

Teen Births

Definition

Teen births is the number of births to teens ages 15-19 and the rate per 1,000 females ages 15-19.

Data in context

All newborns need a strong start in life, and babies thrive when mothers are healthy and have a strong social support network, sufficient financial resources, and access to the education system.¹ Teen pregnancy jeopardizes the health and well-being of newborns and puts enormous pressure on youth to grow up quickly. Teen pregnancy can mean serious long-term social and economic consequences for a family and a community. Teen mothers face significant barriers to completing high school and earning adequate incomes, and they are also more likely to rely on public assistance.²

Even when accounting for maternal differences, such as income and marital status, children of teenage mothers fare poorer academically, socially, and behaviorally, and they are more likely to initiate sex earlier and become teen parents themselves.^{3,4} Children born to teen mothers face a higher risk of prematurity, low birthweight, and infant mortality.⁵

In 2004, the public costs of teen births, including increases in public health, child welfare, and incarceration costs, and decreases in tax revenue, were estimated at \$148 million for Kentucky.⁶

In 2005, the national teen birth rate declined to the lowest rate in 65 years at 41 births per 1,000, though the rate of decline slowed significantly.⁷ However, preliminary data for 2006 indicate the teen birth rate increased slightly for the first time in 15 years.⁸

Young women are more likely to delay sex and parenting when they live in neighborhoods with protective factors, such as economic resources, quality schools, and access to quality health care. In communities of color, due to the disproportionate impact of poverty, racial inequities limit social and economic opportunities that would otherwise promote adolescent reproductive health.⁹ Most teen births in Kentucky are to White women, though disparities in protective factors mean teen birth rates remain higher among Black and Hispanic teens.

Following national trends, older youth in Kentucky were more likely to have teen births in 2005. Birth rates for teens ages 18-19 were 86 per 1,000 compared to 24 per 1,000 for teens ages 15-17.¹⁰

Kentucky's teen birth rate dropped from 54 per 1,000 during 1999-2001 to 51 per 1,000 during 2004-2006. Rates were less than half the state rate in Calloway, Oldham, Rowan, and Woodford Counties and were highest in Knox and Owsley Counties. Between 1999-2001 and 2004-2006, the majority of counties (66 in total) saw their rates of teen births decrease, while 33 counties saw rates increase by 5 percentage points or more.

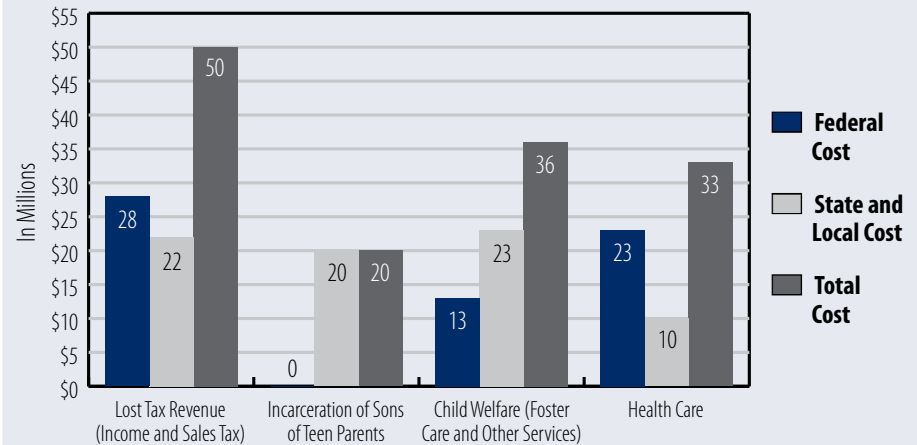
Communities can reduce teen births by educating youth about sex and risky sexual behaviors, as well as ensuring young women have protective factors, such as strong connections with their community and school and plans for their futures.¹¹ Such work is critical for young women of color to help them overcome housing practices where families have been concentrated with limited economic resources and disparate treatment in the education system.¹² Better access to health and reproductive health services is also essential to women of color, due in part to the lack of health insurance or other resources to secure proper care.¹³

Data Source: Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, processed by Kentucky Population Research at the University of Louisville Urban Studies Institute. Number of female teens in 2000 from U.S. Census Bureau and number in 2005 from Kentucky Population Research at the University of Louisville Urban Studies Institute.

Data Note: All data refer to totals over the 3-year periods of 1999-2001 and 2004-2006. Data are reported by mother's place of residence, not infant's place of birth. Data from 2006 are preliminary and exclude births to Kentucky mothers that occurred in Ohio.

