

The Changing Characteristics of Delaware Mothers

Table 1. Live births by maternal characteristic, Delaware, 1990 and 2007

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2007</i>
All Births	11,112	12,097
White non-Hispanic	8,049	6,420
Black non-Hispanic	2,564	3,191
Hispanic	324	1,917
Other non-Hispanic	168	569
Mean age of mother at first birth	24.5	25.1
White non-Hispanic	25.4	26.2
Black non-Hispanic	21.4	22.8
Hispanic	21.8	23.1
Other non-Hispanic	26.8	28.5
Percent of Births		
Births to mothers <20	11.9	10.3
Births to mothers 35+	8.2	13.6
Births to unmarried mothers	29	46.5
Births to mothers with less than HS education	16.3	24
Births to mothers with one or more years college education	38	51.2
Plural births	2.9	3.2
Births delivered by cesarean section	25.1	32

Source: Delaware Health Statistics Center

The racial and ethnic composition of Delaware mothers in 2007 was more diverse than in 1990. Mothers were less likely to be white non-Hispanic (see Table 1 and Figure 3).

Between 1990 and 2007 the proportion of mothers 35 and older increased, while the proportion of mothers in their teens decreased. Likewise, the proportion of first-time mothers (women who experienced their first birth) who were 35 and older increased 74 percent between 1990 and 2007 (see Figure 4).

In 2007, 47 percent of mothers were unmarried, an increase of 62 percent since 1990.

- The percentage varied greatly by race and ethnicity, with 32 percent of white non-Hispanic, 71 percent of black non-Hispanic, 63 percent of Hispanic, and 11 percent of other non-Hispanic mothers single at the time of birth.
- White non-Hispanic and Hispanic mothers exhibited the largest increases between the two time periods, rising from 16 to 32.3 and 42 to 63 percent.

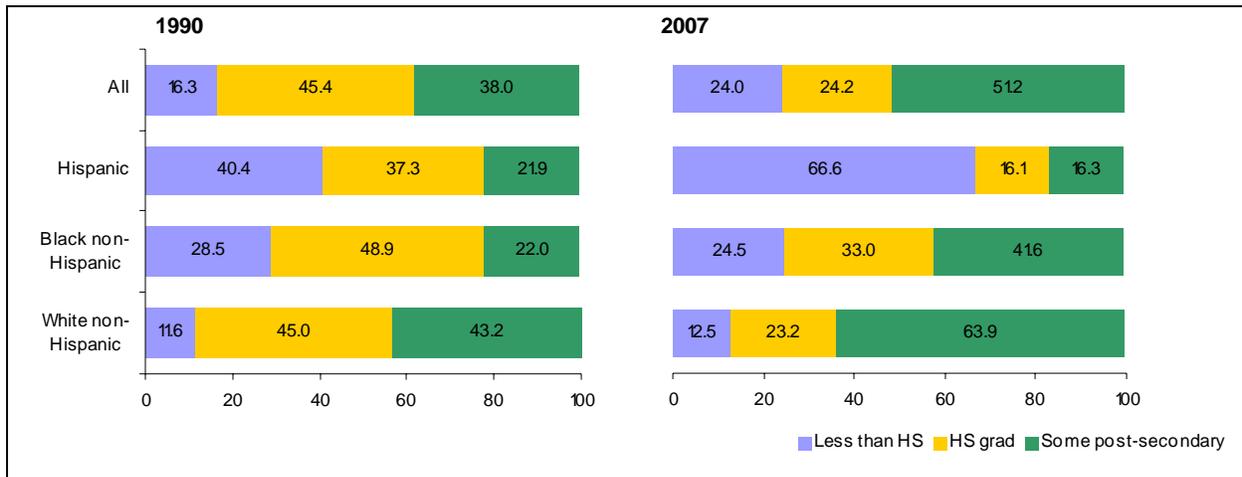
Just over half of mothers had at least some college education in 2007, versus 38 percent in 1990.

Compared to 1990, Delaware mothers in 2007 were more likely to be 35 and older, to be single, and to have either fewer than 12 years education, or to have some post-secondary education.

In 2007, one in seven Delaware babies was born to a mother at least 35 years old. In 1990, one in 12 had a mother in that age group.

Among mothers 35 and older, 73 percent had at least some college education in 2007. This trend, along with those cited on the previous page, were noted in a recent study by the Pew Research Center¹. However, unlike the national data, the increase in the percent of Delaware mothers with some post-secondary education was accompanied by an increase in the proportion of mothers with less than a high school education. This is explained by the large increase in births to Hispanic mothers, who, although their age distribution had shifted to include more older women, demonstrated a 65 percent increase in the proportion of women who had less than 12 years of education.

