

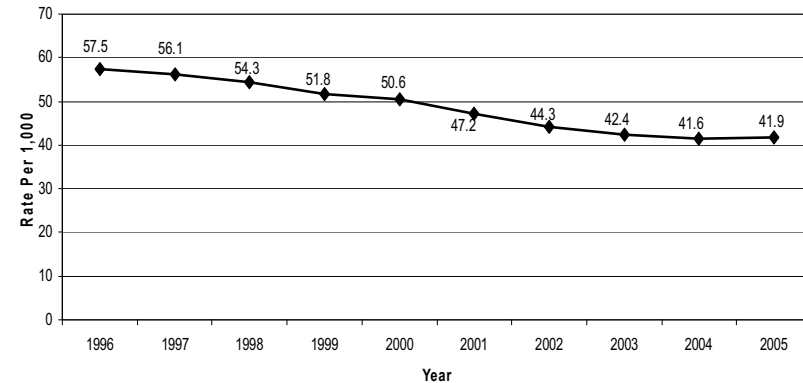
# Teen Births

*Teen pregnancy is closely linked to a host of problems, both for parents and the child. Florida is addressing the full spectrum of social issues that contribute to teen pregnancy.*

## Why is this Important?

- Teen pregnancy is a critical public health issue that affects the health, educational, social and economic future of the mother and child.
- Teen pregnancy is closely linked to a host of other critical social issues as well: welfare dependency, out-of-wedlock births, responsible fatherhood, and workforce development in particular.
- Adolescents are less likely to seek out prenatal care because they are afraid or embarrassed. This phenomenon and the immature physical nature of adolescents result in higher rates of low birth weight babies than in other age groups.
- As the offspring of adolescent mothers grow, they are more apt than children born to older women to have health and cognitive problems, and to be the victims of neglect or abuse.

Florida - Births to 15 - 19 Year-Olds: 1996 to 2005  
Rate Per 1,000



	US	Florida
1986	50.2	59.1
1987	50.6	59.6
1988	53	63.4
1989	57.3	67.9
1990	60.3	69.9
1991	61.8	68.9
1992	60.3	65.7
1993	59	64.2
1994	58.2	63.3
1995	56	60.4
1996	53.5	57.5
1997	51.3	56.1
1998	50.3	54.3
1999	48.8	51.8
2000	47.7	50.6
2001	45.3	47.2
2002	43	44.3
2003	41.6	42.4
2004		41.6
2005		41.9

## Teen Births, cont'd

### How is Florida Doing?

- The rate at which adolescents between ages 15 and 19 are giving birth has been declining in Florida and across the nation for more than 15 years. The teen birthrate in the US has shown a 17% drop in 17 years, about a percent a year, while the Florida rate has decreased by 29% over a 19 year period. Florida's birth rate to teen girls aged 15-19 dropped from 85.7 per 1,000 in 1970 to 41.9 in 2005.
- Both nationally and in Florida, the steepest declines in teen birth rates were recorded for black teens. Florida's birth rate for black teens aged 15-19 has declined by 26% since 1991. Despite the decline, the proportion of Florida births in 2000 to nonwhite mothers aged 18 years and under continues to be higher (12.3%) than the proportion to white mothers (6.4%).
- The birth rates for Hispanic teens have not mirrored the decrease in overall teen birth rates. Florida's birth rate for Hispanic girls aged 15-19 has increased by 9% since 1991. The birth rates for the youngest mothers in Florida aged 10-14 dropped from 2.0 in 1991 to 1.1 in 2000. Of teen births in 1999 to girls aged 10-14, 59% were to black teens, 30% were to Hispanic teens, and 11% were to white teens.





## Teen Births, cont'd

### What Influences Teen Birth Rates?

- Adolescents become sexually mature approximately four to five years before they reach emotional maturity. Many adolescents receive cultural messages indicating that unmarried sexual relationships are common, accepted, and at times expected.
- Young women may be at higher risk for teen pregnancy if they:
  - Use alcohol and/or other drugs, including tobacco products
  - Drop out of school
  - Lack a support group or have few friends
  - Lack involvement in school, family, or community activities
  - Perceive little or no opportunity for success
  - Live in a community where early childbearing is common and viewed as the norm rather than as a cause for concern
  - Have been victims of sexual abuse or assault
  - Have a mother who first gave birth at age 19 or younger
  - Begin dating at an early age

### What is the State's Role?

States can

- Ensure availability of primary care services, mental health/chemical dependency services; adolescent well-care services and family-planning services.
- Focus policy on the idea that preventing teen pregnancy is more than a reproductive health issue, but incorporates a host of other social issues.

### Florida Initiatives

#### The Great to Wait Program

shows why the best choice is sexual abstinence until marriage.

<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/abstinence/index.html>

#### The Healthy Start Program

provides information and referral services, comprehensive assessment of service needs, ongoing care coordination and support to assure access to needed services, psychosocial, nutritional and smoking cessation counseling as well as childbirth, breastfeeding and parenting support and education.

<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/mch/hs/hs.html>