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VITAL STATISTICS REPORT

Natality Statistics

FROM THE

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS

Teenage Childbearing: United States, 1966-75^a

INTRODUCTION

Nearly 600,000 births in 1975 were to mothers under 20 years of age. Births to teenagers comprised 19 percent of all the births in that year in contrast to 17 percent in 1966. Since 1966, birth rates for all women 20 years and older have fallen sharply. The trend for older teenagers, aged 18 and 19 years, has closely paralleled the decline observed for women in their twenties, the prime childbearing period. However, rates for younger teenagers, 15-17 years old, have not followed the general decline in fertility in this 10-year period; their rate actually increased slightly from 35.8 births per 1,000 women aged 15-17 in 1966 to 36.6 births in 1975.

Not only has the rate of childbearing for young teenagers not followed the general decline noted for older women, but the number of births has also risen for women ages 15-17 while it has declined for every older age group, except women 25-29 years. In 1975, for example, 227,270 infants were born to mothers 15-17 years old, an increase of 21.7 percent from the number in 1966.

This report focuses on teenage childbearing, a subject of increasing interest in recent years. The data which follow document some of the less fortunate circumstances which accompany a birth to a teenage girl; such a birth is more likely to be illegitimate, to be born to a mother with less than a high school education, to be of low birth weight, and to be born to a mother who

received inadequate prenatal care. The phenomenon of unchanged teenage childbearing is puzzling when viewed in the context of the general decline in fertility recorded in recent years, the increasing availability of family planning assistance to teenagers, and the legalization of abortion. Although this report does not attempt to explain or account for the recent trends in teenage childbearing, it does present and describe the national statistics available on the subject. Similar data for 1975 for older age groups are shown in "Advance Report, Final Natality Statistics, 1975."^b

The age groups 15-17 and 18-19 have been identified as two distinct groups of women—the first comprised essentially of school-age girls and the second composed of high school graduates or at least of women who could have completed high school. The younger women are, in the vast majority of cases, as yet unmarried. According to the 1970 census, for example, 95.7 percent of girls 15-17 years of age were unmarried, the proportion by single year ranging from 98.5 for 15-year-olds to 92.0 for 17-year-olds. In contrast, a smaller proportion, 77.5 percent, of those aged 18-19 years were unmarried (83.1 percent for 18-year-olds and 71.6 percent for 19-year-olds).^c Although the proportion unmarried among women aged 18-19 years was

^bNational Center for Health Statistics: Advance report, final natality statistics, 1975. *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*. Vol. 25, No. 10, Supp. DHEW Pub. No. (HRA) 77-1120. Washington. Health Resources Administration. Rockville, Md., Dec. 30, 1976.

^cU.S. Bureau of the Census: Marital status. *Census of Population: 1970*. Final Report PC(2)-4C. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972.

^aPrepared by Stephanie J. Ventura, A.M., *Division of Vital Statistics*.

high, more than one-fifth of the women in that age group in 1970 were married.

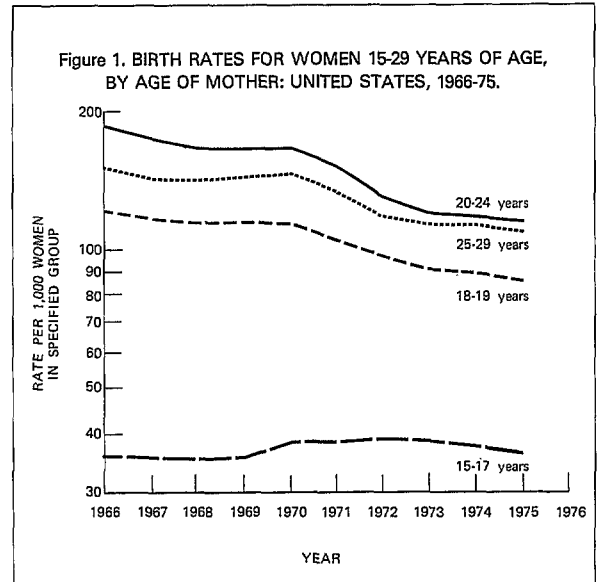
Some births occur to teenage girls under 15 years old, but there is no detailed discussion of childbearing among the age group 10-14 years in this report because the rates are very low (table 1). Regardless of race, not more than one-half of 1 percent of women in that age group has given birth in any year since 1966. The annual numbers of births to these women have not totaled more than 13,000 (table 2). Since the rates and numbers are so small, they do not support the more detailed analysis which follows for women aged 15-19 years.

BIRTH RATES

The birth rate for teenage girls ages 15-17 years was 36.6 births per 1,000 in 1975. In the previous 9 years the rate varied little, ranging from a low of 35.2 in 1968 to a high of 39.2 in 1972 (table 1). The relatively unchanged rate of childbearing for this age group can be contrasted with the steady and substantial decline in the birth rate recorded over the same period for women aged 18-19 years. The rate for older teens declined in every year, with only one exception, from 121.2 in 1966 to 85.7 in 1975. This is a decline of 29.3 percent, nearly the same as the 26.9-percent decline in the general fertility rate (number of births per 1,000 women aged 15-44 years).

Birth rates by age of mother for women 15-29 years of age are shown in figure 1. This graphically presents the similarity in the trends in birth rates for the age groups 18-19 years, 20-24 years, and 25-29 years. The trends are nearly identical, except that the rate for women aged 20-24 years fell more sharply than that for any other group under 30 years of age. Figure 1 also shows the atypical trend recorded in the birth rate for the younger teenagers, ages 15-17 years.

Birth rates for the women under 20 years are shown by race in table 1. Data in this table indicate that the gap between the rates for white and black women 15-17 years old narrowed somewhat between 1966 and 1975, resulting mainly from an 11.5-percent decline in the rate for black women but also partly from a 6.4-percent increase for white women. In 1966 the rate of 97.9 per 1,000 for black women was



3.7 times larger than the rate for white women (26.6). By 1975 the rate for black women had declined to 86.6, about 3.1 times the rate for white women (28.3).

Birth rates for both white and black women 18-19 years old declined considerably from 1966 to 1975, and the race differential increased very slightly. In 1966 the rate for black women was 209.9, or 1.9 times the rate of 109.6 for white women; by 1975 the rate for black women had fallen to 156.0, or 2.1 times the rate of 74.4 for white women.

