MAKING THE CASE FOR YOUTH SPORTS

PREVENTING

TEEN

PREGNANCY
THE PROBLEM

The overall teen birth rate declined 25% from 41.5 per 1,000 teenagers aged 15–19 in 2007 to 31.3 in 2011—a record low. The number of births to teenagers aged 15–19 also fell from 2007 to 2011, by 26% to 329,797 in 2011.¹

Even with these declines, teen pregnancy among Black and Latina women is much higher than White women.

Births per 1000 teenagers age 15-19, by race²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Births per 1000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>31.3/1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>21.8/1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>47.4/1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>49.4/1000</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Despite birth rate declines, the U.S. teen birth rate remains one of the highest among Western countries.³

Teen births are associated with significant public costs, estimated at $10.9 billion annually.⁴

- Associated costs to taxpayers, including health care, child welfare, criminal justice, public assistance, and lost tax revenues are more than $4,000 per underage mother each year.⁵

Teens are less likely to finish school or go to college and more likely to be poor. Their children are at increased risk for low birth weight, impaired cognitive development, abuse, neglect, poor school performance, behavior problems, incarceration, and adolescent childbearing.⁶

SPORTS CAN HELP

Female high school and college athletes are significantly less likely to get pregnant than their non-athlete peers.

- The link between sports participation and reduced pregnancy rates is found across racial and ethnic categories, including white, African-American, and Hispanic girls in one nationwide sample.⁷

- Athletes also engage in less sexual-risk behavior, in part because they are more reluctant to risk pregnancy.⁸
• 10% of young adult women with a history of extensive sports involvement in high school has a child outside of marriage, while the number is 25% for those who had little or no involvement in high school sports.\(^9\)

• Sport may also act as a source of social capital, meaning that sport as a vehicle for greater connection between female athletes and their communities, which is protective against unplanned pregnancy.\(^{10}\)

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