

OHIO POPULATION NEWS: The Well-Being of Ohio's Youth Ages 12 to 17

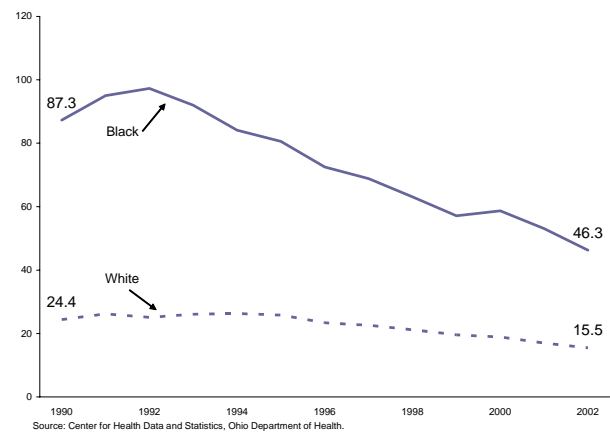
The purpose of this brief is to present a portrait of Ohio's youth ages 12 to 17. There are roughly 987,000 youth in this age group; an age group that has become increasingly racially and ethnically diverse over the last few decades. Currently, non-Hispanic blacks account for 15-percent of the teen population, Hispanics 3-percent, Asians 2-percent and non-Hispanic whites comprising 80-percent. Estimates from the 2004 American Community Survey (ACS) suggest that roughly 14-percent of the state's teen population live at or below the official poverty line. Further, almost a third (32-percent) of Ohio's teens ages 12 to 17 are living in low income families—families with incomes less than two times the poverty line.

Living Arrangements—a majority (47%) of Ohio's teens ages 12 to 17 lives in a married couple family in which both parents work, while another twenty percent of this age group lives in a family headed by a working single mother. However, differences exist across race and ethnic groups with nearly 41-percent of non-

Hispanic black teens, 29-percent of Hispanics and 16-percent of non-Hispanic white teens living in a family headed by a working single mother.

Educational attainment—an important indicator of children's future success is educational attainment. Most of Ohio's teens are enrolled in public school (87-percent), with roughly 11-percent attending private school. For the 2000-01 school year, Ohio had an 81 percent four-year high school completion rate—that is, of those students who have left school, roughly four out of five have done so by obtaining a diploma or other certificate. **Preliminary data suggest a 3.1 dropout rate for grades 9 through 12 in Ohio.** However, there is substantial variation across the state—Canton City, Cleveland Municipal, Lima City and East Cleveland School Districts all had a dropout rate over 10 percent for grades 9-12.

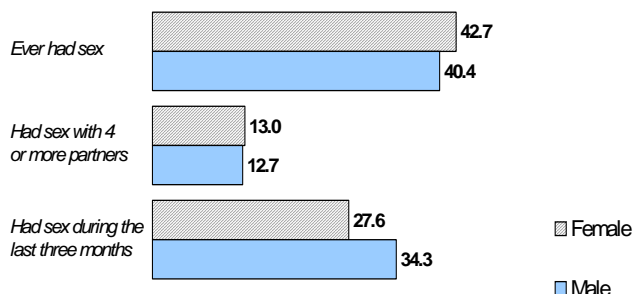
Figure 1: Birth Rates (ages 15 to 17) 1990-2002.



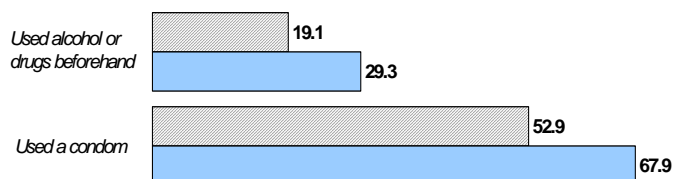
Teen birth rates (the number of births per 1,000 girls ages 15 to 17) have reached historic lows dropping 47 percent for blacks and 36 percent for whites between 1990 and 2002 (Figure 1).

Figure 2: Characteristics of Reproductive Health among Ohio's Youth, Grades 9-12, 2003.

The percentage of students who...



Among those who had sex in the last three months, the percentage who...



Source: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, 2003.

