

PREGNANCY

“PARENTS AND TEEN PREGNANCY: WHAT SURVEYS SHOW”

“Each year the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy commissions an independent survey of adults and teens nationwide. Many of these questions focus on parents and their role in preventing teen pregnancy. Collected here is a sampling of polling result that parents may find of interest.”

“• Who teens say most influences their decisions about sex: Parents”

“• Who adults believe most influence teens’ decisions about sex: Teens’ friends.”

“• Percentage of teens who say it would be easier for them to postpone sexual activity and avoid teen pregnancy if they were able to have more open, honest conversations with their parents: 87%”

“• Percentage of teens who say they haven’t had a single such conversation with their parents: 37%”

“• Percentage of teens who believe they should talk to their kids about sex but often don’t know what to say, how to say it, or when to start: 90%”

“• Percentage of teens who think society should provide them with a strong message to not have sex until they are at least out of high school: 92%”

“• Percentage of adults who think teens should receive more information about both abstinence and contraception: 75%”

“• Percentage of teens who don’t think they are getting enough information about abstinence and contraception: 80%”

“• Percentage of teens say believe that teen boys often receive the message that sex and pregnancy are not a big deal: 61%”

“• Percentage of teens who believe teen girls often receive the message that attracting boys and looking sexy is one of the most important things they can do: 65%”

(Parents and Teen Pregnancy: What surveys Show,” The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy)

“The U.S. Teen Birth Rate has been declining; in ’04 it was 41.2 births per 1,000 girls ages 15-19, vs. 61.8 births per 1,000 in ’91. (USA Today 8/2/06)

(Gary D. Foster, “Religious Market Update,” August 10, 2006, p2)

“Adolescent Partner-Type Experience: Psychosocial and Behavioral Differences”

“In the United States in 2000, more than 800,000 pregnancies occurred among women between the ages of 15 and 19.³ (*3. AGI, U.S. teenage pregnancy statistics: overall trends, trends by race and ethnicity and state-by-state information, 2004, accessed June 6, 2005*)”

(Source: Cynthia Rosengard, Nancy E. Adler, Jill E. Gurvey and Jonathan M. Ellen, “Adolescent Partner-Type Experience: Psychosocial and Behavioral Differences,” Guttmacher Institute, Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, Volume 37, Number 3, September 2005)

“U.S. TEENAGE PREGNANCY STATISTICS”

“Nationwide, the teenage pregnancy rate declined by 2% between 1999 and 2000 (from 85.7 to 83.6 pregnancies per 1,000 women aged 15 – 19). From 1986 to 2000, the rate dropped by 22% and, more importantly, fell by 28% since peaking in 1990.”

“The birthrate for teenagers also declined by 2% between 1999 and 2000 (from 48.8 to 47.7 births per 1,000 women aged 15 – 19). The 2000 rate was 5% lower than the 1986 rate and 23% lower than the peak rate of 61.8 births per 1,000 women reached in 1991.”

“Teenagers’ abortion rate in 2000 was 24.0 per 1,000 women aged 15 – 19 – some 3% lower than the 1999 rate of 24.7 per 1,000. From 1986 to 2000, the abortion rate dropped by 43%; during the same period, the proportion of teenage pregnancies ending in abortion fell from 46% to 33% -- a decline of more than one-quarter (27%).”

“White, black and Hispanic adolescents have experience declines in pregnancy rates, although to different extents. Among black women aged 15 – 19, the nationwide pregnancy rate fell by 32% between 1990 and 2000 (from 224 to 153 per 1,000); among white teenagers, it declined by 28% during that time (from 24 to 71 per 1,000). The pregnancy rate among Hispanic teenagers, who may be of any race, increased from 162 to

170 per 1,000 women aged 15 -1 9 between 1990 and 1992, but then fell to 138 per 1,000 by 2000 – 15% below the 1990 rate.”

(“U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics – Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity And State-by-State Information,” The Alan Guttmacher Institute, updated February 19, 2004, www.guttmacher.org)

“WITH ONE VOICE: AMERICA’S ADULTS AND TEENS SOUND OFF ABOUT TEEN PREGNANCY”

“An Annual National Survey”

“Parents: When it comes to teens’ decision about sex, parents are more influential that they think they are.”

“Teen attitudes and beliefs: Teens continue to express cautious attitudes towards sex. For example, most sexually experienced teens wish they had waited longer to have intercourse, and nearly seven in ten teens do not think it is okay for high school age teens to have sexual intercourse.”

“Moral Values and Religion: When it comes to delaying sex and preventing teen pregnancy, teens say their own morals and values are as influential as health information and service are.”

“Parents”

“Parents are more powerful than they think. Over two decades of good social science research--and the National Campaign’s own polling over the years--make clear that when it comes to teens’ decisions about sex, parents are more influential than they think. Our survey finding this year continue to underscore and important disconnect between parents (37%) influence their decisions about sex more than other likely suspects, including friends (33%), the media (5%), or siblings (6%). Parents, however, underestimate their own influence (only 28% said that parents most influence their teen’s decisions about sex) and overestimate the importance of such influences as peers (47%) and the media (12%).”

“The Sex Talk. Nearly all teens (87%) and adults (91%) agree that it would be easier for teens to delay sex and prevent teen pregnancy of teens were able to have more open, honest conversations about these topics with their parents. However, nearly four in ten teens (37%) report that they have not had such a conversation with their parents.”

“Parents need help. One explanation for why conversations between parents and teens are not taking place is that parents don’t know what to say. Nine in ten adults surveyed agree that parents should talk to their kids about sex but often don’t know what to say, how to say it, or when to start the conversation.”

“Sex can wait. Nearly seven in ten teens do not think it’s okay for high school teens to have sexual intercourse (this includes 59% of older teens aged 15-19).”

“Most sexually experienced teens wish they had waited longer. Two-thirds of all sexually experienced teens (63% of boys and 69% of girls) said they wish they had waited longer to have sex.”

“The Magic number is zero. When asked about an appropriate number of sexual partners for teens to have, the clear majority of adolescents surveyed (56%) said ‘none.’”

“Relationships and sex. Fully 85% of teens surveyed said that sex should only occur in a long-term, committed relationship. Support for this position was consistent across the board-boys (83%), girls (88%) teens aged 15-19 (83%, and teens aged 12-14 (89%) all agreed that sex should only happen within long-term relationships.”

“Abstinence And Contraception”

“Support for strong abstinence message is overwhelming. Nearly all teen (94%) and adults (91%) believe that teens should be given a strong message from society that they should not have sex until they are at least out of high school. Support for providing teens with a strong abstinence message has remained rock solid (90% or better) in every National Campaign survey conducted since 1997.”

“Moral Values and the Role of Religion. Our survey results suggest that while health information and services are an important influence on teen’s decisions about sex and preventing teen pregnancy, young people’s own morals and values are equally- if not more-influential. Six out of ten teens (64%) say morals and values are equally important as health information and services in influential.”

