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BACKGROUND ON OUT-OF-WEDLOCK BIRTHS

The Title X program, the first federal program focused on the promotion of birth control and family planning services, was created in 1970. Following the advent of the program, the teen birthrate increased dramatically in the 1970s and 1980s. The teen birthrate declined slightly during the 1990s, but remains nearly twice as high as the rate in 1970. In fact, the U.S. has the highest teen birthrate of any industrialized nation.¹

In 2000, one out of every three babies was born out of wedlock.

The number of births to unmarried women reached 1,347,043 in 2000, the highest number ever reported.²

The number and percentage of premarital conceptions and births has risen sharply since the 1960s.

From 1960-1964, one in four first births to women 15-29 years old was either conceived or born before marriage. By 1990-1994, this proportion had increased to one in two births.³

Between 1960 and 1964, 60 % of unwed pregnant women age 15-29 married before the birth of their children. This proportion fell to 23% in the early 1990s.⁴

In 2000, nearly a quarter of never-married women age 15-44 were mothers.⁵

The unwed teen birthrate has more than doubled since 1960.

Between 1960 and 1994, the annual birthrate per 1,000 unmarried girls age 15-19 tripled, declining slightly after 1994.

Birthrate* for Unmarried Girls Age 15-19, Historical

Year	Total, Age 15-19	Age 15-17	Age 18-19
1950	12.6	N/A	N/A
1960	15.3	N/A	N/A
1965	16.7	N/A	N/A
1970	22.4	17.1	32.9
1975	23.9	19.3	32.5
1980	27.5	20.7	38.7
1985	31.4	22.4	45.9
1990	42.5	29.6	60.7

1995	44.4	30.5	67.6
2000	39.8	24.4	62.9

*Birthrate is the number of births per 1,000 unmarried girls age 15-19.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics⁶

Unwed mothers and fathers are less likely to marry, and children born outside marriage are likely to be raised outside marriage.

In 1998, 42% of single mothers had never married.⁷

Young men who father a child out of wedlock are much less likely to marry and twice as likely to cohabit than those who do not.⁸

Demographer Larry Bumpass estimates that one-third of the first-born children of unmarried women will spend all of their childhood without married parents. One-fifth of white children and three-fifths of black children will live in a non-intact family during childhood.⁹

-END NOTES-

1. Rebecca Maynard, ed., Kids Having Kids: A Robin Hood Foundation Special Report on the Costs of Adolescent Childbearing, 1996, p. 2.
2. Stephanie Ventura et al, "Births: Final Data for 1999," National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 49, No. 1, April 17, 2001, p.17.
3. Amara Bachu, "Trends in Premarital Childbearing 1930 to 1994" U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports P23-197, October 1999, p.3.
4. Amara Bachu, "Trends in Premarital Childbearing: 1930 to 1994, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, P23-197, Table 1.
5. Amara Bachu and Martin O'Connell, "Fertility of American Women: June 2000," U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Reports, October 2001, Table 2.
6. Stephanie Ventura, "Nonmarital Childbearing in the United States, 1940-99," National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol.48, No. 16, October 18, 2000 Table 3 and Joyce A. Martin, "Births: Final Data for 2000," National Vital Statistics Reports, February 12, 2002, Table 18.
7. U.S. Census Bureau, "Mother's Day, 2001: May 13," Fact for Features, April 30, 2001.
8. Steven Nock, "The Consequences of Premarital Fatherhood," American Sociological Review 63 (1998): 250-263 as cited in Family Planning Perspectives 30 (September/October 1998): 248-249.
9. Larry Bumpass and Hsien-Hen Lu, "Trends in cohabitation and Implications for Children's Family Contexts in the U.S.," Center for Demography and Ecology University of Wisconsin-Madison, NSFH Working Paper No. 83, June 1999, p.16-17.