



Teen Pregnancy

Media contacts: Katherine Meerse, Research, Planning and Development: 612-596-0996
Kris Hays, Human Services and Public Health Department: 612-348-7285
LuAnn Schmaus, Public Affairs: 612-348-7865

Fast facts

- ▲ The teen birth rate in Hennepin County dropped significantly between 1996 and 2005. However, mirroring national trends, it increased in 2006 and 2007.
- ▲ Hennepin County's teen birth rate in 2007 -- 32.2 births per 1,000 females-- was higher than the state rate of 28.5.
- ▲ There were an estimated 2,031 families headed by teen mothers with a total of 2,600 children in Hennepin County in 2006.
- ▲ Disparities in teen birth rates exist, with African American, Latino and Native American teens, as well as teens in foster care and those who have experienced sexual violence, at significantly higher risk for teen pregnancy.

Why is teen pregnancy an important issue for Hennepin County?

Children having children is a costly social issue.

According to Hennepin County studies, only 7.1 percent of births in 2007 were to teen parents. However, families that started with a teen birth made up 53 percent of Minnesota Family Investment Program.

Child trends data is clear: Children born to teen mothers have higher risks for infant death, childhood health problems, cognitive and emotional delays, school struggles, teen parenthood themselves and prolonged poverty.

What works to prevent teen pregnancy?

Rigorous research shows that three key elements work to reduce teen pregnancy:

Comprehensive sexuality education

- Education that includes information about both abstinence and effective contraception has proven to reduce teen pregnancy.
- Comprehensive sexuality education has the support of 9 out of 10 Minnesotans surveyed.

Access to reproductive health services

- 86 percent of the decline in teen pregnancy since 1990 is the result of improved contraceptive use.

Youth development programs

- These programs have been proven to reduce teen pregnancy, as well as to reduce the rate of school dropouts, juvenile crime and other teen problems.
- These activities help young people strengthen inner resources to cope with pressures that might lead them to unhealthy or antisocial behavior.

What improves outcomes for teen parents and their children?

Research identifies several strategies that improve the life chances of teen parents and their children, including:

- Reconnecting teen parents to school and work with services to help them succeed.
- Helping teen parents be good parents through parenting education.
- Having public health nurses visit the teens at home.
- Arranging for quality child care and early childhood experiences for the children.
- Providing health care for both parents and children.
- Encouraging fathers to parent their children.
- Creating motivation as well as refusal skills to avoid further pregnancies while parents are teens.