“Teens and adults want religious leaders and groups to do more. Strong majorities of teens (71%) and adults (65%) agreed that religious leaders and groups should be doing more to help prevent teen pregnancy. Support is strong among whites, African-Americans, and Hispanics, and in all regions of the country, for greater involvement of faith communities in preventing pregnancy.”

“Media”

“Media is influential—often in surprising ways. Recent research conducted by the RAND Corporation and published in the journal *pediatrics* (volume 114, number 3, September 2004, www.pediatrics.org) underscores what common sense suggest: What teens see, hear, and read in the media influences their sexual behavior. The RAND study concludes that adolescents who watch significant amounts of sexual content on television are twice as likely as those who watch a limited amount of sexual material to begin having sexual intercourse in the ensuing year. The report also notes, however, that television can play a positive role by showing the risk and consequences of sexual activity and by providing parents with an opportunity to express their own views about what the media portrays.”

- “Eight in ten adults (84%) and teens (82%) wish the media showed more/talked more about the consequences of sex.”
- “Half of adults (49%) and two-thirds of teens (68%) agree that teen pregnancy rates in the United States have declined due, in part, to increased media attention to the issue.”
- “Nearly equal percentages of parents of teens (72%) and teens (76%) agree that TV shows and other media are good way to start conversation between parents and their children about sex, love, and relationships. Yet only 22% of parents of teens said that something in the media in the past year sparked a conversation between them and their children about the consequences of sex.”

“Supervision”

“Where are the adults? About four in ten (41%) of those surveyed in grades 12-19 report that they have been at an evening or late night party in the past six months where there were not adults in the house. One reason that this finding is of some concern is because two-thirds of tens report that they first had sex in their own home or the home of a friend (see *Science Says: Where and When Teens First Have Sex* at www.teenpregnancy.org/works).”

“SEX EDUCATION”

“A passing grade. Parents of teens are much more critical of sex education than teens themselves. When asked to assign a letter grade to the school-based sex education or ‘family life’ classes their children receive, only one quarter of adults (26%) gave the class an A or a B while 16% rated the classes below average or failing. By contrast, 59% of teens gave their sex-ed classes an A or B had only 12% said the classes were below average of failing.”

“Marriage Matters. Most adults (83%) and teens (85%) believe that teen pregnancy prevention programs should teach young people to be married before they have a child.”

(Bill Albert, “With One Voice: America’s Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy,” The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, December 2004, www.teenpregnancy.com)

“TEENS SAY PARENTS MOST INFLUENCE THEIR DECISION ABOUT SEX”

“Teens say their parents (37 percent) influence their decisions about sex more than friends (33 percent), the media (5 percent), or siblings (six percent), according to a new nationally-representative survey released today by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Adults, however, mistakenly believe that friends (47 percent) are more influential than parents (28 percent). Other results from the annual survey include:”

“Parental Influence:”

“The overwhelming majority of adults (91 percent) and teens (87 percent) agree that it would be easier for teens to postpone sexual activity and avoid teen pregnancy if they were able to discuss these topics with their parents, yet 37 percent of teens say they have not had a single conversation about these issues with their parents.”

“Parents of teens (90 percent) believe they should talk to their kids about sex but often don't know what to say, how to say it, or when to start.”

“Gender Differences:”

“Most adults (79 percent) and teens (63 percent of boys and 67 percent of girls) agree that teen girls often receive the message that attracting boys and looking sexy is one of the most important things teenage girls can do.”

“Adults (64 percent) and teens (70 percent of girls and 53 percent of boys) believe that teen boys often receive the message that sex and pregnancy are not a ‘big deal.’”

“Teens (51 percent of girls and 57 percent of boys) agree that teen girls are equally as sexually aggressive as teen boys.”

“Cautious Attitudes:”

“Nearly seven in 10 teens (69 percent) do not think it's okay for high school teens to have sexual intercourse and 85 percent of teens surveyed said that sex should only occur in a long-term, committed relationship.”

“Two-thirds of all sexually experienced teens (63 percent of boys and 69 percent of girls) said they wish they had waited longer to have sex.”

“Abstinence and Contraception:”

“Most adults (91 percent) and teens (94 percent) say that it is important for teens to be given a strong message from society that they should not have sex until they are at least out of high school.”

“Most adults (75 percent) and teens (81 percent) wish that teens were getting more information about abstinence and contraception, rather than just one or the other. Few teens (two percent) or adults (one percent) believe that teens are getting enough information about abstinence and contraception.”

“Stressing abstinence to teens while also providing them with information does not encourage young people to have sex, according to 68 percent of teens surveyed. Still, a significant minority of parents of teens (44 percent) does believe that such a message encourages teens to have sex.”

“Morals, Values, and Religious Beliefs:”

“Strong majorities of teens (71 percent) and adults (65 percent) agree that religious leaders and groups should be doing more to help prevent teen pregnancy.”

“Six in 10 teens (64 percent) say moral and values are equally as important as health information and services in influencing teen sexual behavior and preventing teen pregnancy.”

“Media Influence:”

“Eight in 10 adults (84 percent) and teens (82 percent) wish the media showed/talked more about the consequences of sex.”

“For More information: To view the complete results of this survey-With One Voice 2004: Americas Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy -- including the exact wording of the questions posed to respondents, please visit the National Campaign's website, <http://www.teenpregnancy.org>”

“About the Survey: The survey canvassed 1,000 young people age 12 to 19 and 1,014 adults 20 years and older and provides nationally representative estimates of each age group. The telephone surveys took place in September 2004 and were conducted by International Communications Research, an independent research company -- <http://www.icrsurvey.com>”

(“Survey: Teen Say Parents Most Influence Their Decisions About Sex,” US Newswire, December 16, 2004, <http://releases.usnewswire.com/printing.asp?id=40841>

“TEENS: PREGNANCY, STDS PROBLEMS AMONG PEERS”

“It appears that some teens are heeding the messages about the risks of unsafe sex and unwanted pregnancy. A 2002 Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report indicates that the number of teenage pregnancies has declined 30% in the last decade. And although still extremely high (a recent study published in *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health* estimates that 15- to 24-year-olds account for 48% of sexually transmitted diseases), cases of STDs have declined as well. But how do teens view the seriousness of sexually related problems among their peers?”

“A new Gallup Youth Survey asked teens (aged 13 to 17) how serious they feel the problems of pregnancy and STDs are among their teenaged friends. Overall, about two-thirds of teens surveyed feels that teenage pregnancy and STDs are either “somewhat serious” or “very serious” problems among their friends (69% feel this way about pregnancy; 66% about STDs).”

