

TEEN BIRTHS: REGIONAL AND NATIONAL TRENDS

Purpose

This Fact Sheet provides summary information from our research report on national and regional trends in teenage birth rates – *Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting: An Overview*.

Teenage birth trends over time and by age

Births to teenage women are a relatively small proportion of all births.

- ▶ In 2011 4,008 of New Zealand's 61,403 births were to teenage women.
- ▶ Births to teenage mothers made up 6.5 percent of all births nationally.
- ▶ Just under three out of every 100 teenage women (aged 15-19 years) give birth each year in New Zealand. Two of these teenage mothers (70 percent) will be 18 or 19 years old.

Few women will have a child as a teenager and even fewer will have two or more children.

- ▶ Around 10 percent of young women are currently likely to have a child as a teenager.
- ▶ Having two children in the teenage years is very rare (about 3 percent do so) and almost unheard of until age 18 years.
- ▶ Between 2006 and 2010, about 20 percent of teenage women who had a first birth went on to have a second as a teenager.

KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ The teen birth rate declined significantly between 1962 and 1985 and has remained fairly stable since. Rates rose slightly in the mid-2000s and fell back again.
- ▶ The overwhelming majority (just under 90 percent) of adolescents do not have a first birth during their teenage years, and a second or subsequent birth as a teenager is rare.
- ▶ Currently just over 4,000 teenagers give birth each year, with over two-thirds of these births to 18 and 19 year olds.
- ▶ Young women from provincial regions in the North Island are over-represented among adolescent mothers.
- ▶ Gisborne and Northland are among regions with relatively high levels of teen childbearing.

Two primary sources of data were used for our analysis of teen births: **Birth Registration data (Statistics New Zealand); and National Maternity Collection data (Ministry of Health).**

As well as numbers of birth's we also present birth rates. Rates of birth per 1,000 in an age group control for possible changes over time in the number of women within an age band. That is, the number of births may increase but so too may the number of women in the age group.

