

# Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

Jamie L. Keith  
Executive Director

# Unwed/Unplanned Pregnancies

*Emphasis on Teen Childbearing*

Alabama Healthy Marriages, Healthy  
Families, and Responsible Fatherhood  
Conference on Best Practices  
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# Topics covered. . .

- Definitions
- Teen pregnancy/childbearing statistics
- What the American public believes
- Teen motherhood and marriage
- Social issues affected by teen pregnancy and teen childbearing
- What it all means
- Considerations

# Definitions. . .

- Unplanned (unintended) – woman wanted to become pregnant but at a point in the future, not at the present time.
- Unwanted – woman did not want to become pregnant now or in the future.
- Unwed – pregnancies and births that occur outside of marriage. (*Can't assume they are unintended or unwanted.*)

# Alabama Statistics '07...

## Total births by age group

- 8,776 (ages <15 - 19)
- 20,029 (ages 20 - 24)
- 18,229 (ages 25 - 29)

## Births to unmarried women by age group

- 6,641 (ages <15 - 19)
- 10,046 (ages 20 - 24)
- 5,096 (ages 25 - 29)

# Percent of births to unmarried women in Alabama women. . .

- 94.1 under age 15
- 85.8 ages 15-17
- 70.4 ages 18-19
- 50.2 ages 20-24
- 28.0 ages 25-29

# 2006 Teen Births

(ages 15-19)

- Nationally, the teen birth rate increased 3% between 2005 and 2006 - to a rate of 41.9 – the first such increase in 15 years.
- There was a decrease in the group aged 10-14, but increases in both the 15-17 and 18-19 age groups.
- The non-marital birth rate rose 7% between 2005 and 2006, the largest single-year increase since 1988-1989.
- Four in five births to teens, 60% to those 20-24 and three in 10 to women 25-29 were to unmarried women.

# Some related news...

According to results from the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) there have been disturbing changes in sexual and contraceptive behaviors among high school youth:



- % who have ever had sex
- % who had sex before age 13
- % sexually active in past 3 months
- % who were ever forced to have sex
- % who experienced dating violence



- % who used a condom at last sex
- % who used the birth control pill at last sex

# What the American public believes...

- The American public strongly supports the goal of reducing unwanted pregnancy.
- 69% said reducing unwanted pregnancy in the United States is an important goal.
- American public has a common-sense understanding that child-bearing and family formation are deeply significant life events.
- Americans think unplanned, unwanted pregnancies are largely confined to teens.

