



# County of Santa Cruz

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## PRESS RELEASE

Date: September 1, 2016  
Release: Immediately  
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### COUNTY TEEN BIRTH RATE AT HISTORIC LOW

The percentage of Santa Cruz County children born to teenaged mothers is at a historic low, according to a report released Thursday by the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency's Public Health Division.

Countywide, just 4.9 percent of births were to mothers 19 years of age or younger, and there were no births to women younger than 15, according to the 2015 Santa Cruz County Birth Report. At 138, the number of births to teen mothers is barely half the number from 2011.

However, while the teen birth rate is also falling among Hispanics, the number remains disproportionately high compared to whites and other ethnicities.

"We're extremely happy that the teen birth rate is dropping so fast, and this is great news for local women and families," Santa Cruz County epidemiologist Will Forest said. "But we still have work left to close the unacceptable disparities among all populations of Santa Cruz County residents."

Local figures reflect state and national trends, which experts have attributed to increases in the use of highly effective contraception, greater access to information about pregnancy prevention and a decline in the number of teens engaged in sexual activity.

Nationally, the teen birth rate is 22.3 births per 1,000 women. In Santa Cruz County, that figure is 14.9 percent.

The full report is available at:

<http://www.santacruzhealth.org/Portals/7/Pdfs/2015%20Birth%20Data.pdf>