It is evident from the foregoing that both racial groups have participated in the overall trends observed in the birth rates for teenage women. The only exception is in the rate for black women aged 15-17 years. The rate for these women fell somewhat during the 1969-75 period, in contrast to the slight upward trend noted for total and white women.

NUMBERS AND PROPORTIONS OF BIRTHS

In 1975, 594,880 babies were born to women under 20 years of age. Of these, 38.2 percent were to girls 15-17 years of age, and 59.7 percent were to those aged 18-19 years (table 2). Although the number of births in 1975 represented a decline from the total in 1966 (629,554 births), the decline resulted entirely from an 18.3-percent reduction in the

number of births to older teenagers, 18-19 years of age. Births to younger teenagers, 15-17 years, increased in this period by 21.7 percent.

Both white and black births to women aged 15-17 years increased from 1966 to 1975, with the relative increase being somewhat larger for white births. However, the overall decline in births to women 18-19 years was not shared by both race groups; white births declined by 24.2 percent, while black births increased slightly, by 1.5 percent.

Several important shifts occurred during the period 1966-75 in the distribution of births according to the mother's age (table 3). There was a sizable decline in the proportion of births to mothers aged 30 years and over and a comparable increase in the proportion of births to mothers aged 25-29. The proportion of births to mothers 20-24 years old declined very slightly. Of particular interest for this report, however, is the increase in the proportion of infants born to young teenage mothers, 15-17 years of age. This proportion increased from 5.2 percent of the total in 1966 to 7.2 percent in 1975. An increase was observed for both racial groups as well. This means not only that more babies have been born to very young mothers, but also that these young women have accounted for a larger proportion of all births.

BIRTH RATES BY LEGITIMACY STATUS

Effect of Proportions Married on Rates

The magnitude of birth rates for teenage women is heavily influenced by the proportions of women married and unmarried in these age groups. It has been noted previously that the overwhelming majority of young teenage girls are unmarried; more than 95 percent of girls aged 15-17 years were unmarried at the time of the 1970 census. This means that an illegitimate birth rate, computed on the basis of the number of unmarried women in the specified age group, would be relatively low for girls 15-17 years old. The number of married women in this age group is quite small; therefore a birth rate for married women, computed on the basis of married women in this age bracket, would be very high because the denominator for the rate would be small. The situation for women 18-19 years is similar but less extreme since a somewhat larger

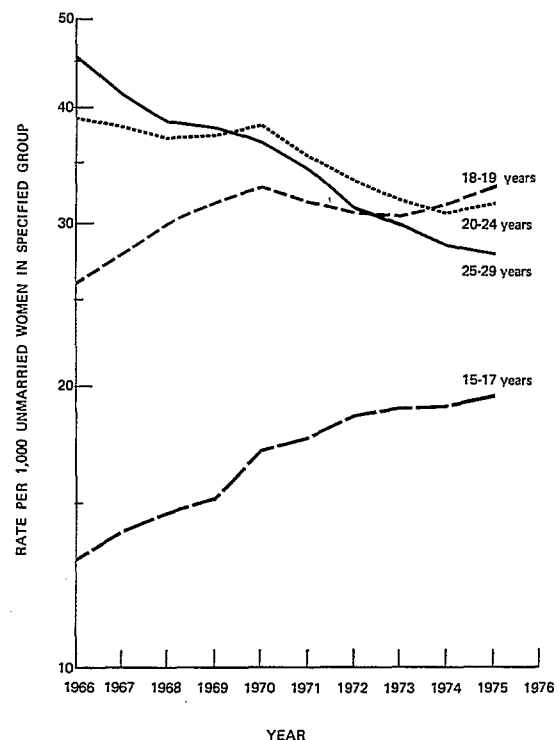
proportion of these women is married. For ages 20 and over the comparison shifts; the relatively smaller proportions and numbers of unmarried women are associated with relatively higher illegitimacy rates and lower birth rates for married women.

Illegitimacy Rates

Illegitimacy rates for both younger and older teenagers increased considerably between 1966 and 1975. These increases occurred at a time when such rates for women aged 20 years and older dropped, in many cases sharply. The estimated illegitimacy rate for young teenagers increased from 13.1 illegitimate births per 1,000 unmarried females 15-17 years old in 1966 to 19.5 in 1975, an increase of 48.9 percent. The percent increase in the rate for older teenagers was considerably smaller—27.1 percent for women aged 18-19 years (table 4).

Figure 2 presents graphically the dramatic shift that has occurred in the relative magnitudes of illegitimacy rates for teenage women compared with the rates for women in their twenties. It might be noted here that 93.3

Figure 2. ESTIMATED ILLEGITIMACY RATES FOR WOMEN 15-29 YEARS OF AGE, BY AGE OF MOTHER: UNITED STATES, 1966-75.

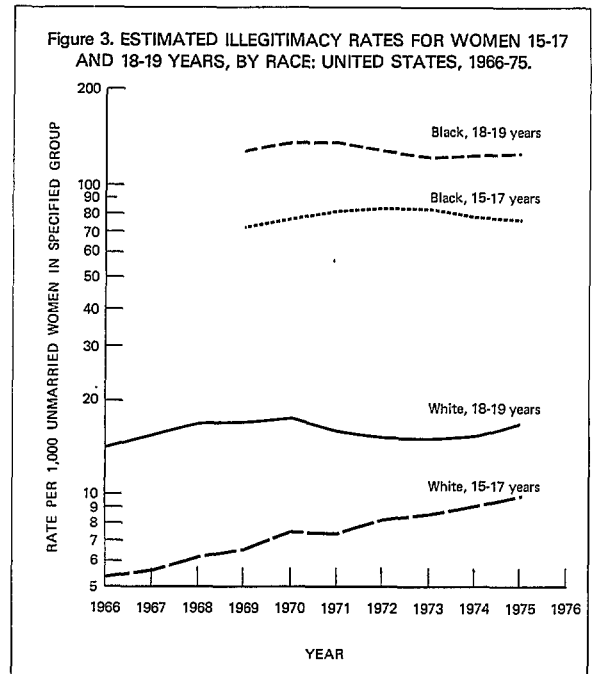


percent of illegitimate births in 1975 occurred to women under 30 years of age, with the majority, or 52.1 percent, occurring to women under 20. In 1966 the teenage illegitimacy rates were low, both absolutely and relatively; the rate for women 15-17 years old was 13.1 and the rate for women 18-19 years old was 25.8. In contrast, the rates for women 20-24 and 25-29 years old were relatively high—39.1 and 45.6, respectively. Between 1966 and 1970 the rates for both groups of teenage women increased steadily at about an equal pace. The rates for women aged 20-24 years declined modestly, while the rates for women aged 25-29 years fell sharply.

