

1. Births to Teenagers

What It Is

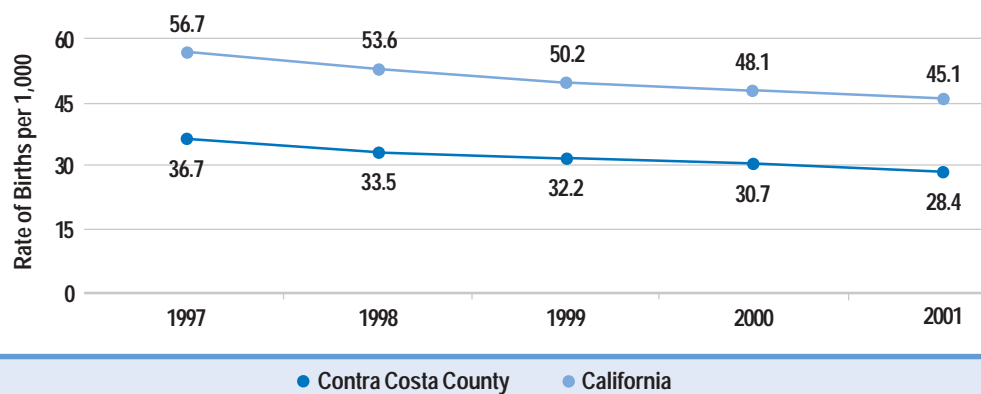
The teen birth rate measures the number of births to teen women ages 15 to 19 per 1,000 females in that age group.

Why It Is Important

Births to teenagers are predictive of increased problems for their children, and reduced economic self-sufficiency for the teen mother. Teenage

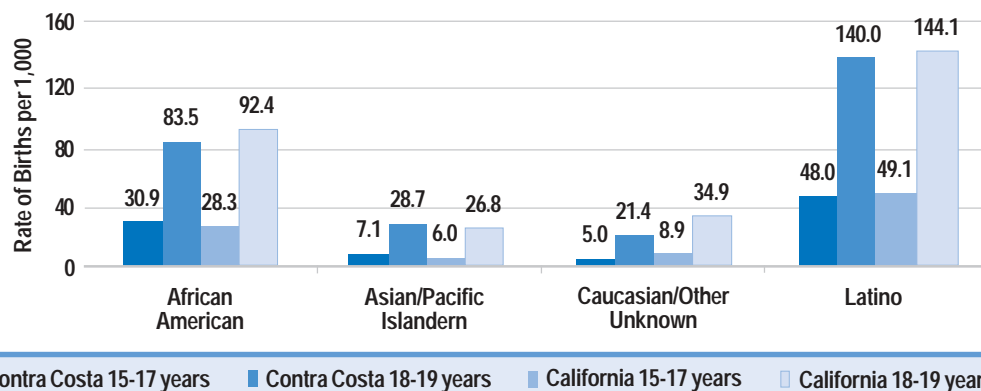
mothers are less likely to finish school and are more likely to be poor. Longitudinal research shows that it can take many years for an unmarried teen mother to catch up to her peers in terms of income and education. Children of teen mothers are even more at risk than the teen mother herself. They are more likely to have academic, cognitive and behavioral difficulties that can persist into their teen years and beyond.

Figure 1.1 — Rate of Births to Teenagers Ages 15 to 19



Source: State of California, Department of Health Services, Center for Health Statistics, Birth Records, 2002.

Figure 1.2 — Contra Costa County and California Rate of Births to Teens by Ethnicity and Age Group, 2001



Source: State of California, Department of Health Services, Center for Health Statistics, Birth Records, 2002.

How We Are Doing

The rate of births to teenagers has decreased in Contra Costa County, in California as a whole, and nationwide. The rate of births to teenagers decreased from 36.7 per 1,000 young women ages 15 to 19 in 1997 to 28.4 in 2001, and remained

below the statewide rate of 45.1 in 2001. A total of 291 babies were born to women ages 15 to 17 in Contra Costa County and 592 babies were born to women ages 18 to 19 in 2001, with another 17 babies born to girls under 15.