

The scope of teen pregnancy

[Family](#), [Teenage Pregnancy](#)



According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy there has been a decline in teen pregnancy since the 1990's. Despite the decline in teen pregnancy the rates in the U. S. are still too high. Thirty percent of the teenage girls get pregnant at least once before they reach age 20 (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2006). Instead of becoming comfortable with knowing the teen pregnancy rate is declining, prevention programs need to continue as well as change with the changing trends. Seventy-five out of 1, 000 females between the ages 15-19 become pregnant according to the U. S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics. Research has shown that teens that become pregnant may come from disadvantage backgrounds. They may come from backgrounds with single parent homes, poverty, substance abuse, uneducated or miseducated parents of a history of teen pregnancy and low self-esteem, to name a few. (Teenpregnancy.org) Being miseducated by peers or even family members may be contributing factor in teen pregnancy. With low academic performance and no long-term goals teens will be more susceptible to becoming pregnant. High rates of teen pregnancy burden us all: teenagers, their children, and society at a large. When adolescent girls give birth, their future prospects decline. Compared to young women who delay their first birth until ages 20 or older, teen mothers complete less school, are more likely to have large families, and are more likely to be single parents. The children born to teens bear the brunt of their mother's young age. When compared to children born to women aged 20 and older, babies born to mothers aged 15-17 have less supportive and stimulating home environments, poorer health, lower cognitive development, worse educational outcomes, higher rates of

behavior problems, and higher rates of teen childbearing themselves. (marchofdimes. com) Teen parenthood is also considerable cost to taxpayers and society more generally. In 1992 the Federal government spent more than \$34 billion on welfare for families begun by teenagers, up from \$16. 6 billion in 1985. In 1995 Indiana spent \$7. 4 million in Aid to dependent children for approximately 2, 700 teen parents. For every federal dollar spent on giving contraceptives to low-income women the government saves more than \$4 in welfare payments, medical costs, etc. (The State of America's Children, 1996) Of all the women aged 15-44 who received welfare or AFDC in 1993, over half became mothers when they were teenagers. Only five percent were currently teenage mothers. After adjusting for other factors related to teen parenthood, the estimated annual cost to taxpayers of births to young women aged 15-17 years is at least \$6. 9 billion in lost tax revenues and increased spending on public assistance, health care for the children, foster care, and the criminal justice system.