

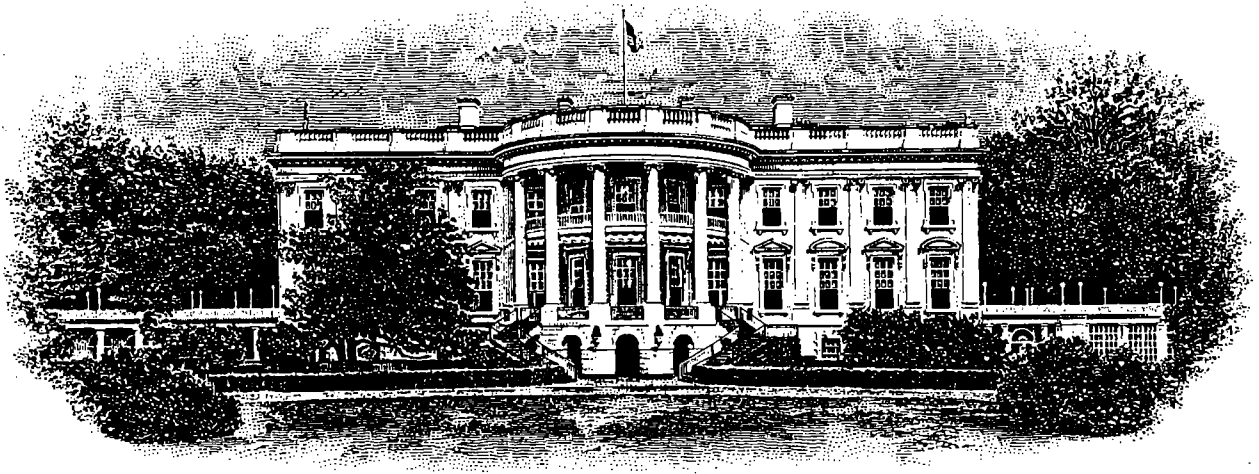
733-4861

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION



PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

The White House



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 28, 2000

Warm greetings to everyone participating in the "White House Conference on Teenagers: Raising Responsible and Resourceful Youth." This conference is in response to the concerns of parents across the country about the unprecedented challenges that today's teenagers face. We hope to provide parents with effective strategies they can use to help their teenagers navigate safely through the difficulties they may encounter during these pivotal years.

During their teens, young people are gaining the skills and confidence they will need as adults. At the same time, they may be exposed to negative influences that present significant risks to their well-being. At this conference, we will discuss what parents, communities, and young people themselves can do to ensure that today's teenagers become successful adults. A portion of the program will be broadcast via satellite, presenting an extraordinary opportunity for communities across the country to participate in our discussion and benefit from the views of the nation's foremost experts on healthy youth development.

We are pleased to welcome you to the White House, and we hope that this conference will help to ensure that the young people of today -- the most diverse group of teenagers in our nation's history -- will also be the most successful.

Bill Clinton Hillary Rodham Clinton



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE, Tuesday, May 2, 10:30 a.m. (ET)

YMCA SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS TEEN-PARENT COMMUNICATION GAP

Teens still rely on parents, despite limited quality time

WASHINGTON, May 2— A new poll released today contains troubling news about the quality of communication between American parents and their young teenage children. The poll, released by the YMCA of the USA at a White House Conference on teenagers, concludes that the vast majority of teens still turn to their parents in times of trouble. But it also reveals that parents and teens have differing views on the ways they interact and even on the topics of their conversations.

The survey polled teenagers aged 12 to 15 and parents. Among its findings are that many families do not eat meals together and that parents significantly underestimate the time their teens spend in front of the television or computer. The poll also shows that young people list inadequate family time as one of their greatest concerns.

In the area of communication, the poll makes clear that, while many parents believe they are discussing issues like sex, violence, and drug and alcohol abuse with their children, their children have a different perception. For example, 61 percent of parents say they talk frequently to their children about values and beliefs, but only 41 percent of children report such conversations. A greater percentage of parents than teenagers also reports having conversations about sex, violence, and drug and alcohol abuse. The communication disconnect also exists over whether parents and their teens share the same values and beliefs, with 62 percent of parents saying they do, compared with 46 percent of children.

“The good news is that families are still spending time together,” says Kenneth L. Gladish, Ph.D., national executive director, YMCA of the USA. “The bad news is that children may not be hearing what we parents *think* we’re saying. Our kids deserve our best efforts, and we must not fail them.”

- more -

YMCA of the USA • Public Policy • 1701 K Street, N.W., Suite 903 • Washington, D.C. 20006

202-835-9043 • toll-free: 800-932-9622 • fax: 202-835-9030 • <http://www.ymca.net>

YMCA mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

Gladish made his remarks at the White House during the day-long *White House Conference on Teenagers: Raising Responsible and Resourceful Youth*. The conference was co-sponsored by the YMCA of the USA, a major national child and family advocacy group.

While families share an average of 80 minutes together each day, young teenagers expressed a desire for more time with their parents. A quarter of all parents report eating no more than four meals a week with their teens.

Education and family time are the top teenage concerns, according to the poll. By contrast, the poll found, parents worry most about drug and alcohol abuse.

