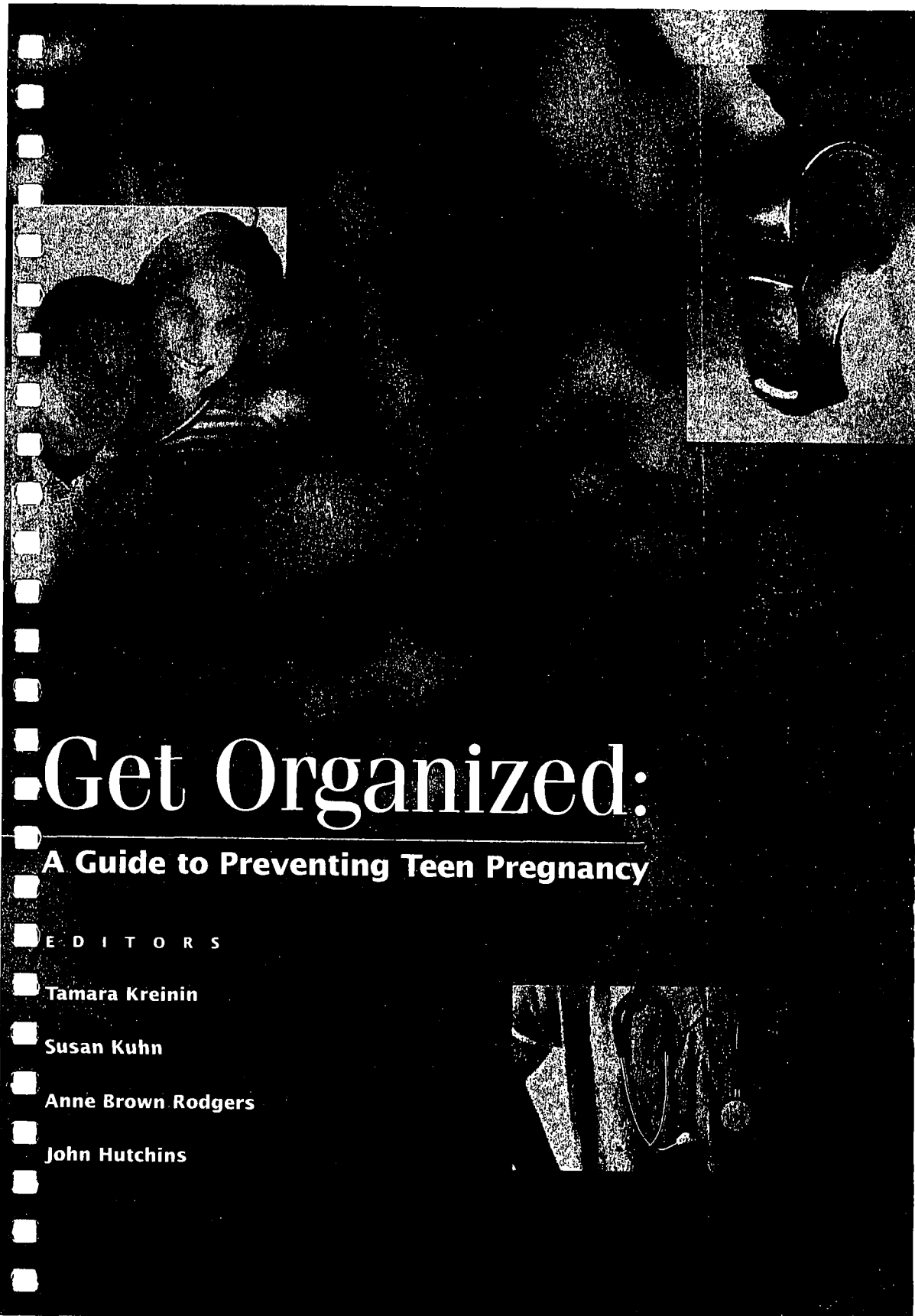




Get Organized:

A Guide to Preventing Teen Pregnancy

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Get Organized:

A Guide to Preventing Teen Pregnancy

V O L U M E 2

Involving the Key Players

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies

September 1999

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Introduction

The 1990s have brought some good news regarding teen pregnancy in the United States: after two decades of increasing teen pregnancy and birth rates, the numbers have declined. Overall, the teen birth rate declined by 16 percent from 1991 to 1997, with all states recording a decline in the birth rate of 15- to 19-year-olds. It is the sixth year in a row that the teen birth rate has declined. Nevertheless, 4 out of 10 American girls get pregnant at least once before they turn 20, leading to nearly one million teen pregnancies a year. Clearly, teen pregnancy remains a serious problem, and the economic, social, and personal costs for teens, their children, and society are great. As a nation, we are at a severe competitive disadvantage when our teen pregnancy and birth rates are at least double—even triple—those of other industrialized nations.

