

April 2006

**To: Individuals and Organizations Concerned
About Teenage Childbearing**

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Subject: Release of *Facts at a Glance* 2006, reporting trends in teen childbearing in the nation, states, and large cities

Teenage birth rates have declined continuously since 1991, and are at historic lows for each age group among teens. Preliminary data show that in 2004, there were 41.2 births per 1,000 15-19-year-olds, a rate that is one-third lower than the 1991 rate of 61.8 births per 1,000 15-19-year-olds, but only 1% lower than the 2003 rate of 41.6. Birth rates continue to decline among younger and older teens, among non-Hispanic black and non-Hispanic white teens, and in the majority of states. However, the teen birth rate increased slightly for Hispanics (by 1%), and in Idaho (by 0.5%) and Wyoming (by 2%) between 2003 and 2004.

The decline in the teen birth rate, which started after 1991, has slowed. This slowdown is one of a number of reasons still to remain concerned about teen sexual activity and childbearing:

- The U.S. teen birth rate varies greatly by state, ranging from a low in New Hampshire of 18 births per 1,000 females 15-19 to a high of 63 in Texas (see Table 2).
- Between 2003 and 2004, the number of births to teens under age 15 and to teens aged 18-19 increased, as did the number of births to Hispanic teens. In addition, the percentage of teen births that are repeat births increased slightly between 2003 and 2004.
- One-quarter of females and 28% of males aged 15-17 have not talked with a parent or guardian about saying no to sex or about birth control, condoms, or sexually transmitted diseases.
- The proportion of teen births that occur within marriage decreased from 49% in 1982 to 18% in 2002, reflecting the decreasing proportion of nonmarital conceptions that result in a marital birth (that is, fewer unmarried pregnant teens are marrying the fathers of their babies before giving birth than in the past).
- Young people between the ages of 15 and 24 account for almost one-half of all newly acquired sexually transmitted diseases in the U.S.

Child Trends' analyses of recent statistics also highlight positive trends in teen sexual activity and childbearing. In 2003, more than one-half of students in grades 9-12 reported that they abstained from sex, and two-thirds of sexually active students in grades 9-12 used a condom the last time that they had sex, with these percentages varying by state (see Table 2). In addition, the estimated proportion of 15-year-old girls who will give birth before the age of 20 declined from 22% in 1993 to 17% in 2003.

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