(Shannon Marullo, “Teens: Pregnancy, STDs Problems Among Peers,” The Gallup Organization, April 27, 2004; www.gallup.com/content/print.aspx?ci=11494)

“U.S. WOMEN WAITING LONGER TO HAVE FIRST CHILD”

“The average age at which American women are having their first child has climbed to an all-time high of 25.1, the government said Wednesday.”

“The age of first-time American moms has risen steadily during the past three decades, from an average of 21.4 in 1970.”

(Associated Press, “U.S. Women Waiting Longer to Have First Child,” FOX News, December 17, 2003; www.foxnews.com/printer_friendly_story/0,3566,106018,00.html)

“CDC: TEEN BIRTHS DECLINE”

"In separate reports, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the rate of U.S. teenagers having babies dropped for the 10th year in a row to a new low last year, while the number of abortions among women of all ages fell 2 percent in 1998, the latest year studied."

"The teen birth rate dropped 5.4 percent last year, from 48.5 births per 1,000 females aged 15-19 in 2000 to 45.9 in 2001. Since 1991, the teen birth rate has fallen 26 percent, the CDC said."

"Still, nearly a half million teens gave birth last year, showing that ‘much work remains,’ said Dr. David Fleming, acting director of the CDC."

(CNN.com/Health, Reuters

<http://www.cnn.com/2002/HEALTH/parenting/06/07/teen.births.reut/index.html>)

“FACTS AND STATS”

“National Campaign Key Statistics”

- “How widespread is teen pregnancy? More than 4 out of 10 young women become pregnant at least once before they reach the age of 20—nearly one million a year.”
- “Don’t a lot of teens want to get pregnant? Eighty-five percent of teenage pregnancies are unintended.”
- “What’s the future for my child as a teen mother or father? Teen mothers are less likely to complete high school, (only 1/3 receive a high school diploma) and more likely to end up on welfare (nearly 80 percent of unmarried teen mothers end up on welfare.) The children of teenage mothers have lower birth weights, are more likely to perform poorly in school, and are at greater risk of abused and neglect. The sons of teen mothers are 13 percent more likely to end up in prison while teen daughters are 22 percent more likely to become teen mothers themselves.”

- “When should I talk to my child about sex? Before they become a parent. One of every 3 girls has had sex by age 16, 1 out of 2 by age 18. Three of 4 boys have had sex by age 18.”
- “Surprise: your teen wants to hear from you. One in two teens say they ‘trust’ their parents most for reliable and complete information about birth control; only 12 percent say a friend. Seven of ten teens interviewed said that they were ready to listen to things parents thought they were not ready to hear.”
- “Do parents really make a difference? Teenagers who have strong emotional attachments to their parents are much less likely to become sexually active at an early age. When asked about the reasons why teenage girls have babies, 78 percent of white and 70 percent of African-American teenagers reported that lack of communication between a girl and her parents is often a reason teenage girls have babies.”
- “How much teenage sex is unwanted or non-voluntary? The younger a sexually experienced teenaged girl is, the more likely she is to have had unwanted or non-voluntary sex. Close to four in ten girls who had first intercourse at 13 or 14 report it was either non-voluntary or unwanted.”
- “Do teens wish they had waited to have sex? Yes. A majority of both girls and boys who are sexually active wish they had waited. Eight in ten girls and six in ten boys say they wish they had waited until they were older to have sex.”
- “Who initiates sex among teens? Three of four girls and over half of boys report that girls have sex because their boyfriends want them to.”

(“Facts and Stats” National Campaign Key Statistics
www.teenpregnancy.org/factstats.htm)

“I contend that unless teenage pregnancy prevention programs reinforce moral values, they will continue to fail in their efforts to effect a significant reduction in teenage pregnancy.”

(Dr. Edgar J. Woody, MD., p25)

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“WITH ONE VOICE 2002: AMERICA’S ADULTS AND TEENS SOUND OFF ABOUT TEEN PREGNANCY”

- **“Sexually experienced teens wish they had waited.** Most teens who have had sex (63%) wish they had waited longer. Fully 70% of sexually experienced teen girls and 55% of sexually experienced teen guys report they wish they had waited longer to have sex.”
- **“Teens in general express cautious attitudes toward early and casual sex.** Most teens (82%) believe that sex should only occur in a long-term committed relationship. This is true for boys (81%) as well as girls (84%). Only 19% of teens think it’s all right to have sex if two people have known each other for a short time. And 33% of adults and 28% of teens also say they have become more opposed to teens having sex over the past several years.”

- **“Parents continue to underestimate their influence.** There continues to be a ‘parent-gap’ when it comes to teens’ decisions about sex. When asked who influences teens’ decisions about sex the most, more adults cited teenagers’ friends (30%) than any other source. Only 8% of teens, however, say friends are most influential. Younger teens (ages 12-14), in particular, cite parents as the most influential by a wide margin (31% cite parents as most influential, while only 8% say friends are most influential.”
- **“Parents matter.** Nearly seven out of ten teens (69%) also agree that it would be much easier for them to postpone sexual activity and avoid teen pregnancy if they were able to have more open, honest conversations about these topics with their parents. And one out of four teen girls say their parents have discussed sex, love, and relationships with them ‘not nearly enough.’”
- **“Morals, values, and religious beliefs are also influential.** Teens say morals, values, and/or religious beliefs influence their decisions about sex more than any of the other options offered by the question (parents, friends, the media, teachers and sex educators, and worries about pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases).”
- **“Americans to the media: Show consequences.** While most adults (57%) and teens (72%) believe that there has been more attention to teen pregnancy prevention in the news and media in the

	2002	2001
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 entertainment media in the past few years, the overwhelming majority of adults (88%) and teens (83%) wish the entertainment media more often presented the *consequences* of sex, including teen pregnancy.”
- **“Marriage should be discussed.** Significant majorities of adults (86%) and teens (84%) believe that teen pregnancy prevention programs should teach young people to be married before having children.”
- **“Positive peer influence.** Nine out of ten teens (91%) say it would be a lot easier for teens to delay sex if other teens spoke positively about not having sex.”
- “Teen boys are also more likely than teen girls to say that it is embarrassing for teens to admit they are virgins.”