In the 5 years between 1970 and 1975 the rate for women 15-17 years old continued to increase fairly rapidly. The rate for women 18-19 years old fell and then rose in this period, so that by 1975 it was almost identical to the 1970 rate. More importantly, by 1975 the rate for women 18-19 years old was higher than the rates for either group of women in their twenties. The rate for women 25-29 years old, which was the highest in 1966, was by 1975 below the rates for both the 18-19 and 20-24 age groups. It is clear from figure 2 that the trend in illegitimacy rates for teenage women has been in rather striking opposition to the trend for women in their twenties.

Estimated illegitimacy rates for white teenagers 15-17 years and 18-19 years followed similar courses from 1969^d to 1971, rising in 1970 and then falling in 1971 (figure 3). Overall, however, from 1969 to 1971 the rate for younger white teenagers increased by 12.1 percent while the rate for older white teenagers declined by 6.5 percent. Between 1971 and 1975 the trend in the rates for the two groups diverged; the rate for women 15-17 years increased at a steady pace while the rate for women 18-19 years old declined through 1973 and increased after that. From 1973 to 1975

^dThe discussions of illegitimacy data by race which follow are confined to 1969-75 because illegitimacy data for black women are available only since 1969. Data for white and "all other" women for 1966-68 are shown in tables 4, 6, and 7. In the 1969-75 period blacks accounted for 96 percent of "all other" illegitimate births; therefore, the trends in these data for black and "all other" women are virtually the same, with the rates and ratios for black women being slightly higher.



the rates for both age groups increased at about the same pace.

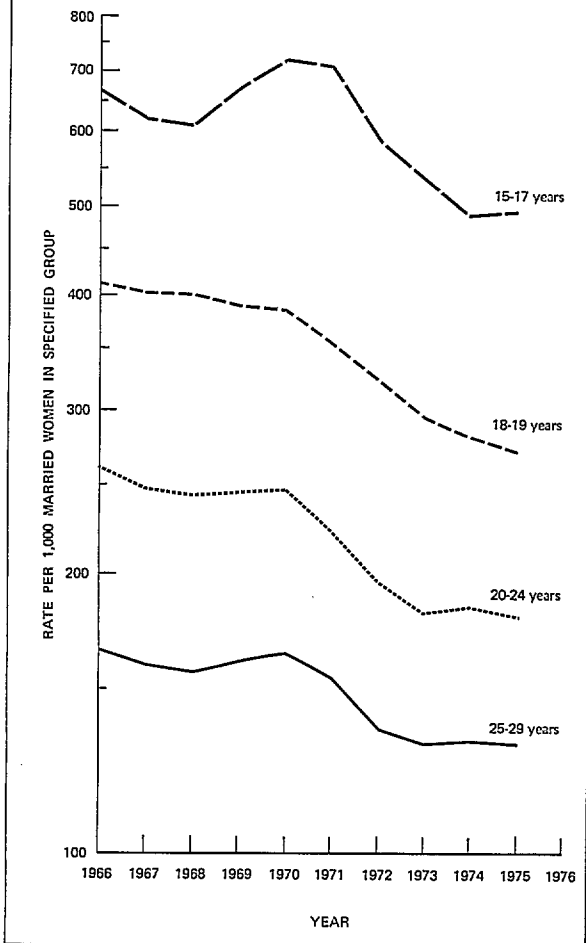
The trend in illegitimacy rates for black teenagers was nearly the same as that for white women of the same age group. The major exception is the divergent trend since 1972 for white and black women 15-17 years old. While rates for young white women rose steadily in the 1972-75 period, rates for black women declined in each year. Rates for black women 18-19 years old have nearly the same pattern as rates for white women: the rates rose from 1969 to 1970, declined through 1973, and increased in 1974 and 1975.

Between 1969 and 1975 the differential in the illegitimacy rates for white and black women 15-17 years old narrowed, principally because of the greater increase in the rate for white women. In 1969 the rate for black women was about 11 times higher than the rate for white women; by 1975 the differential had been reduced to 8. The race differential in the rates for women 18-19 years old fluctuated between 7 and 9 for all years.

Birth Rates for Married Women

Estimated birth rates for married women 15-17 and 18-19 years old, shown in table 5 and figure 4, indicate that childbearing among teenage married women has declined, just as it has

Figure 4. ESTIMATED BIRTH RATES FOR MARRIED WOMEN 15-29 YEARS OF AGE, BY AGE OF MOTHER: UNITED STATES, 1966-75.



among married women in their twenties, and at a more rapid rate in some cases. In spite of these declines, however, the rates of childbearing among young teenage married women are still very high. The rate for women aged 15-17 years was estimated to be 495.5 legitimate births per 1,000 married women in 1975 as compared with 663.7 in 1966. The rates for these very young married women are high because many were already pregnant at the time of marriage. Data from the 1970 census indicate that nearly one-third of women aged 14-17 years who first married in 1965-69 had babies within 6 months of their marriage.^c

^cU.S. Bureau of the Census: Premarital fertility. *Current Population Reports Special Studies*. Series P-23, No. 63. Washington. U.S. Government Printing Office, Aug. 1976.

Birth rates for married women 18-19 years old are high but they also declined considerably between 1966 and 1975. The rate in 1975 was 272.3 per 1,000 married women compared with 414.7 in 1966.