Communities around the country increasingly recognize that helping teens avoid pregnancy can't be accomplished by any single program or strategy. Because the causes of teen pregnancy are complicated and overlapping, solutions must have many parts and approaches. This means doing things differently: getting new people and organizations involved, committing for the long term, and measuring carefully the effectiveness of programs. This three-volume publication, *Get Organized: A Guide to Preventing Teen Pregnancy*, is meant to be a practical manual, a toolkit of sorts, for people at the state and local levels who are interested in taking action to prevent teen pregnancy in their communities. It covers a lot of ground—from strategies for collecting basic data and for reaching out to religious leaders to practical advice about how to raise money and conduct program evaluation. Yet it remains easy to read and simple to use, with many examples from promising programs around the country. We hope it will be useful as communities unite to address this issue and to design programs that are right for them.

Get Organized was developed primarily for those creating a state or local coalition or strategy to prevent teen pregnancy, although anyone interested in developing a single, small program to help teens avoid pregnancy should find valuable information in these chapters. Several overarching principles bind these chapters together:



- Multiple, mutually complementary strategies are more likely to make a difference. There are no easy answers to the problem of teen pregnancy.
- Involving new partners, like the business community, or traditional partners in new ways enhances any prevention strategy.
- Preventing teen pregnancy requires long-term, intense effort. One six-week program will not have much lasting effect, nor will a couple of classroom hours. And, because a new crop of teenagers arrives on the scene every year, prevention efforts must be constantly reinvented.
- Communities can unite around the *need* to address teen pregnancy without expecting unanimity about *ways* to prevent it. Different organizations and members of the community can adopt different strategies to reach the same end—fewer pregnant teens. Sometimes strategies even seem to conflict with each other, but that is not necessarily a problem. Teen pregnancy is a complicated—even messy—problem, and “messy” strategies can often be useful.
- Parents are important influences on their children’s decisions about sexual behavior. They should be supported in their roles and included in planning and developing strategies to prevent teen pregnancy. And, needless to say, involving teens themselves—the “target audience”—is always essential.
- Focusing on boys and young men is critical to any effort to prevent teen pregnancy. Girls are indeed the ones who get pregnant, but it takes two to cause a pregnancy.

As the accompanying matrix shows, *Get Organized* is divided into three complementary volumes:

Volume I: Focusing on the Kids opens with an overview of the promising programs that can help prevent teen pregnancy. The other chapters explain how to tailor programs to stages of adolescent development, create interventions for girls, involve boys and young men in prevention efforts, and involve young people themselves in developing and implementing programs.

Volume II: Involving the Key Players focuses on the roles of traditional participants in prevention efforts, like schools and health

Get Organized Matrix

Volume 1: Focusing on the Kids

1. Promising Approaches to Preventing Teen Pregnancy
2. Tailoring Pregnancy Prevention Programs to Stages of Adolescent Development
3. Developing Pregnancy Prevention Programs for Girls and Young Women
4. Involving Teen Boys and Young Men in Teen Pregnancy Prevention
5. Involving Youth in Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs

Volume 2: Involving the Key Players

6. Involving Parents and Other Adults
7. Involving the Faith Community
8. Involving the Business Community
9. Involving Schools
10. Involving Health Care Professionals

Volume 3: Making It Happen

11. Getting Your Community Involved in a Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project
12. Tailoring a Program to Your Community Through Needs Assessment
13. Planning and Carrying Out a Teen Pregnancy Prevention Project
14. Raising Funds for Teen Pregnancy Prevention
15. Working with the Media to Promote Teen Pregnancy Prevention
16. Building Evaluation into Your Work
17. Moving Forward in the Face of Conflict

care professionals, as well as some often overlooked players, including faith leaders, the business community, and parents.

Volume III: Making It Happen concentrates on the logistics of developing a state or local coalition—or any major effort—to prevent teen pregnancy, including involving the community, assessing the needs of the community, planning, fundraising, working with the media, evaluating initiatives, and dealing with conflict.