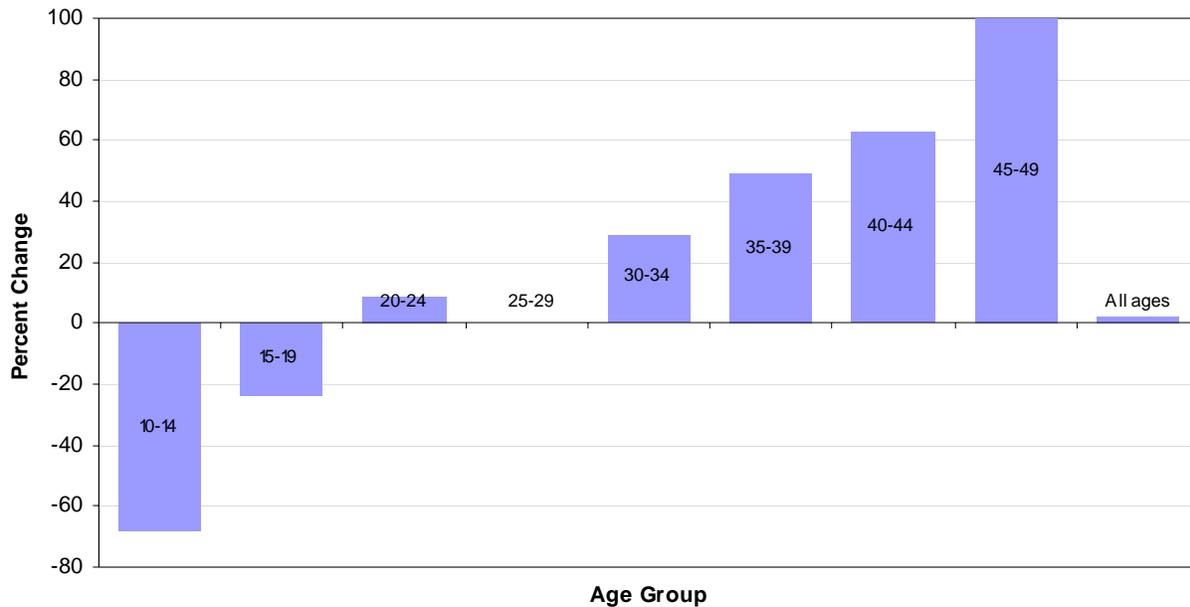
Figure 1. Distribution of Mother's Education by Race and Ethnicity, Delaware, 1990 vs. 2007



Source: Delaware Health Statistics Center

Birth rates demonstrated changes similar to those seen in the age composition of mothers in 1990 as compared to mothers in 2007. Birth rates for older mothers increased, while those for teen mothers decreased.

Figure 2. Percent Change in Five-year General Fertility and Age-Specific Live Birth Rates, Delaware, 1990-1994 vs. 2003-2007

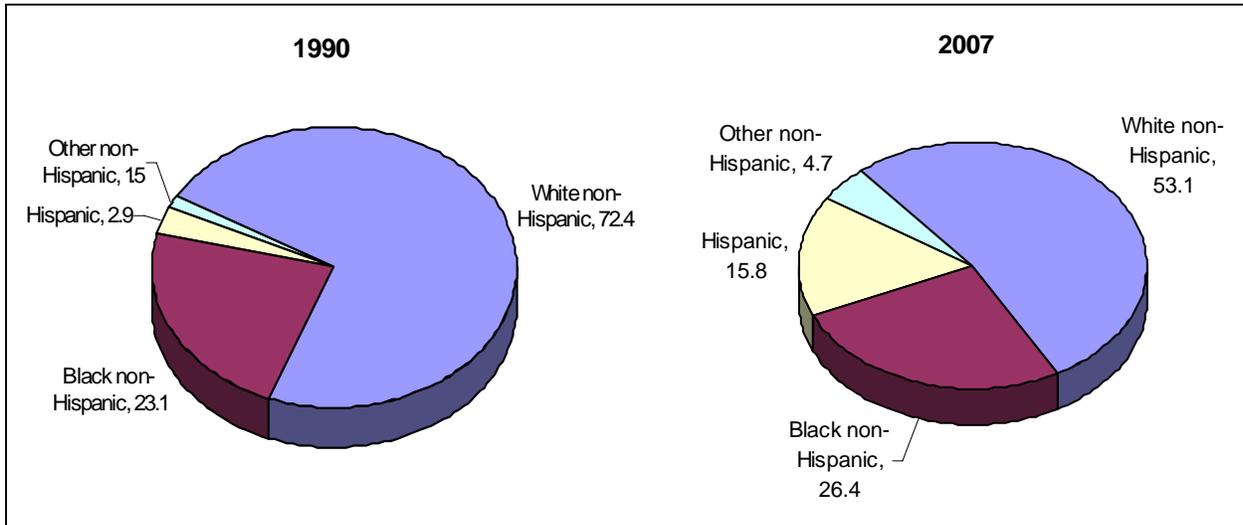


Notes:

