

# TEENS OF TODAY



These days, it seems like we have nothing good to say about our teens. They are often described as entitled minded, unmotivated/lazy and overall out of touch with the “real” world.

Have teens gotten a bad rap in recent years?

The youth of today, in reality, are actually behaving more virtuously than the last generation or two before them.

From smoking and other drug use to unwanted pregnancies and abortions, the trends today show most teenagers making good choices, even better choices than the generation/s before them. They are even volunteering in their communities more than ever before.

**Smoking cigarettes has become uncool.** According to National CDC statistics, cigarette smoking among high school students is at the lowest level in more than 25 years. The rate was cut by more than 70%, leaving just 8% percent of teens smoking cigarettes 2017.

**Driving after drinking as well as riding with someone who had been drinking is also far less common than the generation before them.** The Youth Risk Behavior Survey has revealed that approximately half as many high school students say they got behind the wheel after drinking or rode with someone that had been drinking in 2015 compared to 1991.

Not only has driving or riding with someone who has been drinking declined, but the overall percent of teens drinking has significantly declined. Almost 40% of teens in 1991 report ever drinking, whereas only 20% report ever drinking in 2015.

**Drug use and abuse is down.** Despite the continued rise in opioid and overdose deaths and high levels of opioid misuse among adults, misuse of opioids among teens continues to drop.

In fact, the use of most illicit substances are at historic low levels of use, which includes cocaine, heroin, prescription opioids, MDMA (Ecstasy or Molly), methamphetamine, amphetamines, and sedatives. Other

illicit drugs showed five-year declines, such as synthetic marijuana, hallucinogens other than LSD, and over-the-counter cough and cold medications.

**Teen Pregnancy and abortions have also drastically declined.** Teen pregnancy has declined almost continuously for more than two decades, plummeting from about 6.1% to 2.6%, according to federal health statistics.

Furthermore, the rate of abortions among women under 20 has fallen significantly since it peaked in the early 1990s, according to 2014 research by the nonprofit, Guttmacher Institute.

While many of us tend to agree that kids seem to have more social and academic pressures placed on them inside schools than the generations before them, we also tend to overlook a very important fact.

**Kids are staying in school and graduating.** Efforts to keep teens in school are paying off. The National Center for Educational Statistics reported the high school dropout rate has decreased from 12% in 1990 to 7% in 2012, while those graduating on time has increased more than 10% within the same time frame.

**Today's teens regularly volunteer more.** A higher number of teens are volunteering at least once per month. Matter of fact, about 55 percent of youth ages 12 to 18 volunteer on some level and it should be noted, the teens volunteering rate of 55% is nearly twice the adult volunteering rate of 29 percent.

All in all, teens are actually making much better choices than those before them. So, the next time you hear someone talk negatively about the teens of today, you can add something positive about teens to the conversation.



[https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07\\_100.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07_100.asp)

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/questionnaires.htm>

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<https://www.drugabuse.gov/./drugfacts/monitoring-future-survey-high-school-youth...>

[https://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/05\\_1130\\_LSA\\_YHA\\_SI\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/05_1130_LSA_YHA_SI_factsheet.pdf)

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