



## TEEN BIRTHS

### Overview

MetroWest has seen increases in teen births, despite a continuing trend for the past few decades of older mothers (over 30). This report contains data calculated across the state and is broken down by age and ethnicity. Teen parenthood is the major reason for high school dropouts.

### 2008 Massachusetts Health and Human Services Birth Report

- **Geography:** State and some specific towns
- **Year:** 2007-2008
- **Website:** <http://www.mass.gov/dph/pubstats.htm>

### Key Findings:

*Note: State teen birth rates were calculated using 2008 population data; however, please note that 2008 community teen birth rates use 2005 population estimates.*

- The 2008 teen birth rate in Massachusetts (20.1 births per 1,000 females ages 15-19) was the lowest on record, and it was a significant decrease from the 2007 rate of 22.0. However, disparities persist. In 2008, Hispanic and Black teens have six and three times the rate of white teens, respectively (66.7 for Hispanic teens, 32.3 for Black teens, and 11.7 for White teens).
- Compared with 2007, the 2008 birth rates decreased significantly among mothers' ages 15-19, 20-24, and 25-29 years, and remained stable among mothers 30 years and older in 2008. The largest decrease in birth rates has been among women ages 15-19 years (9%), and the largest increase, though not significant, has been among women ages 40-44 years (7%).
- MetroWest town results show an *increase* overall for teen births of roughly 20%.
- Increases were seen in Dedham (83%), Framingham (33%), Marlborough (23%), Maynard (~600%), Milford (11%), Waltham (13%), and Westborough (40%). Decreases were seen only in Medway (~-400%) and Holliston (~-80%). (*Note: birth numbers between 1-4 per community were suppressed and need to be interpreted cautiously.*)
- There has been a marked change in the age distribution of Massachusetts women giving birth since 1980. Approximately 25% of women giving birth in 1980 were 30 years and older compared with 53% in 2008.
- In 2008, there were fewer births to women ages 10-14 and 15-19 years. The largest decrease was among women ages under 20 years.
- In 2008, there were 4,583 births among women ages 15-19 years, which was a decrease of 361 births from 2007. The Massachusetts teen birth rate decreased from 22.0 births per 1,000 females ages 15-19 years in 2007 to 20.1 in 2008. The Massachusetts teen birth rate in 2008 was 53% below the 2007 US teen birth rate of 42.5 births per 1,000 females ages 15-19 years. (*Martin JA, Hamilton BE, Sutton PD, Ventura SJ, et al. Births: Final data for 2006. National vital statistics reports; vol 57 no 7. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics 2009.*)
- In 2008, 30% of teen births were to women ages 15-17 (1,361 births), while 70% were to women 18 and 19 years old (3,222). The number of births to young teens (ages 10-14 years) was 40 in 2008 as compared with 49 in 2007, but this was not a significant decrease in the rate. In 2008, the youngest mother in Massachusetts was 13 years old, which was the same as the previous year.
- In 2008, teen birth rates decreased for Whites, Hispanics, and Asians but not for Blacks. Even though the rates for Whites and Hispanics declined, the gap in the teen birth rate between Hispanics and Whites increased with the Hispanic rate 5.7 times that of Whites (66.7 vs. 11.7 per 1,000 females ages 15-19 years). When 2008 rates were compared with those of 1998, all race and ethnicity rates had declined significantly.

## 2010 Promise Project Report, Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy

- **Geography:** State
- **Year:** 2007-2008
- **Website:** [www.massteenpregnancy.org/sites/default/files/policy/matppromise-reportvf-rev3-9.pdf](http://www.massteenpregnancy.org/sites/default/files/policy/matppromise-reportvf-rev3-9.pdf)

### Key Findings:

- Approximately 10,000 Massachusetts public high school students dropped out during the 2007–2008 school year. National data indicate that teen *parenthood is a leading reason that 26% of students drop* out of school. Applied to our state, this accounts for approximately 2,600 Massachusetts *high school students who leave school each year.*
- Teen parenthood is an important reason that 33% of girls and 19% of boys drop out. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Dropout in the U.S. Unplanned Pregnancy reports that teen parenthood is the *primary* cause of dropout among girls. These students are ill-equipped to meet even their own basic needs in this competitive economy. Where the vast majority of jobs in Massachusetts that pay family-sustaining wages require education beyond the secondary level.
- We know of no single issue more tied to dropout rate than teen pregnancy. If we want to reach the Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission's goal to reduce the statewide dropout by 50% over the next 5 years, then we must prevent teen pregnancy and help more teen parents finish school.
- A child has a 27% chance of growing up in poverty if the mother gives birth as a teen. If the mother also does not achieve a high school diploma or GED, the chance of child poverty increases to 42%. Since poverty is both a cause and a consequence of early childbearing, impoverished children are at increased risk of becoming teen parents themselves. Most would agree that education is the way out and absolutely central to breaking the cycle of poverty when teen mothers complete their secondary school education, they are also more likely to prevent second teen births, creating greater opportunity for their families to escape poverty

### Trends in Teen Birth Rates for Selected Communities, 2007-2008

- **Geography:** Select cities
- **Year:** 2007-2008
- **Website:** [www.massteenpregnancy.org](http://www.massteenpregnancy.org)

### Key Findings:

*Note: rates were calculated using 2008 population data.*

- On a list of the 25 MA cities and towns with the greatest number of teen births (Rates per 1000 women, ages 15-19):
  - **Framingham ranked 21<sup>st</sup>.**
    - 2006 birth rate-33%
    - 2007 birth rate-20.5%
    - 2008 birth rate-27.1%
    - % change 2007-2008-+32.2%
  - **Waltham ranked 25<sup>th</sup>.**
    - 2006 birth rate-10.3%
    - 2007 birth rate-13.3%
    - 2008 birth rate-15%
    - % change 2007-2008-+12.8%