



THE
NATIONAL
CAMPAIGN TO
PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF PROGRESS
IN IMPROVING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN,
YOUTH AND FAMILIES

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Declining Teen Birth Rates Contribute to Improvements in Child Well-Being in California

First-Ever State Specific Analysis Released

(Washington, DC) — Declining teen birth rates have significantly improved overall child well-being in California, all states, and the District of Columbia, according to a new state-by-state analysis released by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Specifically, declines in the teen birth rate have played a major role in improving child poverty in California. That is, child poverty would have been worse in 2002 if the teen birth rate in California had not declined between 1991 and 2002.

Between 1991 and 2002, the national teen birth rate declined 30%. The teen birth rate in California declined 44% during the same time period (2002 is the most recent year for which state data are available). This new research asks the question: “What if teen birth rates in each state had *not* declined between 1991 and 2002?” In California, if the teen birth rate had not declined:

- Nearly 231,000 additional children under age 18 would have been born to teen mothers between 1991 and 2002.
- Over 68,000 (or 10%) more children under age 6 would have been living in poverty in 2002. California’s percentage improvement in the number of children living in poverty **ranks 9th** in the nation.
- Nearly 63,000 (or 15%) more children under age 6 would have been living in single mother households in 2002. California’s percentage improvement in the number of children living in single mother households **ranks 5th** in the nation.

The analysis also estimates that the decline in the teen birth rate in California between 1991 and 2002 resulted in:

- A 4% improvement in the state’s poverty rate for children under age six in 2002, and
- A 8% improvement in the proportion of children under age six living in a single-mother household in 2002.

“National and state investments in teen pregnancy prevention pay huge dividends,” said Sarah Brown, Director of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. “As this analysis clearly shows, preventing teen pregnancy is one of the most direct and effective ways states can reduce poverty and improve overall child well-being.”

Despite the impressive strides all states made in reducing the teen birth rate between 1991 and 2002, and the important contribution this progress has made to improving the number of children living in poverty and in single parent families, there is still much work to be done. The U.S. still has the highest rate of teen pregnancy among comparable countries and one in three girls in this country become pregnant by age 20. “If all states can continue to bring down teen pregnancy and birth rates, the prospects of this generation of children and the next will greatly improve,” said Brown.

The National Campaign’s new state analysis uses methods developed by the U.S. Congress’ Joint Economic Committee in a report released by the Ways & Means Committee in April 2004. It was made possible by a generous grant from the United Health Foundation.

For more information, including detailed fact sheets for each state, charts showing state rankings and racial and ethnic breakdowns, and the methodology used in this analysis, visit www.teenpregnancy.org

About the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. The National Campaign is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization supported primarily by private donations. Our mission is to improve the well-being of children, youth, and families by reducing teen pregnancy.

About the United Health Foundation. United Health Foundation was established in 1999 by UnitedHealth Group as a nonprofit, private foundation. Its support of this new research is evidence of United Health Foundation’s commitment to providing information to support the health and medical decisions made by physicians, health professionals, community leaders, and individuals that lead to better health outcomes and healthier communities. Visit www.unitedhealthfoundation.org for more information.

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