

POPULATION NOTES

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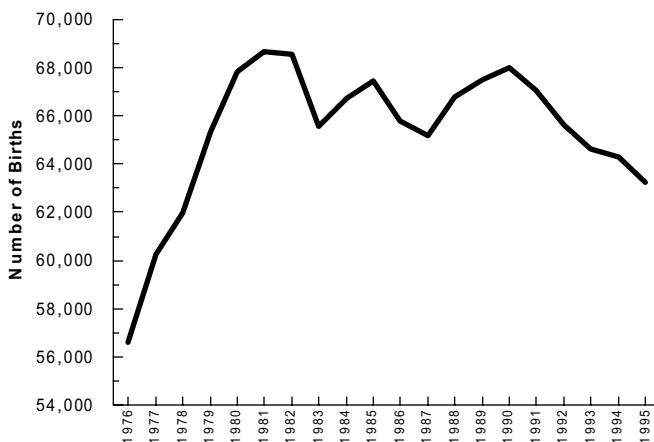
Fewer Births in Minnesota

Martha McMurry

The number of births in Minnesota is falling, not because women are having fewer children, but mainly because the baby boom population is aging. The number of women in the prime years for childbearing — the 20s and early 30s — is shrinking. By now most baby boom women are beyond this stage, and the women currently in their main childbearing years represent the smaller baby bust generation. Between 1990 and 1995, the number of Minnesota women age 20 to 34 fell almost 9 percent, from 548,527 to 499,807.

As a result of these population changes, the number of births in Minnesota dropped every year between 1990 and 1995. Births numbered 63,259 in 1995, down from 67,985 in 1990. The 1995 birth tally was the lowest since 1978, when 61,977 births were recorded.

Births Dropping Since 1990
Minnesota Births, 1976 to 1995



Source: Minnesota Center for Health Statistics

Highlights at a Glance...

Minnesota Fertility Trends: 1990 to 1995

- The number of births in Minnesota declined every year between 1990 and 1995.
- The general fertility rate fell in the United States and in Minnesota not because women are having fewer children but because a larger proportion of women are in their late 30s and early 40s.
- About 24 percent of all births and 34 percent of first births are to unmarried women.
- Birth rates fell 3.3 percent for women under age 30 and rose 7.8 percent for women age 30 and older.

How Fertility Is Measured

This report focuses on fertility rates rather than the number of births. Rates are adjusted for population size and give a better idea of whether women are having large or small families. Two of the most commonly used measures are the general fertility rate and the total fertility rate. Both measures are based on the population of women of childbearing age. The general fertility rate is the annual number of births per 1,000 women age 15 to 44. The total fertility rate is the number of children a woman would



have on the average if birth rates by age do not change over time. For example, a total fertility rate of 1.87 means that if current age-specific fertility rates remain constant and all women live to the end of their childbearing years, they will have an average of 1.87 children each. Generally trends in the two rates are similar, but the total fertility rate is sensitive to the relative size of the age groups within the broad 15- to 44-year-old category.

In demography, fertility refers to actual live births rather than pregnancies or a woman's or a couple's physical ability or potential to have children.

General Fertility Rate Declines

The aging of the population has produced a decline in the general fertility rate. The general fertility rate shrank from 66.3 per 1,000 in 1990 to 60.5 in 1995. This trend does not indicate that women are having smaller families. The alternate fertility measure, the total fertility rate, suggests that the number of children a Minnesota woman has during her lifetime has remained relatively stable. The Minnesota total fertility rate was 1.90 in 1990 and a nearly identical 1.87 in 1995.

Minnesota Fertility Rates, 1990 and 1995

Age of Women	1990 Birth Rate Per 1,000	1995 Birth Rate Per 1,000	Percent Change in Birth Rate
15 to 19	36.9	32.7	-11.3
20 to 24	92.0	85.1	-7.5
25 to 29	127.1	122.0	-3.9
30 to 34	86.9	91.9	5.7
35 to 39	31.3	35.1	12.2
40 to 44	5.4	6.7	22.8
General Fertility Rate	66.3	60.5	-8.7
Total Fertility Rate	1.90	1.87	-1.6

General fertility rate is the number of births per 1,000 women age 15 to 44. The total fertility rate is the average number of births a woman will have if birth rates by age remain constant at current levels.

