

# Oklahoma Alert: 2021 Teen Birth Update



February 2023

Oklahoma's 2021 teen birth numbers and rates decreased for ages 10-17 but increased slightly for ages 18-19. The impact that pandemic-related school and program closures had on the mental, emotional and sexual health of our youth is still emerging. Ensuring that all young people receive quality education and services to protect their sexual health and safety remains a critical priority. Even with a 50% decrease in teen birth numbers and rates since 2010, the state still has one of the highest teen birth rates in the U.S.

## Trends in Oklahoma teen birth numbers

<u>Ages</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
14 & younger	66	69	58	43	49	43	32	29	36	44
15 – 17	1,667	1,517	1,269	1,225	1,100	964	818	851	786	714
18 – 19	4,176	3,792	3,523	3,166	3,146	2,822	2,662	2,669	2,431	2,475
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,909</b>	<b>5,379</b>	<b>4,850</b>	<b>4,434</b>	<b>4,295</b>	<b>3,829</b>	<b>3,512</b>	<b>3,549</b>	<b>3,253</b>	<b>3,233</b>

## A closer look at the 2021 teen birth numbers

Oklahoma had 3,233 births to teens aged 19 and younger in 2021, a decrease of 1% (20 births) from 2020. Nearly one of four births were to teens aged 17 and younger, and 44 of those births were to 10 to 14 year-olds. Three-fourths of births were to older teens, aged 18 to 19. Half (49%) of all teens had not finished high school, and about one birth in every six (16%) was to a girl who was already a parent.

**Reducing teen and unintended pregnancies is a smart, cost-effective strategy for improving health, education and economic outcomes.**

### Number of births by birth order

1 <sup>st</sup> birth	2,713
2 <sup>nd</sup> birth	441
3 <sup>rd</sup> birth	68
4 <sup>th</sup> birth	3
5 <sup>th</sup> birth	-

### Percentage of births by race/ethnicity\*

White, Non-Hispanic	48%
Black, Non-Hispanic	12%
American Indian	17%
Asian	1%
Hispanic/Latino	22%

### 2021 birth rates\*\*

<u>Age</u>	<u>OK</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
15 – 19	<b>24.1</b>	13.9
15 – 17	<b>8.8</b>	5.6
18 – 19	<b>48.2</b>	26.6

\* 2021 data still preliminary  
\*\* Rates = number of births per 1,000 females the same age

Sources: Oklahoma State Dept. of Health, Vital Statistics Preliminary 2021 Data  
National Center for Health Statistics/CDC, *Births: Final Data for 2021* (February 2023)

For more information, check **Healthy Teens OK!** at [healthyteensok.org](http://healthyteensok.org)



# All youth need access to high quality, effective sexual health education and health services.



In 2021, Oklahoma remained among the states with the highest teen birth rates, ranked **47<sup>th</sup>** overall (15-19), **46<sup>th</sup>** for younger teens (15-17), and **48<sup>th</sup>** for older teens (18-19). This means, Oklahoma had the...

- **4<sup>th</sup> highest** birth rate to teens, ages 15 – 19.
- **5<sup>rd</sup> highest** birth rate to young teens, ages 15 – 17.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> highest** birth rate to older teens, ages 18 – 19.

## States with the highest birth rates for ages 15-19 in 2021:

<b>OKLAHOMA</b>	<b>24.1</b>
Louisiana	24.5
Mississippi	25.6
Arkansas	26.5
<b>U.S. Average</b>	<b>13.9</b>

## Priorities for action:

- Where teen birth rates/ numbers are highest
- Youth at **greatest risk** for early sexual activity
- Children and youth growing up in **poverty**
- Children experiencing **early school failure** or **family dysfunction**

## Teens at higher risk for an unintended pregnancy:

**School dropouts** - 30% of girls cite pregnancy/parenting as the reason

**Older teens (18-19)** – *three-fourths* of all teen births each year

**System-involved youth (state foster care and juvenile justice, or county juvenile bureau systems)** – very vulnerable and underserved

**Victims of sexual abuse** - in national studies, two-thirds of teen mothers indicate their first sexual intercourse was *non-consensual* and occurred *between ages 9-12*; preventing child sexual abuse is critical!

**Teen parents** – one in every six teen births is a subsequent birth

**Siblings of teen parents** - at high risk of becoming a teen parent

**Disconnected youth** - young people who are not connected to school or work have the greatest potential for risk-taking behaviors

## Effective ways to reduce teen birth numbers and rates in your community:

- **Expand high quality, evidence-based, well-delivered programs** that provide medically-accurate, age appropriate information by trained health educators in safe, caring settings -- and show they work!
- **Support groups** like Amplify Tulsa ([amplifytulsa.org](http://amplifytulsa.org)), Teen emPower Inc. ([teenempower.org](http://teenempower.org)), Thrive OKC ([thriveokc.org](http://thriveokc.org)), Take Control Initiative ([takecontrolok.org](http://takecontrolok.org)), Youth Services of Tulsa ([yst.org](http://yst.org)) and J.A.M.E.S. Inc. ([jamesinc.org](http://jamesinc.org)). For program and contact info, check: [healthyteensok.org](http://healthyteensok.org)
- **Use the latest research and resources** from the Healthy Teen Network, [healthyteennetwork.org](http://healthyteennetwork.org); Power To Decide, [powertodecide.org](http://powertodecide.org); and Oklahoma KIDS COUNT, coordinated by the Oklahoma Policy Institute and funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, [datacenter.kidscount.org/data#OK/2/0](http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#OK/2/0)
- **Engage youth as leaders and partners:** check Forum for Youth Investment: [www.readyby21.org](http://www.readyby21.org)