Parents also seem to have different notions of the way their teenage children spend their time. Nearly half of all teenagers said they spend their free time with friends, while only about one quarter of parents believe that to be the case. Among the poll's most striking findings is that 71 percent of parents say they frequently monitor their children's Internet use, while only 24 percent of teenagers say their parents supervise them.

Talking with Teens: the YMCA Parent and Teen Survey was performed by the Global Strategy Group, Inc. of New York and Washington, which conducted 200 random telephone interviews with children and 200 with parents during the period April 11-20. The margin of error is +/- 6.9%.

The YMCA of the USA is the national resource office for the 2,393 independent YMCA associations in the United States. Collectively, America's YMCAs are the nation's largest provider of child care. YMCAs across the country are at the heart of community life and offer a variety of programs such as family activity nights, juvenile delinquency prevention programs, volunteerism and mentoring, and welfare-to-work initiatives. YMCAs serve nearly 17 million people, including 9 million children during non-school hours.

#

For further information, contact: Kristin Hurdle (202) 835-9043 /(202) 669-5661 (cell)
Arnold Collins (202) 835-9043 /(202) 669-5661 (cell)
Julie Mulzoff (312) 269-0579
kristin.hurdle@ymca.net
arnold.collins@ymca.net
julie.mulzoff@ymca.net



Global Strategy Group, Inc.
mail@globalstrategygroup.com
www.globalstrategygroup.com

611 Broadway
Suite 206
New York, NY 10012
212.260.8813 Voice
212.260.9058 Fax

1424 16TH Street, nw
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
202.265.4676 Voice
202.265.4619 Fax

Talking With Teens: The YMCA Parent and Teen Survey Final Report

I. Key Findings

- **The good news is that most teens (78%) turn to their parents in times of need.**
 - Boys are more likely than girls to say they turn to their parents for advice (84% vs. 72%).
 - Reliance on parental advice increases from 67% to 90% between the ages of 12 and 13, but then declines over the next two years, with 65% of 15 year olds turning to their parents for guidance (65%).
- **Another positive finding is that teens and their parents appear to be talking and spending time together. They report spending an average of about 80 minutes per day talking to one another and eating an average of eight meals a week together.**
 - Not surprisingly, younger teens report spending more time with parents than their older counterparts (89 minutes a day for 12 yr. olds vs. 69 minutes for 15 yr. olds). However, parents say they average over 80 minutes a day with all age groups.

- Children of single parents spend less time talking to their parents than those with two adults at home (on average 67 minutes vs. 81 minutes per day).
- Mothers spend significantly more time with their teens than fathers (on average 93 minutes vs. 78 minutes per day).
- **Although most families break bread together regularly, there are still a large number who cannot find the time for family meals. One in four parents (24%) and 17% of teens report eating no more than four meals a week together as a family.**
 - Disturbingly, 10% of parents report that they eat just one meal a week, or never eat, with their teens.
- **“Not having enough time together” with their parents is the *top* concern among teenagers today. Teens are three times more likely than their parents to say that “not having enough time together” is their biggest issue of concern (21%). Family time is tied with education for first place on the teens’ list of concerns.**
 - Teens of all ages are concerned by the lack of quality time with their parents.
- **Conversely, parents are far more concerned by outside threats such as drugs and alcohol (24%) than they are about family time. Quality time comes in as the fourth most important priority at 8%.**

- **A substantial percentage of parents and teenagers report that teens spend more of their free time watching television and using computers than they do interacting with their parents. Over one-third of all parents (36%) report that their teens spend the majority of their free time in front of a computer or television screen. Nearly three in ten teens (29%) agree.**
 - Parents underestimate the time their teens spend in front of the television. Only 12% of parents believe their children watch TV during the majority of their free time, while 20% of teens confess to being couch potatoes.
- **Parents often say that they frequently monitor their teen's time in front of the TV and on the Internet, but their children don't agree. While 85% of parents say they frequently monitor what their kids watch on TV (42% "all the time," 43% "often"), 61% of children say they are watching TV without any parental supervision (22% "all the time," 39% "often).**
 - Interestingly, younger teens are more likely to watch television unsupervised than their older counterparts (66%, 12 yr. olds vs. 49%, 15 yr. olds).
- **Parents are even more naïve when it comes to Internet exposure. Nearly three-quarters of parents (71%) assert that they frequently monitor their child's use of the Web. However, 45% of teens say they surf the Web "all the time/often" without a watchful parental eye.**

- **Many parents feel the time they spend with their teens is inadequate. Only 30% of parents say that they spend “more than enough time with their kids.” Another 42% are looking for more quality time with their teens (31% “have some time, but need more,” 12% “do not have nearly enough time”).**
 - Fathers have a bigger disconnect with their teenagers than mothers. Nearly half of all dads (47%) are looking to spend more time with their teens, compared to 38% of mothers who say they need more time.
 - Single parents (23%) are the most likely to maintain that they “do not have nearly enough time” available to spend with their teens.
- **Both teenagers (34%) and parents (34%) blame parental work obligations as the primary reason why families are not spending more time together.**
 - Four in ten fathers (43%) blame work for coming between them and their kids. Additionally, younger parents (37%, 25-44) are more likely than older parents (26%, 45+) to feel that their career keeps them from spending time with their teenagers.
 - Older teens (37%, 14-15) are somewhat more likely than 12 and 13 year olds (30%) to blame their parent’s work schedule for detracting from family time.
 - “Pressed parents,” who are looking to spend more time with their teens (42% of parents overall), suggest that the number one barrier to being together is work (42%). Additionally, these parents face the problem of not being in the same place as their teens at the same time (19%), and complain about a general lack of desire on the part of the kids (14%).

