

Too Young

In *Too Young*, teen parents from a variety of backgrounds share their experiences and offer their candid views about the difficulties they face. Their compelling stories make clear that teen pregnancy is closely linked to many other challenges faced by teens and their babies—including welfare dependency, health problems, absent fathers, and educational failure.

This video is intended to help teens, parents, educators, community leaders, and policymakers better understand the challenges of teen pregnancy by hearing directly from courageous teen parents who know what it means to be too young for parenthood.

Too young to be parents...

- Despite an impressive overall decline of more than 40% in both teen pregnancy and birth rates since the early 1990s, the United States still has high rates of teen pregnancy and the highest rates of teen birth among all fully industrialized countries.¹
- Nearly three in 10 girls in the U.S. get pregnant before age 20. That's about 733,000 teen pregnancies each year or 2000 every day.²
- One in 10 children born in the United States is born to a teen mom.³

Too young to get left behind...

- Parenthood is a leading reason why teen girls drop out of school.⁷
- Less than 40% of girls who have a child before age 18 graduate from high school and less than 2% earn a college degree by age 30.^{5,6}
- Children of teen mothers do worse in school than those born to older parents. They are more likely to repeat grades, less likely to complete high school, and have lower performance on standardized tests.^{5,8}

Too young for healthy babies...

- Children of teen mothers are more likely to be born prematurely and at low birth weight, and are twice as likely to suffer abuse and neglect than children born to older mothers.^{4,9}
- Children born to mothers younger than 17 are more likely to be impulsive and overactive and more likely to suffer from anxiety, low self-esteem, and loneliness.⁸

Too young to support a family...

- Nearly half of all teen mothers live below the poverty line.¹¹
- Nearly two out of three teen mothers receive some type of public assistance (food stamps, TANF, Medicaid, WIC, etc.) within the first year after their child is born.¹²
- Teen childbearing costs U.S. taxpayers more than \$9 billion each year.¹⁰

Too young to do it alone...

- Eight out of 10 fathers don't marry the teen mother of their child and most couples don't stay together at all. Of those who do marry before the birth, nearly 40% split up by the child's fifth birthday. ^{13,14}
- Three out of four teen mothers do not receive any formal or informal child support. ¹⁵
- Teen mothers are nearly twice as likely as older mothers to struggle emotionally and feel depressed, sad, lonely, or fearful. ¹⁶

Too young to be forgotten...

- Children born to teen parents are more likely than children of older parents to grow up without their fathers at home. ¹⁷
- Children who live apart from their fathers are twice as likely as other kids to drop out of school. They are also twice as likely to abuse alcohol or drugs and three times more likely to grow up poor. ^{6,16,18}
- Children born to teen parents are more likely than those born to older parents to be placed in foster care. ⁵
- Sons of teen mothers are twice as likely to be incarcerated than boys born to older mothers. ⁵
- Daughters of young teen mothers are three times more likely to become teen mothers themselves than girls born to older women. ⁵

Sources

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