Each chapter of *Get Organized* follows a similar format. The tab divider briefly describes how the information is organized and lists a handful of the chapter's key ideas. Throughout the chapters, readers will find easy-to-read boxes, checklists, and nuggets of factual information. Boxes labeled "Research Notes" offer useful findings from published studies. "Field Notes" offer the best advice from practitioners in the field. "Case in Point" boxes illustrate specific issues with real-life examples. Every chapter concludes with a list of helpful references and resources. While the chapters and vol-

unes of *Get Organized* certainly work in tandem, each individual chapter is also meant to stand on its own as a resource.

Many talented people have worked on *Get Organized*, and they are recognized by name in the Acknowledgments, but I would like to thank, in particular, our partners and funders, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies, for their support.

Good work is being done around the country to prevent teen pregnancy. We at the National Campaign hope that *Get Organized* serves both to catalyze new initiatives and reinvigorate existing ones at the state and local levels.

Isabel V. Sawhill

President

National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

September 1999



Involving Parents and Other Adults in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

by Lisa Hoeschele

T H I S C H A P T E R

Explains the importance of including parents as well as other adults in teen pregnancy prevention efforts;

Describes ways in which parents and other adults can work together for pregnancy prevention; and

Provides references and resources for further information.

THE
NATIONAL
CAMPAIGN TO
PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY

Key Ideas in this Chapter

The more parents and teens participate in shared activities, the less likely those teens are to get pregnant.

Teens who feel connected to their communities are at reduced risk of teen pregnancy. Having other adults involved in their lives in constructive ways helps teens build a sense of connection.

Parents often want help in communicating their values to their children.

Adults and teens may be wary of working with each other, but once past their initial fears, both are usually pleasantly surprised at how much fun time spent together can be.

Involving Parents and Other Adults in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Why involve parents in teen pregnancy prevention? Because communication is key

Here are just a few of the comments and questions heard by the teacher of an upstate New York parent-child communications class:

- "My teen does not want to hear from me."
- "My daughter thinks she knows it all already."
- "I think my son is having sex. How can I get him to talk to me without scaring him off?"

She hears parents complain about feeling powerless in the face of a media and music culture that promotes risk-taking behavior among young people. Parents feel as though their opinions do not matter to their teens, and that their values mean little to their children.

Studies show, however, that these parents are mistaken. Children want to talk with their parents. A solid relationship between a teen and his or her parents is consistently related to healthy emotional functioning and self-esteem. When the topic is sex, parents are even more

important in helping their children make the right decisions.

It is *ongoing, sustained* communication between parents and their teens that helps prevent teen pregnancy, as well as a host of other risky behaviors. For example, the more parents talk to their children about responsible decision-making, the less likely those children are to engage in sexual intercourse as adolescents. Studies show that teens with little support from their parents say they have more problems in school and are more likely to abuse alcohol and drugs than are teens who have strong parental support (Licitra-Kleckler and Waas, 1994). Thus, the first step is helping parents and their children open the lines of communication.

A 1999 SURVEY SHOWED THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTS...

Teens ranked parents as the biggest influence in their decisions about sex.

National Campaign, 1999

Program strategies to strengthen parent-teenager connectedness

Organized programs can do a lot to help parents and teens communicate more openly and lovingly. The following strategies, based on the experience of others, can help programs develop effective interventions.

Reassure parents that communication difficulties are normal

Many parents are afraid to admit they need help communicating with their children. The best programs offer parents the opportunity to share their experiences with other parents, reassuring them that they are not alone in their difficulties.

Make it convenient for parents to participate

Parents are often too busy to come out on the weekends and too tired for evening classes. Programs should consider meeting parents on their own turf by offering a parent-education program at the worksite. Any program needs to be convenient for parents.

Let parents set the agenda

Allow parents to define their own needs. This offers them a chance to gain information about issues they may be dealing with at the time. It is also important for parents to be able to ask questions without being embarrassed.

