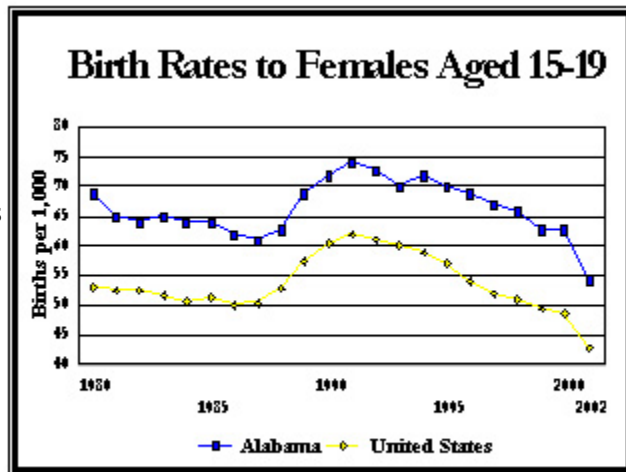


Teen Pregnancy in Alabama

PREGNANCY AND BIRTH RATES

- The U.S. teen pregnancy rate decreased by 24 percent between 1992 and 2000. The rate in Alabama declined by a nearly equal 22 percent. Even with this decline, however, the Alabama teen pregnancy rate of 91 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 in 2000 was the 16th highest teen pregnancy rate in the country.

- The U.S. teen birth rate declined 30 percent between 1991 and 2002, while the Alabama teen birth rate decreased 26 percent during the same time period. After reaching 66 births per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19 in 1998, the Alabama teen birth rate declined further, to 54.5 births per 1,000 teenage girls in 2002. Even with these impressive decreases, the teen birth rate in Alabama in 2002 was still the 10th highest in the U.S.



Sources: Alan Guttmacher Institute and U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, CDC

- Of all births in Alabama in 1999, births to unmarried women were 33 percent, slightly above that of the nation in the same year. Teenage births to unmarried women (73 percent) were among the lowest in the nation in 2002, while the national rate was 80 percent. Alabama's teenagers marry at a higher rate than teens in other states. In 1997 Alabama had the lowest rate of unmarried births to Hispanic teenagers, and the second lowest for white, non-Hispanic teenagers.
- Alabama has been aggressive in reducing unmarried births. In 1996, Congress established a \$20 million award for the top five states that reduce the out-of-wedlock birth rate without increasing the abortion rate. Alabama received the award for two consecutive years.
- Of all births to teens in Alabama in 2000, 82 percent were unintended, compared with births to adults in Alabama, of which 41 percent were unintended. In the same year, 68 percent of all teen pregnancies in Alabama ended in live births, 17 percent in abortion and 15 percent in fetal deaths.
- In 1999, the teen pregnancy rate for whites in Alabama was 51, compared with the national rate of 34. The rate for Latinas was 136, compared with the national rate of 93. For African Americans, the rate in Alabama was 83, compared with the national 81.

PROGRAMS

- The Alabama Department of Public Health has two branches to address teen pregnancy, the Alabama Abstinence-Only Education Program (AAEP) and the Alabama Unwed Pregnancy Prevention Program (AUPP).
- The AAEP funds community- and school-based initiatives that provide abstinence-only based education to 6th through 12th graders across Alabama.

Ten programs received funding in 2002. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System, one of the funding recipients, operates a model program, Teens Getting Involved in the Future (TGIF), in nine counties.

- Another program, "Choosing the Best Life" was established under the 1996 Welfare Reform Act, and run through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The program is an 8-session curriculum used to instruct abstinence and encourage teenage men and women to abstain until marriage.
- TGIF uses teen leaders from local high schools to promote a variety of abstinence-only based education activities. Evaluations of TGIF have found that the program increased sixth graders' self-intent to abstain from sexual activity, and contributed to changed attitudes about and a better understanding of abstinence-only related issues. TGIF also positively impacted the teen leaders' goal-setting, decision-making and attitudes toward abstinence.
- The AUPP educates preadolescent, adolescent and unwed women of childbearing age to prevent unwed pregnancy. The program, promotes leadership skills and provides volunteer experiences, career and character education. It operates through existing youth and adult education programs.

GENERAL

- The U.S. teen pregnancy rate of 84 pregnancies per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in 2000 marked a 27 percent decline from its recent high of 111 in 1992, and was the lowest rate since 1976.
- Between 1960 and 1986 the U.S. teen birth rate declined significantly, but large increases in the latter half of the 1980s resulted in birth rates that were higher than the previous decade. The teen birth rate has since declined to 43 live births per 1,000 teenage women nationally in 2002, including declines in every state. The teen birth rates varied by geographic region, with the highest rates in the southern and southwestern United States.
- Teen mothers are more likely than mothers in their twenties or thirties to come from poor or low-income families, depend on welfare and be single parents. Teen mothers are less likely to obtain adequate prenatal care and to complete high school or attend college. Children of teenage mothers are at greater risk for preterm birth, low birthweight, poverty and welfare dependence. They are more likely to lack a father, receive insufficient health care and experience school failure and mental retardation.
- Evaluation studies show that the most successful teen pregnancy prevention program is a long-term comprehensive program that combines work, education and sports activities with family life and sex education and provides medical care including mental health and reproductive health services. Such programs delay sex, increase the use of contraception and reduced pregnancy and birth rates among girls although they do not reduce sexual risk-taking behavior among boys.

This executive summary was prepared by Angela Bayer of the Population Resource Center (PRC) in May 2001, reviewed by the Alabama Department of Public Health, and updated by Megan McNamara of PRC in April, 2004. Sources include publications from the 2003 National Vital Statistics Reports, the Alan Guttmacher Institute, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, the National Center for Health Statistics, the Alabama Unwed Pregnancy Prevention Program, and the Alabama Center for Health Statistics. For further information, please contact PRC at (609) 452-2822; 15 Roszel Road, Princeton, NJ 08540.