

Oklahoma Alert: Federal budget cuts endanger teen health!



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Teen pregnancy is preventable, yet Oklahoma has provided no state funding to address this issue in well over a decade. Support for evidence-based prevention programs has come primarily from federal funding, now in danger of elimination, and from foundation grants. Oklahoma City, Tulsa, other communities and several tribes have made teen pregnancy prevention a priority – building strong partnerships, investing in effective programs and expanding health services. The numbers are very clear – their efforts are working!

Trends in Oklahoma teen birth numbers

<u>Ages</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
14 & younger	89	91	101	64	66	69	58	43	49	43
15 – 17	2,300	2,167	1,917	1,684	1,667	1,517	1,269	1,225	1,100	964
18 – 19	5,192	5,112	4,573	4,335	4,176	3,792	3,523	3,166	3,146	2,822
TOTAL	7,581	7,370	6,591	6,083	5,909	5,379	4,850	4,434	4,295	3,829

A closer look at the 2017 teen birth numbers

Oklahoma had 3,829 births to teens aged 19 and younger in 2017, a decrease of 11% from 2016! Just over one-fourth (26%) of the births were to teens aged 17 and younger, 43 of them occurred among 10 to 14 year-olds. Nearly three-fourths (74%) were births for older teens, aged 18 to 19. Half (51%) of the teens had not finished high school, and nearly one birth in every five (18%) was to a girl who was already a parent.

Reducing teen and unintended pregnancies is a smart, cost-effective strategy for improving health, education and economic outcomes.

Number of births by birth order

1 st birth	3,154
2 nd birth	567
3 rd birth	98
4 th birth	-
5 th birth	-

Percentage of births by race/ethnicity

White	68%
Black	14%
American Indian	17%
Asian	1%
<i>Hispanic*</i>	19%

2017 birth rates**

<u>Age</u>	<u>OK</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
15 – 19	29.7	18.8
15 – 17	12.5	7.9
18 – 19	56.1	35.1

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

Sources: Oklahoma State Dept. of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics 2017 Final National Center for Health Statistics/CDC, *Births: Final Data for 2017*, November 2018

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Teen births in Oklahoma are declining -- but funding cuts threaten progress.



In 2017, Oklahoma remained among the states with the highest teen birth rates, ranked **48th** overall (15-19), **46th** for younger teens (15-17), and **46th** for older teens (18-19). This means, Oklahoma had the...

- **3rd highest** birth rate to teens, ages 15 – 19.
- **5th highest** birth rate to young teens, ages 15 – 17.
- **5nd highest** birth rate to older teens, ages 18 – 19.

States with the highest birth rates for ages 15-19 in 2017:

Kentucky	29.0
Louisiana	29.1
OKLAHOMA	29.7
Mississippi	31.0
Arkansas	32.8
U.S. Average	18.8

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**

Groups with high teen birth numbers and rates:

School dropouts - 30% of girls cite pregnancy/parenting as the reason

Older teens (18-19) – nearly *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 five 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-evaluated programs** that provide medically-accurate, age appropriate information by trained health educators in safe, caring settings -- and show they work!
- **Build partnerships** like Thrive OKC (thriveokc.org), Teen emPower (teenempower.org), Take Control Initiative (takecontrolok.org), Youth Services of Tulsa (yst.org), Tulsa Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (tulsacampaign.org), and J.A.M.E.S., Inc. (jamesinc.org). Check: healthyteensok.org
- **Use the latest research and resources** from the Power To Decide (Campaign to Prevent Teen & Unplanned Pregnancy), powertodecide.org; the Healthy Teen Network, healthyteennetwork.org; and the Annie E. Casey Foundation/KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org/data#OK/2/0
- **Engage youth as leaders in prevention**, check Forum for Youth Investment: www.readyby21.org