Ideas for getting parents and children to talk

- Teach parents that listening can be even more important than talking.
- Offer information about the importance of parent-child communications to parents on their own turf: at the worksite, in the home, at the gym, and at the church, synagogue, or mosque.
- Promote the value of parent-child communication among youth; encourage teens to ask their parents for information and guidance.
- Give families the courage and motivation to turn off the television and talk. Begin simply by reminding families that time spent together builds strong families.
- Develop volunteer activities for parents and children to do together: serving food at a soup kitchen or cleaning up a littered highway.
- Encourage family dinner or breakfast hours as a time for sharing experiences and personal events.
- Encourage a faith community, employer, school, or community organization to sponsor parent-child communications programs.
- Organize opportunities for parents and their teens to socialize together: a neighborhood picnic, a church social, or a school Super Bowl party.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE WAYS TEENS GROW UP...

**See Chapter 2 (Volume 1)
“Tailoring Pregnancy
Prevention Programs to
Stages of Adolescent
Development.”**

The **Family Guidance Center** in St. Joseph’s, Missouri, collects questions anonymously and answers them at the next class session. Answering the questions this way allows parents the freedom to ask about anything they want and makes class content much more meaningful.

Have teens and parents practice listening skills

Talking together in class about difficult and sometimes embarrassing issues—and learning how to listen—helps promote positive communication at home.

The **Family Guidance Center** uses a variety of ways to get parents and teens talking together, from a “Human Sexuality Board Game” to a pretend “Dear Abby” advice column activity.

Teach parents about the developmental stages of youth

Educating parents about the stages of adolescent development allows parents to better communicate with their children. It helps them get their point across effectively and helps them adjust their expectations for teen behavior.

Know the cultural norms and literacy levels of teen and parent participants

Programs should consider surveying area adults and teens

about their values and feelings on sexual issues. This will reveal important information about what parents and their children want in discussions of sexuality and relationships.

Before they began their efforts with parents, **Plain Talk Seattle** surveyed adults and youth in the area to get a feel for their cultural values about sexual issues. Plain Talk then developed classroom activities that reflected those values.

It is also important to make communications materials as easy to understand as possible. Materials need to be appropriate for the language and literacy level of participants, allowing both parents and teens of any educational level to comprehend them. Materials should use examples or situations that reflect real-life issues and that are relevant to the community.

Innovative parent-child communication programs

Several promising parent-child communications programs have been developed in recent years. These programs tend to focus on sexual issues, but the basic message is the same no matter

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

- **try a humorous approach when recruiting participants**
- **class size is important—too small and discussions will flop; too big and no one will have a chance to talk (try for at least 6 participants)**
- **try to work with parent-child couples of the same gender to help avoid embarrassment when discussing sensitive subjects like menstruation or wet dreams**

what the topic: Parents and teens need to talk *together* about values, experiences, and expectations.

Cortland, New York: A Lunch 'n' Learn Work-Site Program

Reaching parents is often the greatest obstacle to success for any program. The **Zero Adolescent Pregnancy (ZAP)** program in rural Cortland, New York, decided to take their program directly to worksites. ZAP's program, called "Lunch 'n' Learn—How to Talk With Your Teens About Sex," is offered

through many area employers, both large and small.

The course is given once a week for six weeks over a brown bag lunch. It focuses on helping parents and their children develop open and honest communications. Participants are recruited directly by the employer through posters, paycheck stuffers, memos, and e-mail. Businesses are asked to participate through personal phone calls, mailings, networking, and advertising in the local newspaper.

FIELD NOTES

Diversity considerations when involving parents

- Programs that work with immigrant cultures need to get a clear picture of how parents and children deal with acculturation differently. The children may be more "Americanized" than their parents—perhaps becoming more independent as a result—and, therefore, programs that work with immigrant parents and their children need to reflect such differences.
- For many cultures and individuals, sexuality is very private. It may not be possible to start the discussion with sexuality or pregnancy prevention. A better tack may be to start with less-charged topics, probe for sensitivities, and gradually move to issues related to sexuality.
- Some minority cultures have had negative experiences with the way contraception and birth control have been promoted in their communities. Programs need to know this history.
- There may be parents in the class who were themselves teen parents. Programs need to be sensitive to this.

ZAP's facilitator conducts a survey of participants before the first class. Topics requested by parents have included:

- peer pressure and dating;
- family planning;
- sexual decisionmaking and values;
- STDs/AIDS;
- homosexuality;
- masturbation;
- puberty; and
- sexual assault and rape.

To break the ice, the facilitator encourages participants to bring pictures of their children and share funny stories. During the class itself, ZAP offers parents precise information on what to say and how and when to say it, as well as specific information on child and adolescent development. Although the course is called "How to Talk With Your Kids About Sex," ZAP's facilitator includes general communication issues in classroom discussion to help parents talk with their teens about all kinds of subjects.

