

Too Young

Teen pregnancy is closely linked to a host of other problems for teens and their babies – including welfare dependency, health problems, absent fathers, educational failure, and more. If more children were born to parents who are ready and able to care for them, we would see a significant reduction in many of social problems affecting children in the United States. Simply put, teen parents are just Too Young.

Too young to be parents...

- Despite a one-third decline since the early 1990s, the United States still has the highest rates of teen pregnancy and birth among comparable countries.¹
- Three out of ten American girls get pregnant before age 20. That's 750,000 teen pregnancies each year.²
- Almost 50 percent of teens have never considered about how a pregnancy would affect their lives.³

Too young to get left behind...

- Less than half of teen mothers ever graduate from high school and fewer than two percent earn a college degree by age 30.⁴
- Parenthood is the leading reason why teen girls drop out of school.⁵
- Children of teen mothers do worse in school than those born to older parents—they are 50 percent more likely to repeat a grade, are less likely to complete high school than the children of older mothers, and have lower performance on standardized tests.^{4,6}

Too young for healthy babies...

- The children of teen mothers are more likely to be born prematurely and at low birthweight and are two times more likely to suffer abuse and neglect compared to children of older mothers.^{7,4}
- Pregnant teens are far less likely to receive timely and consistent prenatal care than those who get pregnant at a later age.⁸
- Teen mothers are also more likely than mothers over the age of 25 to smoke during pregnancy, and often teen mothers are not at adequate pre-pregnancy weight and/or do not gain the appropriate amount of weight while pregnant.⁸



The National Campaign
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Too young to support a family...

- Two-thirds of families begun by a young unmarried mother are poor.⁹
- More than half of all mothers on welfare had their first child as a teenager.¹⁰
- Teen mothers are likely to have a second birth relatively soon—about one-fourth of teenage mothers have a second child within 24 months of the first birth—which can further impede their ability to finish school or keep a job, and to escape poverty.¹¹

Too young to do it alone...

- Eight out of 10 fathers don't marry the mother of their child. These absent fathers pay less than \$800 annually for child support, often because they are quite poor themselves.¹²
- Children who live apart from their fathers are five times more likely to be poor than children with both parents at home.¹³

Too young to be forgotten...

- The daughters of young teen mothers are three times more likely to become teen mothers themselves when compared to mothers who had a child at age 20-21.⁴
- Children born to teen parents are more likely than those born to older parents to end up in foster care or have multiple caretakers throughout their childhood.¹⁴
- The sons of teen mothers are two times more likely to end up in prison than the sons of mothers aged 20-21.⁴

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Sources

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