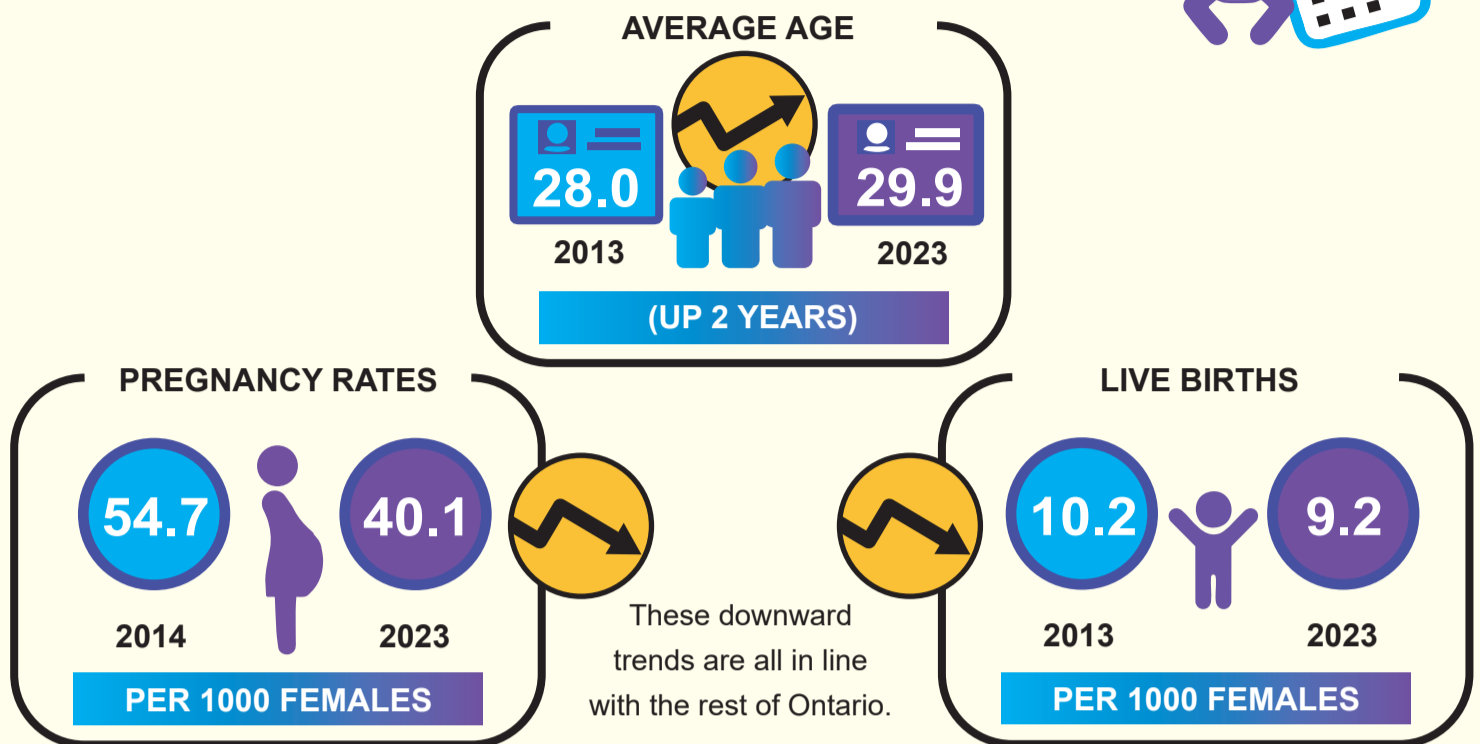
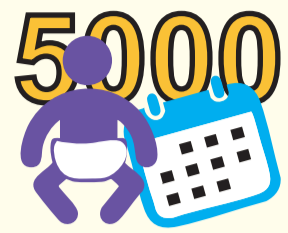


HEALTHY PREGNANCY AND HEALTHY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

What do we know about people giving birth in our region and the risk factors faced by their children.

In recent years, among the residents of Middlesex-London there have been about 5,000 live births each year. Over the past 10 years, our live birth rate and pregnancy rates have dropped and the average age of the birthing parent has increased.



ACEs Impact the Health and Well-being of our Children

Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs) are risk factors that are known to have long-term impacts on the health and well-being of children. The Healthy Babies Healthy Children Screening Tool asks new parents in Ontario about various ACEs-like risk factors that may impact healthy child development.



Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Screening Tool

What local birthing parents have told us about their own risk factors:

| RISK FACTOR | ONTARIO 2023 | MLHU 2023 | MLHU TREND SINCE 2014 |
|--|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Maternal mental health concern during pregnancy (2022)* | 23.1% | 32.9% | INCREASING |
| Parent/partner with mental health concern* | 20.9% | 30.5% | SIMILAR |
| Family with concerns about \$ (2022)* | 3.7% | 18.7% | INCREASING |
| No designated primary care provider for infant and/or birthing parent* | 6.7% | 16.7% | INCREASING |
| Family in need of newcomer support* | 5.4% | 9.7% | INCREASING |
| Cannabis use during pregnancy (2022)* | 3.9% | 5.4% | SIMILAR |
| Smoking cigarettes during pregnancy (2022)* | 4.1% | 5.3% | DECREASING |
| Family involved with Child Protective Services* | 2.3% | 4.2% | SIMILAR |
| Birthing parent is a lone parent | 3.2% | 4.1% | DECREASING |
| Alcohol use during pregnancy (2022) | 1.7% | 1.6% | SIMILAR |

* Middlesex-London is significantly higher compared to Ontario in these risk factors.

Our Response:

Middlesex-London Health Unit supports healthy child development by:

- Providing programs for pregnant individuals and families with young children, including:
 - Smart Start for Babies: Free weekly prenatal nutrition program for low-income pregnant individuals.
 - Breastfeeding Supports: Phone or in-person help for families facing breastfeeding challenges.
 - Healthy Babies, Healthy Children: Nurse home visits for qualifying families from pregnancy to school entry.
 - Nurse-Family Partnership: Nurse home visits for first-time parents under 24 facing life challenges.
- Collaborating with partners in the Age Friendly London and Child and Youth Network to improve child and youth well-being.
- Providing health information to licensed childcare providers and early childhood educators through targeted outreach.

Reference

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Carsley S, Oei T. Interventions to prevent and mitigate the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in Canada: a literature review. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020.

For more information about pregnancy and growth and development trends in Middlesex-London please visit our Healthy Pregnancy and Healthy Growth and Development Dashboards.