Sexual Activity and Reproductive Health

Male high school students report sexual activity at an earlier age than females. Among 9th graders, 33.5-percent of males indicate being sexually experienced compared to 22.2-percent of female students. (Sexually experienced is defined as ever having sexual intercourse). **Over the past ten years, the percentage of sexually experienced students in grades 9 through 12 has declined, falling 10 percentage points for females and 17 percentage points for males.** A high proportion of Ohio's sexually active teen's report increasing condom use—over two-thirds of males and well over half of females who had sex in the last three months reported using a condom (Figure 2). Comparable figures of condom use for 1993 were males 59.4 percent and females 48.7 percent, respectively. In contrast, **risky behavior has increased in the last decade.** In 2003, 29.3 percent of male students and 19.1 percent of female students who were sexually active had used alcohol or drugs prior to recent sexual intercourse. Ten years earlier, 16 percent of girls and 22.6 percent of boys reported using alcohol or drugs prior to recent sexual activity.

Table 1: Estimates of Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Use and Perceptions of Risk among Ohio Teens ages 12 to 17, 2002-2003

Marijuana	
Marijuana use in past year	15.33
Marijuana use in past month	8.74
Perception of Risk by smoking marijuana once a month	35.11
Tobacco	
Any tobacco product use in past month	17.27
Cigarette use in past month	14.52
Perception of Risk by smoking 1+ packs of cigarettes per day	61.92
Alcohol	
Alcohol Use in Past Month	17.52
Binge Alcohol *	11.31
Perception of Risk having 5+ alcoholic drinks once or twice a week	37.89

Source: Wright, D., & Sathe, N. (2005). State Estimates of Substance Use from the 2002-2003 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health (DHHS Publication No. SMA 05-3989, NSDUH Series H-26). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
 *Binge Alcohol Use is defined as drinking five or more drinks on the same occasion (i.e., at the same time or within a couple of hours of each other) on at least 1 day in the past 30 days.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use— the most recent estimates on teen drug use suggest that 15.3 percent of Ohio’s teen population ages 12 to 17 had used marijuana in the past year, and 11.4 percent had used it in the past month. Studies also show that on average, **roughly 18 percent of Ohio’s teens ages 12 to 17 had used alcohol in the last month**—a figure higher than the national average of 15 percent. Cigarette smoking among teens in the state has declined slightly over time, falling from 15.9 percent in 1999 to 14.5 percent in recent years. Table 1 presents rates of drug and alcohol use derived from the National Survey of Drug Use and Health, as well as perceptions of risk, or the perceived level of danger, for several activities. **Three out of five adolescents in Ohio consider daily smoking a great risk to one’s health.** Over a third of teens consider monthly marijuana use or binge drinking as a great risk.

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Health Behaviors—in the past 25 years, the national prevalence of overweight children quadrupled, increasing from roughly four to sixteen percent (National Center for Health Statistics 2004). In addition to the 16 percent of children and teens ages 6 to 19 who were overweight in 1999-2002, another 15 percent were considered at risk of becoming overweight. **In Ohio, an estimated 9.4 percent of females and 18.2 percent of males in grades 9 through 12 are considered overweight.** In addition, there are an estimated 13 percent of both boys and girls considered at risk for being overweight. **Vigorous physical activity is more likely among male high school students (75 percent) than among female students (61 percent).** Levels of vigorous physical activity are measured as engaging in a sport or physical activity for a at least twenty minutes at least three times in the last week that caused the student to breathe hard. **Two out of three male students and almost three out of five female students play on at least one sports team.** (Source: YRBS data, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion).

Labor Force Participation—research has shown that employment rates for teens vary according to family characteristics. For instance, teens from two-parent families have higher rates of employment than do teens from single parent families. It could be that youths from single-parent families are called upon to perform higher levels of non-paid work, such as child-care that would make them less available to participate in the labor force. **However, among those who are employed, teens from lower income families work longer hours.** Rates of employment are also lower for teens from minority groups compared with non-Hispanic whites. (Source: Report on Youth Labor Force, Bureau of Labor Statistics).

The ASC collects basic employment information on those residents ages 16 and older. Results from the 2004 ASC data indicate that roughly a quarter of Ohio’s sixteen year olds and thirty-six percent of seventeen year olds were employed at the time of the survey.