

BIRTHS TO TEENS (AGED 15-19) AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL BIRTHS

DEFINITION: Percentage of all live births to women aged 15-19, disaggregated by race.

SIGNIFICANCE

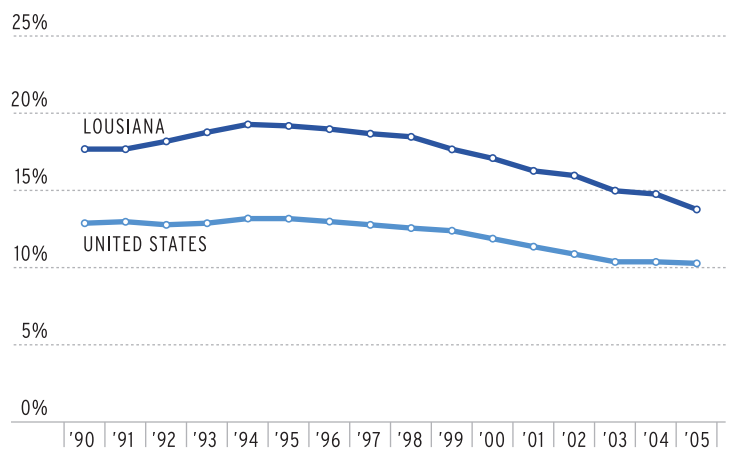
Children of teen mothers are more likely than children of older mothers to experience a number of negative outcomes throughout their lifetimes. Beginning at birth, babies born to teens are more likely to be born preterm and at low birthweight, putting them at increased risk for infant death, deafness, respiratory problems, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, as well as other difficulties.¹ Having a teen mother is also associated with higher rates of abuse and neglect, as well as worse educational outcomes for children. Researchers have also found that children of teen mothers tend to perform poorly in comparison with their peers on several different measures of school readiness, even after controlling for background characteristics. Daughters of teen mothers are three times as likely as daughters of mothers aged 20-21 to become teen mothers themselves.²

There are many reasons that children of teen parents experience such significant challenges. Their mothers are more likely to come from a less-advantaged background. Teen mothers are not only less likely to be married at the time of their child's birth, but they are also less likely to marry later in life than women who delay childbearing.³ This affects child well-being because children who live in single-parent households are significantly more likely to live in poverty than their peers who live in married-couple households. Furthermore, teen pregnancies are overwhelmingly unintended. In 2001, just 18% of all teen pregnancies were intended. Regardless of a mother's age, unintended pregnancies are associated with poor physical, educational, and mental health outcomes for the child.⁴

Further reductions in the number of teen pregnancies would have significant economic and societal benefits for Louisiana. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unintended Pregnancy estimates that teen births cost Louisiana \$165 million in 2004 alone. These costs included public health care, child welfare, incarceration, and lost tax revenues. Louisiana's success in reducing its teen birth rate between 1991 and 2004 resulted in an estimated savings of \$106 million in 2004.⁵

Following national trends, the percentage of all births to teens fell steadily in Louisiana between 1994 and 2005. In 1994, almost one out of every

PERCENTAGE OF BIRTHS TO FEMALES YOUNGER THAN 20 YEARS OF AGE IN THE UNITED STATES AND LOUISIANA 1990-2005



five (19.1%) of all Louisiana babies were born to a teen mother. In 2005, just 13.7% of all Louisiana births were to teen mothers. Despite this progress, Louisiana was still ranked 47th among states on this measure in 2005, meaning that only three states had a larger percentage of births to teens. By contrast, Louisiana's ranking (38th) in terms of our teen birth rate was much better.

DISPROPORTIONALITY

In Louisiana, black children are more likely to be born to a teen mother than their white peers. In 2006, 10.2% of all births to white women in Louisiana were to a mother aged 15-19 years. By comparison, the same was true for 20% of births to black women. Two parishes — Vernon and Concordia — had very little racial disparity in terms of the percentage of births to teens. In three parishes — St. Tammany, Ascension, and St. Charles — teen births comprised less than 10% of all births to black women.

DATA SOURCE

Live births 2006: Louisiana State Center for Health Statistics

RATE CALCULATION

100 * (number of births to teens aged 15-19 ÷ total number of births)

100 * (number of births to black teens aged 15-19 ÷ total number of births to black women)

100 * (number of births to white teens aged 15-19 ÷ total number of births to white women)

¹ National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, "Teen Pregnancy and Overall Child Well-Being," National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, retrieved from www.thenationalcampaign.org on 7/30/2009.

² E. Terry-Humen, J. Manlove, & K. Moore, "Playing catch-up: How the children of teen mothers fare," National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2005, retrieved from www.thenationalcampaign.org on 7/30/2009.