- **Hectic work schedules are not the only barrier families face when trying to spend time together; some teenagers say they would rather spend time with their friends than with their families. Teens are twice as likely to say prefer to spend time with their friends than parents believe (25% vs. 12%).**
 - Teenage boys are significantly more likely than girls to prefer spending time with friends instead of family (31% vs. 19%).
- **The influence of friends is a recurring theme. Teens are almost two-and-a-half times more likely than their parents to state that friends are a critical influence on their values (26% vs. 11%). And over half of all teens (51%) turn to their friends as a source of advice on life issues.**
 - The impact peers have on forming values increases steadily as teens get older. **Just 15% of 12 year olds report that friends are the biggest influence on their values, while 37% of 15 year olds say the same.** Likewise, teens become more dependent on their friend's advice as they get older. Just 37% of 12 year olds cite friends as a source of advice compared to 67% of 15 year olds.
 - Two in five teens who feel their parents do not have enough time to spend with them (40%) turn to friends for guidance on values.
 - Children of single parents are more likely than those from a two parent home to rely on their friends for advice (59% vs. 49%), as well as information concerning values (38% vs. 24%).

- **When families do spend time together, the communication is not getting through. For instance, parents may think that they talk to their children about values and beliefs on a frequent basis (64%), but teens are only hearing it 41% of the time!**
 - Parents of 14 year olds reportedly are the most likely to frequently talk to their teens about values and beliefs (68%). However, only 34% of this age group agrees that they are having conversations about values on a frequent basis.
 - Teenage girls (44%) are more likely to speak with their parents frequently about values than boys of the same age (38%).
- **Similarly, 62% of parents “strongly agree” that they share the same basic values as their teens. However, only 46% of teens suggest that this is true.**
 - Three-quarters of all mothers (75%) “strongly agree” that they share the same values with their teens, compared to just 48% of fathers.
 - Over half of all teenage girls (52%) “strongly agree” that they share the same values with their parents. Just 40% of teen boys feel the same.

- **The same disconnect between parental and teenage perception can be seen on important issues like sex, dating, drugs and alcohol, and future plans.**
 - For example, according to 43% of parents, sex is a frequent topic of conversation in their homes. However, just 26% of teens suggest their parents speak to them about sex with any regularity. Likewise, while 34% of parents suggest they discuss dating frequently, only one-quarter of teens (25%) say the same.
 - ◆ Interestingly, as teens get older, and are more likely to be sexually active, their parents talk to them less about sex. Only 22% of 12 year olds report that their parents “rarely/never” speak to them about the topic, while 58% of 15 year olds do not speak to their parents about sex.
 - ◆ Similarly, parents are more likely to report that they speak to their teens frequently about drugs and alcohol than teens state (51% vs. 35%).
 - ◆ Again, the older a teen becomes the less likely it is that parents will talk to them about the topic. Just 30% of 14 and 15 year olds report that their parents speak to them frequently about drugs and alcohol. In comparison, 41% of 12 and 13 year olds have parents who talk to them regularly on the topic.

II. Methodology

- Global Strategy Group (GSG) conducted a total of 400 telephone interviews nationwide among children between the ages of 12 and 15 (200 interviews) and parents of children between the ages of 12 and 15 (200 interviews), using experienced research interviewers.
 - Parental consent was obtained for the 200 minors who participated in the research.
- The length of the questionnaire was approximately eight minutes and included a total of 21 questions.
- Respondents were called from a nationwide sample of self-reported households with children 11 to 15 currently living at home.
 - The sample was purchased strictly for the use of this study, and the interviews were stratified by gender and age group.
- The interviews were conducted between April 11 and April 20, 2000.
- The survey has an overall margin of error of $\pm 4.9\%$ at the 95% confidence level.
- - The margin of error is $\pm 6.9\%$ among the 200 children interviews as well as the 200 parent interviews.

**THE CLINTON-GORE ADMINISTRATION:
WORKING TO HELP FAMILIES RAISE RESPONSIBLE TEENAGERS**

May 2, 2000

"It's very important that we recognize that the United States has done a great job at creating jobs, but we still give far less support to the responsibility of balancing work and family than virtually every other industrialized country in the world. And it is very important to do that."

President Bill Clinton
May 2, 2000

Today, at the White House, President Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton hosted the first-ever White House Conference on Teenagers. The conference included parents, teens, policy makers, and other experts who discussed the importance of the teenage years in the social and intellectual development of children, and offered strategies for raising responsible and resourceful youth. The President and the First Lady released a new report outlining trends among teenagers, and announced several new steps the Administration is taking to support America's teens, including an Executive Order barring discrimination against parents in the federal workplace.