Seattle, Washington: Plain Talk for Parents—A Community-Wide Approach

One of five community programs funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, **Plain Talk Seattle** is a community-wide campaign

to promote teen health through training workshops for parents, educators, youth workers, and health care providers. The program helps parents communicate with their children about sexual issues and relationships. Four one-hour classes are offered to parents at area schools, libraries, churches, and other similar settings. During the class, parents of children grades 4 through 12 are encouraged to share family values on sexuality and sexual relationships, and to become advocates for teen health and sexuality issues in their community. Videos, worksheets, and role plays strengthen and encourage classroom discussion.

Plain Talk Seattle has developed a complete training package and provides them to many parent and parent-school organizations and local agencies. For communities where many different languages are spoken, classes are offered with help from trained English as a Second Language (ESL) coaches or translators. Participants are

MANY PARENTS ARE HUNGRY FOR INFORMATION BUT HESITANT TO PARTICIPATE...

"Sometimes the courageous souls who attend are mobbed after class by those who did not. They are pumped for information and strategies for talking with their own teens."

Andrea Rankin, ZAP Director

recruited through local media and personal contacts with schools and other sponsoring agencies.

The classes offered are: Personal Boundaries, Sex on TV, Decision Making, and Healthy Neighborhoods. A survey conducted afterward is used to track the impact of the class and to gain feedback on course content, classroom activities, and printed information.

St. Joseph, Missouri: Parents and Teens Learn Together

The Family Planning Department of the **Family Guidance Center** in St. Joseph, Missouri, serves nine counties in rural northwest Missouri, an area with high rates of teen pregnancy. The Family Guidance Center offers reproductive health services and pregnancy counseling as well as sexuality and family life programs with schools and other local organizations in an area where most local schools do not offer comprehensive sexuality education.

Working with the support of parent groups, youth organizations, local religious institutions, and area educators, the Family Guidance Center offers a series of six parent-child sexuality education classes to:

- mothers and daughters aged 9-12;
- mothers and daughters aged 13-17;
- fathers and sons aged 9-12; and
- fathers and sons aged 13-17.

The first class is for parents only, offering an overview of the course and information on the role of the parent in the classroom and at home. The importance of including the nonparticipating parent is also stressed. The classes that follow cover biology, reproduction, pregnancy and childbirth, and feelings and values. Classes for parents and older teens (ages 13-17) also include information about birth control methods, breast and pelvic examinations, STDs and HIV, teenage sexual

PLAIN TALK FOR PARENTS— A SPRINGBOARD FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

Many other community activities have developed as a result of Plain Talk's efforts:

- the opening of a school-linked health center
- a Plain Talk Training Institute
- a recent public policy forum on teen health issues

behavior, values clarification, and decisionmaking and communications skills.

To keep embarrassment to a minimum, the instructor places a "question box" at the back of the classroom where individual participants can place questions anonymously. The instructor answers the questions at the following week's class session.

One of the most popular exercises has been the "Dear Abby" activity. This game helps parent-child pairs focus on decision-making and problem solving in a relevant, fun way. The class is divided into groups of two parent-child pairs. Each group is given a "Dear Abby" card with a letter asking for advice. Developing the answer allows parents and their children to begin discussing differing values, feelings, and beliefs.

Parent participants report feeling closer to their children, and say that they will continue to talk with them about sexual issues outside of class. Teen and pre-teen participants say that they develop a more positive understanding of the values and beliefs of their parents, and that they feel more comfortable talking about sexual issues with their parents after taking the class.

FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER KEYS TO SUCCESS

- **small classes**
- **real-life, relevant topics geared to specific age groups**
- **varied activities that reinforce learning and foster skills-building**
- **shared participation that creates a bond between parents and teens**

Girls Inc.

Girls Inc. is a youth organization which, for the past 50 years, has dedicated itself to helping girls become "bold, smart, and strong." Girls Inc. serves over 350,000 girls ages 6 to 18 in over 1,000 communities across the country through educational programs that encourage girls to take risks and master challenges. Programming includes education, media literacy, health, sports, and substance abuse and pregnancy prevention.

