

Decrease in Teen Moms

According to a [new report](#) from the CDC, the average age of women at the time of first childbirth has risen from 24.9 to 26.3 in the last 15 years. Reporting on this increase, [NPR writes](#),

“The main force pulling the average age to the older end of the spectrum is a decrease in the number of teen moms, the researchers say. Over the past 15 years, the proportion of first-time mothers younger than 20 years old dropped from 23 percent to 13 percent.”

Such news is greeted with enthusiasm – as it certainly should be. But while the teen birth rate has declined, the out-of-wedlock birth rate for *all* women has risen from [33.2% to 40.6%](#) over almost the same time period. While this percentage gain thankfully does not outweigh the decline in teen birth rates, it is still cause for alarm, particularly for the children born to unmarried women.

Scholarly research has discovered that children born out of wedlock are more likely to:

- Have a [father in prison](#)
- Experience [parental break-up](#)
- Live in [complicated family situations](#) with multiple unrelated “siblings” and live-in boyfriends
- Have [lower academic scores](#)
- Have mental and physical [health issues](#)
- Experience [violence](#)
- Encounter [financial instability](#)

In recent years it has become socially acceptable to have children before marriage. Making it socially acceptable, however, hasn’t minimized the consequences for those born out-of-wedlock.