
Teen Pregnancy

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*Focus
on*



N E W M E X I C O

TEEN PREGNANCY COALITION

PREVENTION • PARENTING

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January, 2000



A Look at Teen Pregnancy in the United States

The statistics in this publication reflect the most recent data at the time of publication. Please note the year listed for each statistic.

- Between 1991 and 1998 the teen *pregnancy, birth, and abortion* rates declined for all ages, races, and ethnicities – and in all states. This followed a sharp increase in the late 1980s.
- The 1998 U.S. teen birth rate for 15-19 year olds was 51 per 1,000.¹ Despite the recent declines, US rates are still much higher than in other industrialized countries.
- Reductions in teen births are due to a substantial increase in the use of contraceptives by sexually active teens and a decline in teen sexual activity.
- Almost 1 million teens become pregnant each year. About 4 in 10 teens will have at least one birth by age 20. Approximately 34% abort, 14% miscarry, and 52% give birth.²
- 78.8% of births to teens occur outside of marriage.¹
- In 1998, 22% of all teen births were repeat births. This percentage has also declined substantially.³
- On average, males are 2½ years older than the female, but 20% of all teenage mothers had a partner six or more years older. Half the births to 15-17 year-olds were fathered by men age 20 or older.⁴
- 66% of teen mothers report having experienced molestation, attempted rape, or rape.⁵





- The four risk factors that are consistently associated with teen pregnancy are: early school failure, early behavioral problems, family dysfunction, and poverty.
- Our most disadvantaged youth are most likely to become teen parents.



A Look at Teen Pregnancy in New Mexico

Although rural, with high poverty rates, high drop out rates, and low access to health care services, New Mexico has demonstrated commitment to documenting the scope of the teen pregnancy problem and to working on viable solutions.

NM Teen Pregnancy/Teen Birth Rates

- In 1996, NM ranked 6th in the US in teen pregnancy rates at 110 per 1,000. The US rate was 97 per 1,000 (1st NV, 2nd CA, 3rd AZ, 4th FL, 5th TX).⁷
- In 1997, NM ranked 5th in birth rates to 15-19 year olds at 68.4 per 1,000 births. The US rate was 52 per 1,000 (1st MS, 2nd AK, 3rd TX, 4th AZ).⁷
- In 1997, 18% of all births in NM were to teens. Nationally, about 13% of births are to teens.⁸
- In 1997, NM showed a decrease in the rate of childbearing for all but the 10-14 age group.⁸
- In 1998, there were 103 births to New Mexico teens under the age of 15.⁸
- One-third of all NM families begin while the mother is a teen.⁹

Facts: New Mexico Stats





NM Teen Pregnancy/Teen Birth Rates

- In 1998, teens in New Mexico gave birth to 4,964 babies.
 - Hispanic girls made up 44% of our female teen population; they delivered 64% of these babies.
 - Non-Hispanic white girls made up 40% of our female teen population; they delivered 19% of these babies.
 - Native American girls made up 12% of our female teen population; they delivered 13% of these babies.
 - African American girls made up 3% of our female teen population; they delivered 3% of these babies.
 - Other ethnic groups made up 1% of our female teen population; they delivered 1% of these babies.¹⁰
- The following counties had the highest teen birth rates when the three years, 1996-1998, were averaged:¹⁰

Per 1000	#1:	Sierra County	114.0
	#2:	Luna County	110.8
	#3:	Lea County	95.2
	#4:	Guadalupe County	93.6
	#5:	Curry County	92.8
	#6:	Eddy County	90.5
		New Mexico Average	71.8
- In NM, teen pregnancies result in 62% live births; 23% abortions; 15% miscarriages.²
- Approximately 80% of births to teens in New Mexico occur outside of marriage⁸ and 20% are repeat births.³
- In 1997, NM ranked 47 among states in per capita income, 23% lower than the national average. Poverty is both a cause and effect of teen pregnancy.





