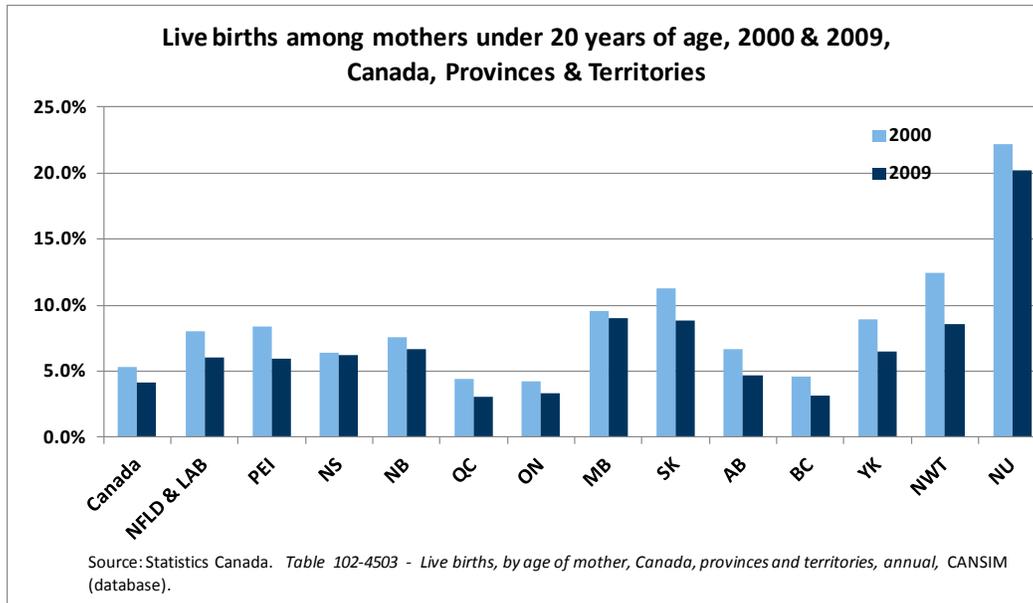


# FASCINATING Families

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## Teen Pregnancy: Supporting Young Parents

*In Canada, 46,774 or 4.3% of babies born in 2009 had a mother under the age of 20.*



Teen pregnancy rates are considered a good indicator of adolescent sexual and reproductive health (McKay, 2006). The rate is calculated as the sum of recorded live births, induced abortions, and miscarriages per 1,000 of the population of females aged 15-19. According to this measure, young women in Canada are doing increasingly well controlling and protecting their reproductive health. Over the last 2 decades, the teen pregnancy rate in Canada has dropped appreciably, declining 36.9% between 1996 and 2006 (McKay and Barrett, 2010).

This decline is not unique to Canada: the United States, England & Wales have witnessed a similar decrease in recent years (McKay, op. cit.).

The overall decline in births among Canadian teen mothers, however, masks significant variations between the provinces and territories. The percentage of births to teen mothers in Nunavut, for example, accounts for more than 20% of all births (see graph below), as compared to approximately 3% in Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia, respectively (Statistics Canada, 2011).

### The Family Lens

Regardless of age, most new parents discover that the care demands of a newborn require changes in lifestyle, perspectives, expectations and aspirations. For teens, balancing parenthood and school as well as work can be challenging, particularly where the resources and supports for young moms are insufficient (BC Council for Families, 2009). To be effective as parents and to reach their full potential, teen parents need access to healthcare and social and economic supports (prenatal counselling, childcare subsidies, affordable housing, etc...), and to personal, parenting and career mentoring, coaching and guidance. These supports help them build confidence and acquire skills and knowledge regarding child development and parenting so they and their children can thrive (McCreary Centre Society, 2008).

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