



Teen Parents and Benefit Receipt

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Teen pregnancies, births and abortions

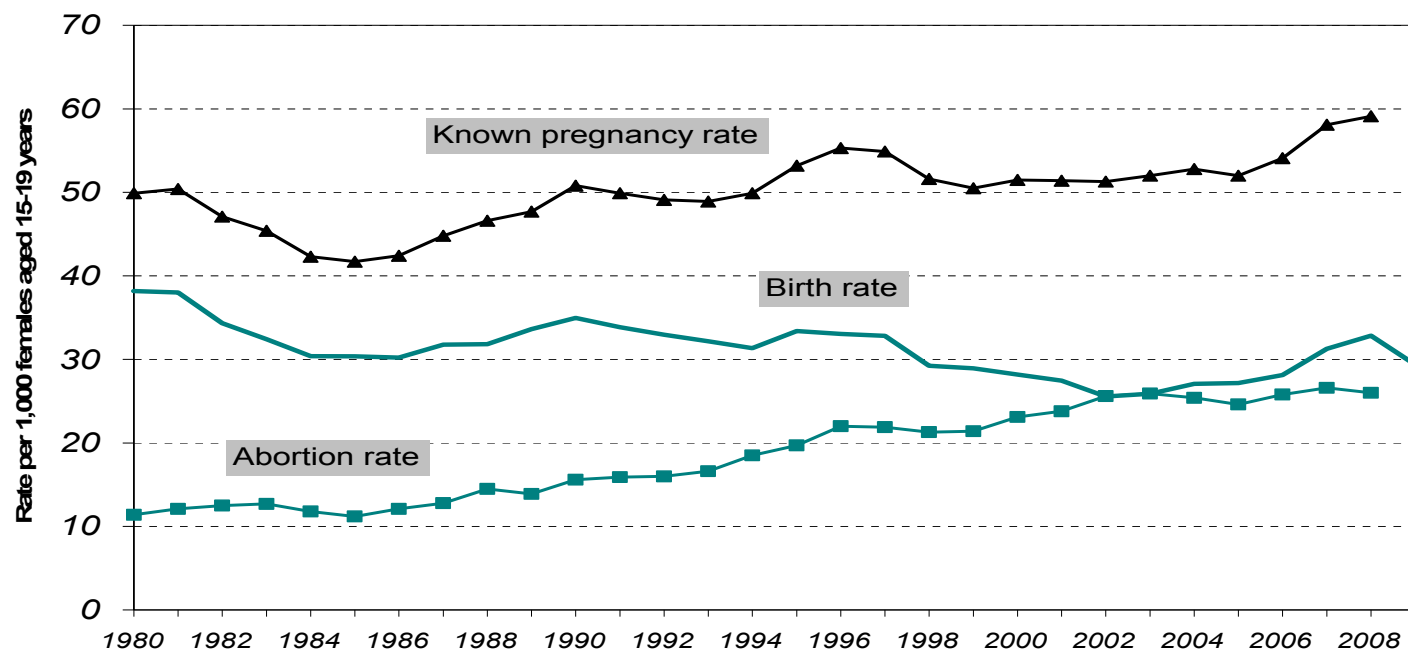
In 2009:

- 4,670 births to teenage women
- approximately two thirds of these were to 18 and 19 year olds
- half of all teen births were to Māori women
- approximately half of all teen pregnancies ended in induced abortion