Rate Calculation: (average yearly number of births to teens ages 15-19 between 1999-2001 * 1,000) / (number of female teens ages 15-19 in 2000) (average yearly number of births to teens ages 15-19 between 2004-2006 * 1,000) / (number of female teens ages 15-19 in 2005)

Selected Annual Costs for Children of Teen Parents in Kentucky, 2004



Source: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

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Births to teens 15-19 (number & rate per 1,000 girls ages 15-19)

	1999-2001		2004-2006	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Kentucky	22,808	54	20,566	51
Adair	105	53	100	50
Allen	103	52	95	57
Anderson	97	57	86	44
Ballard	34	49	29	40
Barren	215	56	202	56
Bath	74	72	76	78
Bell	212	66	187	65
Boone	337	38	331	33
Bourbon	84	46	91	49
Boyd	219	47	249	58
Boyle	135	46	142	52
Bracken	47	56	46	54
Breathitt	91	52	69	43
Breckinridge	91	47	91	54
Bullitt	275	43	226	33
Butler	95	64	61	44
Caldwell	68	54	64	56
Calloway	130	27	115	24
Campbell	453	46	390	41
Carlisle	35	60	22	47
Carroll	77	69	71	79
Carter	181	61	155	57
Casey	100	64	74	50
Christian	566	83	531	74
Clark	212	65	182	60
Clay	164	60	148	63
Clinton	68	73	48	59
Crittenden	47	49	42	48
Cumberland	44	59	39	68
Daviess	553	54	480	52
Edmonson	72	60	58	54
Elliott	42	57	41	58
Estill	111	67	100	78
Fayette	1,093	39	1,100	41
Fleming	77	56	63	45
Floyd	279	62	269	71
Franklin	241	51	221	48
Fulton	50	59	48	71
Gallatin	52	69	74	88
Garrard	61	43	59	40

	1999-2001		2004-2006	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Grant	180	73	150	65
Graves	202	56	189	55
Grayson	160	64	126	57
Green	55	53	59	57
Greenup	172	49	135	39
Hancock	54	65	43	53
Hardin	582	56	533	54
Harlan	245	68	231	77
Harrison	106	57	111	65
Hart	102	54	105	61
Henderson	292	61	269	67
Henry	100	68	76	49
Hickman	28	62	19	41
Hopkins	316	69	321	75
Jackson	111	74	83	66
Jefferson	3,768	56	3,118	49
Jessamine	156	35	221	47
Johnson	152	59	109	49
Kenton	796	53	752	51
Knott	95	42	94	49
Knox	288	83	293	99
LaRue	71	50	66	51
Laurel	381	70	326	66
Lawrence	93	55	95	60
Lee	41	51	45	70
Leslie	70	55	58	53
Letcher	164	59	144	68
Lewis	109	68	84	62
Lincoln	154	68	158	70
Livingston	42	43	37	44
Logan	171	60	171	70
Lyon	18	36	18	38
McCracken	339	55	292	52
McCreary	136	68	139	81
McLean	75	77	49	52
Madison	393	39	339	33
Magoffin	111	70	98	78
Marion	113	61	103	57
Marshall	137	50	122	48
Martin	98	66	81	68
Mason	86	57	107	68

	1999-2001		2004-2006	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Meade	158	57	98	36
Menifee	49	60	33	46
Mercer	113	62	101	58
Metcalfe	63	64	59	62
Monroe	67	53	64	61
Montgomery	145	67	148	68
Morgan	74	55	58	46
Muhlenberg	210	67	166	60
Nelson	201	51	209	52
Nicholas	47	72	46	75
Ohio	127	51	144	64
Oldham	84	18	96	18
Owen	56	52	68	68
Owsley	26	57	35	101
Pendleton	86	56	79	51
Perry	194	61	171	61
Pike	371	54	330	56
Powell	103	67	104	87
Pulaski	407	77	344	66
Robertson	14	75	12	48
Rockcastle	108	67	83	54
Rowan	106	27	76	21
Russell	96	62	109	68
Scott	182	47	200	49
Shelby	182	53	168	48
Simpson	123	79	98	68
Spencer	49	42	39	30
Taylor	139	53	120	48
Todd	69	57	52	45
Trigg	62	56	51	44
Trimble	47	59	29	34
Union	95	46	96	50
Warren	497	39	429	36
Washington	52	46	49	46
Wayne	123	64	155	82
Webster	95	62	69	51
Whitley	279	66	212	50
Wolfe	80	100	60	89
Woodford	77	31	62	24