







# Final Births for 2004


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This report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) summarizes the 2004 final births and birth rates for the United States. A report that includes both demographic and health characteristics of births as well as state-based final 2004 data is forthcoming (1). Key findings, illustrated in [Tables 1-4](#)  [PDF - 62 KB] and [Figure 1](#), show:

The number of births rose very slightly, the crude birth rate was down, and the general fertility rate increased modestly ([Tables 1 and 2](#)  [PDF - 62 KB]). In 2004, 4,112,052 births were registered in the United States, 22,102 more than in 2003 (2). Births increased for Hispanic women, were essentially unchanged for non-Hispanic black women, and declined for non-Hispanic white women. The crude birth rate for the U.S. in 2004 declined slightly from 2003, to 14.0 live births per 1,000 total population. However, the general fertility rate in 2004 increased slightly from the 2003 rate, to 66.3 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-44 years. Fertility rates for non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic black women were essentially unchanged between 2003 and 2004; the rate for Hispanic women increased by 1 percent. Fertility also increased for Asian or Pacific Islander (API) women, but was essentially unchanged for American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN) women.

The birth rate for teenagers declined 1 percent in 2004 to 41.1 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 years ([Tables 2 and 3](#)  [PDF - 62 KB]). The rate has dropped one-third since its recent peak in 1991. The rates for teenage subgroups 15-17 and 18-19 years each fell 1 percent, to 22.1 and 70.0, respectively. These reductions were the smallest since the downward trend began after 1991. The rate for the youngest teenagers, 10-14 years, rose slightly from 0.6 to 0.7 per 1,000 in 2004, the first increase since 1988-89. Among population subgroups, rates fell 2 to 3 percent for non-Hispanic white and black teenagers 15-19 years. Since 1991, the rate for black teenagers has fallen almost one-half, from 118.2 to 63.1 per 1,000, whereas rates for non-Hispanic white, AIAN, and API teenagers dropped 36-38 percent. The rate for Hispanic teenagers declined 21 percent over this period, but there was very little change in the rate between 2003 and 2004.

The birth rate for women aged 20-24 years declined to 101.7 births per 1,000 women in 2004 ([Tables 2, 3](#)  [PDF - 62 KB], and [Figure 1](#)). This is the fourth consecutive decline in this rate and marks another record low for this age group for the United States (1). Since 1990, the rate has generally declined, down 13 percent. The birth rate for women aged 25-29 years, 115.5 births per 1,000 women, was not significantly different from the rate in 2003. The birth rate for women aged 30-34 years was 95.3 births per 1,000, the highest level since 1964 but not significantly different from the rate in 2003, whereas the birth rate for women aged 35-39 years was up 4 percent, to 45.4 births per 1,000 women. The rate for this age group has increased each year since 1978 (19.0) and has risen 43 percent since only 1990 (31.7). The birth rate for women aged 40-44 years rose by 2 percent, to 8.9. The birth rate for women aged 45-49 years was unchanged. This rate more than doubled between 1990 and 2000 but has been stable since.

The total fertility rate (TFR) was slightly higher in 2004 (2,045.5) than in 2003 ([Table 1](#)  [PDF - 62 KB]). The TFR summarizes the potential impact of current fertility patterns on completed family size to estimate the average number of births that a hypothetical cohort of 1,000 women would have over their lifetime. The rise in the TFR between 2003 and 2004 is the result of increases in birth rates for women aged 30-44 years and especially those aged 35-39 years. The TFRs for two of the three largest race and Hispanic origin groups declined between 2003 and 2004, falling by less than 1 percent for both non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic black women; the rate for Hispanic women rose by 1 percent. The rate for API women also rose by 1 percent in 2004; the rate for AIAN women was essentially unchanged.

For the second consecutive year, all measures of childbearing by unmarried women rose sharply ([Tables 1](#)  [PDF - 62 KB] and [4](#)). The birth rate rose 3 percent to 46.1 per 1,000 unmarried women aged 15-44 years in 2004, essentially matching the previous high point recorded in 1994. During the years 1995-2002, the rate was fairly stable. The number of births to unmarried women climbed 4 percent, to 1,470,189, the highest number ever recorded in the more than six decades for which

comparable national statistics are available. The proportion of all births to unmarried women increased to 35.8 percent in 2004. Birth rates for unmarried teenagers continued to fall, though more modestly than in previous years, whereas rates for unmarried women aged 20 years and over continued to increase. Unmarried teenagers accounted for only 24 percent of all nonmarital births in 2004, whereas unmarried women in their twenties accounted for 59 percent (1).