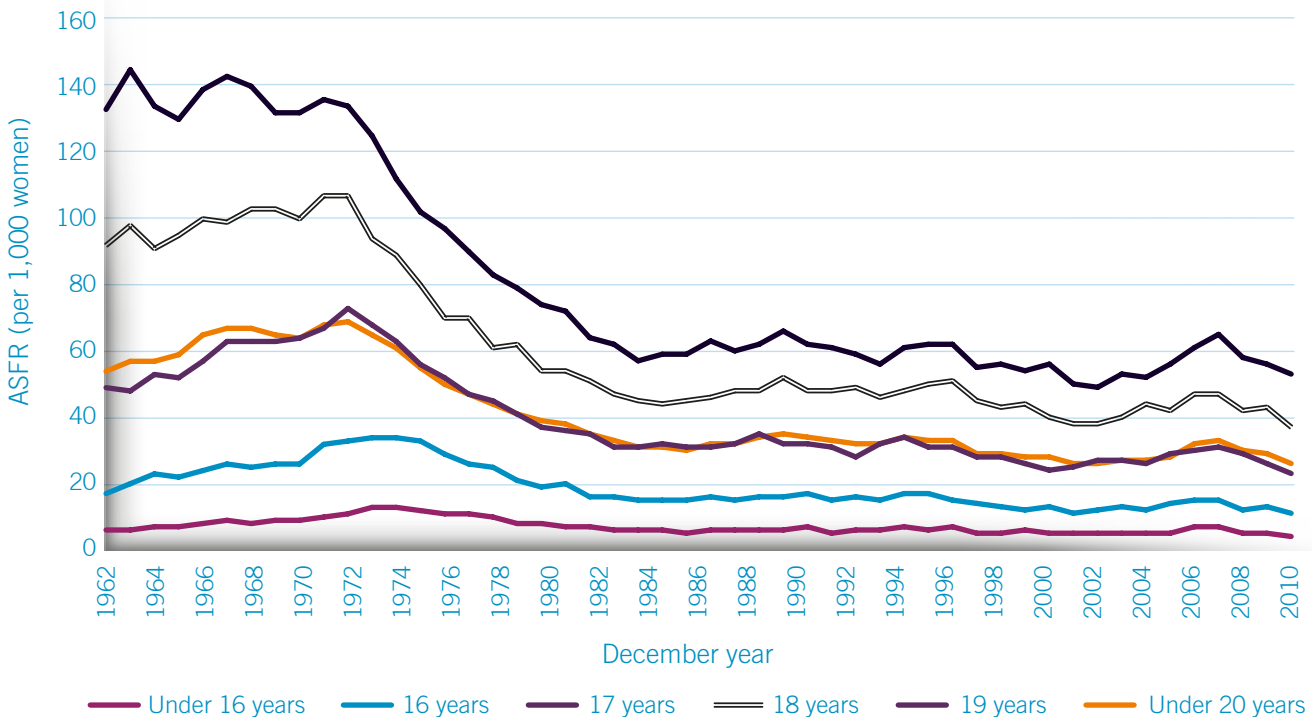


Figure 1 presents the change in teen birth rates for each teenage year from 1962 to 2011. The rate is the number of births per 1,000 women in the specific age group in the year.

Long term teen birth trends over time are generally in a downward direction:

- ▶ The teen birth rate declined significantly between 1962 and 1985. This is consistent with the decline in total fertility for all ages over that period (not shown).
- ▶ Rates rose slightly in the mid-2000s and fell back again.

Figure 1 Age specific fertility rates (ASFR per 1,000) for teenage mothers over the period 1962–2011



Source: ASFRs provided by Statistics New Zealand

No. of live births	2002	2005	2008	2011
Under 16 years	129	162	202	123
16 years	317	373	468	342
17 years	699	789	1,020	698
18 years	1,077	1,285	1,526	1,160
19 years	1,400	1,527	2,008	1,685
Total under 20 years	3,622	4,136	5,224	4,008
20 years and over	50,399	53,609	59,119	57,395
Total all ages	54,021	57,745	64,343	61,403

The table shows the numbers of births to teenagers by individual years of age for recent selected years. As reflected in Figure 1, it shows an increase from 2002 until 2008 and then a decline to just over 4,000 teen births.