Pregnancy, Birth and Abortion Rates

Females aged 15-19 years, 1980-2009

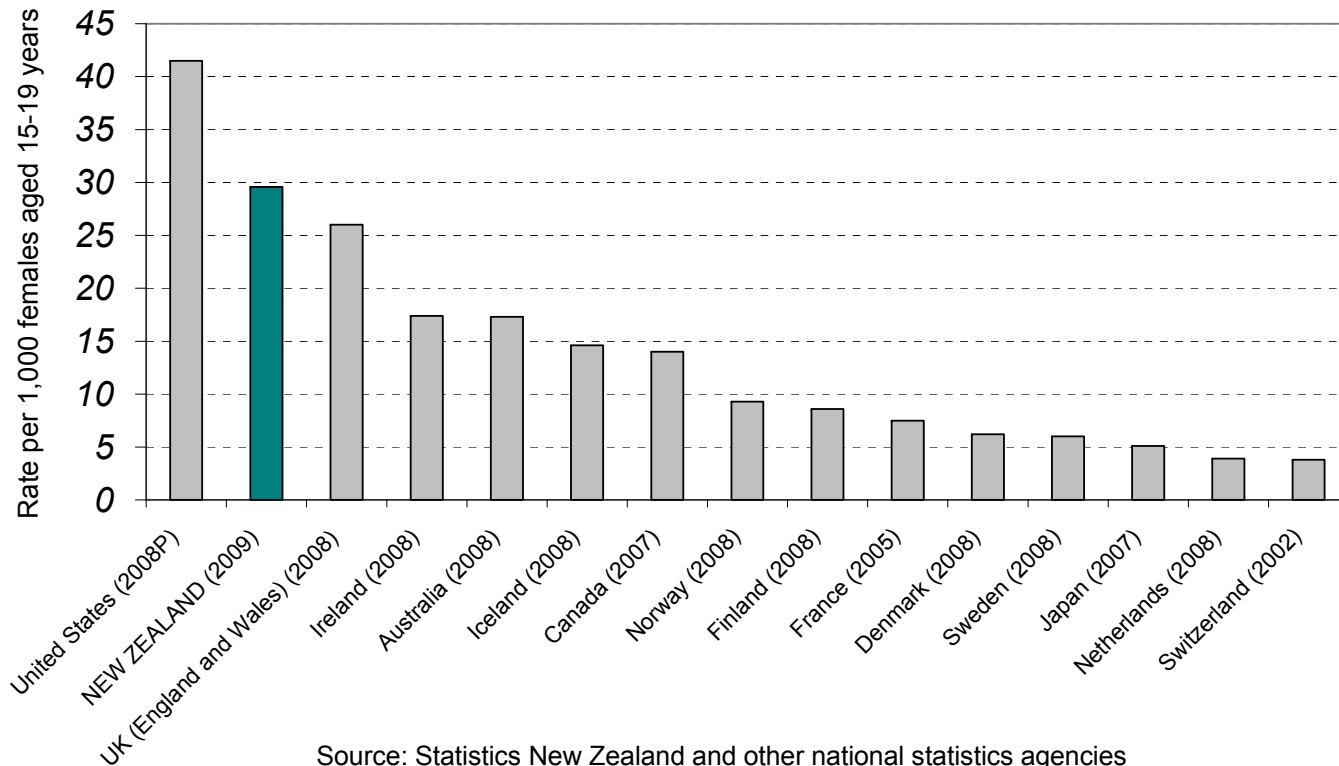


Source: Statistics New Zealand. Age-specific fertility rates by 5 year age group, Dec years (Infoshare) 2009 data is provisional. Induced abortions and abortion rates by age of woman (Abortions, tables). Known pregnancies and pregnancy rates by age of woman (Demographic Trends 2009, Table 2.20).