SUPPORTING AMERICA'S TEENS. At today's conference, participants highlighted ways in which parents, schools, businesses, the media and others in the larger community can support children during the critical teenage years. The conference included the following:

- The President released a new report by his Council of Economic Advisers which outlines positive trends as well as challenges for today's teenagers. The report concludes that teens whose parents are involved in their lives are more likely to excel in school and avoid risky behavior.
- A YMCA poll commissioned for the conference showed that parents are worried about outside influences on their teenagers, while teenagers are concerned about not having enough time with their parents and education.
- The First Lady highlighted research by the National Institute of Mental Health which indicates that the cognitive portion of the brain goes through a second wave of development just before puberty, suggesting that early adolescence is a critical time of development.
- The President signed an Executive Order barring discrimination against parents in the federal workplace in all aspects of employment, including recruitment, referral, hiring, promotions, discharge, and training.
- The President and the First Lady renewed their call for Congress to pass an expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act that would allow eligible workers an additional 24 hours of leave to meet family responsibilities.
- The President and the First Lady announced several steps to help parents and teens spend more time together:
 - "Time with Your Teens Campaign," a new public education campaign to raise awareness about the importance of parent-teen time, including family mealtime.
 - Efforts by the Office of Personnel Management to raise awareness in the federal workplace of family-friendly tools such as flexible work schedules, job sharing, and the use of leave in order to make family time a priority.
 - A public-private task force to provide tools for parents and teens to find resources through the media and to help parents monitor their teens' use of the media.
 - A joint effort between the federal government and a coalition of prevention campaigns to provide tips for parents on how to best nurture and raise their children to avoid risky behaviors, including drug, alcohol and tobacco use, sex, and violence.
 - A new web site for teenagers - www.americasteens.gov - where teens can find information to help them do their homework, pursue a hobby, or choose a career.
 - A guide by the Department of Health and Human Services to help improve communications between teenagers and their parents and other caring adults.

**White House Conference on Teenagers
Break-Out Assignments
May 2, 2000**

Breakout 1/ The Jackson Room in the White House Conference Center

Family Time: What can we do to make it easier for parents and teenagers to spend time together?

Moderators: Director Janice LaChance, OPM
Member of Congress

Panelists: Stanley J. Botts, Bell Atlantic
Ken R. Canfield, National Center for Fathering
The Malone Family (Donnie & Fonda)
Laurence Steinberg, Temple University
Amy Swisher, First Day Foundation

Participants: Lisa Benenson, Working Mother
Janet Chan, The Parenting Group
William J. Doherty, University of Minnesota
Ellen Galinsky, Families and Work Institute
Shirley Igo, National PTA
The Malone Family (Tameka & Lakeeya)
The Silcox Family (Deborah, Drew & Dylan)
Ruth Wooden, The National Parenting Association

Breakout 2/ The Eisenhower Room in the White House Conference Center

The New Media: How is the information age shaping youth today?

Moderators: Deputy Director Donald Vereen, ONDCP
Member of Congress

Panelists: Zoe Baird, Markle Foundation
Jim Browne, GetNetWise.org
Robert J. Davis, Lycos, Inc.
Judith A. McHale, Discovery Communications, Inc.
Kathryn C. Montgomery, Center for Media Education
Justin Newland, National Campaign Against Youth Violence

Participants: Patrice Adcroft, Seventeen Magazine
Susan Bales, Frameworks Institute
Jeffrey Bleich, National Campaign Against Youth Violence
Sarita Brown, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans
Peggy Conlon, The Advertising Council

Karen Hein, William T. Grant Foundation
Katharine Heintz-Knowles, Children's Media Research and Consulting
Sheila Johnson, Black Entertainment Television (BET)
Rachel Jones, National Public Radio
Lisa Paulsen, Entertainment Industry Foundation
Karen Pittman, International Youth Foundation
Ellen Seidman, Seventeen Magazine
William Treanor, Youth Today
Meredith Wagner, Lifetime Television
Mildred Wurf, Girls Incorporated

Breakout 3/ The Truman Room in the White House Conference Center
Education: How can we build school climates that work for teenagers?

Moderators: Secretary Richard Riley, U.S. Department of Education
Senator John Kerry (D-MA)

Panelists: Sarah Austin, Decatur High School, Atlanta, GA
Gene Bottoms, Southern Regional Education Board
Jay Engeln, MetLife/NASSP National Principal of the Year
Susan Gaddy Greene, I.S. 218, New York City
Larry Hurt, 1999 Indiana Teacher of the Year
Robert S. Rivera, Project GRAD

Participants: Karen Austin, Parent
Susan Ballard, Newton-Conover City Schools, North Carolina
The Barrett Family (William, Betsy & MaryGrace)
Pam Bethel
Martin Blank, Coalition for Community Schools
The Bosques-Smith Family (Maria, Khyanna & Anastasia)
Kathleen Burgess
Michael Casserly, Council of the Great City Schools
Clarice Chambers, National School Boards Association
Anthony Colon
Philip Coltoff, The Children's Aid Society
Mary Kate Cullen
Steven W. Edwards, East Hartford High School, East Hartford, CT
Amitai Etzioni, The Communitarian Network
Maria Cristina Fernandez
Elinor Goldberg, Maine Children's Alliance
Linda Gordon
Susan Gorin, National Association of School Psychologists
Beatrix A. Hamburg, Cornell Medical College
Margaret Hamburg, Department of Health and Human Services
Carole Hankin

Stacy Holmes
Clifford M. Johnson, Institute for Youth, Education & Families
Lois Harrison Jones, National Alliance of Black School Educators
David Kaplan
Louis King, Summit Academy
Kristen Kingdon, Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
Judith Lichtman, National Partnership for Women and Families
Guillermo Linares, New York City Council
Bill Milliken, Communities in School
Sydney Miner, Simon & Schuster
Kristin Moore, Child Trends
Gail Nayowith, Citizens Committee for Children of New York
Amy Paulsen, Teen People
Robert Pynoos, UCLA School of Medicine
Nancy Safer, The Council for Exception Children
Katheryn Lee Shaw, Carnegie Mellon University
The Speaker Family (Edd & Edwin)
Laura Stepp, The Washington Post
Sue Swaim, National Middle School Association
Gerald N. Tirrozz, National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
William S. White, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
Stephanie Williams
Mark Walker
Richard Yep, American Counseling Association

Breakout 4/ The Lincoln Room in the White House Conference Center
The Village: How can the community better support parents and teenagers?

