

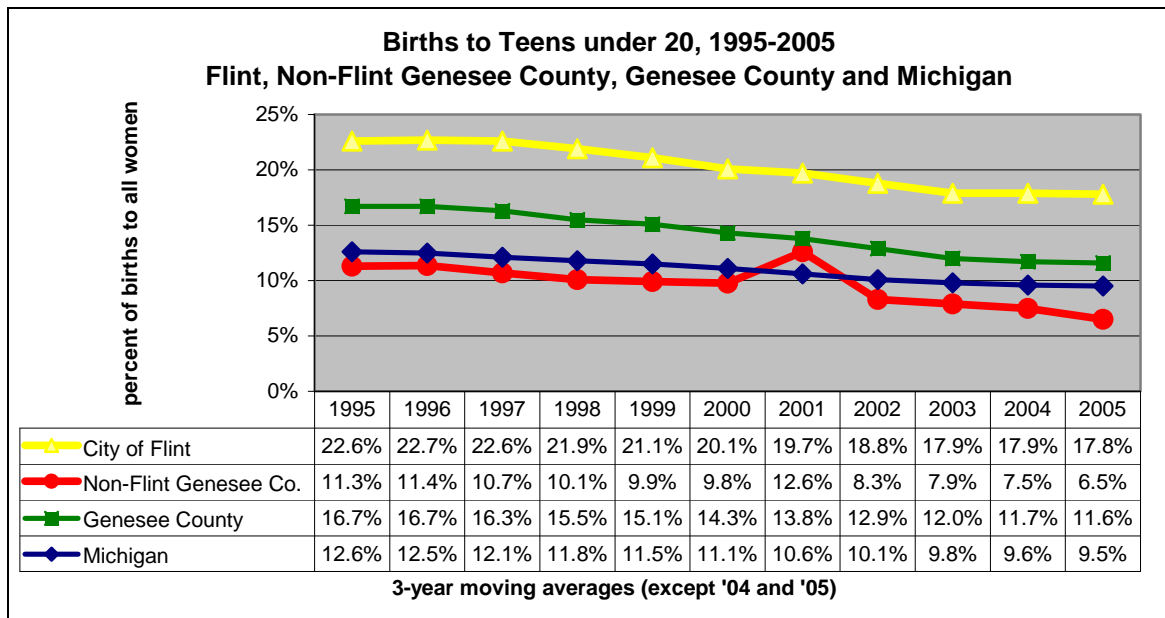


Mission: To improve the quality of life for children and families in Genesee County through assessment, awareness, advocacy and action.

Fact Sheet 2.12 Teen Pregnancies and Births

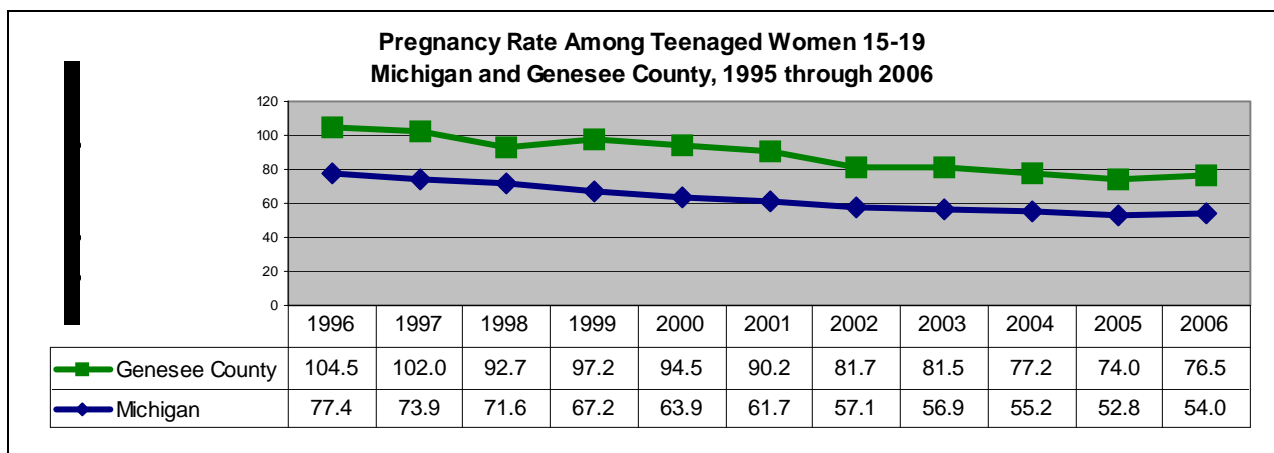
Childbearing during the teen years often places teenaged mothers and their children at heightened risk for long-term poverty and reduced socio-economic status, limitations in educational opportunities and poor health. Children born to teenage parents are more likely to experience development delays, be raised in a single-parent household and are less likely than other children to use health and social services as needed. A child born to a single teen mother is twice as likely to drop out of school and twice as likely to have a child before age twenty. This child is one and a half times as likely to be out of school and out of work in his/her late teens and early twenties. Reductions in the rates of teenage pregnancy can yield significant improvements to the health and well-being of teens and children.

