the following pages, the increase occurs in varying degrees when controlling for age, marital status, and ethnicity.

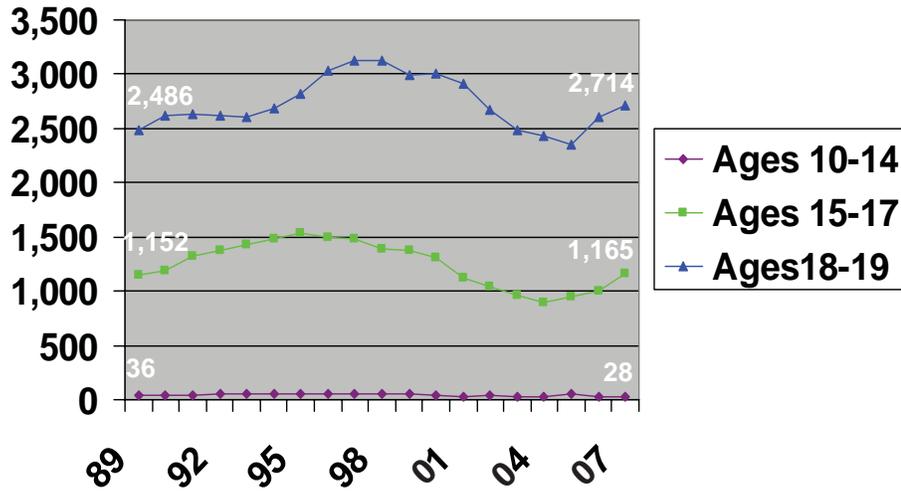


A product of the
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In Utah during 2003-2005 (average), low birthweight rates were highest for women ages 40 and older (10.1%) and under age 20 (8.8%)

Source: March of Dimes of Utah

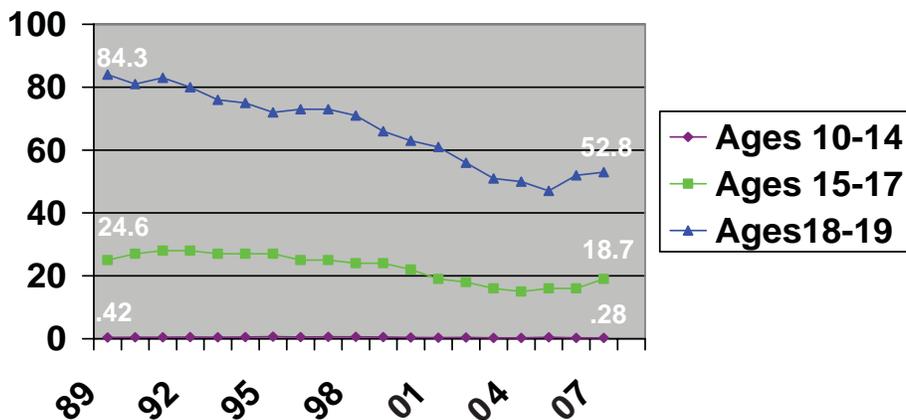
Number of Utah Teen Births by Age



3,132. However, there has been a rise in the number of births to younger teens (15-17) from 893 in 2004 to 1,165 in 2007. The same is true for older teens ages 18 and 19 (though the increase in teen births started a year later) with the number of births rising from 2,353 in 2005 to 2,714 in 2007.

The trend in the teen birth rate, which adjusts for the rise in the number of teens, is a slightly different story with the same ending. The teen birth rate is the number of births per 1,000 teens in the relevant age category. Rather than the fluctuation seen in the number of teen births, the birth rate showed a steady decline through the early part of 2000. However, starting in 2005 for younger teens and 2006 for older teens, the teen birth rate began to rise slightly for both age groups:

Rate of Utah Teen Births by Age, per 1,000 Teens



TEEN BIRTH TRENDS

The number of girls ages 15-19 has risen steadily over the years from 76,294 in 1989 to 113,614 by 2007. The number of teen births, however, has fluctuated over the same time period and for about the last 10 years Utah has seen a drop in the number of births. This yearly decrease in teen births has, for now, been replaced by an increase in both the number and the rate.

For girls ages 15-17, the number of teen births peaked in 1995 at 1,513 births. Births to teens ages 18-19 hit a high two years later in 1997 at

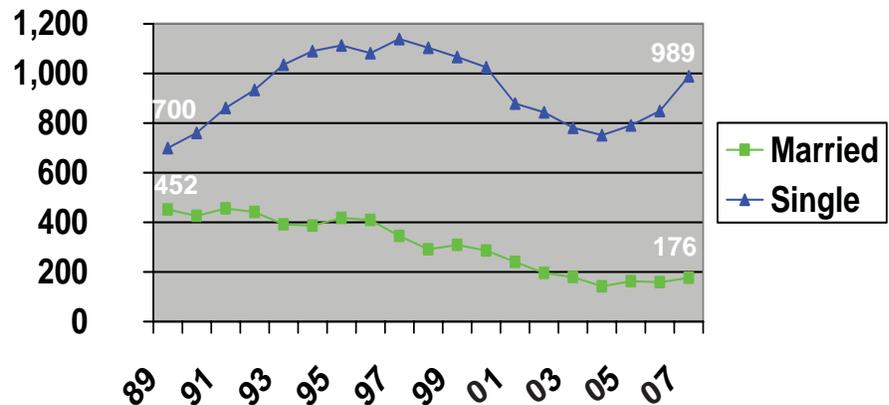
The good news is that, despite the increase, Utah still has a teen birth rate below the national rate. In the 2008 National KIDS COUNT Data Book Utah ranked 16th in the nation for births to teens ages 15-19. (Utah had a teen birth rate of 33 while the nation's teen birth rate is 40 per 1,000 teens).