Teenage Fertility (Birth) Rates, Selected OECD Countries

2008 or latest

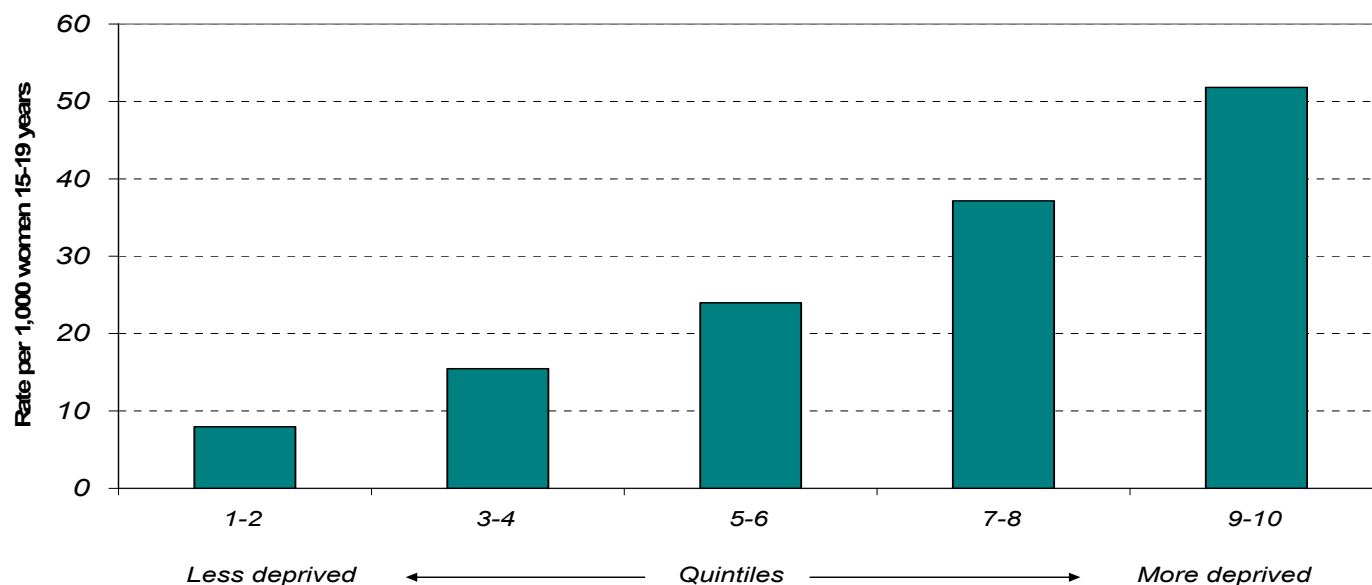


Source: Statistics New Zealand and other national statistics agencies



Teen Birth Rate, 15-19 Years

by area deprivation quintile, 2002-2006



Source: MSD (2008) *Children and Young People: Indicators of Wellbeing, Care and Support*, p78.

The teen birth rate in the most deprived areas of New Zealand is 6.5 times higher than the rate in the least deprived areas



Number of teen mothers in population

Based on IRD Family Tax Credit data for year to March 2009:

- estimated 6,000 mothers aged 16-19 years
- around 5,000 of these were aged 18-19 years
- 79% were sole parents



Births by Age of Mother and Father, 2008

Age of Parents	Number of Births	% Births to Teenage Mothers
Mother under 20, father under 20	1,875	36%
Mother under 20, father 20+	2,288	44%
Mother under 20, father not stated	1,061	20%
Mother 20+, father under 20	539	
Total births where father known to be under 20	2,414	
Total births to mothers under 20	5,224	100%

Source: Statistics New Zealand, Population Statistics Unit, customised data for 2008; percentages derived by MSD



Some important considerations

- Teen parents and their children are not an homogenous group.
- Circumstances preceding and following teen births vary widely.
- Childbearing norms, acceptance of early parenthood, and support for teen parents and children varies across ethnic and other groups.
- Many teen parents and their children do well.



Teen Mothers - Risk Factors Before Birth

A New Zealand study¹ shows that, compared with those who did not become mothers by age 21, those who became mothers by age 18 had the following risk factors at ages 0-15:

- sexually abused (36% vs 7%) 5 times more likely
- physically abused (36% vs 12%) 3 times more likely
- history of depression (26% vs 7%) 4 times more likely
- parental history of:
 - criminal offending (32% vs 9%) 3 times more likely
 - substance abuse (68% vs 30%) 2 times more likely
- conduct disorder and problems at school more likely

¹ Boden, J. M., Fergusson, D. M. & Horwood, L. (2008). Early motherhood and subsequent life outcomes. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49(2), 151-160.



Teen Mothers - Risk Factors After Birth

A New Zealand study² shows that, compared with those who did not become mothers by age 21, those who became mothers by age 18 had the following risk factors at ages 21-25:

- received main benefits (82% vs 30%) almost 3 times more likely
- have no qualifications (59% vs 7%) 9 times more likely
- major depression (55% vs 25%) 2 times more likely
- thinking about or attempting suicide (36% vs 11%) 3 times more likely
- substance dependence (14% vs 7%) 2 times more likely

²Boden, J. M., Fergusson, D. M. & Horwood, L. (2008). Early motherhood and subsequent life outcomes. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49(2), 151-160.



Teen Fathers – risk factors

A New Zealand study³ shows that young men most likely to father a child at an early age:

- were born to a teenage mother
- spent time in a single mother household while growing up
- had an early initiation to sexual activity before age 16
- had a history of conduct problems
- had planned to leave school early

³ Jaffee, S.R., Caspi A., Moffitt, T.E., Taylor, A., & Dickson, N. (2001). *Predicting early fatherhood and whether fathers live with their children: Prospective findings and policy considerations*. Institute for Research on Poverty Discussion Paper No 1235-01.



