

## Teen births decrease, remain expensive

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A report by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy in Washington said childbearing teens cost U.S. taxpayers at least \$9.1 billion in 2004.

The nonprofit organization said teen pregnancy has declined since the early 1990s, but the children of teens have higher healthcare, foster care and incarceration costs than children of adult parents, USA Today reported Monday.

"It's important to remind people the problems are very serious and expensive," said group director Sarah Brown.

She cited the decline in teen births from 62 per 1,000 teenage girls in 1991 to 41 per 1,000 in 2004 as a positive development resulting from greater use of contraception and abstinence among teens.

However, Brown said the teen pregnancy rate in the United States is still twice as high as the rate in Canada and four to five times as high as many European countries.

The report said offspring of teens 17-years-old and younger are more than twice as likely as children of mothers aged 20 or 21 to be placed in foster care. The mothers are also more than twice as likely to be cited for child abuse or neglect, or to have a son sent to prison.

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