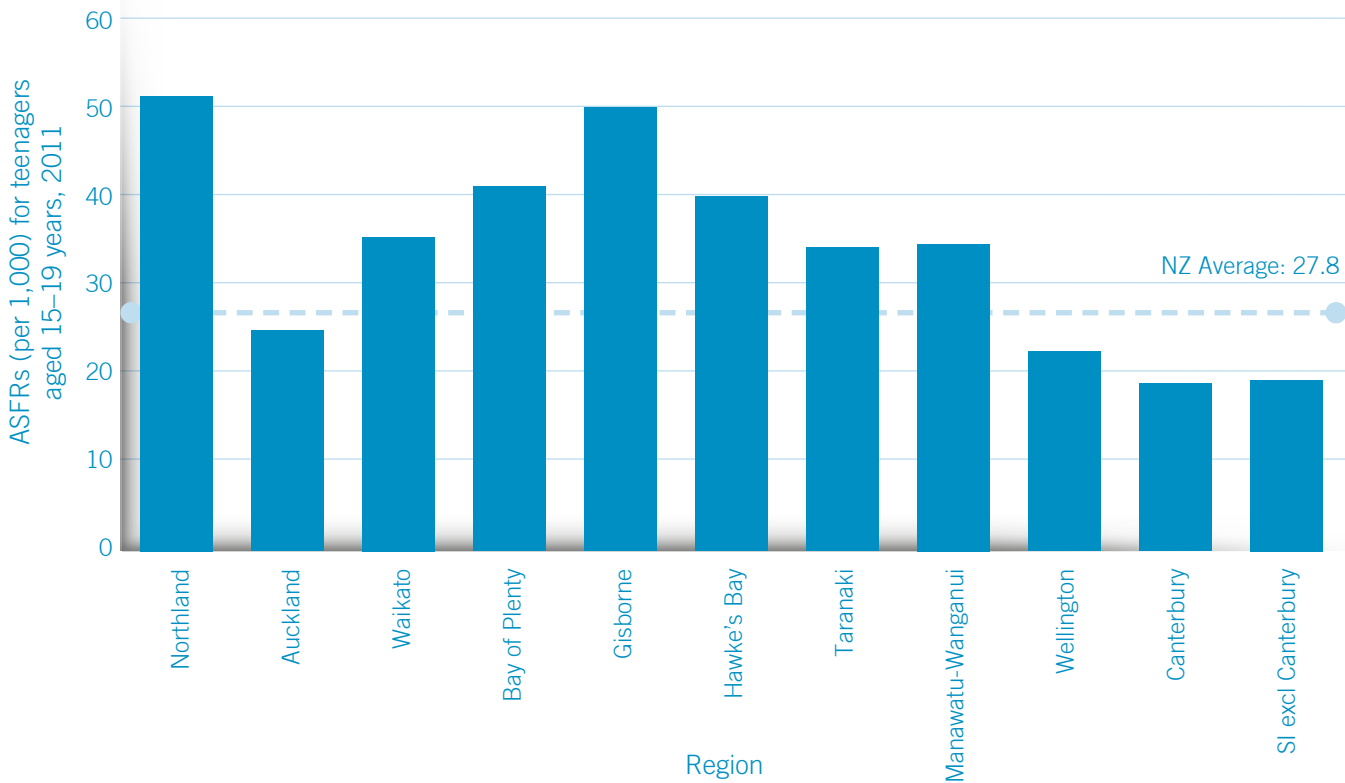
Regional trends in teenage births

In New Zealand the teen birth rate varies by region (Figure 2).

- ▶ Births to teenage women are more common in the North Island and outside predominantly urban regions.
- ▶ While some areas have higher teen birth rates, the number of births is not great. For example the highest teen *birth rate* (51.3 births per 1,000 female teens) is in Northland, although there are only 262 actual teen births.

- ▶ Because of its large population, most teen births are in Auckland (1,256) although the *rate* is relatively low (24.9 births per 1,000 female teenagers).
- ▶ Higher rates of teen births in particular regions reflect the socio-economic and population characteristics. Teen birth is more common in lower socio-economic communities, and in New Zealand the rates of teen birth are higher for Māori and Pasifika teenage women.
- ▶ Most regions reflect the national trend of an increase in teen birth rates in the mid-2000's, followed by a decline to 2011. Northland is the one exception, with the teen birth rate continuing to increase through to 2011.

Figure 2 Regional age specific fertility rates (ASFR per 1,000) for teenage mothers aged 15–19 years in 2011



Based on Birth Registration data

Related Resources

Regional trends in teenage parenthood, Kaipuke Consultants Ltd, February 2012

Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting in New Zealand, Nita Zodgekar, Families Commission, July 2012

Teen Pregnancy and Parenting: An Overview, Families Commission, July 2011

Overview of Māori Teen Parenting, Dr Leonie Pihama, Māori and Indigenous Analysis Limited, June 2012

Fact Sheets draw on recent statistics and data to provide a picture of selected aspects that impact on New Zealand families and family life. A Families Commission Fact Sheet contributes to the intellectual property of the Families Commission's Centre for Family and Whānau Knowledge.

If you would like any information about the work of the Families Commission, contact enquiries@nzfamilies.org.nz

Wellington office

Public Trust Building, Level 5
117–125 Lambton Quay
PO Box 2839, Wellington 6140
Phone 04 917 7040
Fax 04 917 7059

Auckland office

AMI House, Level 5
63 Albert Street, Auckland 1010
Phone 09 985 4106
Fax 09 985 4109

Email

enquiries@nzfamilies.org.nz

Commission website

www.nzfamilies.org.nz



Follow us on Facebook



Follow us on Twitter