“MESSAGES: CHART ONE”

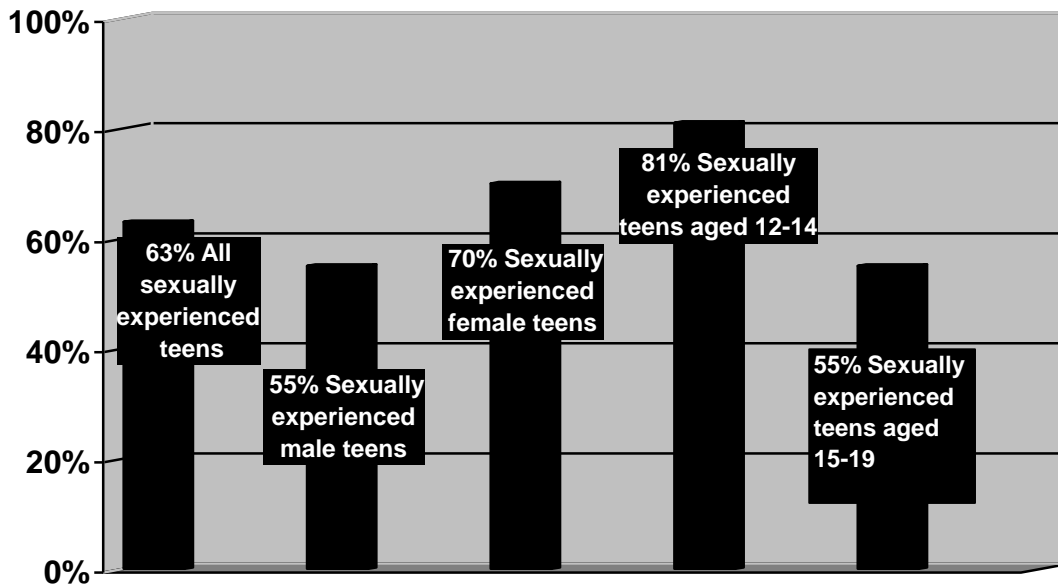
“How important do you think it is for teens to be given a strong message from society that they should not have sex until they are at least out of high school?”

Very important (adults)	81%	78%
Somewhat important (adults)	12%	17%
Very important (teens)	72%	66%
Somewhat important (teens)	21%	27%

“BELIEFS: CHART SIX”

“If you have had sexual intercourse, do you wish you had waited longer?”

Answer: YES



“INFLUENCES: CHART TWELVE”

“Among the following options, what do you think would best help you avoid (becoming pregnant/causing a pregnancy) as a teen?”

- “More classes about preventing teen pregnancy” 21%
- “More attention and supervision from my parents” 14%
- “More media messages about preventing teen pregnancy” 20%
- “Less pressure from my partner” 17%
- “Something else” 25%

“INFLUENCES: CHART THIRTEEN”

“When it comes to (teens’/your) decisions about sex, which of the following influences (them/you) the most?”

	ADULTS	TEENS
Parents	19%	19%
Morals, values, and/or religious beliefs	18%	34%
Friends	30%	8%
The media	13%	2%
Teachers and sex educators	3%	3%
Worries about pregnancy	5%	15%
Worries about STDs	3%	15%

	TEENS AGED 12-14	TEENS AGED 15-19
Parents	31%	12%
Morals, values, and/or religious beliefs	19%	44%
Friends	8%	7%
The media	2%	1%
Teachers and sex educators	4%	2%
Worries about pregnancy	13%	15%
Worries about STDs	13%	17%

“FRIENDS: CHART NINETEEN”

“It would be a lot easier for teens to delay sex if other teens spoke positively about not having sex.”

	ADULTS	TEENS
AGREE STRONGLY	77%	65%
AGREE SOMEWHAT	16%	26%
DISAGREE SOMEWHAT	3%	6%
DISAGREE STRONGLY	2%	3%

Adults 93% Agree net 91% Teens
5% Disagree net 9%

“PROGRAMS: CHART TWENTY ONE”

“Teen pregnancy prevention programs should teach young people to be married before they have a child.”

	ADULTS	TEENS
AGREE STRONGLY	73%	63%
AGREE SOMEWHAT	13%	21%
DISAGREE SOMEWHAT	7%	10%
DISAGREE STRONGLY	6%	6%

ADULTS 86% AGREE NET 84% TEENS
13% DISAGREE NET 16%

(“With One Voice 2002: America’s Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy,” An Annual National Survey, December 2002, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy)

“PROGRESS PENDING: HOW TO SUSTAIN AND EXTEND RECENT REDUCTIONS IN TEEN PREGNANCY RATES”

“Chapter 1. Progress Pending”

“Overall, four out of ten girls become pregnant at least once before age 20.”

- “Significant state disparities exist for teen birth rates. Thirteen states, all clustered in the South— almost one-quarter of the nation — have extremely high teen birth rates that rival the rates of nations such as Azerbaijan, Egypt, and Mexico. (vii)”
- “While the pregnancy and birth rates for African American and Hispanic teens aged 15 to 19 have declined substantially in recent years, they remain higher than for other groups. African American teens have the highest teen pregnancy rates and Hispanic teens have the highest teen birth rates in the United States.”

“I. When it comes to declines in teen pregnancy rates, for many, the ‘glass is half empty.’”

“Overall the news *is* very good: the teen birth rate in 2001 reached its lowest level in 60 years. (viii) Some states—such as California, which saw its teen birth rate to its lowest level in decades between 1999 and 2000—are reporting wonderful progress in reducing teen pregnancy rates. And a recent report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation lists 43 of

the largest 55 U.S. cities as experiencing decreases between 1990-2000 in the percent of all births that were teens. (ix).”

“III. Consider the context in which youth are making decisions about sex and relationships”

- “Nearly seven out of ten teens (69%) agree it would be easier for them to postpone sexual activity and avoid teen pregnancy if they were able to have more open, honest conversations about these topics with their parents. One of four teenage girls say their parents have discussed sex, love, and relationships with them “not nearly enough.”
- “Teens say morals, values and/or religious beliefs influence their decisions about sex more than parents, concerns about pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, friends, teacher and sex educators, or the media.”
- “The overwhelming majority of adults (88%) and teens (83%) wish the entertainment media more often presented the consequences of sex, including teen pregnancy.”

“Documentation:”

“vii – Child Trends. (2002) *Ten reasons to keep the focus on teen childbearing*. Washington, DC.

viii – Papillo, A. R., Franzetta, K., Manlove, J., Moore, K.A., Terry-Humen, E. & Ryan, S. (2002). *Facts at a glance*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.

ix – The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2003). *The Right Start Online 2003*. Retrieved on January 29, 2003, from <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/rightstart2003>”

(2003 National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy: “Progress Pending – How to Sustain and Extend Recent Reductions in Teen Pregnancy Rates”, pages 3-7. Kirby, Douglas, Ph.D., Troccoli,, Karen MPH)

“TEEN BIRTHS AT ALL-TIME LOW”

“The Department of National Vital Statistics reports that in the year 2000, the teen birth rate for 15-19 years olds dropped to a record low of 48.5 per 1,000. This represents a 2% drop from the 49.6 figure in 2000, and a 22% drop since 1991. New Hampshire had the lowest rate of 23.4, while Mississippi had the highest at 72.0, excluding Washinton, D.C.’s 80.7. The number of births to 10-14 year-olds dropped 6% to 8,519.”