Minnesota First Birth Rates, 1990 and 1995

Age of Women	1990 First Birth Rate Per 1,000	1995 First Birth Rate Per 1,000	Percent Change in First Birth Rate
15 to 19	29.7	27.0	-9.2
20 to 24	46.1	43.7	-5.3
25 to 29	46.8	50.4	7.7
30 to 34	21.3	24.7	15.7
35 to 39	6.4	7.2	13.5
40 to 44	0.9	1.2	32.0

Minnesota Second and Higher Birth Rates, 1990 and 1995

Age	1990 Second & Higher Birth Rate Per 1,000	1995 Second & Higher Birth Rate Per 1,000	Percent Change in Second & Higher Birth Rate
15 to 19	7.2	5.8	-1.4
20 to 24	45.9	41.4	-4.5
25 to 29	80.2	71.7	-8.6
30 to 34	65.5	67.2	1.6
35 to 39	25.0	27.9	3.0
40 to 44	4.6	5.5	1.0

Births to women under age 15 were assigned to the 15 to 19 group. Births to women over age 45 were assigned to the 40 to 44 group.

The reason for the apparent discrepancy in the trends for the total fertility rate and the general fertility rate lies in the changing composition of the 15- to 44-year-old age group. In 1990, 53.5 percent of this group consisted of women age 20 to 34. By 1995, only 47.7 percent of women in their childbearing years were age 20 to 34.

Minnesota Fertility Rate Below National Average

Minnesota's fertility rate is slightly below the national average and has fallen faster. The 1994 general fertility rate for the United States was 66.7 per thousand, compared to the 1994 Minnesota figure of 61.9. National data for 1995 is not yet available.

Just as in Minnesota, the national fertility rate has been dropping. The national rate fell from 70.9 per thousand women age 15 to 44 in 1990 to 66.7 in 1994.

Among states, Utah had the highest 1994 fertility rate, at 85.9 per 1,000. Utah was far ahead of the second-highest state, Arizona (79.7). The lowest fertility rates occurred in Maine (51.4) and West Virginia (53.3). Fertility rates are generally higher in the southwest and lower in New England.

Older Age at Childbearing

Birth rates have fallen for Minnesota women under age 30 and risen for older women, reflecting a continued trend to later childbearing. Proportionally, the biggest decline in fertility rates occurred for teens, from 36.9 to 32.7 per 1,000, and the biggest increase for women age 40 or older, from 5.4 to 6.7 per 1,000. In 1995, 41.7 percent of all women who gave birth were age 30 or older, compared to 34.8 percent in 1990.

First-time mothers were also more likely to be age 30 or older in 1995 than in 1990, 25.9 percent compared to 21.1 percent. Rates of first-time births fell for women under age 25, with an especially large decline for teens. The first-time birth rate for teenagers went down by 9 percent, from 29.7 to 27.0 per 1,000. Rates of first births rose substantially for women in their 30s and 40s, though the incidence of first births continues to be quite low for women over age 35.

Minnesota mothers are older than the national average. Nationally, 34.0 percent of all mothers and 21.0 percent of first-time mothers were age 30 or older, both considerably lower than the Minnesota figures.

Minnesota women between the age of 25 and 34 are most likely to have children. In 1995, 58.8 percent of all births in Minnesota were to women in this age bracket, compared to 50.5 percent nationally. By contrast, Minnesota women are much less likely than the national average to have a baby when they are in their teens or early 20s. The fertility rate for 15- to 19-year-olds in Minnesota in 1995 was 32.7 per 1,000, compared to a 1994 U.S. figure of 60.3 per 1,000. The fertility rate for women age 20 to 24, 85.1 per 1,000, was also substantially lower than the national average of 111.1 per 1,000.

