



April 2011

# Teen Parent Connection Report Card

A teenager who becomes a parent faces significant educational, economic, and social risks. Teen Parent Connection participating organizations<sup>1</sup> work together to identify all teen parent families in Hennepin County and get them connected to school and/or work, parenting support, and high quality early childhood experiences. While these partners are also committed to reducing teen pregnancies, we also seek to enhance the chances for teen family success by keeping teen parents in school, connecting them with resources, preventing second pregnancies, and assuring access to high-quality child care for their children. This report represents a decade-long commitment to measuring and reporting on the progress and challenges in serving this population.

<sup>1</sup> Teen Parent Connection partners include the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Schools, and Intermediate School District 287. In Northwest Hennepin County, the Teen Parent Connection participating organizations include the Osseo, Brooklyn Center, Anoka Hennepin (Hennepin County side) and Robbinsdale school districts.

## Who are teen parents?

### Teen parents and their children are a significant population

In Minneapolis, teen mothers headed an estimated 1,000 families with a total of 1,200 children in 2009. 529 Minneapolis teens gave birth and another 400 teens were pregnant but did not give birth until 2010.

In suburban Hennepin County teen mothers headed an estimated 800 families with a total of 1,000 children in 2009. 462 suburban teens gave birth and another 300 teens were pregnant but did not give birth until 2010.

Source: Estimate from Hennepin County Vital Records.

**Success:** The estimated number of teen parents in Hennepin County has fallen nearly 25 percent (1,800 in 2009 vs. 2,400 in 2002). To continue this progress it is critical that supports for teen parents are sustained.

### Fathers of babies born to teen mothers

In 2009, 1,247 teen mothers were in the Hennepin County child support system; the father was identified in 756 of these cases (61 percent). About 33% of these fathers were themselves teens, 61% were in their 20s, and the remaining 7% were 30 or older.

Source: Hennepin County Child Support.

**Success:** Since 2006, there has been a 20 percent increase in the proportion of child support cases that have an identified father. In addition, fewer of these cases are associated with fathers 30 and older.

### Teen parents are mobile

Many teen parents live in conditions that increase the risk of mobility, including unstable housing, low income, and variable work and school obligations. In fact, an analysis of teen parents enrolled in public assistance showed that 50 percent had **2 or more** address changes during one year alone.

Hennepin County unpublished data, 2009.

**Challenge:** Because of the high mobility of teen parents, it may be difficult to assure continuity of services and to find new teen families that move into an area.

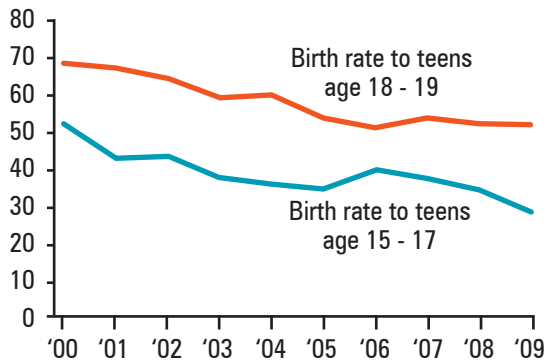


## Teen Birth Rates are Falling in Minneapolis and Suburban Hennepin County overall

In 2009, Minneapolis made up 53 percent of teen births, Northwest Hennepin 30 percent, South Hennepin 11 percent and West Hennepin 6 percent.

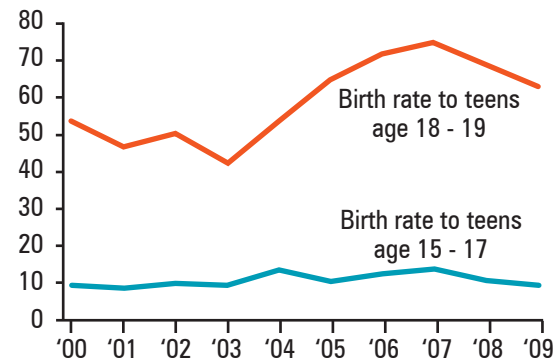
**Success:** The overall birth rate to teens in Hennepin County has fallen 23 percent since 2000, and the birth rate to younger teens age 15 to 17 has fallen 35 percent.

Teen births per 1,000 teenage girls in Minneapolis, 2000 - 2009



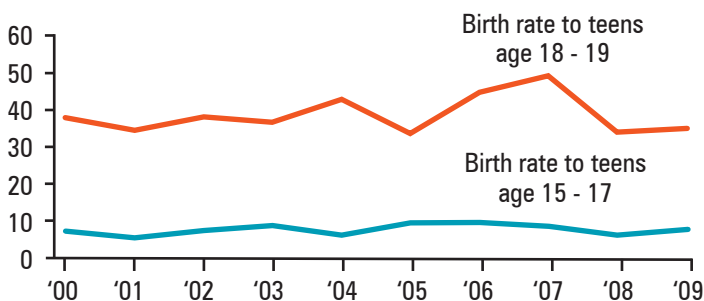
**Challenge:** The birth rate to teens age 15 to 17 in Minneapolis is 3.7 times higher than that in other areas of Hennepin County.