Unfortunately, there are several of the Utah State Health Department's small areas which have teen birth rates higher than the nation. Rose Park (56.6), Glendale (54.2), Downtown Ogden (49.1), South Salt Lake

(44.5), and a portion of West Valley (44.5) all have teen birth rates higher than the nation. (Figures in parentheses are an average for 2003 - 2006 and are for teens ages 15-17.

It is interesting to note that Midvale which had an average teen birth rate of 52 births per 1,000 teens ages 15-17 for 1999 to 2002, declined to 27 births for 2003 to 2006. The Midvale Building Community Initiative has been working for the last four years on teen pregnancy prevention. Their program involves working with both parents and their teens to improve communication skills. It also instituted support groups for parents that provide resources and training on abstinence based education and family planning, whichever works best for each particular family. Also included are support groups for both girls and boys ages 9 through 18.

Number of Utah Teen Births by Marital Status of Mother, Ages 15-17



TEEN BIRTHS AND MARRIAGE

The chart above indicates that the trend has been for more of Utah's younger teen moms to be single rather than married. The gap widened considerably in the mid to late 1990's and is once again on the rise. The picture is very different for older teens. While marriage for teen moms for these teen moms was more prevalent in the late 1980's, by the late 1990's this trend line had flipped and more 18 to 19 year old teen moms are now single. Data for the two tables on this page are below.

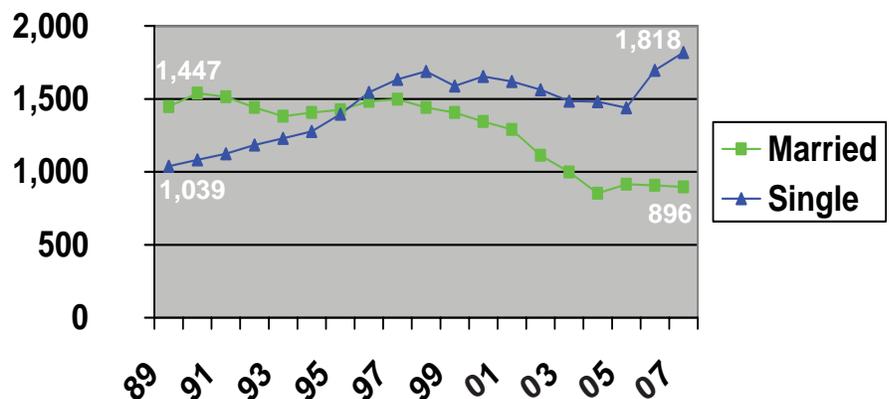
Married

Year	1989	1999	2007
Age			
15-17	452	309	176
18-19	1,447	1,407	896

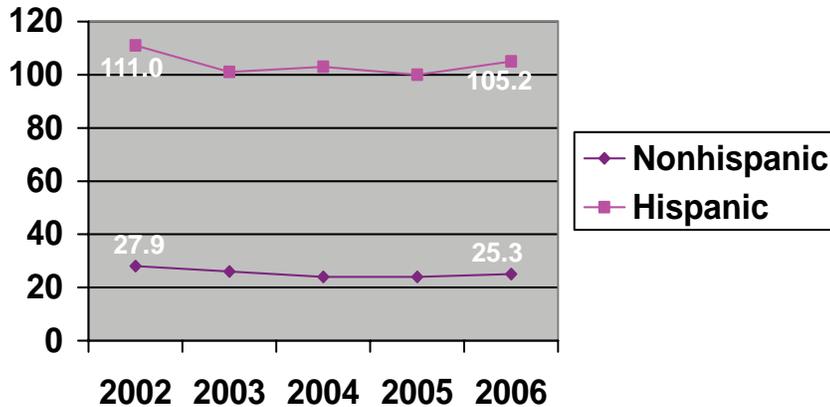
Not Married

Year	1989	1999	2007
Age			
15-17	700	1,066	989
18-19	1,039	1,589	1,818

Number of Utah Teen Births by Marital Status of Mother, Ages 18-19



Teen Birth Rates by Ethnicity, per 1,000 Teens Ages 15-19



TEEN BIRTHS AND ETHNICITY

The highest teen birth rates continue to be among Hispanic/Latina girls. In 2002 the teen birth rate among this population was 111 per 1,000 teens compared to 28 for non-hispanic youth. The same is true in 2006 where the birth rate for hispanic teens was 105 compared to the non-hispanic rate of 25.

SOURCES

All data was obtained from the IBIS Query System at the Utah Department of Health. The birth rate is live birth rate per 1,000 female population in a certain age group (i.e. live births to adolescent mothers per 1,000 adolescent girls of the same age in the Utah population). The statistics are provided by the Utah Birth Certificate Database, Office of Vital Records and Statistics at the Utah Department of Health. Population projections are from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, 2008 Baseline Economic and Demographic Projections.

END NOTES

1. U.S. General Accounting Office, June 1998, Teen Mothers: Selected Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Risk Factors, p. 14.
2. Kahn, Joan R. and Anderson, Kay E., Intergenerational Patterns of Teenage Fertility; Demography, Vol.29, No. 1, 1992, pp. 39-58;
3. Wertheimer, Richard and Moore, Kristin, Childbearing by Teens: Links to Welfare Reform, No. A-24 in Series, "New Federalism: Issues and Options for States," The Urban Institute, 1998.
4. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, Whatever Happened to Childhood? The Problem of Teen Pregnancy in the United States, May, 1997; Maynard, Rebecca A. (Ed.), Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy, The Urban Institute Press, 1997.
5. When Teens Have Sex: Issues and Trends, A KIDS COUNT Special Report. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1999.
6. Hoffman, Saul D and Maynard, Rebecca A. (Ed.), Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy, The Urban Institute Press, 2008

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