

Family Profile No. 24, 2022

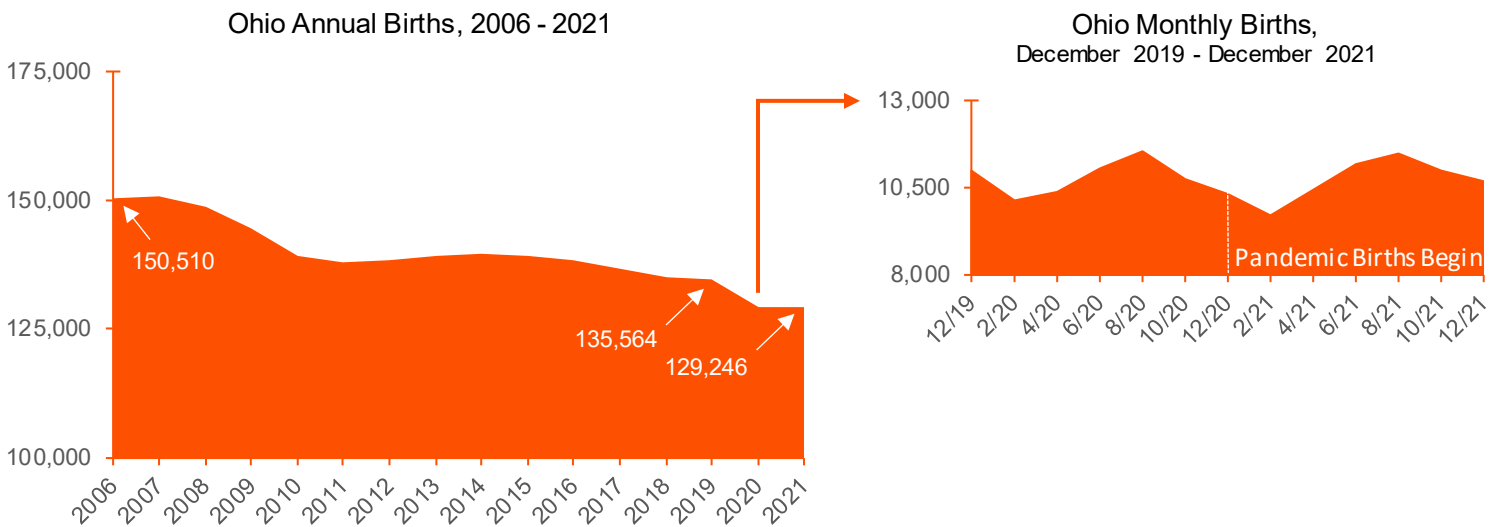
Ohio and Florida Births Prior to and During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Authors: Christopher A. Julian, Wendy D. Manning, & Karen B. Guzzo

Understanding changes in fertility during the pandemic requires situating analysis in the longer-term fertility context. We consider two states (Florida and Ohio) that provide updated monthly birth counts and differ demographically and in pandemic-related public policies. We present annual total births counts for both states from 2006 to 2021 (Figure 1) but focus on the months of December 2019 to December 2021 to highlight the immediate pre-pandemic and pandemic periods. Births conceived after the pandemic onset (March) first occurred in December 2020.

Ohio

Figure 1. Births in Ohio Prior to and During the COVID-19 Pandemic



Source: NCFMR analyses of Ohio Department of Health (<https://odh.ohio.gov/>). These data were provided by the Ohio Department of Health. The Department specifically disclaims responsibility for any analyses, interpretations, or conclusions.

