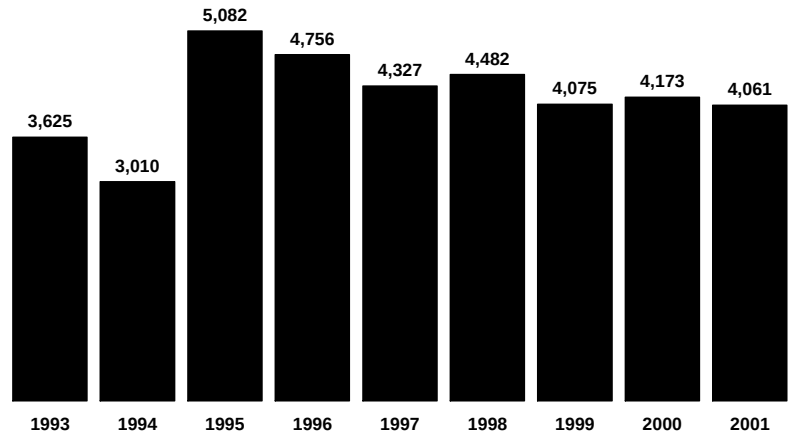
Tennessee accounted for 3,760 births in the year 2000. Shelby County led the state in births with 852 teen (ages 15 to 17) births for year 2000, with Trousdale County having only 2, the county with the lowest number of birth in that year (TDH, 2000).

Consequences of teen parenthood:

- Half of all single mothers on welfare were teens when they had their first child.
- Fewer than one third of teen mothers ever finish high school. This leaves them unprepared for the job market and more likely to raise their children in poverty.
- Nearly 80 percent of the fathers of babies born to teen mothers do not marry their babies' mothers. On average, these absent fathers pay less than $800 annually for child support (National Campaign to Prevent Pregnancy, 2001).

The U.S teen birth rate has declined slowly but steadily from 1991 to 2000, with an overall decline of 22 percent for those ages 15 to 19. While the teen pregnancy rate has declined, between 1995 and 2010 the number of girls ages 15 to 19 will increase by 2.2 million (National Campaign to Prevent Pregnancy, 2002).

Sexually Transmitted Diseases
Total Number of Cases for Teens 15-17
1993-2001



Source: Office of Health Statistics and Information,Tennessee Department of Health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports: "The reduction in teen birthrates from 2000 to 2001 was greatest among black teenagers (8 percent). Since 1991, the rate for black teens ages 15-19 years has dropped 37 percent. Between 2000 and 2001, birthrates for teens declined among all races and ethnic groups, including non-Hispanic white teenagers (7 percent); Asian or Pacific Islander teens (5 percent); American Indian teens (3 percent); and Hispanic teens (2 percent)" (U.S. Department if Health and Human Services, 2002).

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

The latest estimates indicate that each year there are 15 million new Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) cases in the United States (Cates, 1999). Approximately one fourth of the new infections are in teenagers. While some STDs, such as syphilis, have been brought to an all time low, others like genital herpes, gonorrhea, and chlamydia, continue to resurge and spread through the population (CDC, 2001).

Teens are at high behavioral risk for acquiring most STDs. Teens and young adults are more likely than other age groups to have multiple sex partners, to engage in unprotected sex, and, if young women, to choose sexual partners who are older than themselves. As a result, young females are biologically more susceptible to chlamydia, gonorrhea, and HIV (CDC, 2001).

Curable STDs are typically caused by bacteria and can be cured by antibiotics, with chlamydia and gonorrhea the most common curable bacterial STDs among teens. However, if these diseases remain undetected and untreated, they can result in severe health consequences later in life. Among teens nationally it is not