Moderators: Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder
Rep. Ellen Tauscher (D-CA)

Panelists: Jeffery L. Brown, Ten Point Coalition
LaToya Gardner, Maplewood Comprehensive High School, Nashville, TN
Kenneth L. Gladish, YMCA of the USA
Milbrey W. McLaughlin, Stanford University
Katherine Newman, Harvard University

Participants: Kent Amos, Urban Family Institute
Shay Bilchik, Child Welfare League of America
J. Ben Casey, Dallas YMCA
Debra Delgado, Annie E. Casey Foundation
Danny Devito
Eden Fisher Durbin, YMCA of the USA
Willa Gardner, Parent
Cora Greenberg, Westchester Children's Association

Victor Hernandez, City Council of Lubbock , Lubbock, Texas
Michele D. Kipke, National Academy of Sciences
Sarah Ann Long, American Library Association
Daniel Marcus, U.S. Department of Justice
Patrick McCarthy, Annie. E. Casey Foundation
The McDonald Family (Emily & Veronica)
Matthew L. Myers, National Center for Tobacco Free Kids
Rhea Perlman
Diana Zuckerman, National Center for Policy Research for Women & Families

Breakout 5/ Eisenhower Executive Office Building 476

Closing the Gap: How can we provide positive opportunities for all teenagers?

Moderators: Secretary Alexis Herman, U.S. Department of Labor
Rep. Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX)

Panelists: Peter L. Benson, Search Institute
Talmira L. Hill, Annie E. Casey Foundation
Lan-Ahn Phan, Woodrow Wilson High School, Washington, D.C.
accompanied by Sandra Hoa Dang, Asian American LEAD
Dorothy Stoneman, Executive Director, YouthBuild USA
accompanied by Ameer Ramadan, Youthbuild USA
Kathleen Sylvester, Social Policy Action Network (SPAN)

Participants: Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, Teachers College
Vernon Gray, National Association of Counties
Samuel Halperin, American Youth Policy Forum
Grace Hou Ovnik, Chinese Mutual Aid Society
Della M. Hughes, National Network for Youth
Ruth-Ann Huvane, Creative Artists Agency Foundation
Alan Khazei, City Year
Jodie Levin-Epstein, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Rae Linefsky, YWCA
Sister Mary Rose McGeady, Covenant House
Richard Murphy, AED, Center for Youth Development and Policy Research
David Saltzman, Robin Hood Foundation
Susan Shaffer, The Mid Atlantic Equity Center
Hillary O. Shelton, NAACP
Roxanne Spillet, Boys & Girls Clubs of America
William Spriggs, National Urban League
Susan Sygall, Mobility International USA

Breakout 6/ Eisenhower Executive Office Building 472

Youth as Resources: Can teenagers be resources in their own development and for their peers?

Moderators: Harris Wofford, CEO, Corporation for National Service
Member of Congress

Panelists: Kathleen Lee, Turner Middle School, Philadelphia, PA
Michael Preston, Gila River Youth Council
Robert D. Putnam, Harvard University
Nicole Salinas, Antonian High School, San Antonio, TX
Andrew Shue, Do Something
Gary Walker, Public Private Ventures

Participants: Dr. Robert Wm. Blum, University of Minnesota
John Calhoun, National Crime Prevention Council
Geoffrey Canada, Rheedlen Center for Children and Families
The Contreras Family (Gabriella & Grace)
Deborah Craig, YouthNet
Terry Cross, National Indian Child Welfare Association
William Damon, Stanford University
Alan Freedman, B'nai B'rith Youth Organization
Anthony Jackson, Disney Learning Initiative
James Kielsmier, National Youth Leadership Council
Richard Lerner, Tufts University
Eric Liu, White House Domestic Policy Council
Catherine Milton, Save the Children
Patrick J. O'Connor, Chicago City Council
Gorden Raley, National Collaboration for Youth
Ramona Sabori, Parent
Frank Salinas, Parent
Richard J. Sauer, National 4-H Council

Breakout 7/The Roosevelt Room

A Healthy Start: How can we help teenagers stay healthy?