(CDC press release, February 12, Youthworker, May/June 2002, p12-13)

“PREVENTING TEENAGE PREGNANCY, CHILDBEARING, AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES: WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS”

“The quality of adolescents’ relationships with their parents is also a factor in sexual decision-making. Teenagers who feel that they have a high-quality relationship with their parents and who communicate regularly with them are likely to initiate sex at a later age and behave in less risky ways than their peers. (54) Moreover, teens whose parents talk about sex and birth control with their children, and communicate strong disapproval of sexual activity, are more likely to have positive reproductive health outcomes. (58) Adolescents whose parents are involved with their schooling also exhibit fewer risk-taking behaviors, (47) and those whose parents closely monitor their activities tend to be less sexually active.”(54)

“The Role of Peers”

“Research supports the widespread belief that peers play an important role in adolescents’ lives. Teenagers with sexually active friends are more likely to have sex themselves. (55) But it is not just peers’ behaviors that matter; it is also teens’ perceptions of their behavior. Adolescents who believe their friends are having sex are more likely to have sex at an early age. (35) Peer attitudes toward contraception are also important. Adolescents who believe that their peers do not use condoms or that their peers do not like using condoms are less likely to use them.” (84)

35—Kinsman, S.B., Romer, D., Furstenberg, F.F., & Schwartz, D. (1998). “Early Sexual Initiation: The Role of Peer Norms.” *Pediatrics*, 102(5), 1185-1192.

47—Manlove, J. (1998). “The Influence of High School Dropout and School Disengagement on the Risk of School-age Pregnancy.” *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 8(2), 187-220.

54—Miller, B.C. (1998). “Families Matter, A research Synthesis of Family Influences on Adolescent Pregnancy.” Washington, D.C: The National Campaign to Prevent Teenage Pregnancy.

55—Miller, B.C., Norton, M.C., Curtis, T., Hill, E.J., Schvaneveldt, P., & Young, M.H. (1997). “The Timing of Sexual Intercourse Among Adolescents: Family, Peer and Other Antecedents.” *Youth and Society*, 29(1), 54-83.

58—Miller, K.S., Levin, M.L., Whitaker, D.J., & Xu, X. (1998). “Patterns of Condom Use Among Adolescents: The Impact of Mother-adolescent Communications.” *American Journal of Public Health*, 88, 1542-1544.

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(www.childtrends.org)

"U.S. TEEN PREGNANCY RATES PLUMMET TO RECORD LOW LEVELS"

"In 1997, about 9.4% of all girls ages 15 to 19 became pregnant—a total of 872,000 pregnancies, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Tuesday. Fifty-five percent gave birth, 29% had abortions and the rest miscarried."

"The teen pregnancy rate fell by 4.4% between 1996 and 1997, the most recent year for which data are available, continuing a trend that has marched through the 1990's."

"Most of the teen pregnancies are among 18 and 19-year olds, though some 6.4% of girls ages 15 to 17 were pregnant in 1997. That's down 21% since the peak in 1990."

"Overall, the teen pregnancy rate fell 19% in 1997 from its peak in 1991, and was the lowest since 1976, when the government began keeping records."

"The abortion rate fell by nearly a third since 1990, also reaching a record low."

"In 1995, 51% of teen girls said they'd had sex, down from 55% in 1990; among boys, it dropped from 60% to 55% between 1988 and 1995."

("U.S. Teen Pregnancy rates plummet to record low levels", USA TODAY, Wednesday, June 13, 2001 page 8D)

"TEENS AND NONMARITAL PREGNANCY"

- "72% of teen births are out-of-wedlock."

"The report, 'Kids Having Kids,' (1) said:"

- "Each year nearly one million teenagers in the US—approximately 10 percent of all 15 to 19-year-old females—become pregnant."

- “About 33 percent of these teenagers abort their pregnancies.”
- “14 percent miscarry.”
- “52 percent (more than 1/2 million teens) bear children—almost 72 percent of them out-of-wedlock.”
- “More than 175,000 of these new mothers are 17 years old or younger.”

"The Alan Guttmacher Institute reported:" (2)

- “20 percent of teens 15 to 19-years-old who have intercourse become pregnant each year...”
- “76 percent of births to teens occur outside of marriage. One-fourth of teenage mothers have a second child within two years of their first delivery.”
- “About 33 percent of teen pregnancies (excluding miscarriage) end in abortion. In 1992, there were about 350,000 abortions among teens.”

(1) Robin Hood Foundation Special Report, Rebecca A. Maynard, Editor, Kids Having Kids, 1996 (2) The Alan Guttmacher Institute, "Teen Sex and Pregnancy," Facts in Brief, July 1996.)

“TEEN PREGNANCIES RAISING CRIME COSTS”

"That American society pays a heavy price for children having children is hardly surprising. But when you assign a \$7 billion price tag to it, as UCSB economist Jeff Grogger and 14 other researchers have done, heads turn."

"Grogger wrote one chapter of 'Kids having Kids,' a national report that is being hailed as the most ambitious study undertaken to quantify the problem. His focus was how much is spent in the United States to jail the sons of teen-age mothers—\$1 billion a year, he figures—and whether lowering the rate of teen pregnancies would help reduce crime."

"He found males born to teen mothers (defined as 17 and younger) grow up to be 2.7 times more likely to commit crimes than the sons of women who wait until age 20 to have their first child."

"Grogger focused only on boys because, he said, men commit 90 percent of the crime in this country."

“‘Teen-age mothers are more likely to be single, dysfunctional and addicted,’ Dye said. ‘They don't have the ability to give and receive love. We learn nurturing from our mothers, but teen-age mothers haven't learned to love themselves.’”

"Nationwide, nearly 20 percent of all teen-agers become pregnant."

(Melissa Grace, "Teen Pregnancies Raising Crime Costs," Santa Barbara News-Press, June 22, 1996)

“KIDS HAVING KIDS”

“Approximately 10 percent of all 15- 19 year-old females-become pregnant. About one third of these teens abort their pregnancies, 14 percent miscarry, and 52 percent (or more than half a million teens) bear children, 72 percent of them out of wedlock. Of the half a million teens who give birth each year, roughly three-fourths are giving birth for the first time. Even more striking, more than 175,000 of these new mothers are 17 years old or younger. These young mothers and their offspring are especially vulnerable to severe adverse social and economic consequences. More than 80 percent of these young mothers end up in poverty and reliant on welfare.” (p1)

“More than 80 percent of those who are 17 or younger when they have their first child are unmarried. Fewer than half of them will get married within 10 years.” (p2)

“Much of all this seems to be a uniquely American phenomenon. The teen birthrate in the United States is the highest of any industrialized nation, nearly twice as great as that of the United Kingdom and 15 times that of Japan. A teenager in the United States is twice as likely to have an abortion as a teenager in the United Kingdom, the industrialized country with the next highest abortion rate. American teens were more than 13 times as likely to have an abortion as Japanese teens.” (pp2,3)