1. General fertility rates represent the total number of live births per 1,000 women 15-44 years of age.
2. Age-specific live birth rates represent the number of live births in a specific age category per 1,000 women in that age category.

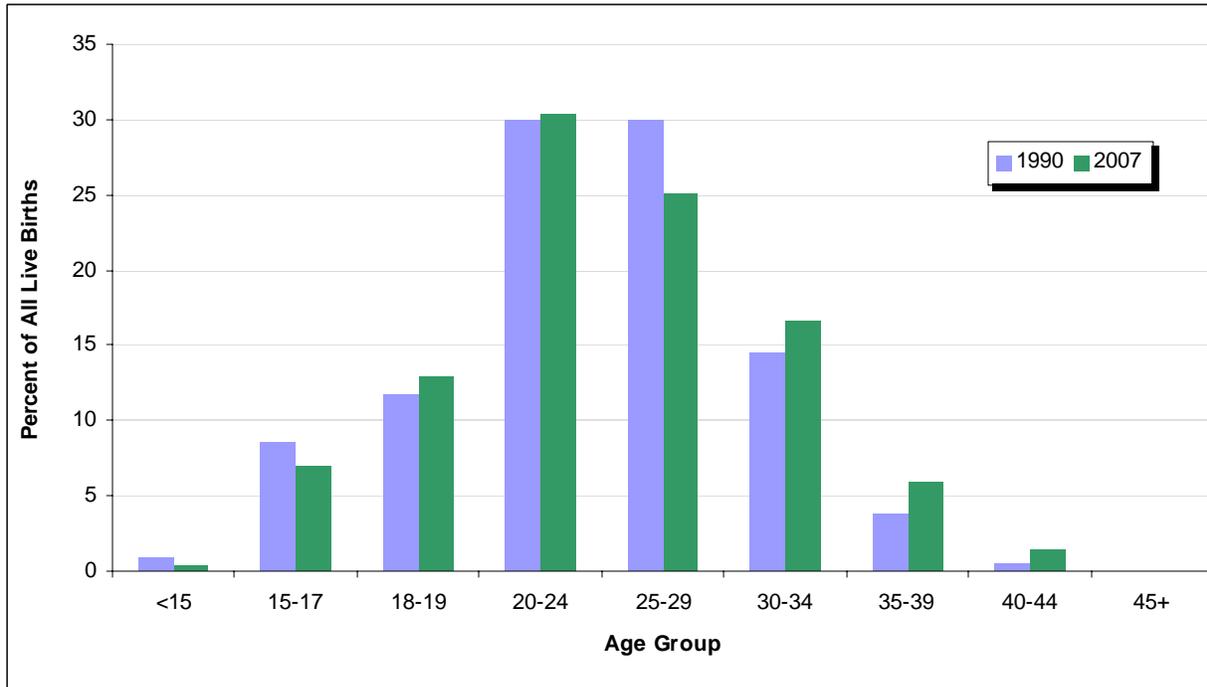
Source: Delaware Health Statistics Center

Figure 3. Racial and Ethnic Distribution of Mothers, Delaware, 1990 and 2007



Source: Delaware Health Statistics Center

Figure 4. Distribution of First births by Mother's Age Group, Delaware, 1990 and 2007



Notes:
 1. First births refer to those mothers who had their first birth in 2007.
 2. Distribution of first births is based on the frequency of first births by age of mother.
Source: Delaware Health Statistics Center

References:

1. Livingston, Gretchen and Cohn, D'Vera. "The New Demography of American Motherhood." Pew Research Center. May 6, 2010. <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1586/changing-demographic-characteristics-american-mothers>
2. Martin JA, Hamilton BE, Sutton PD, Ventura SJ, et al. **Births: Final data for 2006**. National vital statistics reports; vol 57 no 7. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2009.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Division of Public Health

If you have comments, suggestions, and/or questions, please contact the Delaware Health Statistics Center at (302) 744-4541.

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