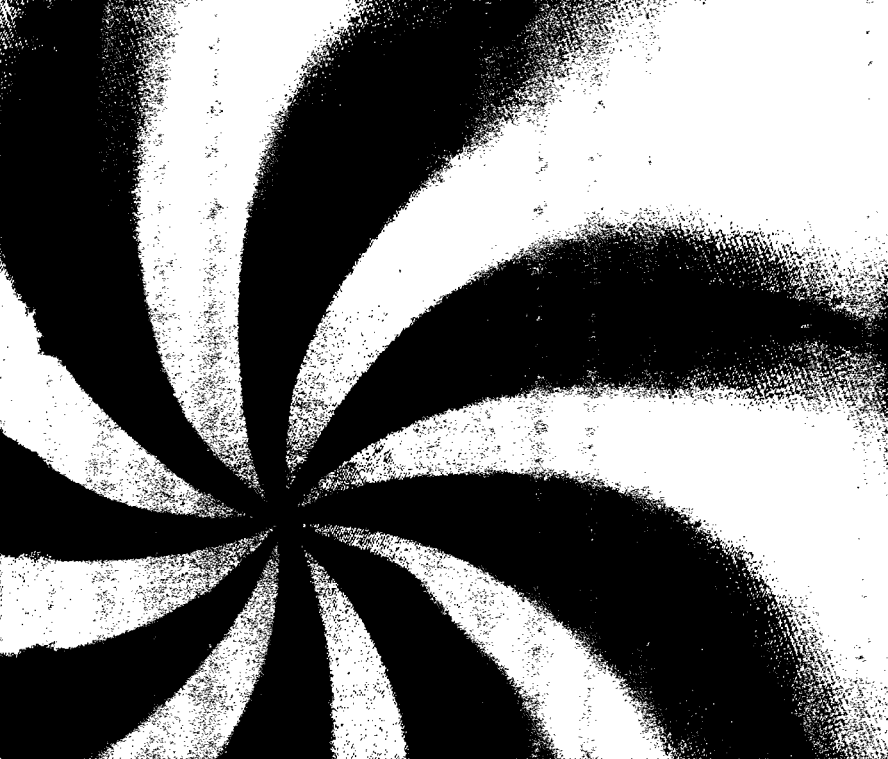
Moderators: Secretary Donna Shalala, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)

Panelists: Sarah S. Brown, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
Brandi Chapple, Trinity College, Washington, D.C.
Harold S. Koplewicz, NYU Child Study Center
Carole Morris, Mt. Vernon Neighborhood Health Center
Michael D. Resnick, University of Minnesota School of Medicine

Participants: Bernard S. Arons, Center for Mental Health Services
Linda Bearinger, University of Minnesota
Susan Blumenthal, U.S. Assistant Surgeon General
Jon Butler, Pop Warner Little Scholars
Michael Caplin, Childhelp USA
Rodney Chapple, Parent
Steven Culbertson, Youth Service America
Sally Cunningham, National Council of Youth Sports
William C. Dement, Stanford University
Angela Diaz, Mt. Sinai Adolescent Health Center
Jacquelynne S. Eccles, University of Michigan
Michael Faenza, National Mental Health Association
Jay Giedd, National Institute for Mental Health
David A. Hamburg, Carnegie Corporation of New York
Barbara Huff, Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
Julius Richmond, Harvard Medical School

EXPRESS YOURSELF!!

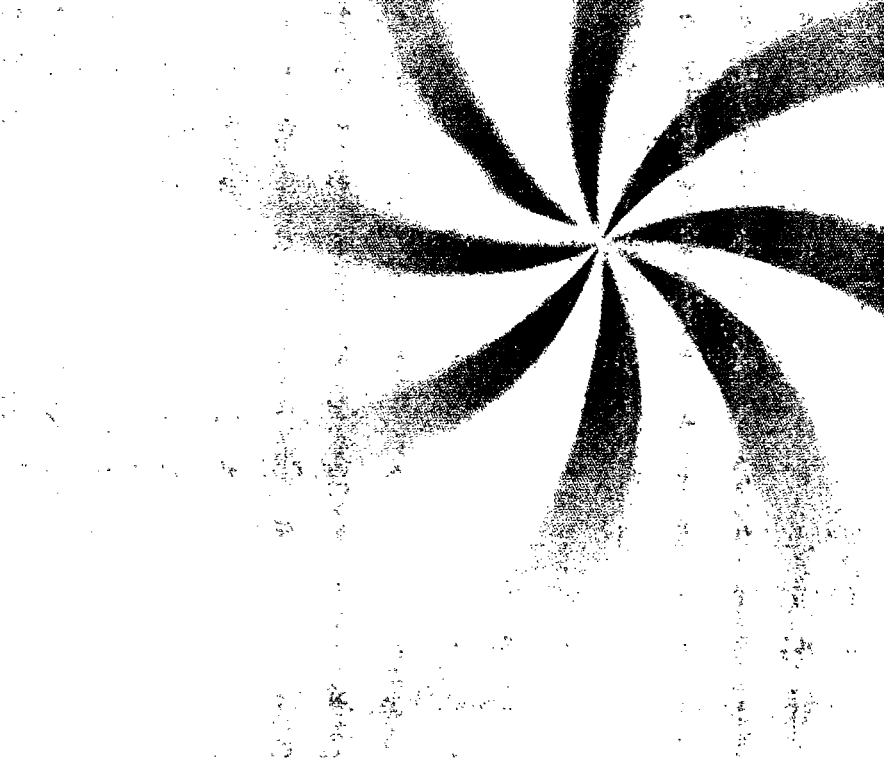
A Teenager's Guide to...



...Fitting in

Getting involved

Finding yourself



If you're a teenager, or about to become one, you have a lot to look forward to. Maybe more than at any other time of life, your world is wide open and the possibilities are endless.