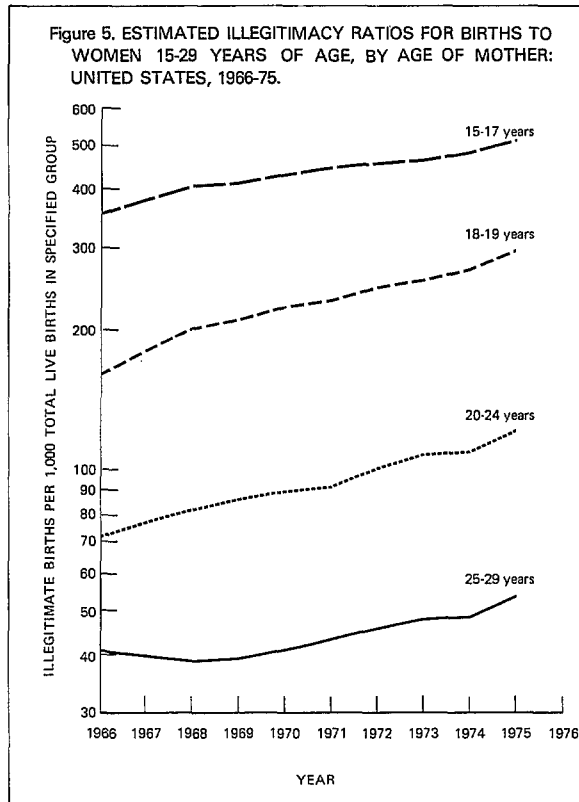
From 1966 to 1970 the rates for all married women 18-29 years changed relatively little overall. The rates for the youngest married women, 15-17 years old, actually increased somewhat in this period. Beginning in 1970 the rates for all ages under 30 declined, with the reductions being slightly smaller for each successively older age group. The declines noted in the birth rates for married women have had relatively little impact on the trends in teenage childbearing, however, because of the relatively small proportions of teenage women who are married and thus influencing these rates.

It is not feasible to compute birth rates for married women by race because the numbers of married women in the age-race-specific groups are very small in the teenage years. This problem is especially acute for very young black women. Not only are the numbers of married women small absolutely, but the trend in these population figures is very erratic from year to year because of sampling variability.

THE ILLEGITIMACY RATIO

The picture presented by the illegitimacy ratio is one of continued and very rapid increase in the ratios for births to teenagers. The illegitimacy ratio is defined as the number of illegitimate births per 1,000 total births. It is thus a measure of the proportion of all births that are illegitimate, and it is influenced primarily by the rate of illegitimacy and the number of unmarried women (both affecting the numerator) and by childbearing within marriage (which influences the denominator).

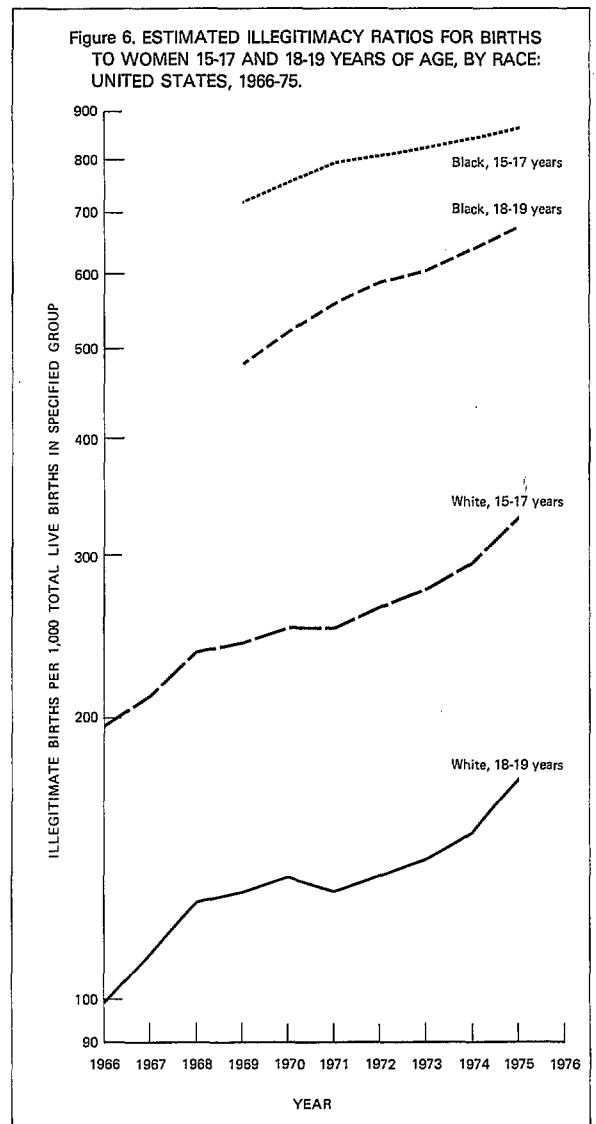
The illegitimacy ratio has risen for all age groups, almost without exception, since 1940, particularly since the current downward trend in general fertility began. The ratios presented in table 6 and in figure 5 show that of births to young teenagers (15-17 years) more than half in 1975 were to unmarried mothers; the ratio was 513.9. This represents a very large increase from the 1966 ratio of 353.0. Ratios for young teenagers are high because, as has already been noted, very few of them are married and in a



position to have a legitimate baby. The increase in the ratio from 1966 to 1975 resulted largely from the continued increase in the illegitimacy rate for young teenagers.

Nearly one-third of all births in 1975 to women 18-19 years old were illegitimate; the illegitimacy ratio was 298.1. This is substantially higher than the ratio of 160.6 for 1966 births. This sizable increase is a result of both the continued rise in the illegitimacy rate (affecting the numerator of the ratio) and the fairly sharp decline in marital fertility (affecting the denominator) for women this age. Ratios for each older age group are lower, primarily because proportionately more women are married with increasing age, thus reducing the number of women at risk of having an illegitimate birth.

A comparison of the trends in illegitimacy ratios by race (figure 6) shows similar patterns in the ratios for white and black births to mothers of the same age. Ratios for white births to mothers 15-17 years old have risen somewhat more since 1969 than those for black births, but the ratios for black births are still substantially above those for white births for both age groups.



NUMBER OF ILLEGITIMATE BIRTHS

The number of illegitimate births to teenage mothers has risen substantially in recent years (table 7). In 1975 an estimated 222,500 infants were born to unmarried females 15-19 years old. This figure represents a sharp increase in illegitimate fertility in just 10 years: in 1966 an estimated 135,800 babies were born to unwed mothers 15-19 years old. Thus, while total births to mothers 15-19 years declined 6.3 percent from 1966 to 1975, illegitimate births increased by 63.8 percent. Large increases are evident in the number of illegitimate births to both

younger and older teenagers. The group showing the sharper increase again was the 15-17 year age group. Illegitimate births to this group rose by 77.2 percent; the increase for older teenagers measured 51.6 percent.

