

## Unmarried Teen Births

### Definition

#### Unmarried Teen Birth Rate

The Unmarried Teen Birth Rate is the number of births to unmarried teenage females between the ages of 15 and 17, per 1,000 females. The data are reported by mother's county of residence, rather than infant's place of birth.

### Significance

Because of the strong correlation between single parenthood and poverty, the Unmarried Teen Birth Rate is an important predictor of children's economic well-being. "Children growing up in single-parent households typically do not have the same economic and human resources available as those growing up in two-parent families."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, babies born to young, unmarried teens reflect a group of children who will have to overcome high odds to thrive.

### Risk Factors

The risk factors for single parenthood among teens are the same ones mentioned in the previous section. Teens most likely to have a child outside marriage are those: 1) from economically disadvantaged families and communities, 2) not doing well in school and having low aspirations for educational achievement, 3) from dysfunctional families and 4) with substance abuse and behavioral problems.<sup>2</sup>

### Impact

- ◆ Today's teen parents face very different circumstances than their counterparts of 30 years ago. In 1965, 22 percent of teen births occurred outside of marriage.<sup>3</sup> The corresponding figure for 1997 was 87.<sup>4</sup>
- ◆ The vast majority of unmarried teen mothers choose to keep their children rather than put them up for adoption.<sup>5</sup>
- ◆ "Eight to 12 years after birth, a child born to an unmarried, teenage, high school dropout is 10 times more likely to be living in poverty than a child born to a mother with none of these three characteristics."<sup>6</sup>
- ◆ Failure in school, behavioral problems and delinquency are common among the children of unmarried teenage mothers.<sup>7</sup>
- ◆ More than 75 percent of all unmarried teen mothers went on welfare within five years of the birth of their first child. About 55 percent of all mothers on welfare were teenagers at the time their first child was born.<sup>8</sup>

### Nevada

From 1996 to 1998, the Unmarried Teen Birth Rate in Nevada was **30** per 1,000 females, ages 15-17. The Annie E. Casey Foundation reported that in 1996, 77 percent of all teen births in Nevada (ages 15-19) were to unmarried teens, versus the national average of 76 percent.<sup>9</sup>

### Counties

The Unmarried Teen Birth Rate ranged from a low of 0 in Esmeralda and Eureka counties to a high of 33 in Clark County.

**\* Nevada 1999 National Rank: 18<sup>10</sup>**

***"Premature parenthood is more than a 9-month interruption in a youth's life. Rather, it can further complicate a life that is already deficient in promise, hope, and dreams for the future."***<sup>11</sup>

***\* Based on teenage females 15-19 years of age.***

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## Unmarried Teen Birth Rate, 1996 - 1998

(Births per 1000 females, ages 15 - 17)

	1996 Births to Unmarried Teens	1996 Female Population Ages 15-17	1997 Births to Unmarried Teens	1997 Female Population Ages 15-17	1998 Births to Unmarried Teens	1998 Female Population Ages 15-17*	Unmarried Teen Birth Rates 1996-1998**
Carson City	30	832	35	847	19	929	32
Churchill County	8	491	12	532	16	531	23
Clark County	660	21,009	805	22,235	751	23,604	33
Douglas County	6	843	9	886	9	923	9
Elko County	28	1,119	23	1,180	17	1,259	19
Esmeralda County	0	32	0	32	0	23	0
Eureka County	0	43	0	39	0	36	0
Humboldt County	11	386	10	398	10	420	26
Lander County	2	191	3	178	6	175	20
Lincoln County	0	106	1	115	1	111	6
Lyon County	12	609	15	664	17	724	22
Mineral County	8	161	1	164	3	151	25
Nye County	7	532	20	630	5	659	18
Pershing County	4	155	4	158	4	215	23
Storey County	0	68	0	75	1	78	5
Washoe County	155	5,325	148	5,453	159	5,566	28
White Pine County	6	226	2	228	3	238	16
<b>Nevada ***</b>	<b>937</b>	<b>32,128</b>	<b>1,065</b>	<b>33,814</b>	<b>1,021</b>	<b>35,642</b>	<b>30</b>

\* *Revised*

\*\* *Rates based on small numbers should be used with caution*

\*\*\* *The sum of the counties may not equal the state total due to missing or incomplete county reference data*

*Source: State of Nevada Department of Human Resources, Health Division, Office of Vital Records and Statistics, 1996, 1997, 1998*

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