

# Oklahoma Alert: 2023 Teen Birth Update



April 2025

Oklahoma's number of teen births remained the same in 2023, while the birth rate decreased by 3% (ages 15-19), compared to 2022. Ensuring that all young people receive quality education, services and support to protect their sexual health and safety remains a critical priority. Even with a 50% decrease in teen birth numbers and rates in the last decade, the state still has one of the highest teen birth rates in the U.S.

## Decade trend in Oklahoma teen birth numbers

<u>Ages</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>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
14 & younger	58	43	49	43	32	29	36	44	25	26
15 – 17	1,269	1,225	1,100	964	818	851	786	714	708	708
18 – 19	3,523	3,166	3,146	2,822	2,662	2,669	2,431	2,475	2,147	2,146
<b>TOTAL</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>	<b>2,880</b>	<b>2,880</b>

## A closer look at the 2023 teen birth numbers

Oklahoma had 2,880 births to teens aged 19 and younger in 2023, the exact number as 2022. One out of four births was to a teen aged 17 and younger; 25 of those births were to 10 to 14 year-olds. Three-fourths of births were to older teens, aged 18 to 19. Over half (52%) of the teen mothers had not finished high school, and about one out of five (15%) was to a teen who was already a parent.

Reducing teen pregnancy is a smart, cost-effective way to improve health, education and economic outcomes.

### Number of births by birth order

1 <sup>st</sup> birth	2,441
2 <sup>nd</sup> birth	389
3 <sup>rd</sup> birth	42
4 <sup>th</sup> birth	<5

### Percentage of births by race

White	55%
Black	11%
American Indian	11%
Asian/Pacific Isl.	1%
Other	7%
Two or more races	14%

### Percentage by ethnicity\*

Hispanic Origin	27%
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### Birth rate comparison\*\*

<u>Age</u>	<u>OK</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
15 – 19	20.6	13.1
15 – 17	8.3	5.5
18 – 19	39.9	24.6

\* Hispanic can be any race.  
\*\* Rates = number of births per 1,000 females the same age

Sources: Oklahoma State Dept. of Health, Vital Statistics Final 2023 Data  
National Center for Health Statistics/CDC, *Births: Final Data for 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 2023, Oklahoma remained among the states with the highest teen birth rates, ranked **46<sup>th</sup>** overall (15-19), **45<sup>th</sup>** for younger teens (15-17), and **45<sup>th</sup>** for older teens (18-19). This means, Oklahoma had the...

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

## States with the highest birth rates for ages 15-19 in 2023:

<b>OKLAHOMA</b>	<b>20.6</b>
Kentucky	20.7
Louisiana	23.1
Arkansas	23.8
Mississippi	24.9
<b>U.S. Average</b>	<b>13.1</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 – programs that work!
- **Support groups** like Teen Empower ([teenempower.org](http://teenempower.org)), Honestly OKC ([honestlyokc.org](http://honestlyokc.org)), Amplify Tulsa ([amplifytulsa.org](http://amplifytulsa.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)