



## **Teen Pregnancy: Its Cost and Consequences and what YOU can do to help**

**NCSL Fall Forum  
Washington, DC**

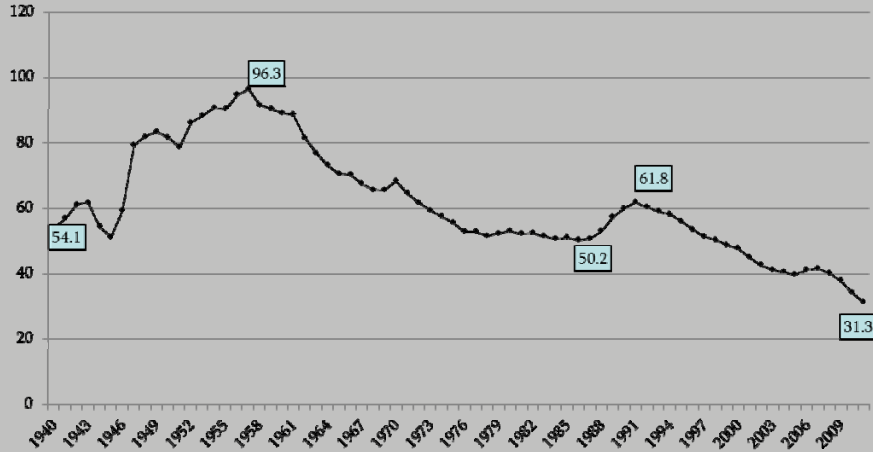
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### **What we'll cover**

- How are we doing in this area?
- Why Care?
  - Education
  - Workforce
  - Poverty
  - Budget
- What Can You Do?



## National Teen Birth Rates, 1940-2011



Note: Birth data for 2011 is provisional.

Sources: Ventura, S.J., Mathews, T.J., & Hamilton, B.E. (2001). Births to Teenagers in the United States, 1940-2000.

*National Vital Statistics Reports*, 49(10). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr49/nvsr4910.pdf>

Martin, J.A., Hamilton, B.E., Ventura, S.J., Osterman, M.J.K., Kirmeyer, S., Wilson, E., & Mathews, T.J. (2012). Births: Final Data for 2010.

*National Vital Statistics Reports*, 60(1). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

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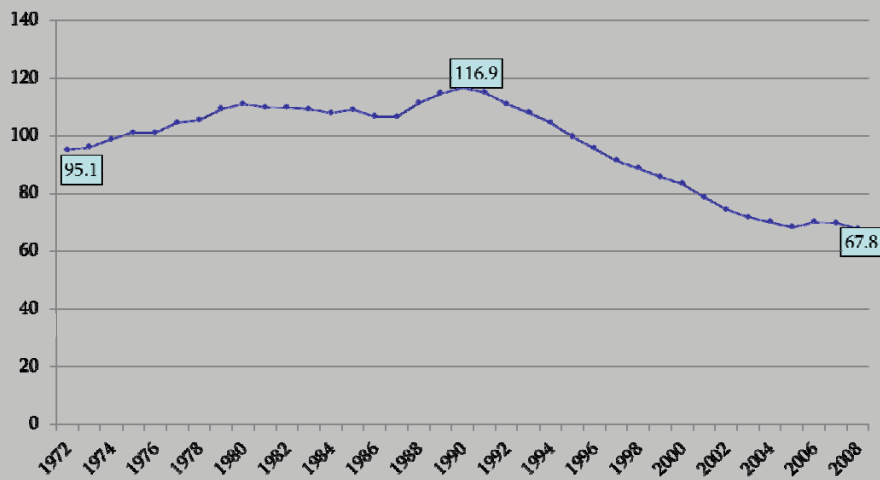
Hamilton, B.E., Martin, J.A., & Ventura, S.J. (2012). Births: Preliminary Data for 2011. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 61(5). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

Retrieved from [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr61/nvsr61\\_05.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr61/nvsr61_05.pdf)



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## National Teen Pregnancy Rates, 1972-2008



Source: Kost, K., & Henshaw S. (2012). U.S. Teenage Pregnancy, Births, and Abortions, 2008: National Trends by Age, Race and Ethnicity.