Unmarried Motherhood Trend Continues

The proportion of births to unmarried women continues to grow. In 1995, 24.0 percent of Minnesota births were to unmarried women, compared to 20.9 percent in 1990. The Minnesota proportion of unmarried births remains lower

than the national average. Almost one-third (32.6 percent) of U.S. births in 1994 were to unmarried women.

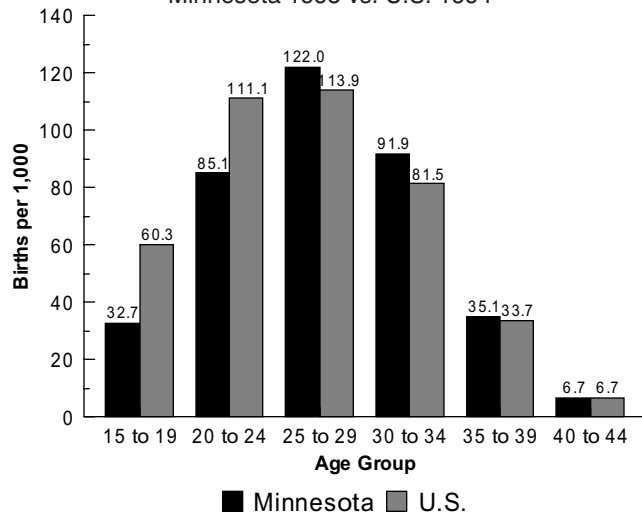
Teenagers and women in their early 20s are most likely to have children when they are not married. Among Minnesota women age 15 to 17, about 94 percent of births were to unmarried mothers in 1995. This declined to 81 percent among women age 18 and 19. Even for women in their early 20s, the proportion of unmarried births is almost half. About 45 percent of mothers age 20 to 24 were not married in 1995. The probability of having a child outside of marriage is much lower for women after age 30, when about 9 percent of births are to unmarried women.

Many people think most unmarried mothers are teenagers, partly because most teenagers who have babies are not married. Teenage childbearing is considered a serious social problem because young mothers have a high risk of going on welfare and not completing their educations. In Minnesota, however, less than 30 percent of unmarried mothers are teenagers. The rate of unmarried fertility is higher for women age 20 to 24 than it is for teens, 38.4 per 1,000 compared to 28.0 per 1,000. The rate of unmarried childbearing has been falling for teenagers but rising for older women. In other words, unmarried mothers, like married mothers, are having their children at a later age.

Increasingly, women begin their families through childbearing rather than through marriage. More than one-third of first births (34.3 percent) occur to women who are not married. This figure for unmarried births falls to 19.1 percent of second births and 17.3 percent for third births.

Age Specific Fertility Rates

Minnesota 1995 vs. U.S. 1994

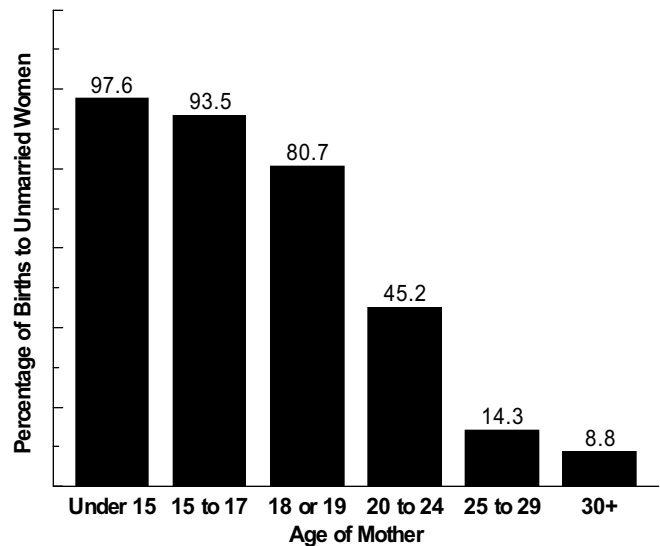


Figures for under age 15 and over age 45 added to first and last groups, respectively.