“Runaway Children”

“Children of adolescent moms are two or three times more likely than the children of their older childbearing counterparts to report having run away from home during those years.” (pp7,8)

“In a study of Illinois Child Protective Service statistics, which are among the best and most comprehensive in the nation, the scholars found that children of adolescent mothers are more than twice as likely to be the victims of a abuse and neglect than are the offspring of 20-to-21-year-old moms.” (p8)

“The effect of adolescent childbearing on foster-care placement results in a taxpayer burden as high as \$900 million a year.” (p8)

“They are two to three times less likely to be rated ‘excellent’ by their teachers and 50 percent more likely to repeat a grade.” (p9)

“Only 77 percent of the children of adolescent moms earn their high school diplomas by early adulthood, compared with 89 percent of the comparison group.” (p9)

“The daughters of adolescent moms are 83 percent more likely themselves to become mothers before age 18” (p9)

“Teen mothers beget teen mothers at a far greater rate than older mothers do, and they are far more likely to pass on their poor life prospects as a birthright. Furthermore, the daughters of teen moms, whether or not they become teen moms themselves, are 50 percent more likely to bear children out of wedlock.” (p10)

“The teen sons of adolescent mothers are 2.7 times more likely to land in prison than the sons of mothers who delayed childbearing until their early twenties.” (p10)

“Adolescent childbearing in and of itself costs U.S. taxpayers roughly \$1 billion each year to build/and maintain prisons for the sons of adolescent mothers.” (pp10,11)

“The daughters of adolescent mothers are 83 percent more likely to become mothers before age 18. Adolescent childbearing and closely linked factors account for about 40 percent of this difference. Adolescent childbearing itself costs U.S. taxpayers at least \$920 million a year.” (pp10,11)

“Adolescent mothers face poor life prospects. Seven of 10 will drop out of high school. During their first 13 years of parenthood, adolescent moms earn an average of about \$5,600 annually, less than half the poverty level. And adolescent mothers spend much of their young adult years (ages 19 to 30) as single parents.” (p11)

“Only about three of 10 adolescent mothers earn a high school diploma by age 30, compared with nearly 76 percent in the comparison group. Adolescent childbearing alone accounts for more than 40 percent of this difference. Adolescent childbearing is responsible for over 30,000 adolescent girls annually not completing high school.

Adolescent moms spend nearly five times more of their young adult years as single parents that do women who have their first child at age 20 or 21.” (pp12,13)

“Children who grow up in the homes of single moms are one and a half to two times more likely to become teen parents themselves than are children who live in two-parent families.” (p14)

“The fathers of children born to adolescent mothers are, on average, two and a half years older than the mom; in one fifth of the cases, they are at least six years older (Alan Guttmacher Institute 1994). Recent research also suggests that the incidence of pregnancy among adolescent girls often is the result of sexually predatory behavior of older men.” (p16)

“**Adolescent Dads:** Adolescent dads will finish an average of only 11.3 years of school by the age of 27, compared with nearly 13 years by their counterparts who delay fathering until age 21.” (p17)

“Adolescent childbearing itself costs the taxpayers \$6.9 billion each year. The higher public assistance benefits—welfare and food stamps combined—caused by adolescent childbearing cost the taxpayers \$2.2 billion. The increased medical care expenses cost \$1.5 billion.”

“Constructing and maintaining prisons to house the increased number of criminals caused by adolescent childbearing cost about \$1 billion each year, and the increased costs of foster care are only slightly less at \$.9 billion. Due to the sizable effects of adolescent childbearing on the work patterns of fathers, the United States incurs a nontrivial loss of tax revenue-\$1.3 billion annually.” (p19)

“The cost to taxpayers of adolescent childbearing together with the other disadvantage faced by adolescent mothers is between \$13 billion and nearly \$19 billion per year—this is the amount the taxpayers would save if a policy successfully delayed adolescent childbearing and successfully addressed these other disadvantages.” (p19)

“They calculate the social cost of adolescent childbearing at \$21 billion per year.” (p20)

“Cost of adolescent childbearing to society:”

- “**\$6.9 billion**-cost of adolescent childbearing.”
- “**\$29 billion**-cost of adolescent childbearing and all related factors” (p20)

“The gross annual cost to society of adolescent childbearing and the entire web of social problems that confront adolescent moms and ultimately lead to the poorer and sometimes devastating outcomes for their kids is calculated to be \$29 billion.” (p20)

(Rebecca A. Maynard, “Kids Having Kids” The Robin Hood Foundation, 111 Broadway, 19th Floor, New York, New York 10006. Telephone: 212-227-6601, Fax: 212-227-6698)

“PREGNANCY AND CHILDBEARING AMONG U.S. TEENS”

“Teen Pregnancy:”

- “Each year more than one million U.S. teenagers become pregnant—one in nine women aged 15-19 and one in five who are sexually active. In 1988, the teenage pregnancy rate was 113 per 1,000 women aged 15-19. The rate was 74 per 1,000 among those aged 15-17.”
- “Nonwhite teenagers have twice the pregnancy rate of white teenagers—in 1988, the rates were 197 and 93, respectively.”
- “50 percent of teenage pregnancies conceived in 1987 resulted in a birth, 36 percent in an abortion, and an estimated 14 percent in miscarriage.”
- “By age 18, one in four young women (24 percent) will have a pregnancy (21 percent of white teens and 40 percent of nonwhites). By age 20 more than four in 10 (44 percent) will have a pregnancy (41 percent of whites and 63 percent of nonwhites).”
- “Nearly one in five teenagers who experience a premarital pregnancy will get pregnant again within a year. Within two years, more than 31 percent will have a repeat pregnancy.”
- “Eight in 10 teenage pregnancies are unintended—nine in 10 pregnancies among unmarried teenagers and about half of those among married young women.”
- “U.S. teenagers have one of the highest pregnancy rates in the western world—twice as high as rates found in England, France, and Canada; three times as high as that in Sweden; and seven times as high as the Dutch rate.”
- “A 1985 international teenage pregnancy study concluded that teen pregnancy rates are lower in countries where there is greater availability of contraceptive services and sexuality education.”

“Teenage Childbearing:”

- “About half of all teenage pregnancies end in births. In 1989, teenage births totaled 517,989.”
- “In 1988, two-thirds of births to women under age 20 were to unmarried women—54 percent of the births to whites and 91 percent of the births to blacks were non-marital.”
- “In 1988, there were 10,588 babies born to teenagers aged 14 and younger—94 percent of these births were non-marital.”
- “73 percent of births to teenagers result from pregnancies that are unintended.”
- “The teen birth rate in 1988 was 53.6 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19; the rate among those aged 10-14 was 1.4.”
- “The birth rate for teens aged 15-17 increased 10 percent between 1986 and 1988; the 1988 rate was higher than in any year since 1977. The increase occurred entirely among nonwhites and Hispanics. The birthrate in 1988 among white teenagers aged 15-19 was 43.7 and 95.3 among non-white teenagers.”
- “Of women having their first birth in 1988, 23 percent were teenagers—among whites, two in 10 first births were to teenagers; among blacks, four in 10 were to teenagers.”
- “23 percent of all babies born to teenagers in 1988 were not first births.”
- “More than nine in 10 teenagers who give birth keep their babies; few place their babies for adoption.”
- “On average, 33 percent of women under age 20 who give birth receive inadequate prenatal care, either because they start care late in their pregnancy or they have too few medical visits.”