Clearly, the number of illegitimate births to teenage mothers has risen very sharply in the past 10 years. Part of this increase has resulted from an increase in the number of unmarried women over these years due to the growing number of girls, born during the peak birth years of the 1950's and early 1960's, reaching their teenage years. Part of the increase is due to a declining marriage rate for teenagers in recent years. A large portion of the increase, however, is a result of the rise in the illegitimacy rates for teenage women.

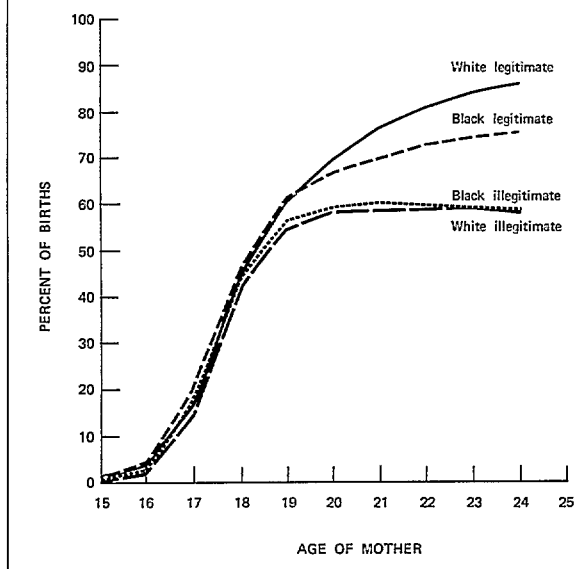
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Items asking for the educational attainment of mother and father have been on the birth certificates of many States since 1968. This is considered the best available measure of socioeconomic status. According to data from 33 States and the District of Columbia which reported both educational attainment and legitimacy status in 1975, young mothers were much less likely to have completed high school than were mothers in their twenties (table 8 and figure 7). This situation arises in large part because very young girls, ages 15-17, are not old enough to have completed high school, regardless of whether or not they are mothers. Of the 17-year-olds giving birth in 1975, only 16.3 percent had completed high school, compared with 59.1 percent of 19-year-old mothers. By age 24, 83.0 percent of mothers giving birth in 1975 had completed high school.

The relationships between age and educational attainment were similar for white and black mothers; that is, the proportion of all mothers who had completed at least 12 years of schooling rose with each successively higher age-of-mother category for both white and black women. The actual levels of educational attainment were higher for white than for black women at each age except for women 16-18 years.

It seems apparent from figure 7 that age of mother was the critical factor determining the

Figure 7. PERCENT OF LIVE BIRTHS TO MOTHERS WHO HAVE COMPLETED AT LEAST 12 YEARS OF EDUCATION, BY LEGITIMACY STATUS AND RACE: TOTAL OF 33 REPORTING STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, 1975.



likelihood that a teenage mother would have at least a high school education. Young mothers were not likely to have completed high school; for mothers through age 19, there was very little difference in educational attainment by race or legitimacy status. Beginning with age 20, however, there was an increasing gap in educational attainment between married and unmarried mothers for both racial groups. For unmarried mothers there was little racial difference in the percent completing 12 or more years of school. In addition, the percent of mothers completing at least 12 years of school changed very little from age 20 to age 24 for both white and black unmarried mothers. For married mothers there was a steady increase from age 20 to age 24 in the proportion completing 12 or more years of school, with the amount of increase being somewhat higher for white than for black mothers.

INCIDENCE OF LOW BIRTH WEIGHT

Infants born weighing 2,500 grams or less (5 pounds 8 ounces or less) have higher rates of infant mortality, mental retardation, and birth defects. Babies born to teenage mothers are more likely to be of low birth weight than are

infants born to mothers in their twenties, and the incidence of low birth weight is higher as age of mother declines among teenagers (table 9). Thus, in 1975, 13.0 percent of births to mothers 15 years old weighed 2,500 grams or less compared with 9.0 percent for births to 19-year-old mothers. The proportion of low-weight infants declined even further for births to mothers in their twenties: 7.1 percent for births to women aged 20-24 years and 6.1 percent for births to women aged 25-29.

This association of age of mother and low birth weight is seen regardless of race or legitimacy status. Although the proportions of low-weight infants were higher for black than for white babies and for illegitimate compared with legitimate babies, in every case the incidence of low birth weight was highest for infants born to the youngest mothers.

It is not possible to present the percents of low-birth-weight babies cross-tabulated by race, legitimacy status, and age of mother because the numbers of births in some specific categories are insufficient to support reliable computations.

INCIDENCE OF INADEQUATE OR NO PRENATAL CARE

Young teenage mothers are much more likely to seek prenatal care relatively late in their

pregnancies or to have no prenatal care at all than are older teenagers or mothers in their twenties. For example, the proportion of 15-year-old mothers beginning prenatal care in the seventh to ninth month of pregnancy was almost twice the comparable proportion for 19-year-old mothers (12.6 percent compared with 7.0 percent) and almost 5 times the proportion for mothers 25-29 years of age (2.8 percent), according to data from 42 States and the District of Columbia which reported this information in 1975 (table 10). In addition, 3.4 percent of 15-year-old mothers received no care at all compared with 1.9 percent of 19-year-olds and only 0.8 percent of mothers 25-29 years old.

Similarly, the younger the mother, the less likely she was to have begun prenatal care in the critical first trimester of pregnancy. Among 15-year-old mothers, 39.7 percent began to receive prenatal care in the first 3 months of pregnancy, compared with 60.7 percent of 19-year-old mothers and 81.4 percent of mothers 25-29 years old.

These relationships between age of mother and onset of prenatal care hold regardless of race. White mothers of all ages, however, began care earlier on the average than did black mothers, and the incidence of no prenatal care was somewhat lower for white than black mothers except for mothers under 15 years of age.