Data sources: Minnesota Center for Health Statistics; National Center for Health Statistics.

Younger Mothers More Likely to be Unmarried

Minnesota Unwed Births by Age of Mother, 1995



Source: Minnesota Center for Health Statistics

Fewer Births to White and American Indian Women

The number of births to white and American Indian women in Minnesota declined between 1990 and 1995. Births to white women fell from 61,795 in 1990 to 55,966 in 1995. American Indian births dropped from 1,299 to 1,068 over the five-year period.

While white and American Indian births were falling, the number of births to African American, Asian and Hispanic women went up. The rise in births for these groups probably stems from the large number of Hispanic, Asian and African American women of childbearing age who moved to Minnesota in the 1990s.

Hispanic births rose by 81 percent, from 1,059 to 1,916. The large rate of increase in births to Hispanic women may reflect more accurate information on the birth record as well as the rapid growth in the Hispanic population.

Despite the changes in recent years, the overwhelming majority of Minnesota mothers are white. In 1995, 89 percent of mothers were white, compared to 91 percent in 1990. Minnesota mothers are less racially and ethnically diverse than the national average. Nationally, 21 percent of mothers were nonwhite and 17 percent were Hispanic in 1994. Women of Hispanic origin can be of any race. The comparable 1995 figures for Minnesota were 11 percent nonwhite and 3 percent Hispanic.

Nonwhite mothers are much younger on average than white mothers. In 1995, only 7 percent of Minnesota white women having babies were teenagers, compared to 24 percent of African American mothers and 27 percent of American Indian mothers. Seventy-five percent of white mothers were at least 25 years old, compared to 60 percent of Asian mothers and 43 percent of African American and American Indian mothers.

Proportion of 1995 Minnesota Births by Age and Race (excluding unknown age)

	Under 20	20 to 24	25+
White	6.9	18.4	74.8
African American	24.2	32.6	43.3
American Indian	26.9	30.1	43.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	14.2	25.8	60.0
Other/Unknown Race	14.0	27.8	58.1

Partly because they are younger, nonwhite mothers are less likely to be married. The percentage of births to unwed mothers was 21 percent for whites, 22 percent for Asians and Pacific Islanders, 70 percent for African Americans, and 78 percent for American Indians. Among Hispanic women, 46 percent of mothers were unmarried at the time of the child's birth.

Fertility Rates by Race Converging

Fertility rates have been dropping for women of all races, and rates for African American and American Indian women are becoming more similar to the rates for white women. From 1990 to 1994, the general fertility rate fell 17 percent for African American women and 22 percent for American Indian women. Declines were smaller for white (-7 percent) and Asian (-4 percent) women. Race-specific fertility data is not available for 1995.

In contrast, the data shows a sharp rise in the fertility rate for Hispanic women, from 74.8 per 1,000 to 98.9 per 1,000. These figures may be misleading. The Hispanic origin information on the birth certificate may have been more completely recorded in 1994 than in 1990.

More Mothers Are College Graduates

Minnesota mothers had more education in 1995 than in 1990. The percent of mothers who had graduated from college increased from 23.6 percent in 1990 to 30.6 percent in 1995. The proportion who had not completed high school was about the same, 9.9 percent in 1990 and 10.2 percent in 1995.

Mothers in Minnesota are far more educated than the national average. Nationally, 23 percent of mothers had not finished high school in 1994, and 21 percent were college graduates.

Fertility Rates Vary by County

The 1995 general fertility rate in Minnesota counties ranged from a low of 37.5 per 1,000 in Stevens County to a high of 85.4 per 1,000 in Nobles County. Most of the counties with the lowest fertility rates, including Blue Earth, Nicollet, Rice and St. Louis counties, have college or university campuses. College students make up a large share of the prime childbearing-age population in these counties, and few of them have babies while enrolled. The result is a low fertility rate.