# Teenage Motherhood and Marriage

# Overall Trends

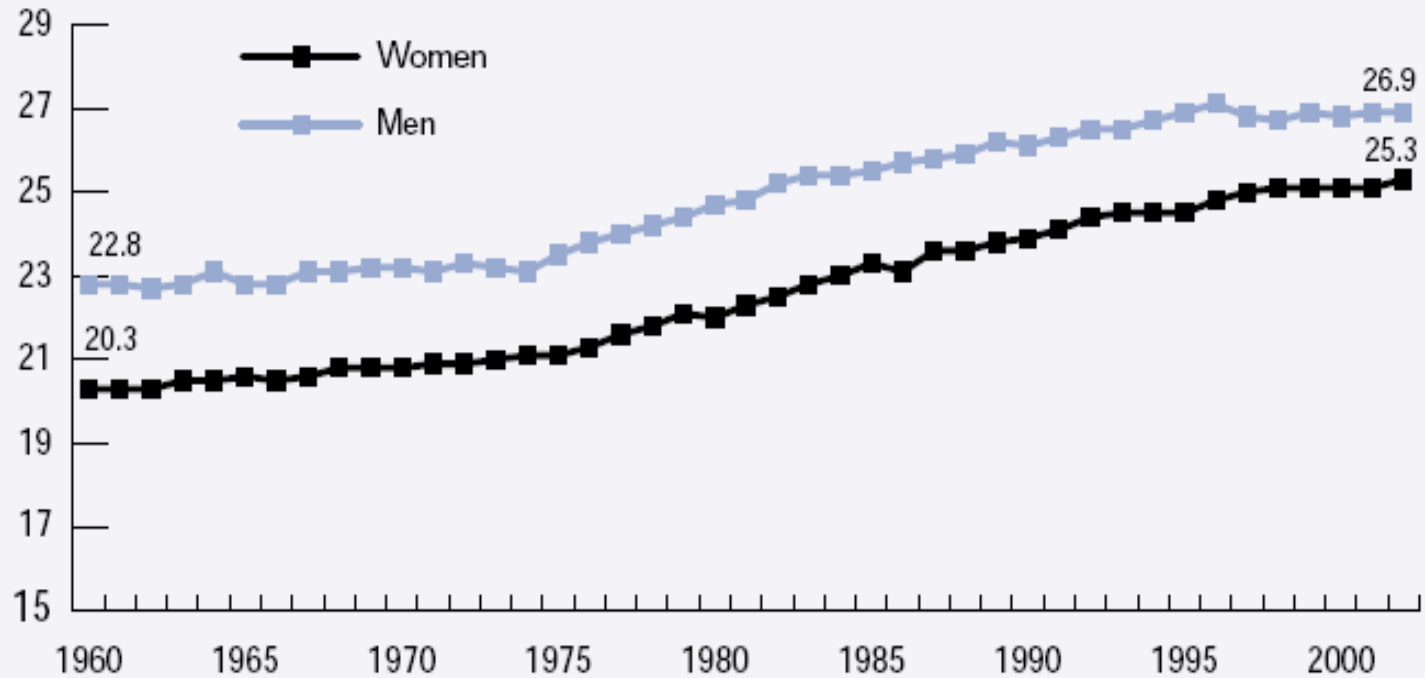
- Teens are less likely to be married than in the past, whether or not they become teen parents.
- Teen marriage and birth patterns have shifted from a general trend of marrying before pregnancy, to marrying as a result of pregnancy, to becoming pregnant and not marrying.
- U.S. teen birth rates have declined at the same time that the median age of first marriage has risen.

# Teen Marriage

- Marriage among teenagers is rare.
- In 2002, only **2.5%** of teens aged 15-19 had ever been married, compared to **11%** in 1975.
- The median age of first marriage has increased from around 20 years for women and 23 for men, in 1960, to 25 and 27 years old for men and women, respectively in 2002.

# Teen Marriage

Estimated median age of first marriage, by gender (1960-2002)



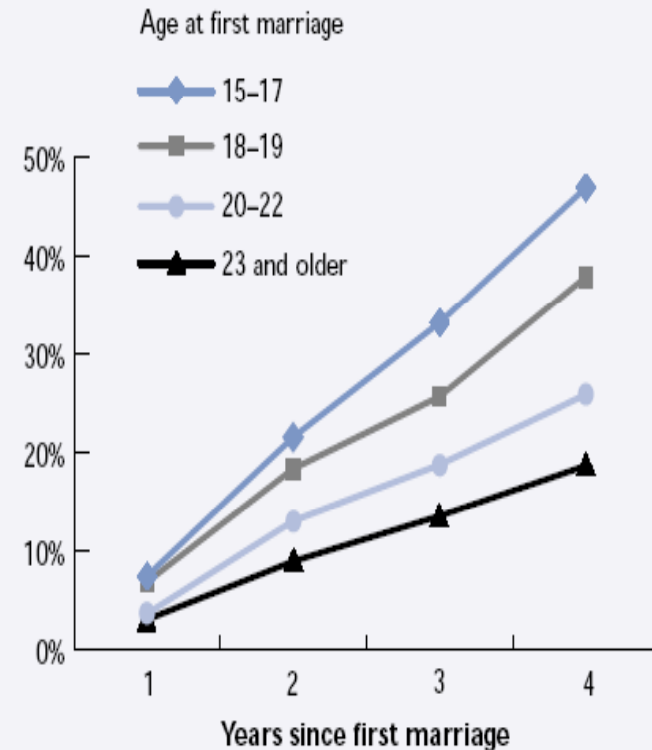
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2003.