Among its teen pregnancy prevention programs, **Growing Together** is the most important in helping parents and their daughters communicate about sex and pregnancy. In five, 90-minute classes, Growing Together works to increase communication between parents and daughters about sexuality, reinforce the idea that parents are the primary sexuality educators of their children, help parents learn how to start conversations and answer questions about

Developing a parent-child communications program

- ☐ Create a planning committee, including community leaders, members of the school community, business people, clergy, teens, and others.
- ☐ Assess community needs and values.
- ☐ Set content area and program goals. Set realistic participation targets.
- ☐ Gather materials from established programs and review. Choose the approach that will best meet identified needs.
- ☐ Learn about local PTA and public and private school systems. Enlist their support and involvement.
- ☐ Secure financial and in-kind support.
- ☐ Prepare promotional materials to show the benefit of the program to potential sponsoring agencies, business leaders, faith communities, and participants.
- ☐ Recruit and train class leaders/facilitators. Choose class sites.
- ☐ Market the program to potential sponsors and participants:
 - ☐ Circulate press releases and place advertisements with local media.
 - ☐ Make personal contacts with community organizations like the YWCA and YMCA, the PTA, and religious institutions as well as area service clubs, Chambers of Commerce, local industry councils, and human resources groups.
 - ☐ Place posters in area department stores, malls, schools, and other community gathering places.
- ☐ Prepare and order materials for classes, including videos, classroom activities, homework, and printed information.
- ☐ Develop any evaluation instruments that will be needed, such as pre- and post-course surveys.
- ☐ Make arrangements for props, audio-visual aids, and refreshments.
- ☐ Assess the program to the extent feasible. Meet with facilitators for fine-tuning and program changes.
- ☐ Follow up with mailings, a newsletter, or other communication to reinforce new skills in parent-child communications.

sexuality, and help parents and their children clarify feelings and values.

Let's Talk Month

In 1980, the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Coalition of North Carolina designated October as **Let's Talk Month** to encourage parents in their role as the primary sexuality educators of their children. In 1997,

Advocates for Youth, a national youth advocacy organization began a national promotion of Let's Talk Month, encouraging every state, community, religious institution, school, youth organization, and parent to get involved. Its extensive *Let's Talk Month Campaign Manual* offers materials, suggestions, and organizing tips for community groups.

The goals of Let's Talk Month are to provide parents with factual information, to help them feel more comfortable discussing sexual matters with their children, and to encourage ongoing communication. The typical schedule has a variety of activities, including:

- press conferences;
- film festivals;
- parent/child sexuality education seminars;

- teen parent panel discussions;
- lecture series;
- clergy conferences;
- professional training programs for educators; and
- teen theater performances.

Some communities offer special events for teens as well, such as teen essay and/or poster contests and awards for outstanding local teens. Suggestions for lecture topics include healthy relationships, being an "askable" parent, peer pressure, sexual relationships, abstinence/postponing sexual activity, HIV/STDs and other health issues, and life and career planning.

"Working together, parents and their communities can provide the information and support necessary to prepare today's young people for their responsibilities as adults and parents of tomorrow."

*North Carolina Gov.
James B. Hunt Jr. in his 1995
Let's Talk Month Proclamation*

Planning and carrying out a *Let's Talk Month* campaign

- ☐ Organize a community advisory board. Be sure to include representatives from all important community groups, including teens.
- ☐ Think about possible nontraditional partners, such as detention centers, group homes, child care centers, and foster parents. Send them promotional mailings.
- ☐ Encourage the mayor and city or county legislative body to endorse the campaign with an official proclamation.
- ☐ Involve the media as much as possible through press releases, feature stories, ads, interviews, and public service announcements.
- ☐ Develop a list of activities and a calendar of events.
- ☐ Schedule dates, times, and locations of all activities. Be sure to consider transportation limitations.
- ☐ Send a promotional mailing to schools, businesses, service clubs, social service agencies, religious organizations, and the local media.
- ☐ Post program listings throughout the community.
- ☐ Assess the effectiveness of each activity to the extent feasible and decide if that activity will be repeated during subsequent campaigns.
- ☐ Send a personal thank-you note to each program participant.
- ☐ Follow up with ads or a letter to the editor of the local newspaper thanking the community for its involvement.

Why involve other adults in teen pregnancy prevention? Because they make a difference one teen at a time

Parents do the best they can, but often teens need more adult involvement in their lives—particularly those kids in single-parent families or whose parents are not available to them. Studies show that involving adults in the lives of teens can be important. Teens who have adult role models are less likely to get pregnant, cause a pregnancy, or engage in substance abuse or criminal behavior.