Of course, just as in other times of life, you will have both bad and good experiences.

The ideas in this booklet can help you learn to deal with the tough times and enjoy the good times by finding the people and places that are right for you. You might find these ideas useful in your everyday life. Or read them to see if they might be helpful to a friend.

Freedom, and Responsibility Too

The teenage years are full of change. You might get a job to earn money of your own. You may get a driver's license and graduate from high school. You also might begin...

- ☼ Questioning more of what you hear
- ☼ Learning the skills you'll need to pursue a job or a career
- ☼ Spending more time with your friends and others outside your family
- ☼ Hearing from teachers, parents, and other adults about taking more responsibility



Those changes don't mean that your teenage years have to be harder than others. In fact, this can be the time when you get what you need to have fun and be happy now and in the future.

Obviously, what you go through will depend on...

- ☼ Whether or not the adults responsible for you are loving and supportive
- ☼ Whether or not the neighborhood you live in offers you many opportunities
- ☼ Whether or not you feel close to people your age, and are connected with your school and community

That means everyone's experience is different. **But no matter what your experience, you still can figure out how to be happy.**

One thing that most people find satisfying is figuring out what they do well.

Deciding what you do well often is a matter of knowing what you like to do. Most people like to do what they are good at.



So, think about what you enjoy. Then try asking people how you might get involved in those activities. You might talk to your parents, other relatives, friends, and neighbors. Check with people at your school like a teacher, a guidance counselor, or the school librarian.

Or, if school is not the most comfortable place for you, get help at the public library. Look on the Internet. Or check the newspaper.



Get connected.

Better yet, get involved in a youth organization.

Youth agencies exist across the country. Their mission is to support young people and link them with activities they're interested in. Wherever you are, one of these organizations usually is close by.

Youth organizations have all kinds of programs. Some offer activities. Others can give you support when you have a problem or are in trouble. Or they can be helpful when you just need someone to talk to.



Youth agencies like the Boys and Girls Clubs, 4-H Clubs, and the YMCA can help you find...

- ☼ Recreational activities
- ☼ Volunteer opportunities
- ☼ Other people who share your interests

To learn more about youth agencies in your area, call them.

Below are two ways to locate a youth organization near you. (If there's not a youth organization where you live, find one in a nearby area.)

1. Check the Yellow Pages. Look under "Youth Organizations," "Youth Centers," or "Teen-Age Activities."
2. Contact the national offices of youth agencies to find their local organization. On the next page are three you can start with.



& Girls Clubs of America

Phone: (404) 815-5700

E-mail: <lmclemore@bgca.org>

Home page: <www.bgca.org>

National 4-H Council

Phone: (301) 961-2800

Home page: <www.fourhcouncil.edu>

(Note: If you are 12 years old or younger, 4-H requires you to involve your parents when you contact them.)

YMCA of the USA

Phone: (312) 977-0031

Home page: <www.ymca.net>



When you call, tell the person you talk to your age and your area of interest. Ask questions to find out more about their programs, for example:

- ☼ What types of programs and activities does your organization offer for someone my age?
- ☼ Do these programs cost anything? What if I do not have money to pay a fee?
- ☼ Do I need my parents' permission to become involved? What if I would like to join but cannot get a signed permission slip from my parents?
- ☼ What do I do next to get involved?

READ ON TO FIND OUT

MORE!

The best youth organization for you has people you feel comfortable with.

One of the bonuses of being involved in a youth club or program is meeting all kinds of people. Some agencies even have “mentoring programs.” These link you with someone your age or an adult. You can discuss ideas with that person and learn about new ways to deal with everyday problems. Or you can try out new activities together.



In fact, getting to know people is often what makes life fun and interesting. And the best people to have around are those who do care about you. They can be helpful when you feel pressure to do things that you don't want to do. They can offer advice on how to be yourself and still fit in.

On the next pages are signs that a person does care about you, and questions to help you identify those signs.

**Think about how
real friends treat you...**



**They're interested in your well-being,
not in something that you might
give them or do for them.**

- ☼ Do they value your health and safety (including never asking you to do something that puts you in danger or is illegal)?
- ☼ Do they suggest that you do things that help you, not them?
- ☼ Do other people you respect and trust also trust this person?

They listen: they care about what you have to say.

- ☼ Are they paying attention to you when you talk to them?
- ☼ Do they ask questions when they don't understand something you tell them?
- ☼ Do they make sure they understand your situation before they offer advice?

They're interested in your success, and are happy for you when things go well.

- ☼ Do they praise you when something good happens or you've done something well?
- ☼ Do they ask about your goals and interests?

They say they're sorry when they make a mistake.

- ☼ Do they admit when they are wrong (just as you or anyone else should be able to do)?

They do 't expect you to be perfect.

- ☼ Would you feel comfortable telling them when you've made a mistake and need help knowing what to do next?
- ☼ Do they help you recognize and work through mistakes? (Or do they use words that make you feel ashamed or worthless?)
- ☼ Do you have a feeling that no matter what happens, they will look out for your well-being (since everyone makes mistakes)?

When they give you guidance, they do so in a way that shows they care.

- ☼ Does this person make you feel encouraged and motivated?
- ☼ When they are talking or asking about a mistake you made, do you still feel that they are trying to help you?
- ☼ Do they make you feel comfortable (including never physically or emotionally hurting you)?