New York: Guttmacher Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/USTP2008.pdf>



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## Why does all this matter?

What are the consequences:

For the teen mom?

For her child?

For taxpayers?

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## Connection to poverty

- Poverty is both a cause and consequence of teen pregnancy
- About half of teen mothers live below the FPL
- As their children grow older, their likelihood of living in poverty increases – in part because more of them have moved out of their parents' home

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## The dropping out problem



- Nearly 1 in 4 U.S. public school students drop out of high school.
- Nearly 3 in 10 teen girls who drop out cite pregnancy or parenthood as a key reason; for Hispanic and African American girls, it's 4 in 10

One high school dropout costs the nation approximately \$260,000 in lost earnings, taxes, and productivity

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## Connection to education and workforce preparation

- Only 51% of teen moms get a high school diploma by age 22 vs. 89% of women without a teen birth
- Only 38% of young teen moms (who have children before 18) graduate from high school.
- Fewer than 2% of teen mothers have a college degree by age 30.

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## Connection to college completion

- 61% of women who have children after enrolling in community college fail to finish their degree—a rate 2/3 higher than the rate for those who didn't have children
- 82% of students say that having a child while still in school would make it harder to accomplish their goals
- NB: a college graduate will earn, on average, \$1 million more than a high school dropout

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## Connection to child welfare

- By age 19, 1/2 of girls who were in foster care become pregnant (about 2.5X more likely than those not in foster care)
- By age 21, 7 in 10 girls who were in foster care become pregnant and 1/2 of young men reported getting a girl pregnant

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## Children of teen parents



Too-early pregnancy and parenthood also affects the future prospects of *children* of teen parents.

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## For example...

- Compared to children born to older mothers (20-21 years old), children born to teen moms are more likely to:
  - start school at a disadvantage
  - drop out of high school
  - use Medicaid and SCHIP
  - experience abuse/neglect and enter the foster care system
  - end up in prison (sons)
  - be raised in single parent families
  - become teen parents themselves

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## If you remember only one thing...

A child born to a teen mom who has not finished high school and is not married is **9 times > likely to be poor** than a child born to an adult who has finished high school and is married

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## Costs of teen childbearing in the US



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## What can YOU do?

- Back to basics: there are only 2 ways to prevent pregnancy
  - Less sex
  - More contraception
- Prevention must affect one or both of these goals
- And remember: The only teens getting pregnant are those having sex and not using contraception effectively

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## Some strategic advice

- Invest in approaches that have **evidence** of success
- Ask: what will lead to the **most** progress and/or have the biggest impact?
- Ask: what is my state/community likely to support?
- Enlist many sectors: businesses, faith, media, parents, teens, community groups...

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## More advice

- Consider embedding TPP in *other* priorities (i.e. dropout prevention, child welfare, economic development)
- Set clear goals
- Use data to assess progress and stress accountability
- Encourage those on the front lines
- Maybe use Aunt Sarah's tips...

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## What programs work?

- Over 30 educational programs have been rigorously evaluated and found to change teens' behavior
- A variety of approaches and settings
- Body of evidence continuing to grow through current federal grants

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## Some State/Local Initiatives to consider

- Arkansas task force and data analysis
- South Carolina legislative task force
- New Mexico state and local goals
- West Virginia legislative forum

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## More...

- Massachusetts foster care initiative
- West Virginia school superintendent/DHHR partnership
- Many states/communities investing in effective youth development approach – Teen Outreach Program

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## More...

- Mississippi

- Blueprint for Economic Development
- Governor made it a priority, created state task forces, called for a plan
- Local input
- School districts decide on sex ed approach using state-approved list of programs

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## And finally...

### California

- public/private investments
- multi-prong: education, health services, media, community grants, male involvement
- sustained through bipartisan administrations
- data driven: focus on hot spots
- dramatic declines in teen pregnancy/birth rates

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**Thank You!**

**For more information check out:**

**TheNationalCampaign.org**

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