## Technical Notes

### Nature and source of data

Final data for 2004 are based on 100 percent of the birth certificates in all states and the District of Columbia. The data are provided to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program (VSCP). Missing data for mother's race, age, and marital status are imputed. Detailed information on reporting completeness and imputation procedures may be found in the "Technical Appendix" of Vital Statistics of the United States, 2003, Natality (3).

### Hispanic origin of mother

Race and Hispanic origin are reported separately on the birth certificate. Data shown by race (i.e., American Indian or Alaska Native and Asian or Pacific Islander) include persons of Hispanic or non-Hispanic origin, and data for Hispanic origin include persons of any race. Data shown for Hispanic persons include all persons of Hispanic origin of any race. Data for non-Hispanic persons are shown separately according to the race of the mother, because there are substantial differences in fertility characteristics between, for example, Hispanic and non-Hispanic white women.

### Single, multiple, and bridged race of mother

The 2003 revision of the U.S. Standard Certificate of Live Birth allows the reporting of more than one race (multiple races) for each parent (4). Information on this change is presented in a recent report (2).

In 2004, multiple race was reported on the revised birth certificates of Florida, Idaho, Kentucky, New Hampshire, New York State (excluding New York City), Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington, as well as on the unrevised certificates of California, Hawaii, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Utah. Data from the vital records of the remaining 35 states and the District of Columbia are based on the 1989 revision of the U.S. Standard Certificate of Live Birth that follows the 1977 Office of Management and Budget standard, allowing only a single race to be reported (5-7).

In order to provide uniformity and comparability of the data during the transition period, before all or most of the data are available in the new multiple race format, it was necessary to "bridge" the responses of those who reported more than one race (multiple race) to one, single race (see "Population denominators"). Information on the processing and tabulation of data by race is presented in a recent report (1,2).

### Marital status

Information on the national estimates of births to unmarried women (i.e., methods of determining marital status) and the computation of birth rates for unmarried women are presented elsewhere (1,2).

### Population denominators

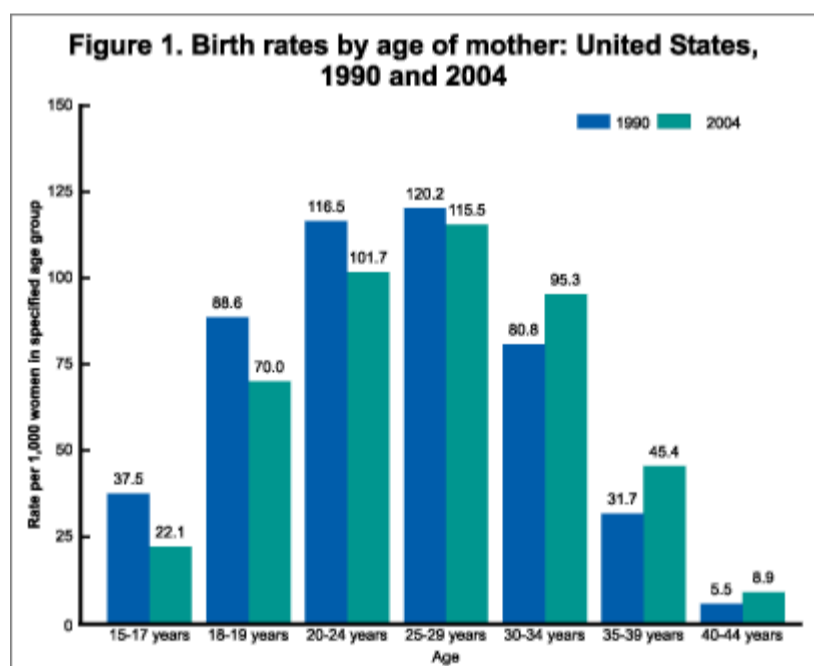
Birth and fertility rates shown in this report for 2003 and 2004 are based on population estimates based on the 2000 census, as of July 1, 2003, and 2004. These population estimates are available on the NCHS Web page (8,9). The production of these population estimates is described in detail in a recent report (2).

Rates for unmarried women shown in this report are based on distributions of the population by marital status as of March 2004 as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau in the March Current Population Survey, which have been adjusted to July 2004 population levels by the Division of Vital Statistics, NCHS (8,10). The nonmarital birth rate shown in reports based on final data are based on populations estimated from 3-year averages of the marital status distributions (1,11).

## References

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## Figures



## Suggested citation

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