Children of Teen Mothers

By age 21, and compared to children of later child-bearers, children of teen mothers in the Dunedin Longitudinal Study⁴ were more likely to have the following outcomes:

- left school early more than 2.5 times more likely
- unemployed for 12 months or more 2 times more likely
- violent offenders just under 3 times more likely
- teen parents themselves more than 2.5 times more likely

⁴ Jaffee, S. R., Caspi, A., Moffitt, T. E., Belsky, J., & Silva, P. A. (2001). Why are children born to teen mothers at risk for adverse outcomes in young adulthood? Results from a 20-year longitudinal study. *Development and Psychopathology*. 13, 377-397.



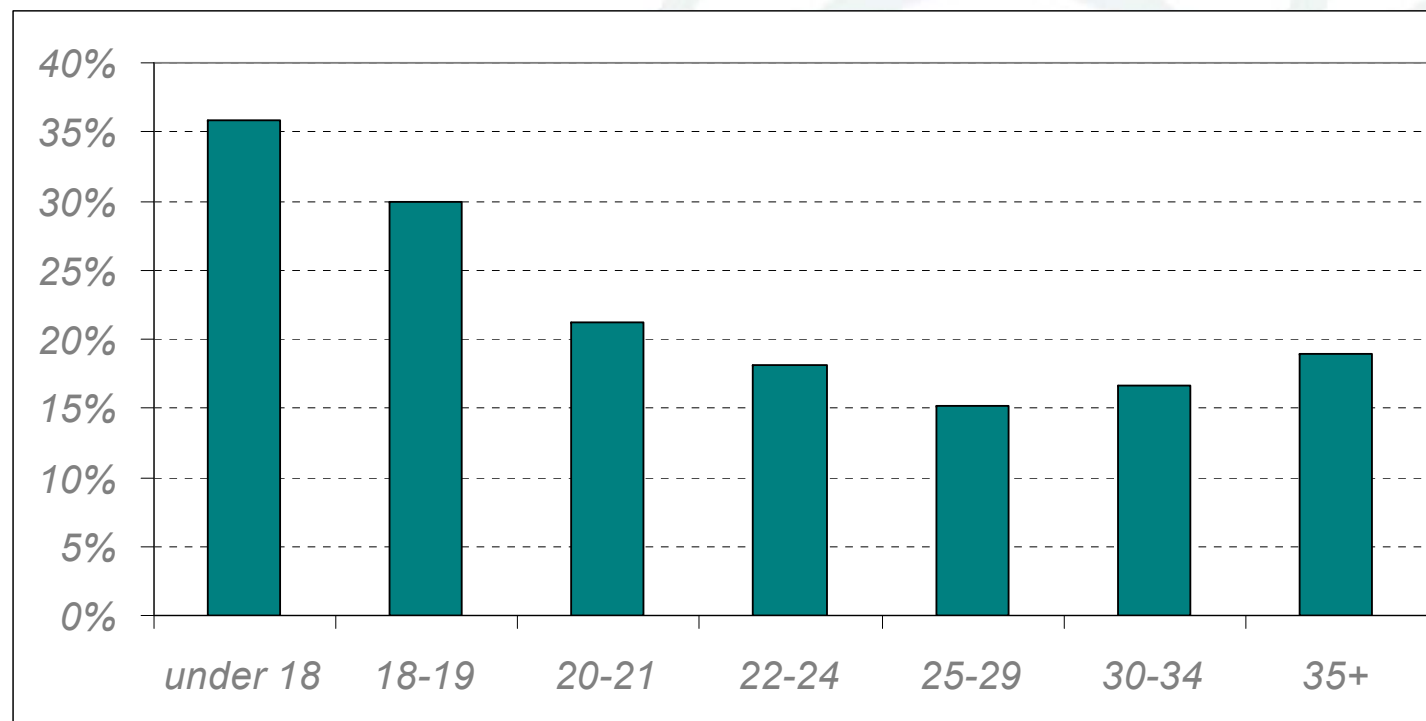
Teen parents and benefit receipt

- at end of December 2009, 4,169 teenagers received the DPB (including EMA)
- 290 teenage men with dependent children received main benefits at June 2009, and 158 teenage men receiving benefits had Child Support payments deducted
- estimated that a least a third of current DPB clients became parents as teenagers
- teen parents stay longer on benefits than those who become parents at an older age - average length of time for those who enter as teenagers, in the 10 years after entry, is 7.1 years



Likelihood of Being on Benefit 10 Years Later by Age at First Birth

Percent new entrants to DPB in year to June 1999 on benefit at June 2009 by age when oldest child born



Source: Ministry of Social Development, Benefit Dynamics Dataset.



