

Brazilians Becoming Moms at Younger Age

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To an increasing extent, Brazilian women are younger when they have their first child. A study released yesterday by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) shows that, in 2000, over 38% of first-time mothers in Brazil were in the 10-19 age bracket. This percentage was 32.5% in 1991.

Acre was the state with the highest percent of mothers who bore their first child before the age of 20. At the other end of the spectrum, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, the Federal District, and Rio Grande do Sul were the Federal units in which the average age of first-time mothers was the highest.

Among girls who experienced motherhood for the first time between the ages of 10 and 14, the majority had little schooling, regardless of family income level.

Adolescents and young women between the ages of 15 and 19 from families with monthly incomes of up to three minimum wages (US\$ 364) tended to have their first child while they were attending fundamental school.

Above this income level, mothers are concentrated in the group with high levels of schooling.

The study also confirms an increase in the number of women in large urban centers who were mothers for the first time after the age of 40.

In 1991, 7,142 (0.67%) of the first-time mothers were 40 or more, while, in 2000, they represented a total of 9,063 (0.79%).

Women who become mothers after the age of 40 have more education (59.1% have eight years or more of schooling) and belong to families with elevated purchasing power.

Moreover, the majority (58.8%) have their own jobs, and 79.3% were either married or had participated in a union in the past.

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