

TEEN BIRTH IN TEXAS

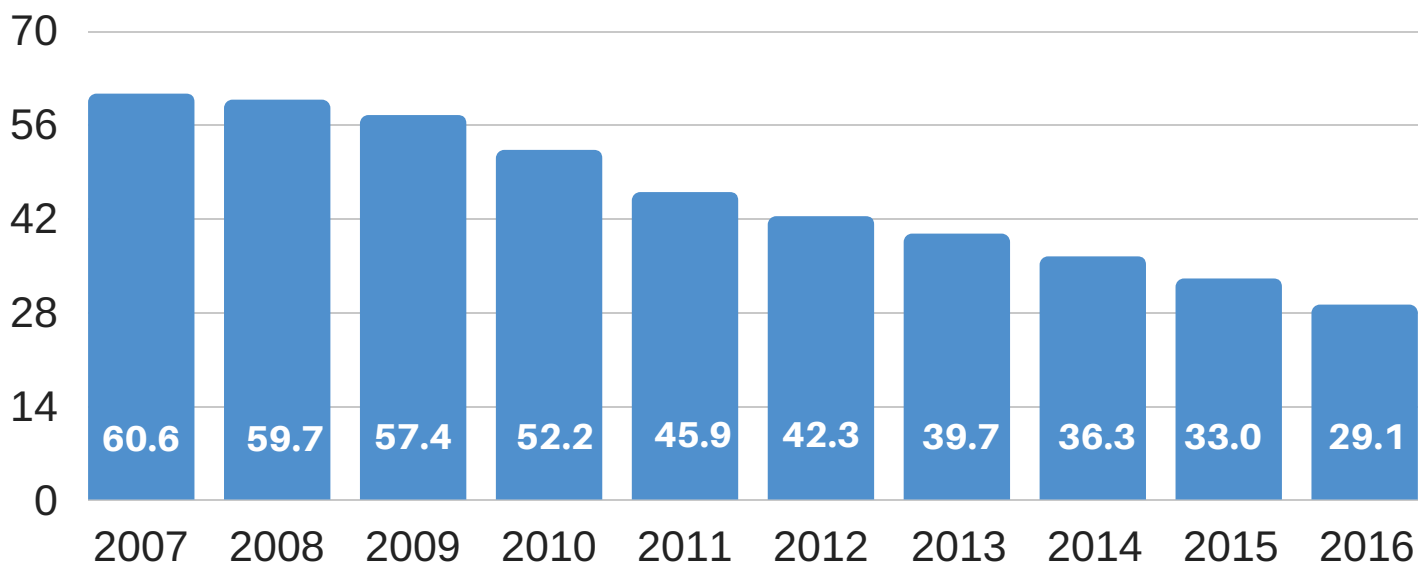


Like the rest of the nation, Texas has made tremendous progress in reducing the rate of teen birth. Between 2007 and 2016, the birth rate per 1,000 girls ages 15-19 decreased by 52%, from 60.6 to 29.1 per 1,000. However, much is left to accomplish. Texas maintains the fourth highest rate of teen birth in the nation and the highest rate of repeat teen births. Approximately 15% of Texas girls give birth before the age of 20.

Unintended childbearing can create significant barriers for young women. Teen mothers are less likely to complete their education, with only 53% earning a high school diploma, and their odds of living in poverty are high. With 91% of births to teen mothers covered by Medicaid, the public cost also is significant.

Improving access to effective contraception and providing medically accurate sex education can empower young women with the tools and information they need to avoid unplanned pregnancy.

BIRTH RATE PER 1,000 TEXAS GIRLS AGED 15-19



REPEAT TEEN BIRTHS

Texas has the highest rate of repeat teen births nationwide. Among teens aged 15-19 giving birth, more than 19% already have at least one child. Nevertheless, under state law, teen moms in Texas can provide consent to medical care for their child, but require parental consent for their own contraception. Best practices to address repeat teen pregnancy include:

- Statutory change to give teen mothers in Texas the legal right to consent to contraception
- Contraceptive counseling during prenatal visits
- Access to highly effective birth control in the postpartum period, if desired
- Supports provided through the school district to help teen mothers complete their education

SEX EDUCATION

Under Texas law, schools that teach sexual health education are required to emphasize abstinence until marriage. Most districts teach abstinence-only education, which leaves teens in the dark about basic reproductive health. The Texas Campaign supports abstinence-plus education, which frames abstinence as the safest choice, but also provides medically accurate information around pregnancy prevention and sexually transmitted infection (STI) avoidance. Among Texas school districts:

- 58% teach abstinence-only curriculum.
- 17% teach abstinence-plus curriculum.
- 25% teach no sex education at all.

However, 80% of large school districts with enrollment greater than 50,000 teach abstinence-plus education.

2015 TEXAS TEEN BIRTH RATES BY COUNTY

Texas teen birth rates show significant variance by county, ranging from 0 to almost 100 per 1,000, or 10% of teens giving birth each year. Teen birth rates are highest along the border and in the Texas Panhandle, reflecting the higher rates of pregnancy experienced by Hispanic and rural teens. Due to their large population size, approximately one-third of teen births in Texas occur in Harris, Dallas, or Bexar counties.

Birth Rate



Note:
Counties filled in yellow have data suppressed for privacy due to small birth counts. However, the actual teen birth rates in these counties may be high.