Supporting resilience in teenage mothers

Resilience:

- positive outcomes in the presence of adversity
- “surfaces in the face of hardship”
- denotes ability to “bounce back”



A New Zealand qualitative study

- 2001 - 18 teenage mothers interviewed on views and experiences of teenage parenting
- 2008 – 13 of these located and re-interviewed – focus on resilience
- all had received, or were currently receiving, DPB
- provides insights to ways some had reduced benefit dependency



Factors supporting resilience



Intensive, youth-focused, and co-ordinated early intervention that provides opportunities for reflection with skilled adults, and helps develop skills, address challenges, and overcome fatalistic attitudes

No matter what, they never let you give up. If you didn't show up for two days, (teacher) would be on that phone ... 'Where are you? What are you doing? Why aren't you here?' Just the encouragement and the opportunities that they presented. I think that's what really, really helped. They were genuine options, and genuine hands of help. So without judgment. There is enough judgment out there without having more.

1.a sense of purpose and direction

If I didn't have my children, I don't think I would have gone through academia. I would have kind of wish-washed my way through life, because that's just my natural way of doing things. But they gave me a reason and they gave me substance to go in this other direction and be a bit more focused on where I'm going, with them in mind.



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

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Supportive families and whānau

You know ... that phone call that you can ring up and say 'Awful day' for whatever reason, and that someone who can say, 'It will get better, and what can I do, and how can I help?' It's nice to know there's someone to say those things, rather than having no-one.

When I graduated, it wasn't just my achievement. It was the achievement of my whole whānau in that they had been supporting me through this whole journey, and finally we had reached a milestone, and we had done it as a whānau. We were all celebrating that someone in our whānau who had come from nothing, could achieve something, could overcome all those obstacles and be successful.



Support, along with other young mothers, from community-based services

If you can do other stuff, what you've got to deal with is not so bad. Like ... if you can go and have fun somewhere, and you've got to go home to a little bit of milk and not much sugar, it's not that bad. Because you've just had a bit of fun, and you've got somewhere to go the next day.



“Settling down” with a supportive partner

The other night the kids wrote out a list of rules, and (partner – not the children’s father) said, ‘You know I’ll back up your mother on those, boys. If you don’t do it, I’ll help.’ He didn’t say, ‘I’ll get up and make you’. He said, ‘I will help her.’



Focus on the well-being of their children, and resolving custody and access issues

(Birth father) and I will still have our little arguments and stuff, but both my partner and (birth father's partner) know just to stand back, because there are going to be some aspects that are between me and (birth father). Because at the end of the day, he's their biological father. And I think that's what's made us actually grow up and realise that ... you know ... we can hate each other for the rest of our lives, but we're still going to be there, because we've got the two kids together. Or we can just bite the bullet, get along, and do it for our kids, which is what we've decided to do. The kids are much happier and more settled for it.



Insights to the past

It's really hard to give your children everything you want to when you don't have everything to give them. You can't, at 17, make a life...to suddenly be able to support a child. If I'd been in a better position financially, if I'd been in a better position with my relationships, a lot of things would have gone a lot differently.



Positive role models, particularly former teenage mothers

She had her first baby at 16. I knew I could succeed, but listening and talking to someone like her who actually did (job), I thought, 'I want to be like you.'



Support to identify education and training opportunities

I did want to be a masseuse, but then somehow I went to polytechnic and did hospitality ... like a food and beverage certificate ... just to get something so I could go and work. I got that, and it just opened my eyes to a whole different world. I got all these new awesome friends and my self esteem started building. I was working in town. It was just great. But then as (daughter) got older I realised that I couldn't be doing night shifts when she was at school. So when she started school I finished working in town and I started working in a café during the day. Then I got over that, and I thought I needed to do something else. [...] My aunty said, 'Why don't you go and train to be a teacher?' I was like 'Okay, I think I want to.' So we investigated that, and here I am. I am in the third year and I love it.



Future focused

(Daughter) needs to have a future. That's just the way it is. She can't have a future if I'm on the benefit with nothing to do ... well ... not a great future, and not a future that I want for her. So, hopefully, if she sees me going and doing university, and going and working, I'll be able to provide that for her as well ... you know ...the money and the support so she can do that too.