COSTS

To reduce teen pregnancy, we must address the hard issues of poverty, early school failure, and distressed families.

The “costs” of teenage pregnancy are much more than just financial. There are social, educational, and health implications, all of which lead to higher costs for taxpayers. The negative consequences most severely affect the child, then the mother, the tax payer, and the father — in that order.

\$\$ In fiscal year 1996, the federal government spent over \$38 billion to provide services and support to families begun with a teen birth. This includes families headed by adult females who were teens when they gave birth. In the same year, the federal government invested \$138.1 million to prevent teen pregnancy.⁶

\$\$ Nationally, children of adolescent mothers have more developmental and other health problems. This leads to higher health costs for taxpayers of at least \$1.5 billion.¹¹

\$\$ In NM, the cost of teen childbearing in 1990 was \$88 million.¹²

\$\$ It is estimated that NM taxpayers would save at least \$35 million per year if every teen birth were delayed until the mother was in her early 20's.¹²

\$\$ In NM, 7.8% of *all* births in 1997 were low birth weight (LBW = a live birth less than 2500 grams or 5.5 lbs.)⁸

- In 1992, the average cost of a normal birth-weight infant was \$741 (in Medicaid costs). The average Medicaid cost of a worst-case scenario (LBW and preterm infant) was 11 times more, or \$8,151.¹⁴

Costs





Kids Having Kids, a 1996 study by the Robin Hood Foundation¹¹ shows the differences in outcomes between mothers who had their first child before age 18 and mothers who waited until age 20-21. The differences are staggering and alarming, and support the efforts of NMTPC and the grassroots service providers working in prevention and parenting programs.

According to this report:

- By their late 20's, only 32% of teens who became mothers before age 18 had completed high school, compared to 76% of those who waited until age 20-21 to have children.
- Teens who become mothers before age 18 spend nearly five times more of their young adult years as single parents than do women who postponed childbirth to age 20-21.
- Teens who have a child before age 18 have larger families by age 30 than females who postpone childbearing until age 20-21. These larger families increase by 30% the number of children exposed to the risks associated with adolescent childbearing and thus needing additional social and economic support.
- Babies born to mothers under age 18 are more likely to be born prematurely and 50% more likely to be low birth weight babies.
- Children born to mothers under the age of 18 do much worse in school and are 2-3 times less likely to be rated "excellent" by their teachers than children of 20-21 year olds. They are also 50% more likely to repeat a grade.





- 23% of the children born to teen mothers under age 18 will be high school dropouts, compared to 11% of the children of 20-21 year olds.
- Children of mothers who gave birth before age 18 are more than twice as likely to be victims of abuse and neglect than children of 20-21 year olds.
- 5% of the children born to teen mothers under 18 are run-aways, compared to 2% of the children of 20-21 year old mothers.
- By age 24, 30% of the children born to teens under 18 will not be working, nor looking for a job, compared to 17% of the children born to 20-21 year old mothers.
- Daughters of teens who give birth before age 18 are 83% more likely to also become mothers before age 18 than the daughters of 20-21 year olds.
- Teen sons of mothers who gave birth before age 18 are 2.7 times more likely to be in prison than sons of 20-21 year old mothers.
- Over the child's first 18 years, the fathers of children born to mothers who were 20-21 when they had their first child, earn an average of \$3,000 more per year.
- Adolescent fathers, by age 27, earn about \$4,732 less than men who delayed fatherhood until age 20-21.
- Poverty is both a cause and effect of teen pregnancy.

Kids Having Kids





Root Causes of Teen Pregnancy

multi-level
social, economic, and developmental correlates
including family, community, and social dysfunction
not an "adolescent-only" problem

No single cause...