Yearly Changes

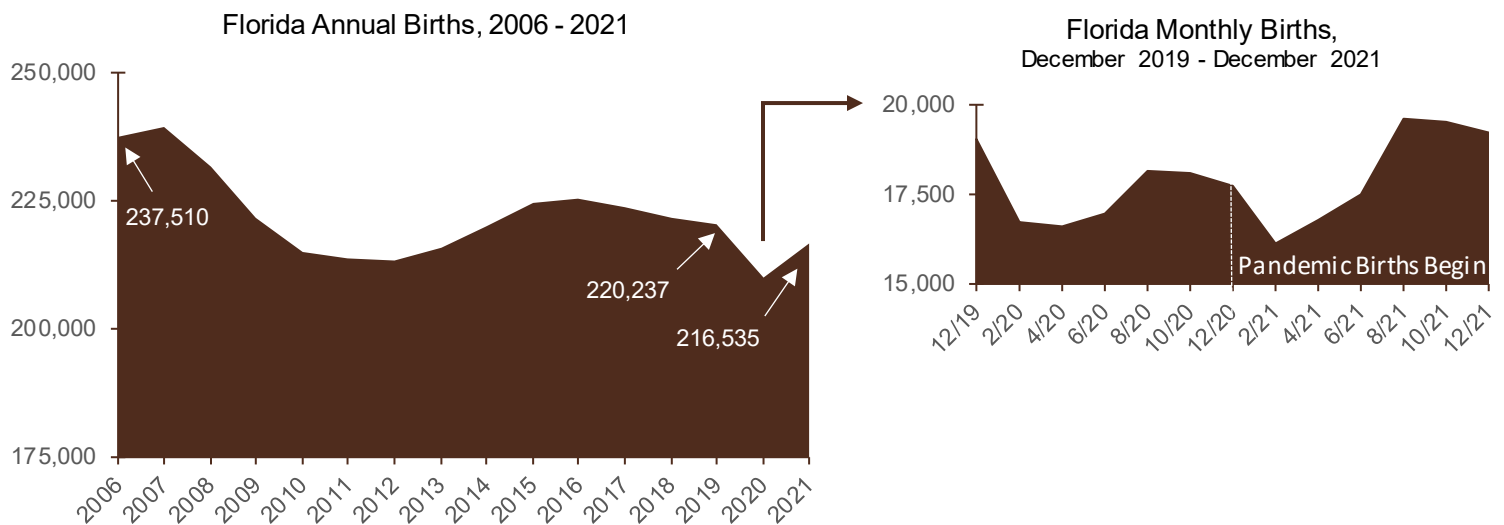
From 2007 to 2011, the total number of annual births in Ohio declined before rising annually to 2014, reaching 139,514 births. Births fell again slightly between 2014 and 2019, and there was a sharp decline between 2019 to 2020, reaching a low point of 129,320 births. Most of the 2020 births were conceived prior to the pandemic (January-November) meaning the birth decline largely occurred prior to the pandemic.

Monthly Changes

Spotlighting monthly changes, in Ohio births conceived after the pandemic onset declined from December 2020 (10,341 births) to February 2021(9,705 births). Like Florida this decline did not last long, as births increased every month between February and August 2021 (11,464 births), with a plateau between August and December 2021 (10,707 births). By 2021, Ohio had not fully recovered to 2019 levels with 129,246 births, a shortfall of 3.95% or 5,318 births.

Florida

Figure 2. Births in Florida Prior to and During the COVID-19 Pandemic



Source: NCFMR analyses of Florida Department of Health (<https://www.floridahealth.gov/>)

Yearly Changes

From 2007 to 2012, the total number of annual births in Florida declined and then rose, reaching 223,613 births in 2017. Births declined slightly between 2017 and 2019, with a sharp decline between 2019 and 2020 to a low of 209,880 births. The birth decline reflects pre-pandemic conceptions, as December is the only month in 2020 representing pandemic births.

Monthly Changes

Focusing on monthly changes, births representing post-pandemic conceptions declined in Florida from December 2020 (17,739 births) to February 2021 (16,122 births). This decline was short-lived, as births increased every month between February and August 2021, with births plateauing between August and December 2021. In 2021, Florida had nearly recovered to 2019 levels with 216,535 births, a shortfall of 1.68% or 3,702 births.

Implications

Despite demographic and pandemic policy differentials, Ohio, and Florida experienced similar pre-pandemic fertility patterns. Ohio and Florida's births counts were declining prior to COVID-19, with both experiencing a large decline from 2019 to 2020, a period in which only one month can plausibly be attributed to the pandemic. For both states, from the first month of pandemic-conceived births, December 2020, to February 2021, there was a decline in total births, indicative of changes in fertility linked to the pandemic. But the decline was short-lived in both states, as fertility increased in spring and late summer of 2021. In Florida, the level of births remained stable throughout the fall, whereas births again declined in Ohio in the fall. While neither state fully recovered from the 2019 to 2020 decline, the fertility decline preceded the pandemic onset. The economic, political, and social factors that altered childbearing prior to the pandemic have yet to be identified.

Data Source:

Ohio Department of Health (2022). Ohio Public Health Information Warehouse [dataset]. OH.

<https://publicapps.odh.ohio.gov/EDW/DataBrowser/Browse/OhioLiveBirths>

Florida Department of Health Bureau of Vital Statistics (2022). Vital Statistics Annual and Provisional Reports [dataset].

FL. <http://www.flpublichealth.com/VSProv/rdPage.aspx>

Suggested Citation:

Julian, C. A., Manning, W. D., Guzzo, K. B. (2022). Ohio and Florida births prior to and during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Family Profiles*, FP-22-24. Bowling Green, OH: National Center for Family & Marriage Research.

<https://doi.org/10.25035/ncfmr/fp-22-24>