Studies show that the teens that are least able to financially support children are more likely to become teen parents. While teen pregnancy crosscuts all income levels, 85 percent of teens that give birth are poor or near-poor. Teen mothers have more children, on average, than women who delay childbearing, which makes it more difficult for them and their children to escape a life of poverty. In addition to poverty, other indicators that consistently predict teen childbearing are family dysfunction, early behavior problems and poor performance in school.



- As a proportion of all births, births to mothers under 20 years of age have been steadily falling in Flint, Genesee County and Michigan during the most recent ten-year period. Teen births to Genesee County women who live outside Flint constitute a smaller proportion of all births than is the case in Michigan as a whole.
- The proportion of teenaged mothers in Flint has been and continues to remain twice as great as in Genesee County outside of Flint.

Face Sheet 2.12: Teen Pregnancies and Births continued...



- The pregnancy rate among teenagers has steadily fallen in Genesee County and Michigan.
- Genesee County's rates remain consistently higher compared to the Michigan rate.

BEYOND THE NUMBERS

The introductory paragraph says it all. The incidence of teen births has a bearing on a number of societal conditions. Teens need awareness of and access to birth control information as well as appropriate counseling services.

EXAMPLES OF INTERVENTION EFFORTS

A recent review of "abstinence-only" evaluations found that "there do not currently exist any abstinence-only programs with reasonably strong evidence that they actually delay the initiation of sex or reduce its frequency." However, other research does suggest that particular abstinence strategies appear to delay the onset of sexual activity; however, this good news is tempered by finding of negative health consequences for some youth. For example, in the last decade teenagers across the United States have participated in formal and informal virginity movements in which teens pledge virginity until marriage. Recent studies have shown that this movement has been successful in delaying the onset of intercourse among young pledgers on average by nearly 18 months but pledging has no effect among older teens (18 and older). Further, pledgers were less likely than a comparison group to use contraceptives once they had intercourse, and thereby were at greater risk for sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. In contrast, evaluations of programs that combine abstinence education with contraceptive information find that they can help delay the onset of intercourse with a concomitant concern regarding health risk.

- **Planned Parenthood** - Offices throughout Michigan provide pregnancy prevention education and information, as well as health care to those requesting it.
- **Schools and other agencies** such as **Connexion, Inc.** also address teen pregnancy prevention.
- **Catholic Charities** - Through a contract with the Department of Human Services, provides comprehensive services to low-income teen parents and pregnant teens.
- **The Flint Carrera Replication Program**- The project provides pregnancy prevention education/activities for 11-12 year olds that will continue through the graduation. The original partnership is with Children's Aid Society and replication sites incorporate research-based activities.

Note: Pregnancies and births to mothers aged 15 to 19; pregnancies are the sum of all live births, abortions, estimated miscarriages.

Miscarriages are estimates adapted from a model developed by C. Tietz and J. Bongaarts of the Population Council (20% of the live births and 10% of the abortions). Abortions for females 10-19 are used in place of 15-19. County totals may not add to state totals. All rates are per 1,000 age and sex specific population.

Sources: Annie E. Casey and MDCH, Pregnancy source - <http://www.mdch.state.mi.us/pha/osr/chi/births/frame.html>. Birth source - http://www.kidscount.org/cgi-bin/cliiks.cgi?action=profile_results&subset=MI&areaid=96&printerfriendly=0&expandindicators=0&expandyears=1#3

References: Douglas Kirky, Emerging Answers: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy. National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, May 2001 and Peter Bearman and Hannah Bruckner, "Virginity Pledges as They Affect The Transition to First Intercourse," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 106, No 4, 2001. John B. Jemmott III, Loretta Sweet Jemmott, and Geoffrey T. Fong, "Abstinence and Safer Sex HIV Risk-Reduction Interventions for African-American Adolescents, A Randomized Control Trail," Journal of the American Medical Association, Vol. 279, May 20, 2998.

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