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Table 1. Birth rates for women 10-19 years of age, by age of mother and race: United States, 1966-75
 [Rates are live births per 1,000 women in specified group]

Age of mother and race	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966
<u>10-14 years</u>										
Total.....	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9
White.....	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3
All other.....	4.7	4.7	5.0	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.6	4.4	4.1	4.0
Black.....	5.1	5.0	5.4	5.1	5.1	5.2	4.9	4.7	4.4	4.3
<u>15-17 years</u>										
Total.....	36.6	37.7	38.9	39.2	38.3	38.8	35.8	35.2	35.5	35.8
White.....	28.3	29.0	29.5	29.4	28.6	29.2	26.4	25.7	25.8	26.6
All other.....	82.0	86.2	91.6	94.5	94.3	95.2	93.4	94.1	95.2	92.9
Black.....	86.6	91.0	96.8	99.9	99.7	101.4	97.3	98.9	100.0	97.9
<u>18-19 years</u>										
Total.....	85.7	89.3	91.8	97.3	105.6	114.7	115.0	114.9	117.4	121.2
White.....	74.4	77.7	79.6	84.5	92.4	101.5	101.5	102.0	104.9	109.6
All other.....	150.1	156.4	163.7	175.2	187.0	195.4	197.9	196.6	200.0	205.5
Black.....	156.0	162.0	169.5	181.7	193.8	204.9	202.9	201.3	205.2	209.9

Table 2. Total live births for women 10-19 years of age, by age of mother and race: United States, 1966-75

Age of mother and race	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966
<u>10-14 years</u>										
Total.....	12,642	12,529	12,861	12,082	11,578	11,752	10,468	9,504	8,593	8,128
White.....	5,073	5,053	4,907	4,573	4,130	4,320	3,684	3,114	2,761	2,666
All other.....	7,569	7,476	7,954	7,509	7,448	7,432	6,784	6,390	5,832	5,462
Black.....	7,315	7,291	7,778	7,363	7,264	7,274	6,650	6,312	5,742	5,370
<u>15-17 years</u>										
Total.....	227,270	234,177	238,403	236,641	226,298	223,590	201,770	192,970	188,234	186,704
White.....	148,344	152,257	153,416	150,897	143,806	143,646	128,156	121,166	118,035	119,800
All other.....	78,926	81,920	84,987	85,744	82,492	79,944	73,614	71,804	70,199	66,904
Black.....	74,946	77,947	81,158	82,217	79,238	76,882	71,020	69,594	68,133	64,922
<u>18-19 years</u>										
Total.....	354,968	361,272	365,693	379,639	401,644	421,118	402,884	398,342	408,211	434,722
White.....	261,785	267,895	271,417	283,089	302,920	319,962	306,118	305,336	317,204	345,312
All other.....	93,183	93,377	94,276	96,550	98,724	101,156	96,766	93,006	91,007	89,410
Black.....	86,098	86,483	87,615	90,132	92,446	94,944	90,918	87,986	86,410	84,818

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Table 3. Total live births and percent distribution of total live births by age of mother: United States, 1966-75

Age of mother	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966
	Number									
Total	3,144,198	3,159,958	3,136,965	3,258,411	3,555,970	3,731,386	3,600,206	3,501,564	3,520,959	3,606,274
	Percent distribution									
All ages	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 15 years.....	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2
15-17 years	7.2	7.4	7.6	7.3	6.4	6.0	5.6	5.5	5.3	5.2
18-19 years	11.3	11.4	11.7	11.7	11.3	11.3	11.2	11.4	11.6	12.1
20-24 years	34.8	35.1	35.1	36.0	38.1	38.0	37.7	37.3	37.2	36.0
25-29 years	29.8	29.2	28.3	27.6	26.6	26.7	26.6	25.8	24.6	24.2
30 years and over	16.5	16.5	16.9	17.0	17.3	17.7	18.6	19.7	21.0	22.3

Table 4. Estimated illegitimacy rates for unmarried women 15-17 and 18-19 years of age, by race: United States, 1966-75

[Rates are illegitimate live births per 1,000 unmarried women in specified group. Population estimated as of July 1]

Age of mother and race	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966
<u>15-17 years</u>										
Total.....	19.5	19.0	18.9	18.6	17.6	17.1	15.2	14.7	13.9	13.1
White	9.7	8.9	8.5	8.1	7.4	7.5	6.6	6.2	5.6	5.4
All other	72.0	74.3	76.5	78.1	75.7	73.3	68.4	67.3	64.9	61.2
Black	77.7	79.4	81.9	82.9	80.9	77.9	72.3	---	---	---
<u>18-19 years</u>										
Total.....	32.8	31.4	30.6	31.0	31.7	32.9	31.5	30.0	27.8	25.8
White	16.6	15.4	15.0	15.1	15.9	17.6	17.0	16.8	15.4	14.3
All other	117.4	115.9	114.6	120.6	126.5	126.5	120.7	114.8	112.4	110.5
Black	126.8	124.9	123.0	129.8	136.3	136.4	129.1	---	---	---

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Table 5. Estimated birth rates for married women 15-17 and 18-19 years of age: United States, 1966-75
 [Rates are legitimate live births per 1,000 married women in specified group. Population estimated as of July 1]

Age of mother	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966
15-17 years	495.5	490.7	536.3	590.3	709.0	720.3	669.5	609.0	620.6	663.7
18-19 years	272.3	282.5	294.0	323.8	355.7	386.3	392.6	401.1	402.3	414.7

Table 6. Estimated illegitimacy ratios for births to mothers 15-17 and 18-19 years, by race: United States, 1966-75
 [Ratios are illegitimate live births per 1,000 total live births in specified group]

Age of mother and race	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966
<u>15-17 years</u>										
Total	513.9	482.5	466.9	458.5	445.4	429.8	412.8	403.7	376.7	353.0
White	329.6	294.2	276.4	264.4	251.7	252.0	240.3	234.4	210.1	195.3
All other	860.3	833.7	811.9	798.9	784.3	750.5	713.2	689.4	656.7	635.2
Black	874.0	848.0	825.6	810.1	796.3	759.6	720.9	---	---	---
<u>18-19 years</u>										
Total	298.1	270.4	255.7	246.8	232.0	223.9	210.7	201.3	180.1	160.6
White	171.9	150.1	142.6	136.7	131.7	135.0	129.0	127.4	111.9	98.8
All other	651.4	615.8	581.3	570.7	541.9	505.2	469.2	443.0	417.6	400.4
Black	676.0	638.3	603.8	590.2	560.3	521.4	482.9	---	---	---