Teen births per 1,000 teenage girls in suburban NW Hennepin County, 2000 - 2009

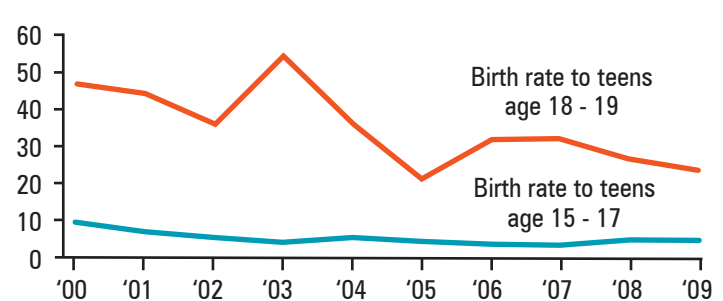


**Challenge:** The birth rate to teens age 18 and 19 in NW Hennepin is 1.5 times higher than that in other areas of Hennepin County.

Teen births per 1,000 teenage girls in suburban S Hennepin County, 2000 - 2009



Teen births per 1,000 teenage girls in suburban W Hennepin County, 2000 - 2009



## Teen parents are diverse

Disparities in teen birth rates affect the racial and ethnic makeup of teen parents

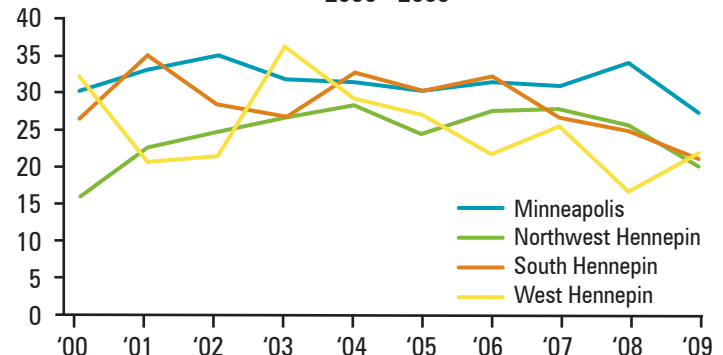
Teen births by race and ethnicity of the mother, 2009

|                 | Minneapolis | Northwest Hennepin | South Hennepin | West Hennepin |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Hispanic        | 25.1%       | 15.7%              | 33.3%          | 17.6%         |
| Asian           | 7.8%        | 12.3%              | <4.0%          | <6.0%         |
| Black           | 46.5%       | 44.7%              | 28.8%          | 23.5%         |
| American Indian | 7.4%        | <2.0%              | <4.0%          | <6.0%         |
| White           | 11.0%       | 24.0%              | 28.8%          | 51.0%         |
| Other           | 2.3%        | <2.0%              | <4.0%          | <6.0%         |

Racial categories do not include persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Percentages based on counts less than 5 are suppressed.

Births to foreign-born teens have been declining

Percentage of births to foreign-born teenage mothers in Minneapolis and suburban Hennepin County 2000 - 2009



Source: Hennepin County Vital Records



## Teen parents need support to be successful

### Goal 1: Keep teen parents in school until graduation

Teen parents face higher risk for school dropout. Finishing school greatly increases the future opportunities for these families.

#### School enrollment

Minneapolis Public Schools enrolled 621 pregnant and parenting teenage girls in the 2008-2009 school year. This does not include contracted alternative schools or private or charter schools. Intermediate School District 287, a consortium of 13 west metro school districts which provides learning opportunities for students with specific needs including teen parents, served 242 pregnant and parenting teens. Some of these students may reside outside the district they attend, and others choose to attend regular programs in their home district.

| Year      | Minneapolis Public Schools | School District 287 |
|-----------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 2006 - 07 | 764                        | 191                 |
| 2007 - 08 | 504                        | 216                 |
| 2008 - 09 | 621                        | 242                 |

Source: Minneapolis Public Schools, ISD 287.

**Challenge:** Schools are not mandated to collect data on pregnant or parenting students. The variability in school reporting makes it difficult to accurately measure school enrollment.

### Goal 2: Connect teen parents with the support they need.

Teen parents face numerous challenges and may require support to meet the health and social needs of their family. The services below provide these teens with health, nutrition, and economic assistance.