# Teen Marriage

- Teenage marriages are typically unstable.
- **1/3** of teen marriages formed before the bride is 18 end in divorce within 5 years, and almost half dissolve within 10 years.
- For teens who marry later, at age 18 or 19, the likelihood of divorce is **25%** within 5 years and **38%** within 10 years.

# Teen Marriage

The divorce rate for teens is considerably higher than for women who delay marriage until they are in their early twenties.



Source: Abma et al. 1997

Child TRENDS

# Marital Status of Teen Mothers

- Today - most teen births are to unmarried mothers.
- In 1960, 85% of teen births were to married teens; however, by 2002 only 20% of teen births occurred within marriage.
- Marriage is especially unlikely among younger teens.

# Marital Status of Teen Mothers

- Marriage prospects for those teens who already have a child are also quite limited.
- Declines in marital births to teens are partly due to a decreasing percentage who marry *because* they are pregnant.
- In the early 1960's, **70%** of white teens and **36%** of black teens aged 15-19 who became pregnant got married before their child was born.

# Marital Status of Teen Mothers

- By the 1990's those percentages had decreased to **20%** and **7%**, respectively.
- First births are less likely to occur within marriage than subsequent births.
- In 2002, among first time mothers aged 15-19, **18%** were married when they gave birth while **27%** of 15-19 year old mothers who had at least two children had the child/children within marriage.

# Marital Status of Teen Mothers

- Marital births are less common among young teen mothers.
- Only **11.5%** of teens ages 15-17, in 2002, were married when they gave birth.
- More than twice as many (**24.2%**) older teens (ages 18-19), were married when they gave birth.

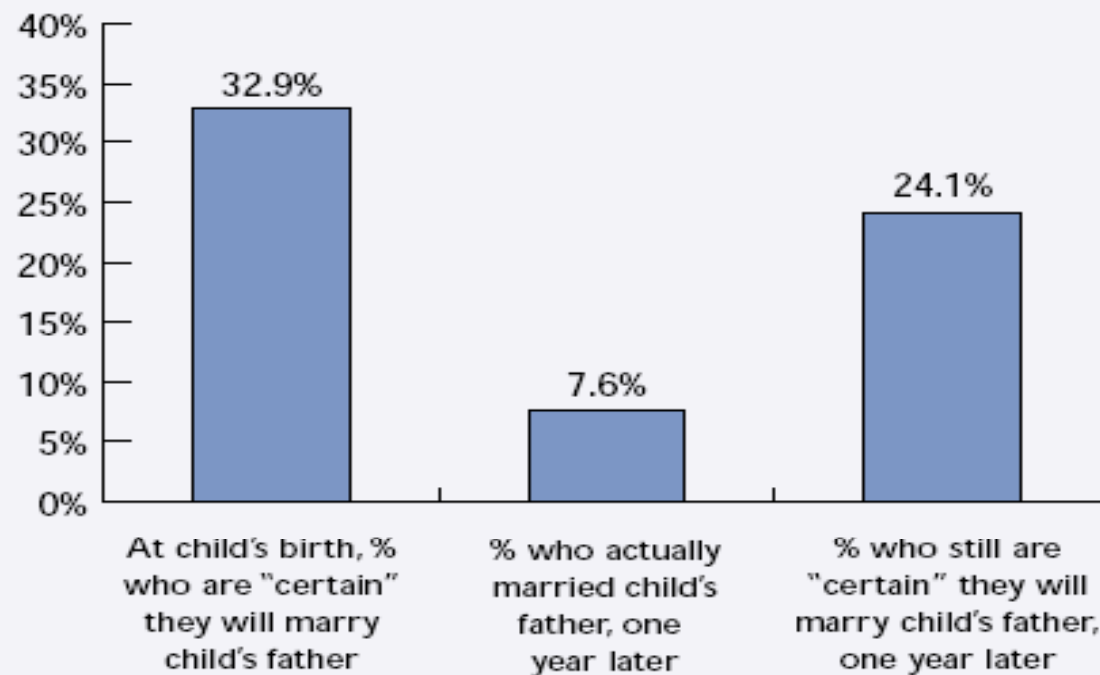
# Teen Mothers Marital Hopes and Realities