Table 7. Estimated number of illegitimate live births for unmarried women 15-17 and 18-19 years, by race: United States, 1966-75
 [Due to rounding estimates to the nearest hundred, figures by age or race may not add to totals]

Age of mother and race	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966
<u>15-17 years</u>										
Total	116,800	113,000	111,300	108,500	100,800	96,100	83,300	77,900	70,900	65,900
White	48,900	44,800	42,400	39,900	36,200	36,200	30,800	28,400	24,800	23,400
All other	67,900	68,300	69,000	68,500	64,700	60,000	52,500	49,500	46,100	42,500
Black	65,500	66,100	67,000	66,600	63,100	58,400	51,200	---	---	---
<u>18-19 years</u>										
Total	105,800	97,700	93,500	93,700	93,200	94,300	84,900	80,200	73,500	69,800
White	45,000	40,200	38,700	38,700	39,900	43,200	39,500	38,900	35,500	34,100
All other	60,700	57,500	54,800	55,100	53,500	51,100	45,400	41,200	38,000	35,800
Black	58,200	55,200	52,900	53,200	51,800	49,500	43,900	---	---	---

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Table 8. Percent distribution of live births by educational attainment of mother, according to legitimacy status, age of mother, and race:
Total of 33 reporting States and the District of Columbia, 1975

[Based only on records for which educational attainment is stated]

Legitimacy status, race, and educational attainment	Age of mother												
	15-17 years	15 years	16 years	17 years	18-19 years	18 years	19 years	20-24 years	20 years	21 years	22 years	23 years	24 years
All births													
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-8 years	12.5	29.1	12.6	7.8	5.6	6.1	5.1	4.2	4.7	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.8
9-11 years	78.1	70.3	85.0	76.0	42.2	49.7	35.8	19.6	28.3	22.9	18.7	15.4	13.3
12 years	9.3	0.6	2.3	16.0	48.3	42.6	53.0	54.2	56.2	56.8	55.5	52.9	49.9
13-15 years	0.2	-	0.1	0.3	4.0	1.6	6.0	17.5	10.6	15.0	18.3	21.1	22.1
16 years or more	-	-	-	-	0.0	-	0.1	4.5	0.3	1.1	3.4	6.7	11.0
White	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-8 years	13.3	32.5	14.1	8.8	6.0	6.7	5.4	4.0	4.8	4.2	3.9	3.6	3.6
9-11 years	77.1	66.8	83.5	75.7	41.4	49.3	35.1	17.6	26.9	21.0	16.7	13.4	11.3
12 years	9.4	0.7	2.3	15.3	49.1	42.8	54.3	55.6	58.0	58.8	57.1	54.0	50.6
13-15 years	0.2	-	0.1	0.2	3.4	1.2	5.1	18.0	10.0	14.9	18.9	22.0	23.0
16 years or more	-	-	-	-	0.0	-	0.1	4.8	0.2	1.0	3.4	7.0	11.5
Black	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-8 years	10.9	25.2	9.8	5.6	4.2	4.5	4.0	4.4	4.1	4.2	4.5	4.8	4.7
9-11 years	79.9	74.3	87.7	76.4	43.9	50.3	37.7	29.0	33.3	30.5	28.1	26.2	24.8
12 years	9.1	0.5	2.5	17.7	46.2	42.5	49.8	48.9	50.3	49.1	49.1	48.2	47.0
13-15 years	0.2	-	0.0	0.3	5.6	2.7	8.4	14.6	12.1	14.9	15.2	15.7	16.3
16 years or more	-	-	-	-	0.0	-	0.1	3.1	0.3	1.2	3.2	5.1	7.2
Legitimate births													
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-8 years	13.4	35.8	15.5	9.1	5.7	6.6	5.1	3.8	4.5	4.0	3.7	3.5	3.4
9-11 years	75.6	63.3	81.7	74.5	40.8	48.8	34.7	17.6	26.6	20.9	16.8	13.8	11.7
12 years	10.8	0.9	2.7	16.1	49.8	43.3	54.7	55.4	58.3	58.6	56.8	53.7	50.4
13-15 years	0.2	-	0.1	0.3	3.6	1.2	5.4	18.2	10.3	15.4	19.1	21.9	22.9
16 years or more	-	-	-	-	0.0	-	0.1	5.0	0.3	1.1	3.5	7.1	11.6
White	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-8 years	13.6	36.4	15.4	9.4	5.9	6.7	5.2	3.7	4.5	3.9	3.6	3.3	3.3
9-11 years	75.7	62.6	81.8	74.6	40.7	48.8	34.6	16.7	26.1	20.1	15.9	12.7	10.7
12 years	10.5	1.0	2.7	15.7	50.1	43.4	55.2	56.2	59.1	59.8	57.8	54.4	50.8
13-15 years	0.2	-	0.1	0.3	3.3	1.0	5.0	18.4	10.0	15.2	19.3	22.4	23.4
16 years or more	-	-	-	-	0.1	-	0.1	5.0	0.3	1.0	3.4	7.2	11.8
Black	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-8 years	11.9	31.0	16.3	7.2	4.4	5.3	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.6	3.9	3.7
9-11 years	74.6	68.6	80.7	72.7	40.6	48.2	35.3	24.2	29.5	26.3	23.6	21.6	19.9
12 years	13.2	0.4	3.0	19.7	49.0	43.8	52.7	51.0	53.6	51.5	51.2	50.1	48.8
13-15 years	0.2	-	-	0.3	5.9	2.7	8.3	16.6	12.5	16.8	17.5	17.8	18.3
16 years or more	-	-	-	-	0.0	-	0.1	4.3	0.4	1.6	4.1	6.5	9.3

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Table 8. Percent distribution of live births by educational attainment of mother, according to legitimacy status, age of mother, and race: Total of 33 reporting States and the District of Columbia, 1975—Con.