“Consequences of Early Childbearing:”

- “Teenage mothers are at greater risk of socioeconomic disadvantage throughout their lives than those who delay childbearing until their twenties. They are generally less educated, have larger families, and have higher levels of non-marital, unintended births.”

- “The younger the mother, the greater the likelihood that she and her baby will experience health complications, primarily due to later prenatal care, poor nutrition, and other lifestyle factors.”
- “More teenage mothers are now graduating from high school than ever before, yet only half of the women who have their first child at age 17 or younger will have graduated from high school by age 30.”
- “Teens who become mothers are disproportionately poor and dependent on public assistance for their economic support.”
- “Public funds pay for the delivery costs of at least half of the births to teenagers.”
- “Each year, the U.S. government spends an estimated \$25 billion on behalf of families in which the first birth occurred when the mother was a teenager. That estimate for 1990, which includes direct payments from Aid to Families and Dependent Children, Medicaid, and Food Stamps, does not include other public costs such as job training; housing subsidies, the Women, Infants, and Children supplemental food program; subsidized school meals; special education; foster care; or day care.”
- “If every birth to a teen mother in 1990 had been delayed until the woman were in her 20s, the federal government would have saved 40 percent of the calculated expenditures, or \$10 billion.”
- “A family begun by a first birth to a teen mother in 1990 will cost the taxpayer an average of approximately \$18,133 by the time the child reaches age 20.”
- “The children of teenage mothers are at greater risk of lower intellectual and academic achievement, social behavior problems, and problems of self-control than are children of older mothers, primarily due to the effects of single parenthood, lower maternal education, and larger family size.”
- “Although it is not inevitable, the daughters of teenage mother are more likely to become teenage parents themselves.”

“Adoption:”

- “In 46 states and the District of Columbia, mothers who are minors may legally place their child for adoption without parental involvement.”
- “From 2 to 3 percent of teen pregnancies become live births for which the mother makes an adoption plan.”

- “Less than 10 percent of the babies born to unmarried teens are placed in adoptive homes.”
- “Unmarried adolescent mothers who place their children for adoption are more likely to be white, have higher socioeconomic status and educational aspirations, and be from suburban residences.”

“Teenage Abortion”

- “Four in 10 teenage pregnancies (excluding miscarriages) end in abortion.”
- “While the rate of abortion (number of abortions per 1,000 women) among nonwhite teenagers is considerably higher than the rate among white teenagers, the likelihood that nonwhite teenagers will end a pregnancy in abortion (abortion ratio) is about the same as for whites.”
- “26 percent of all abortions in the U.S. each year are to women under age 20—in 1988 the total number of abortions in this age group was 406,370.”
- “Every year, about 4 percent of women aged 15-19 have an abortion.”
- “The top three reasons cited by pregnant teenager for choosing to have an abortion were concern about how having a baby would change their lives, their feeling that they are not mature enough to have a child, and financial problems.”
- “Access to confidential abortion services is essential to teenager’ health. Most teens who become pregnant already involve a parent in their decision; and laws that mandate parental involvement only victimize teens in unstable or abusive family situations—a disproportionate number of whom are poor or minority. Moreover, such laws, which are required to include judicial bypass provisions, have been shown to have no effect on the percentage of teens who involve their parents.”
- “Laws that mandate the involvement of both parents place a special burden on African-American teens—only 39 percent of whom live with both parents, versus 79 percent of white minors.”
- “23 states currently have mandatory parental consent or notice, or professional counseling laws in effect for a minor to obtain an abortion: AL, AR, GA, ID, IN, KS, LA, MA ,MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, NB, ND, OH, RI, SC, TN, UT, WV, WI, WT.”

"FACTS AND STATS"

"National Campaign Key Statistics"

"How widespread is teen pregnancy? More than 4 out of 10 young women become pregnant at least once before they reach the age of 20-nearly one million a year."

"Don't a lot of teens want to get pregnant? Eighty-five percent of teenage pregnancies are unintended."

"What's the future for my child as a teen mother or father? Teen mothers are less likely to complete high school, (only 1/3 receive a high school diploma) and more likely to end up on welfare (nearly 80 percent of unmarried teen mothers end up on welfare.) The children of teenage mothers have lower birth weights, are more likely to perform poorly in school, and are at greater risk of abuse and neglect. The sons of teen mothers are 13 percent more likely to end up in prison while teen daughters are 22 percent more likely to become teen mothers themselves."

"When should I talk to my child about sex? Before they become a parent. One of every 3 girls has had sex by age 16, 1 out of 2 by age 18. Three of 4 boys have had sex by age 18."

"Surprise: your teen wants to hear from you. One in two teens say they 'trust' their parents most for reliable and complete information about birth control; only 12 percent say a friend. Seven of ten teens interviewed said that they were ready to listen to things parents thought they were not ready to hear."

"Do parents really make a difference? Teenagers who have strong emotional attachments to their parents are much less likely to become sexually active at an early age. When asked about the reasons why teenage girls have babies, 78 percent of white and 70 percent of African-American teenagers reported that lack of communication between a girl and her parents is often a reason teenage girls have babies."

"How much teenage sex is unwanted or non-voluntary? The younger a sexually experienced teenaged girl is, the more likely she is to have had unwanted or non-voluntary sex. Close to four in ten girls who had first intercourse at 13 or 14 report it was either non-voluntary or unwanted."

“Do teens wish they had waited to have sex? Yes. A majority of both girls and boys who are sexually active wish they had waited. Eight in ten girls and six in ten boys say they wish they had waited until they were older to have sex.”

“Who initiates sex among teens? Three of four girls and over half of boys report that girls have sex because their boyfriends want them to.”

(“Facts and Stats” National Campaign Key Statistics
www.teenpregnancy.org/factstats.htm)

“PREGNANCY”

"Nationwide, 35.1% of college students reported that they had been pregnant, or gotten someone pregnant."(pg. 19)

(US Dept. of Health and Human Services, MMWR Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, National College Health Risk Behavior Survey United States, 1995)

**“IMPACT OF
NONMARITAL PREGNANCY”**

- “The teenage daughters of adolescent mothers are 50% more likely to bear children out of wedlock.”*
- * Robin Hood Foundation, 1996

Slide 65

“Impact of Nonmarital Pregnancy”

“THE REPORT ‘KIDS HAVING KIDS,’ STATES:” (1)

- “Of the half million teens who give birth each year, roughly 75 percent are giving birth for the first time.”
- “More than 175,000 of these new mothers are 17 years old or younger.”