#### Nurse home visiting

Home visiting nurses from the Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency helped 638 Minneapolis teen parents with parenting education and returning to school in 2009, and served an additional 260 in suburban Hennepin County.

| Year | Minneapolis | Suburban Hennepin |
|------|-------------|-------------------|
| 2007 | 523         | 231               |
| 2008 | 577         | 249               |
| 2009 | 638         | 260               |

Source: Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency

**Success:** The number of teen parents receiving nurse home visits has been increasing, even as the number of teen parents has fallen.

#### Public assistance

At some time during 2009, 1,291 Minneapolis pregnant or parenting teens and 981 suburban pregnant or parenting teens received public assistance. Of these families, 62 percent received cash assistance and other benefits while 38 percent received non-cash assistance only. These numbers also include teens that move into the county at any time during the year.

Source: Hennepin County

**Success:** Many teen parents are identified through Hennepin County Public Assistance, connecting them with economic resources needed for success.

#### Emergency assistance

In 2009, 468 (20%) of the teen parents receiving public assistance utilized Emergency Assistance, available when a crisis threatens the health or safety of a child. The most common reasons for emergency assistance were support for housing, emergency shelter, or utility payments.

Source: Hennepin County

#### WIC nutrition program

In 2009, 540 pregnant teens and 679 postpartum teen mothers in Minneapolis were on Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) while 288 pregnant teens and 412 postpartum teen mothers in suburban Hennepin County received WIC. In addition, 38 pregnant and parenting teens were served by Bloomington, Richfield and Edina Public Health WIC services.

Source: Hennepin County

#### Healthy Start

In 2009, the Twin Cities Healthy Start (TCHS) program served 152 high-risk pregnant teens at clinics or social service sites in Minneapolis by providing case management to help reduce social and behavioral risk factors and reduce infant mortality. TCHS also served 52 high-risk parenting teens in Minneapolis in 2009.

Source: Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support

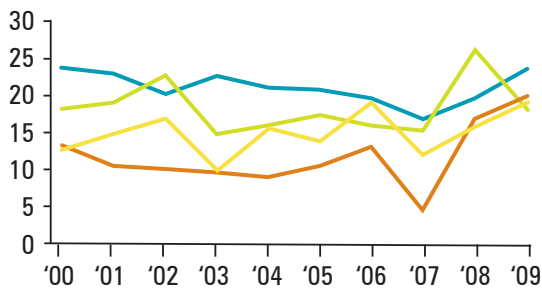




### Goal 3: Eliminate second pregnancies to teen parents during teen years.

Second pregnancies to teen parents increase the risk for long-term poor outcomes for the teen, the child, and the family.

Percentage of births to teens who were already mothers in Minneapolis and suburban Hennepin County, 2000 - 2009



Source: Hennepin County Vital Records

— Minneapolis  
— Northwest Hennepin  
— South Hennepin  
— West Hennepin

**Challenge:** Second births to teens, which had fallen in the mid-decade, have been increasing in recent years, highlighting the need to continue efforts to prevent pregnancies among teen parents.

### Goal 4: Provide quality early childhood education experiences for children of teen parents.

Early childhood education prepares children for school and improves chances for school success. Teens often need childcare to enable them to finish school or get a job.

#### Child care

In 2009, 236 teen mothers in Minneapolis and 257 teen mothers in suburban Hennepin County received child care assistance. Most children of these teens were enrolled in licensed child care center settings (81%), 5 percent were in licensed family care settings, and 14 percent were in legal non-licensed settings.

Source: Hennepin County

**Challenge:** Very few teen parents receive child care assistance, which may hinder their educational and employment opportunities, and negatively impact the child's development and school readiness.

### Recommendations

We recommend that policy makers and all teen parent service providers' support and work towards implementing the following best practices which are critical to facilitate the long term self-sufficiency of young parents, build their parenting capacity and ensure the healthy development of their children.

#### Core Best Practices<sup>1</sup>:

- Provide flexible, quality schooling to help young parents complete high school or obtain a GED.
- Ensure case management, family support, health care, and social support services are readily available.
- Improve access and utilization of quality child care for the children of young parents.
- Ensure that parenting and life skills supports are available to young mothers and fathers
- Continue coordination of culturally appropriate services connected to educational programs and other supports.
- Create opportunities to support father involvement in the lives of their children

<sup>1</sup> Batten S and Stowell B (1996). School Based Programs for Adolescent Parents and Their Young Children: Guidelines for Quality and Best Practice. Center for Assessment and Policy Development, [www.capd.org](http://www.capd.org).

For more information about this report, please contact Dave Johnson, Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support, at (612) 673-3948.

This report is available online at: [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs) and click on Research and Policy.

If you need this material in an alternative format please call Ahmed Muhumud at (612) 673-2162 or email [Ahmed.Muhumud@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:Ahmed.Muhumud@ci.minneapolis.mn.us)

Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons may use a relay service to call 311 agents at (612) 673-3000.

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