- Many teen mothers have unrealistically high expectations for marriage.
- At the time of their child's birth, almost **1/3** of unmarried teen mothers say they are "certain" that they will marry the biological father of their child. An additional **23%** say their chances of marrying are "good."

# Marital Hopes and Realities

In reality, not even 8% of unwed teen mothers are married to the baby's father within the year.

# Marital Hopes and Realities



Source: Child Trends' analyses of data from Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study, baseline and one-year followup

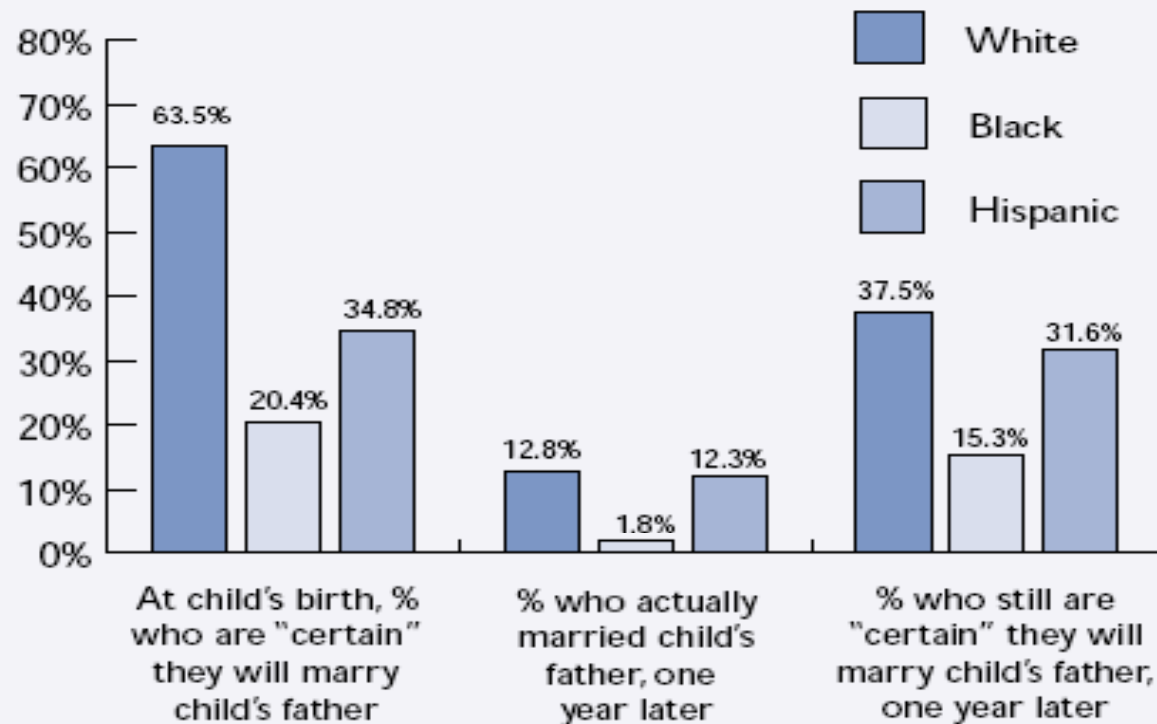
# Marital Hopes and Realities

- One year later, only **12%** of both non-Hispanic whites and Hispanics had actually married their child's father, as had only **2%** of non-Hispanic blacks.
- Childbearing outside of marriage is associated with an increased risk of divorce among those who eventually do marry.