Other than the low rates in college counties, the fertility rates do not seem to follow any clear geographical pattern. As fertility levels across the states have become more compressed, many of the differences may simply reflect random yearly variations in births or anomalies in age estimates used to calculate the rates. For example, the low fertility rates in Pope and Koochiching counties are puzzling and not in line with previous levels found in these areas.

Minnesota Births and Fertility Rates, 1990 and 1995

County	1990		General Fertility Rate, 1990	1995		Percentage of Births to Women Under 20	County	1990		General Fertility Rate, 1990	1995		Percentage of Births to Women Under 20
	Births	Births	Rate, 1990	Rate, 1995	Rate, 1995	Rate, 1990		Rate, 1995	Rate, 1990	Rate, 1995	Rate, 1995	Rate, 1995	Rate, 1995
Aitkin	143	141	67.7	67.4	6.4%	Marshall	151	126	71.3	67.3	14.3%		
Anoka	4,190	4,221	67.3	62.7	7.9	Martin	292	231	67.8	55.6	10.0		
Becker	415	329	76.4	60.0	9.7	Meeker	305	248	71.9	62.6	8.9		
Beltrami	598	532	74.3	63.3	14.5	Mille Lacs	280	213	75.5	57.4	13.6		
Benton	518	485	69.7	63.1	8.5	Morrison	417	374	75.5	65.0	8.8		
Big Stone	77	52	73.5	53.8	7.7	Mower	488	430	68.7	63.4	10.2		
Blue Earth	687	612	48.2	43.9	7.8	Murray	122	104	71.9	65.7	2.9		
Brown	370	319	65.6	59.1	7.2	Nicollet	388	351	55.9	49.6	7.7		
Carlton	371	320	64.2	53.1	11.3	Nobles	286	322	71.9	85.4	11.8		
Carver	939	987	78.8	73.8	4.3	Norman	88	98	64.4	77.0	12.2		
Cass	333	254	82.0	62.5	16.1	Olmsted	1,862	1,756	69.2	64.4	6.9		
Chippewa	159	140	64.7	59.9	8.6	Otter Tail	606	553	66.7	59.0	8.9		
Chisago	458	517	70.1	68.5	7.7	Pennington	169	161	63.4	60.6	9.9		
Clay	670	702	51.2	52.1	10.8	Pine	290	243	74.6	61.9	15.6		
Clearwater	112	102	72.8	70.2	15.7	Pipestone	129	117	68.7	62.6	5.1		
Cook	47	56	57.6	67.3	10.7	Polk	464	401	78.1	64.4	10.5		
Cottonwood	150	135	71.7	62.3	7.4	Pope	150	83	80.2	46.7	3.6		
Crow Wing	653	592	76.4	62.9	13.3	Ramsey	8,330	7,474	68.7	62.0	10.6		
Dakota	5,104	5,197	69.9	64.6	5.1	Red Lake	48	48	72.5	61.7	10.4		
Dodge	267	223	77.2	64.2	7.6	Redwood	215	204	70.3	68.6	8.3		
Douglas	370	337	66.5	58.8	7.7	Renville	241	215	81.5	72.7	11.2		
Faribault	192	167	65.5	59.9	13.8	Rice	676	568	55.5	45.3	8.5		
Fillmore	284	241	77.1	65.3	7.1	Rock	117	97	68.1	55.7	8.2		
Freeborn	406	323	68.5	53.4	12.7	Roseau	276	265	89.9	83.6	14.7		
Goodhue	539	488	64.3	57.6	7.6	St Louis	2,340	1,997	54.0	48.0	10.2		
Grant	81	69	78.7	70.7	10.1	Scott	1,098	1,246	76.7	75.9	3.0		
Hennepin	17,131	15,317	64.1	57.7	8.1	Sherburne	685	811	67.3	66.8	6.0		
Houston	278	251	72.8	66.0	5.6	Sibley	186	149	74.3	58.2	6.0		
Hubbard	172	194	71.3	67.1	11.9	Stearns	1,712	1,636	58.6	53.7	7.1		
Isanti	370	326	64.9	53.0	11.0	Steele	454	409	70.2	62.0	10.0		
Itasca	491	431	59.8	51.2	14.6	Stevens	86	93	35.8	37.5	1.1		
Jackson	130	25	65.4	60.7	7.2	Swift	143	108	69.0	59.1	13.0		
Kanabec	177	148	74.0	56.5	13.5	Todd	272	250	65.7	59.7	14.4		
Kandiyohi	576	523	70.5	61.3	11.1	Traverse	51	48	80.4	74.4	10.4		
Kittson	74	63	71.9	66.6	7.9	Wabasha	293	261	73.3	65.6	6.9		
Koochiching	202	127	61.6	42.3	8.7	Wadena	180	158	79.3	68.1	10.8		
Lac Qui Parle	86	84	65.5	60.8	6.0	Waseca	231	201	65.3	54.8	8.0		
Lake	105	103	58.5	55.1	8.7	Washington	2,353	2,539	64.9	60.7	5.0		
Lake of the Woods	69	48	77.2	60.8	8.3	Watsonwan	170	157	79.0	77.2	11.5		
LeSueur	342	323	77.3	69.1	8.4	Wilkin	86	73	68.6	54.8	6.8		
Lincoln	72	65	70.4	63.2	4.6	Winona	580	569	48.9	48.1	9.0		
Lyon	358	344	61.0	62.8	14.8	Wright	1,204	1,188	77.8	70.1	5.0		
McLeod	466	479	73.1	70.3	10.4	Yellow Medicine	152	118	75.9	62.2	13.6		
Mahnomen	86	72	89.4	81.4	18.1%	Minnesota	67,985	63,259	66.3	60.1	8.4%		