Individual

- ❖ participation in other high-risk behaviors (smoking, drinking, drugs)
- ❖ poor school performance
- ❖ lack of future goals
- ❖ sense of hopelessness and isolation
- ❖ poor decision-making skills

Family

- ❖ lack of fathers or other responsible, positive adult male role models
- ❖ mothers who were themselves teen mothers
- ❖ siblings who are teen parents
- ❖ ineffective modeling and reinforcement of family values
- ❖ lack of appropriate parenting skills
- ❖ increased financial pressures
- ❖ necessity for parent(s) to work outside of home, thus less time together as a family
- ❖ poor communication and communication skills
- ❖ sense of alienation

Community/Social

- ❖ increased poverty
- ❖ single-parent families without support systems
- ❖ media; influence of advertising
- ❖ decrease in number of full-time jobs that provide enough income for families
- ❖ discomfort with sexuality issues
- ❖ inability to address sexual abuse and its related issues
- ❖ peer pressure
- ❖ inability to collectively agree on a viable solution to address teen pregnancy
- ❖ lack of constructive youth activities



Comprehensive Solutions to Teen Pregnancy

multi-level
requires changes in society, economics, education,
and communication

not an "adolescent-only" solution

...No single solution

Individual

- ❖ youth involvement in community, volunteer work, and employment
- ❖ dedication to better school performance
- ❖ develop better interpersonal skills
- ❖ extra-curricular activity involvement (music, sports, etc.)

Family

- ❖ responsible and positive adult role models
- ❖ participation in youths' education
- ❖ appropriate and consistent discipline
- ❖ goal-setting
- ❖ increased and improved communication about sexuality
- ❖ more family activities

Community/Social

- ❖ increased employment and volunteer opportunities for youth
- ❖ more adults, especially males, to be active in teens' lives
- ❖ parent and teen support groups
- ❖ school-based health centers
- ❖ sexuality education at younger ages
- ❖ easy access to contraceptive services
- ❖ address the needs of impoverished families
- ❖ counseling/mental health services for behavioral problems, and sexual abuse
- ❖ include life skills education relevant to today's world
- ❖ commitment by businesses, churches, and other community organizations to support schools and other agencies' efforts in teen pregnancy prevention
- ❖ all children to have equal access and opportunities in education, extra-curricular activities, employment

Comprehensive Solutions to Teen Pregnancy



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The New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition

The New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition (NMTPC) is the statewide organization committed to the reduction of teen pregnancy in New Mexico. NMTPC provides updated information, education and training, networking opportunities, scholarships, and grassroots advocacy. We are a non-profit membership organization made up of parents, community leaders, educators, healthcare professionals and community advocates from across the state. Our efforts are focused on both the state and local levels; we collaborate with state and federal agencies, schools, churches, MCH councils, youth groups and other community-based organizations.

NMTPC offers post secondary scholarships to pregnant and parenting teens, and to young people who have been active in teen pregnancy prevention efforts.

Our Mission ...

To reduce teen pregnancy and the negative consequences of teen pregnancy and parenting in New Mexico.

Our Goals ...

- A. To be a proactive statewide organization focusing public attention on critical issues of teen pregnancy;
- B. To provide networking, training, and technical assistance in areas of teen pregnancy, prevention, and parenting.
- C. To provide a support structure for youth related to teen pregnancy issues.
- D. To support male involvement initiatives related to teen pregnancy issues.

All interested adults and teens are invited to join with us. Membership is \$25, full time students are \$10, and organizations are \$50. Your membership entitles you to an informative newsletter (3-4 times per year), reduced conference and training rates, as well as regular updates on statistics and important news.

For more information, please contact NMTPC at 505-244-9297 • FAX: 505-244-9298
e-mail: nmtpc@flash.net • web site: www.flash.net/~nmtpc

New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition

Please Join Us!

Name _____ Affiliation _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone (day) _____ (evening) _____

\$10 Full Time Student \$25 Individual \$150 Lifetime \$50 Organization

Make checks payable to: New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition, PO Box 35997, Albuquerque, NM 87176



**This publication was funded by the
Turner Foundation
and the
New Mexico Department of Health/PHD/Family Planning
*January, 2000***