# Marital Hopes and Realities

- Non-Hispanic whites have substantially higher expectations for marriage than other racial and ethnic groups.
- Almost **2/3** of non-Hispanic whites say they are “certain” they will marry their child’s father, compared with **35%** of Hispanics and **20%** of non-Hispanic blacks.

# Marriage expectations and rates among unwed teen mothers vary by race and ethnicity.



Source: Child Trends' analyses of data from Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study, baseline and one-year followup

# Marital Hopes and Realities

- Since most teen births are non-marital, women who give birth during their teenage years face reduced chances of marriage.
- Women who give birth out of marriage have lower educational attainment, lower incomes, and are more likely to receive public assistance.

# Marital Hopes and Realities

- Unmarried mothers are at greater risk of poverty.
- Children born to unmarried teen mothers face higher risk of poverty, low educational attainment, early sexual activity, and are more likely to engage in problem behavior and become teen parents themselves.

# Marital Hopes and Realities

- Since teen mothers are less likely to *ever* get married, they are at greater risk for long term single motherhood and consequently, of being poor later in life.
- Teen mothers who *do* marry are more likely to have a closely-spaced subsequent birth.

# Marital Hopes and Realities

- Short birth intervals increase risks for mother and child: premature birth, low birth weight, lower quality and quantity of parental time, increased physical, emotional and economic stress.
- The instability of teen marriages combined with rapid subsequent births can result in more single-mother households with greater numbers of children.

# Social Issues Affected by Teen Pregnancy Childbearing

- Welfare dependency and poverty
- Child well-being
- Out-of-wedlock births and marriage
- Responsible fatherhood
- Workforce development

# What It All Means

- Teen childbearing is associated with reduced marriage prospects, and marital instability for those who do wed.
- Both are linked to poor outcomes for the children of teen parents.
- Reducing rates of teen pregnancy is a critical step towards ensuring healthy marriages and improving child-well-being.

# What It All Means

- Teen marriage is not a cure-all.
- Teens who marry face higher rates of divorce than older couples, whether or not they are parents.
- In cases where teens really do want to marry, programs might consider helping them develop knowledge and skills to sustain a healthy marriage and to delay subsequent pregnancies.

# What It All Means

- It is not simply the pregnancy or disadvantaged backgrounds that cause the many problems teen mothers face, it's the timing.
- If more teens first completed their education, secured employment, married, and established stable home lives before becoming parents, they, their children, and society would fare much better.

# What It All Means

- The vast majority of teens want to marry some day.
- Programs must highlight long-term relationships and family formation goals - including both abstinence and comprehensive sex ed programs.

# Considerations

- Provide teens with relationships education and include evidence-based education focused on teen pregnancy prevention.
- Teach teens about the healthy development of children and the ethical consequences of their relationship decisions on children.
- Make pregnancy prevention integral to the strategy to promote healthy marriage.

# Considerations

- Establish a goal of managing the health risks of sexual risk-taking behavior and include the goal of building healthy relationships.
- Provide teens with accurate information about healthy relationships and marriage.
- Build awareness of the success sequence.

# Considerations

- Increase attention to adolescent boys on the subjects of healthy relationships and sexual risk-taking behavior.
- Engage parents as first teachers on subjects of relationships and sexual behavior.
- Explore dual track relationship programming for parents and teens.

# Resources

## **Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy**

412 N. Hull Street

Montgomery, AL 36104

334-265-8004

[www.acptp.org](http://www.acptp.org)

## **The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy**

1776 Mass Ave, NW, Suite 200

Washington DC 20036

(202)478-8500

[www.thenationalcampaign.org](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org)