Most of the larger cities in Minnesota followed the state trend and had fewer births in 1995 than in 1990. Births went down 14 percent in Minneapolis and 9 percent in St. Paul. The few cities with increases in births are rapidly growing suburbs such as Woodbury, Lakeville, Coon Rapids and Plymouth. The rising number of births in these communities is due to the large numbers of women in their childbearing years who have moved in.

Minnesota Cities with 500 or More Births in 1995

	1990 Births	1995 Births	Change	Percent Change
Minneapolis	6,632	5,739	-893	-13.5
St. Paul	5,237	4,764	-473	-9.0
Rochester	1,454	1,359	-95	-6.5
Eagan	1,17	1,143	-35	-3.0
Coon Rapids	957	1,038	81	8.5
Brooklyn Park	1,136	1,022	-114	-10.0
Duluth	1,259	1,004	-255	-20.3
Bloomington	1,153	982	-171	-14.8
Burnsville	936	910	-26	-2.8
Plymouth	804	875	71	8.8
Eden Prairie	846	797	-49	-5.8
Maple Grove	776	664	-112	-14.4
St. Cloud	734	638	-96	-13.1
St. Louis Park	630	620	-10	-1.6
Apple Valley	601	586	-15	-2.5
Woodbury	334	583	249	74.6
Lakeville	502	583	81	16.1
Blaine	644	583	-61	-9.5
Mnetonka	583	524	-59	-10.1

Data Sources

Birth data is provided by the Minnesota Center for Health Statistics in the Minnesota Department of Health. Carol Vargas of MCHS assisted with this report by providing a number of custom tables from the birth records. The 1995 age data used to calculate the rates comes from MCHS. MCHS staff members calculated 1995 county age estimates by applying the age group proportions from a set of 1994 Census Bureau estimates to the 1995 Office of State Demographer estimates of total county population. The 1990 fertility rates come from *Population Notes*, January 1993. National fertility data is from the National Center for Health Statistics.

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