³ Emily Holcombe, B.A., Kristen Peterson, B.A., and Jennifer Manlove, Ph.D., "Ten Reasons to Still Keep the Focus on Teen Childbearing," Child Trends, 2009, retrieved from www.childtrends.org on 7/30/2009.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, "By the Numbers: The Public Costs of Teen Childbearing in Louisiana," National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2006, retrieved from <http://www.thenationalcampaign.org> on 7/30/2009.

PERCENTAGE OF BIRTHS TO TEENS (AGES 15-19)

2006 TOTALS

	TOTAL	BLACK	WHITE	RACIAL DISPARITY RATIO*
	% of all births	% of births	% of births	
LOUISIANA	13.9	20.0	10.2	2.0
Acadia	17.3	26.4	14.5	1.8
Allen	15.2	LNE	14.1	n.a.
Ascension	9.6	17.2	6.9	2.5
Assumption	13.5	23.3	LNE	n.a.
Avoyelles	18.4	22.5	16.2	1.4
Beauregard	13.4	LNE	12.9	n.a.
Bienville	19.6	26.7	LNE	n.a.
Bossier	12.9	17.1	11.7	1.5
Caddo	16.9	22.8	8.6	2.6
Calcasieu	13.6	17.6	11.8	1.5
Caldwell	16.1	LNE	LNE	n.a.
Cameron	LNE	LNE	LNE	n.a.
Catahoula	17.7	LNE	LNE	n.a.
Claiborne	17.2	21.6	LNE	n.a.
Concordia	20.7	22.1	19.5	1.1
De Soto	16.8	20.8	12.7	1.6
East Baton Rouge	13.1	17.8	6.6	2.7
East Carroll	17.0	18.3	LNE	n.a.
East Feliciana	10.6	14.5	LNE	n.a.
Evangeline	17.4	28.6	12.0	2.4
Franklin	20.5	26.0	16.7	1.6
Grant	14.5	LNE	13.4	n.a.
Iberia	17.1	22.9	13.1	1.8
Iberville	19.7	23.6	14.0	1.7
Jackson	14.0	LNE	LNE	n.a.
Jefferson	11.1	16.9	8.2	2.1
Jefferson Davis	17.2	27.6	15.3	1.8
Lafayette	11.2	19.6	6.7	2.9
Lafourche	14.5	23.8	11.6	2.1
La Salle	18.4	LNE	16.1	n.a.
Lincoln	14.2	19.1	9.0	2.1
Livingston	12.0	LNE	11.9	n.a.
Madison	19.7	19.5	LNE	n.a.
Morehouse	17.5	24.5	LNE	n.a.
Natchitoches	14.8	20.0	9.3	2.2
Orleans	13.7	19.6	3.1	6.3
Ouachita	15.7	22.2	10.4	2.1
Plaquemines	10.5	LNE	LNE	n.a.
Pointe Coupee	12.9	18.1	LNE	n.a.
Rapides	15.3	22.2	11.0	2.0
Red River	21.3	31.4	LNE	n.a.
Richland	15.3	19.0	LNE	n.a.
Sabine	16.2	LNE	15.4	n.a.
St. Bernard	16.0	LNE	15.0	n.a.
St. Charles	9.7	14.0	7.8	1.8
St. Helena	LNE	LNE	LNE	n.a.
St. James	12.1	17.1	LNE	n.a.
St. John the Baptist	12.9	16.2	7.1	2.3
St. Landry	17.7	23.5	12.2	1.9
St. Martin	12.8	17.5	9.2	1.9
St. Mary	16.9	21.1	14.5	1.5
St. Tammany	8.3	16.9	7.2	2.3
Tangipahoa	15.4	21.0	11.4	1.8
Tensas	LNE	LNE	LNE	n.a.
Terrebonne	14.0	18.8	12.0	1.6
Union	21.4	29.5	15.9	1.9
Vermilion	15.3	22.6	13.2	1.7
Vernon	12.5	13.9	12.4	1.1
Washington	14.0	19.4	10.8	1.8
Webster	17.0	22.8	13.6	1.7
West Baton Rouge	14.1	16.4	12.4	1.3
West Carroll	13.0	LNE	LNE	n.a.
West Feliciana	LNE	LNE	LNE	n.a.
Winn	17.6	LNE	17.1	n.a.

*The racial disparity ratio was developed by dividing the black rate by the white rate. The resulting number demonstrates the degree to which the percent of all births to teens are higher or lower for black births versus white births. A ratio of one shows that the rates are the same for both racial categories, while ratios greater than one reflect higher rates for black births. Statewide, a black baby was about twice as likely as a white baby to be born to a teen mother in 2006.

n.a. Racial disparity ratios were not calculated for any parish in which the number of births to teens of either race was less than 20.

LNE [low number of events] is used because the rate or percent may be unreliable.