[Based only on records for which educational attainment is stated]

Legitimacy status, race, and educational attainment	Age of mother												
	15-17 years	15 years	16 years	17 years	18-19 years	18 years	19 years	20-24 years	20 years	21 years	22 years	23 years	24 years
Illegitimate births													
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-8 years	11.6	26.3	10.3	6.0	5.2	5.2	5.2	6.8	5.6	6.2	7.2	8.0	8.7
9-11 years	80.4	73.3	87.6	77.9	45.4	51.3	38.8	34.1	35.5	34.2	33.6	32.6	33.1
12 years	7.9	0.5	2.1	15.8	44.6	41.3	48.3	45.8	47.5	46.3	45.1	44.5	43.5
13-15 years	0.1	-	0.0	0.3	4.8	2.3	7.6	11.9	11.2	12.5	12.1	12.3	11.8
16 years or more	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1	1.3	0.2	0.8	2.0	2.5	2.8
White	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-8 years	12.7	28.5	12.0	7.0	6.7	6.6	6.8	9.1	7.5	8.8	9.3	10.9	11.6
9-11 years	80.1	71.1	86.4	78.9	45.1	51.2	38.2	32.3	34.0	32.7	32.0	29.9	30.3
12 years	7.0	0.4	1.6	14.0	44.4	40.5	48.7	45.9	47.8	46.2	44.2	44.7	44.1
13-15 years	0.1	-	0.0	0.2	3.8	1.7	6.2	11.4	10.5	11.6	12.2	12.1	11.2
16 years or more	-	-	-	-	0.0	-	0.0	1.3	0.1	0.7	2.4	2.4	2.8
Black	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-8 years	10.7	24.8	9.0	5.3	4.2	4.2	4.1	5.2	4.2	4.6	5.8	6.4	6.8
9-11 years	80.7	74.7	88.5	77.2	45.5	51.0	39.2	35.3	36.5	35.1	34.5	34.3	34.8
12 years	8.4	0.5	2.4	17.2	44.9	42.0	48.1	46.1	47.4	46.5	46.1	44.8	43.5
13-15 years	0.2	-	0.0	0.3	5.5	2.8	8.5	12.1	11.7	12.9	11.8	11.9	12.0
16 years or more	-	-	-	-	0.0	-	0.1	1.4	0.2	0.8	1.8	2.6	2.9

NOTE: Excludes data for Alabama, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, and Washington, which did not require the reporting of both legitimacy status and educational attainment of mother.

Table 9. Percent of infants of low birth weight by age of mother, by race and legitimacy status: Total of 38 reporting States and the District of Columbia, 1975

[Percent of infants of low birth weight is proportion of births weighing 2,500 grams or less (5 pounds 8 ounces or less)]

Race and legitimacy status	Age of mother									
	Under 15 years	15-17 years	15 years	16 years	17 years	18-19 years	18 years	19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years
Total	14.9	11.1	13.0	11.6	10.3	9.3	9.7	9.0	7.1	6.1
White	12.0	9.0	10.6	9.5	8.3	7.6	8.0	7.4	6.0	5.4
Black	16.9	15.4	16.2	15.3	15.1	14.4	14.4	14.3	12.8	11.3
Legitimate	12.6	9.1	11.2	9.9	8.4	8.0	8.3	7.7	6.4	5.7
Illegitimate	15.3	13.2	13.8	13.0	13.0	12.6	12.5	12.7	12.4	12.4

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Table 10. Percent distribution of live births by month of pregnancy prenatal care began, according to age of mother and race: Total of 42 reporting States and the District of Columbia, 1975

[Based only on records for which month of pregnancy prenatal care began is stated]

Race and month prenatal care began	Age of mother									
	Under 15 years	15-17 years	15 years	16 years	17 years	18-19 years	18 years	19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1st and 2nd month	14.5	22.4	18.5	20.9	24.5	31.3	28.1	33.9	46.1	54.3
3rd month	16.4	24.1	21.2	23.4	25.2	26.4	25.9	26.8	27.3	27.1
4th-6th month	48.0	40.7	44.3	42.5	38.7	32.7	35.5	30.4	20.8	15.0
7th-9th month	16.2	10.1	12.6	10.4	9.2	7.6	8.3	7.0	4.5	2.8
No prenatal care	4.9	2.7	3.4	2.8	2.4	2.1	2.2	1.9	1.3	0.8
White	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1st and 2nd month	15.2	23.9	19.4	22.1	25.9	33.5	29.9	36.4	48.8	56.3
3rd month	15.3	25.2	21.9	24.6	26.4	27.5	27.1	27.8	27.9	27.3
4th-6th month	46.4	38.9	42.6	40.8	37.0	30.5	33.7	28.0	18.5	13.4
7th-9th month	17.7	9.7	12.9	10.1	8.7	6.9	7.6	6.3	3.8	2.3
No prenatal care	5.5	2.3	3.2	2.5	2.0	1.7	1.8	1.5	1.0	0.6
Black	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1st and 2nd month	14.1	19.7	17.6	18.8	21.2	24.9	23.4	26.3	33.5	40.7
3rd month	17.3	21.9	20.3	21.6	22.9	23.4	23.0	23.8	24.6	25.7
4th-6th month	49.3	44.5	46.4	45.7	42.7	39.2	40.5	37.9	31.8	26.2
7th-9th month	14.9	10.5	11.9	10.7	9.8	9.4	9.7	9.1	7.4	5.4
No prenatal care	4.4	3.4	3.7	3.3	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.0	2.6	2.0

NOTE: Excludes data for Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Idaho, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, which did not require the reporting of month of pregnancy prenatal care began.

SOURCES OF DATA AND TECHNICAL NOTES

Data shown in this report for 1972-75 are based on 100 percent of the birth certificates from States participating in the Cooperative Health Statistics System (CHSS) and on a 50-percent sample of births from all other States. Beginning in 1972 States providing data through CHSS were Florida, Maine, Missouri, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The following States were added in subsequent years: Michigan, Colorado, and New York (excluding New York City) in 1973; Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Oregon, and South Carolina in 1974; and Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin in 1975. Data for 1966 and 1968-71 are based on a 50-percent sample of births, while statistics for 1967 are based on a 20- to 50-percent sample of births.

National estimates of births by legitimacy status are based on data from the States which

require reporting of legitimacy status on the birth certificate. In 1975, 38 States and the District of Columbia reported legitimacy status. The States not reporting this information in 1975 were California, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, and Vermont.

Birth rates for all births shown in table 1 and figure 1 are based on populations enumerated as of April 1 for 1970 and estimated as of July 1 for all other years. Birth rates by legitimacy status shown in other tables and figures are based on populations by marital status estimated as of July 1 for each year, which are derived from Current Population Survey reports on marital status published annually by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Unmarried women are defined as women reporting themselves as single (never married), widowed, or divorced.