- “These mothers and their offspring are especially vulnerable to severe adverse social and economic consequences.”
- “More than 80 percent of these young mothers end up in poverty and relying on welfare, many for the majority of their children's critically important developmental years.”
- “Only 3 of 10 girls who become pregnant at the age of 17 or younger will earn a high school diploma by age 30. (76 percent of women who delay childbearing until the age of 20 or older earn a high school diploma)”
- "28 percent of women who become mothers as teenagers are poor in their 20s and early 30s. (Only 7 percent of women who first give birth after adolescence are poor at those ages.)" (2)

"Due to their weak educational and skill levels, low rates of marriage, and inadequate support from non-resident fathers of their children, young mothers face significant challenges in trying to provide for their children. Partly because of their young age, very few of these mothers complete high school before their first child is born. More than 80 percent of those who are 17 or younger when they have their first child are unmarried. Fewer than half of them will get married within ten years. Only a small minority of the unwed fathers of the children born to adolescent mothers provide any ongoing support for their children."

“Footnotes:”

“(1) Slide: Robin Hood Foundation Special Report, Rebecca A. Maynard, Editor, “Kids Having Kids,” 1996.

Text: Robin Hood Foundation Special Report, Rebecca A. Maynard, Editor, Kids Having Kids, 1996.

(2) Hoffman, S.D., Foster, E.M., Furstenberg, F.F., "Reevaluating the Costs of Teenager Childbearing", Demography, 1993; 30:1-13.”

(“The Report ‘Kids Having Kids’ Says,” The Medical Institute for Sexual Health”)

“TEEN PREGNANCY & OLDER FATHERS”

- “About 71% of all births among teenage girls are fathered by men older than 20.”**

** National Center for Health Statistics, 1988

Slide 66

“Teen Pregnancy and Older Fathers”

“According to a 1992 report published by the California Dept. of Health Services (1):”

- “Men 20 and older father five times more births among junior high school aged girls than do junior high school aged boys.”
- “The large majority of all teenage pregnancies are caused by men older than 20 years of age.”
- “The study showed that the age gap between male and female partners is much greater than is generally assumed—For example, they showed that when the mother is 12 years of age or younger, the father averages 22 years of age. For mother of junior high school age, fathers averaged nearly 5 years older, and for mothers of high school age, fathers averaged nearly 4 years older.”

(The Medical Institute for Sexual Health, Slide 66, pg.103)

- “Another report said this about the epidemic of older fathers (2): ‘These adult/youth sex patterns have profound implications for the spread of sexually transmitted disease (STD) and AIDS as well. STDs and AIDS rates are 2.5 times higher among females under age 20 than can be predicted from rates among males under age 20...’ This points strongly to STD transmission from older men.”

(The Medical Institute for Sexual Health, Slide 66, pg.103)

“Footnotes:”

“Slide: (2) National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics of the United States, Vol. 1 Natality, 1988; Public Health Services.”

“Text: (1) California Vital Statistics Section, "California Residents' Live Births, 1990, By Age of Mother, Age of Father, Race, Marital Status," California Department of Health Services, Sacramento, 1992. Junior high school aged boys account for just 7 percent of the births among junior high school aged girls. (2)Centers for Disease Control STD statistics, Surveillance Report, May 1993.”

(NO. DOC)

“PREGNANCY”

- *“Each year, more than one million teens become pregnant.”*
- *“More than 360,000 unmarried teens deliver babies each year in the U.S.”*
- *“77% of unwed teen mothers in the U.S. go on welfare within five years of delivery.”*

(“Teens and Sex,” statistics provided by the Medical Institute for Sexual Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

“CLOSENESS TO MOM AND DELAY FIRST SEX AMONG YOUNGER TEENS, ACCORDING TO LARGEST-EVER SURVEY OF U.S. ADOLESCENTS”

“Mothers’ Disapproval of Sex Carries Weight With Teens, But Talk Alone Doesn’t Get the Message Across”

“When teens perceive that their mothers oppose their having sex, they are less likely to do so, according to the Add Health results. But kids don’t always get the message. Even when mothers strongly disapprove of their kids having sex, 30 percent of girls and nearly 45 percent of boys do not believe they do. At the same time, when teens report that they are having sex, only 51 percent of their mothers think they are.”

“‘Parents say they talk until they’re blue in the face and their kids still don’t listen,’ said study author Robert Blum, MD, PhD, professor and director of the University of Minnesota’s Center for Adolescent Health and Development. ‘Kids will pay attention to their parents’ values on sex. But talk alone does not get the message through.’”

“The study results show that parents can do many things that make a difference in whether their teens start having sex. For example, teens are less likely to become sexually active if their parents know their friends and speak with their friends’ parents. Most importantly, teens, and especially younger teens, who feel close to their mothers are less likely to start having sex. Finding from other Add Health research have also shown that teens whose parents value education are less likely to have sex.”

“Delaying Teen Sex: What Works?”

“The Add Health findings identified a number of factors that are associated with postponement of early sex:”

- “For younger teens and older teenage boys, a strong sense of connectedness with their mothers—in which the teen feels close to mom and perceives that she is warm and caring—makes a difference. This effect was not seen among older teenager girls.”
- “Girls whose mothers have higher levels of education are less likely to become sexually active. On the other hand, teens whose mothers are highly religious are no less likely than other teens to start having sex.”
- “Mothers who report that they frequently talk with the parents of their daughters’ friends had daughters who were less likely to have initiated sex over the one-year study period. These findings did not hold true for boys.”

(Blum, R.W. (2002) “Mothers’ Influence on Teen Sex: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health.” Center for Adolescent Health and Development, University of Minnesota. (McNeely, C.A., Shew, M.L., Beuhring, T., Sieving, R., Miller, B.C., Blum, R.W. “Mother’s Influence on Adolescents’ Sexual Debut.” *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 31 (3), 2002. (Sieving, R.E., McNeely, C.A., Blum, R.W. “Maternal Expectations, Mother-Child Connectedness and Adolescent Sexual Debut.” *Archives of Adolescent Medicine*. 154 (8): 809-16, 2000. www.allaboutkids.umn.edu)

“MATERNAL EXPECTATIONS, MOTHER-CHILD CONNECTEDNESS, AND ADOLESCENT SEXUAL DEBUT”

“Conclusion: Perceived maternal disapproval of sexual intercourse, along with mother-child relationships characterized by high levels of warmth and closeness, may be important protective factors related to delay in adolescents’ first sexual intercourse.”

(Arch Pediatric Adolescent Med. 2000; 154:809-816)