



## Fact Sheet:

### A look at the Real Costs of Teen Pregnancy

March 2003

#### *Teen pregnancy affects everyone.*

- i Although the rates are declining, the U.S. still has the highest rates of teen pregnancy, birth, and abortion in the western industrialized world. Problems related to teen pregnancy cost taxpayers over \$7 billion per year.<sup>1</sup>
- i Forty percent of American girls become pregnant at least once by age 20 — that's nearly one million teen pregnancies each year.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Teen pregnancy is linked to poverty and school failure.*

- i Half of all single mothers on welfare were teenagers when they had their first child.<sup>3</sup>
- i Fewer than one-third of teen mothers ever finish high school. This leaves them unprepared for the job market and more likely to raise their children in poverty.<sup>4</sup>
- i Nearly 80 percent of the fathers of babies born to teen mothers do not marry their babies' mothers. On average, these absent fathers pay less than \$800 annually for child support.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Children of teen mothers suffer most.*

- i Children of teen mothers are twice as likely to be abused and neglected as are children of older mothers.<sup>6</sup>
- i Babies born to teens are at an increased risk of low birth weight and the attending health problems: mental retardation, blindness, deafness, mental illness, cerebral palsy, and infant death.<sup>7</sup>
- i Children of teen mothers are more likely to do poorly in school, more likely to drop out of school, and less likely to attend college.<sup>8</sup>
- i The consequences to the children of teen mothers continue into young adulthood. Girls born to teen mothers are 22 percent more likely to become mothers as teens themselves and sons of teen mothers are more likely to end up in jail.<sup>9</sup>

Most of these statistics were drawn from the National Campaign's report, *Whatever Happened to Childhood? The Problem of Teen Pregnancy in the United States*. For more information on the problem of teen pregnancy, see our website, [www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org).

## SOURCES

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