They let you think things through on your own when you want to and respect your privacy.

-  Do they accept that sometimes you might prefer to think through a problem or situation on your own? (Most people do sometimes.)
-  Do they keep things you say private when you ask them to?

Keep in mind, though, that a person you confide in may not have a choice about whether to keep something you tell them private. They may be required under the law to report a problem to authorities if what you tell them involves a legal issue.

So if you go to someone for assistance, you might want to ask them about whether they can keep a problem to themselves. They may say that they will report legal issues to someone else. If so, ask them how they have handled situations like this in the past. Ask what happened to the teenagers involved. And talk with them about your choices before you tell them your story.

So, ask questions and...

Trust your feelings.

Sometimes you may still feel unsure about whether you trust someone. If so, follow your instinct. And talk to someone else. Explain why you feel uncertain. That is one of the best things about having a circle of people to turn to: they can help you think through the doubts all of us have sometimes.

Of course, nobody's perfect. Most people don't always do all the right things. Just remember that people who say they care about you prove that by their actions over a period of time.

People who you trust can help you...

Make the best of all that life has to offer.

There isn't any magical answer that will always make life easy. For all of us, there are both hard times and good times. But having a network of friends, supportive adults, and people to talk to at a youth service organization can help. They'll be there for both the unexpected difficulties *and* life's good surprises.

And on the next page are some ideas to think about no matter how things are going for you.

Believe in yourself.

You can't compare yourself to others.

Don't let a negative response stop your positive effort.

Remember the 4 E's:

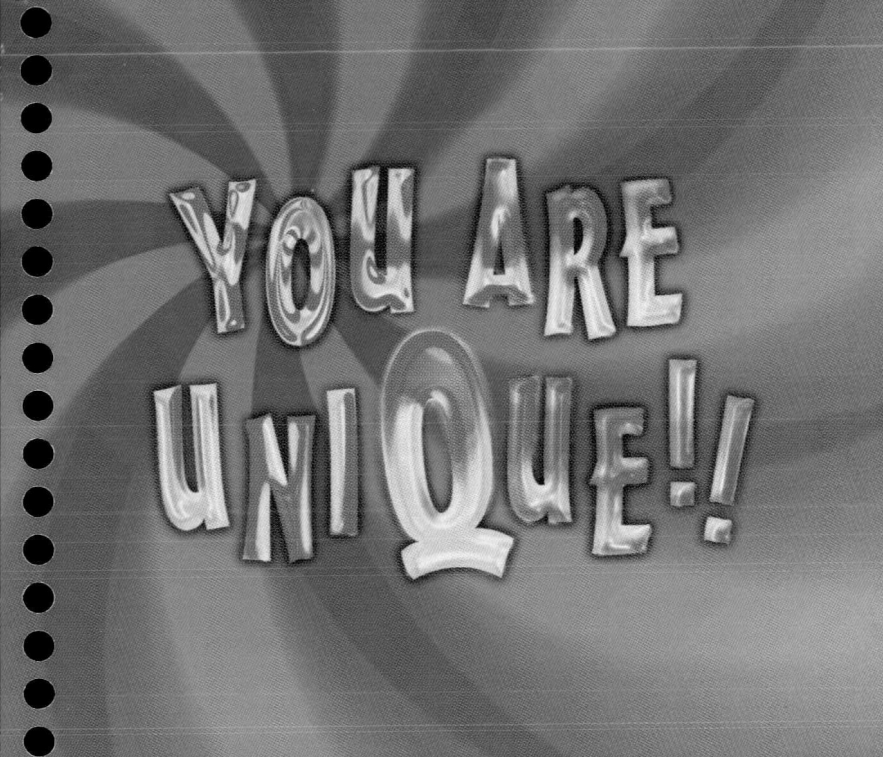
- ☼ Expect a lot of yourself.
- ☼ Everyone has strengths and limitations.
- ☼ Everybody needs help sometimes.
- ☼ Express yourself: your ideas and feelings matter

So...



**Enjoy the good times,
learn from the difficult ones, and
get help when you need it.**

**If you do, you may find that
life has great things to offer.**



YOU ARE
UNIQUE!!



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Family and Youth Services Bureau

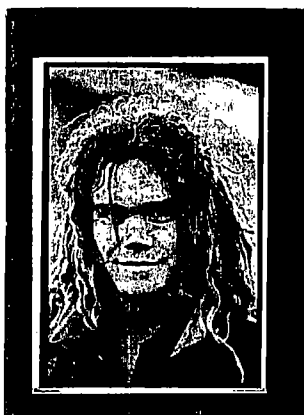
This publication was produced for the Family and Youth Services Bureau by Johnson, Bassin and Shaw, Inc., under a contract from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families; Administration for Children and Families; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to manage the National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth.

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a publication.

Publications have not been scanned in their entirety for the purpose of digitization. To see the full publication please search online or visit the Clinton Presidential Library's Research Room.



Reducing the Risk:

Connections That Make a Difference in the Lives of Youth



Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a publication.

Publications have not been scanned in their entirety for the purpose of digitization. To see the full publication please search online or visit the Clinton Presidential Library's Research Room.

Community Counts



HOW YOUTH
ORGANIZATIONS
MATTER FOR YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC
EDUCATION
NETWORK

BY MILBREY W. MCLAUGHLIN