Research also shows that even youth development programs whose primary goal is not teen pregnancy prevention may act to reduce teen pregnancy among participants (Kirby, 1997). For example, a poor, fifteen-year-old girl, whether she lives in a city or the rural American countryside, can feel powerless to make decisions that will positively influence her life. College is probably not even an option: just finishing high school will be a challenge. She has no money for transportation outside of her immediate community, and sees no alternatives for her future other than as a poor, teen parent. Who can help her and how? By focusing on education, employment, and life options, programs may reduce teen

pregnancy rates among girls like her, while helping them with other issues at the same time.

Program strategies for building relationships among teens and adults

Many of the programs working to bring adults and youth together use the following strategies to foster positive relationships. The examples mentioned here are described in more detail later in this chapter.

Offer positive role models to youth

Mentoring programs often work with teens who have few positive adult influences in their lives.

Cincinnati's **Project ASPIRE** helps teens think about the future by developing a positive relationship with a caring adult who has already been successful in starting a career. This strategy offers the student a chance to see that life holds options other than teen parenthood, crime, or a dead-end job. Project ASPIRE also focuses on helping all mentored students, even those who may not be planning on attending college, to set and meet academic goals.

Liability issues when working with adult volunteers

Safety and liability issues must be taken into consideration when developing programs that include adult involvement in the lives of youth. Screening the adults who participate in mentoring activities is necessary. Failure by a volunteer candidate to complete the screening process should be considered a red flag because it may indicate that the applicant has something to hide. The following recommendations are adapted from a guide on screening potential volunteers in youth development organizations, developed by the **National Collaboration for Youth**.

Assess the level of risk for child sexual abuse at the organization's activities based on factors such as location, frequency and duration of meetings, monitoring of activities, and parental involvement. For example, a mentoring program with activities and meetings that are held in public places, such as schools, would present a lower risk than a program with activities that occur in private homes.

FIELD NOTES

Decide what screening information is necessary

to determine if a potential volunteer poses a risk for child sexual abuse:

- a past history of sexual abuse or conviction of any crime dealing with children
- a history of sexually exploitative behavior or violence
- termination from a paid or volunteer position because of misconduct with a child

Choose appropriate screening tools. Based on the level of risk, an organization may choose one of three levels of screening:

Basic screening

- information provided by the applicant
- references provided by the applicant
- personal interviews

Intermediate screening (may be necessary for programs that will involve a fair amount of unsupervised contact between volunteers and children)

- home visits
- checks against state criminal and sex offender registries

Comprehensive screening (probably not necessary for every volunteer or for every program)

- checks against FBI criminal records
- checks against national child abuse registries
- psychological evaluations

Encourage parents, adults, and schools to work together

Positive influence works best when all the sources of influence are working together.

EPIC in Buffalo, NY, helps parents and teachers work together to help children develop a positive sense of values and a strong sense of right and wrong.

The **Teen Outreach Program (TOP)** in Roanoke, VA, holds monthly family night out events to allow parents and mentors to come together in celebration of young people and their importance in the community.

Encourage long-term relationships between teens and adults

Most mentoring programs ask that mentors make a commitment of at least one year.

However, many mentors and teens continue to have positive relationships long after the mentoring experience has ended.

Innovative adult involvement programs

With more and more children living in single-parent families, the involvement of an adult outside the family unit can be crucial. This section provides examples of programs that have worked in a variety of communities. Some seek to address

directly the problem of teen pregnancy; others focus on other related problems, like school failure, which are strongly associated with risk of teen pregnancy.

Cincinnati, Ohio: Project ASPIRE

In 1987, Procter & Gamble (P&G) decided to address the teen dropout rate in Cincinnati with an adult-teen mentoring project. With help from the local government, the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, and the Cincinnati Public School System, P&G began its pilot project at Cincinnati's Woodward High School with 100 employees and students.

Project ASPIRE (which stands for *advise, support, prepare, inform, respect, and encourage*) is designed to "assist students in developing attitudes necessary to succeed in an academic program and to provide opportunities for personal development and success," through building self-esteem and cultivating a positive attitude toward learning. Project ASPIRE now matches over 150 students with mentors from both P&G and the community at large.

The program has a simple philosophy—one caring adult for every teen. Although a mentor's commitment is initially for one year, many mentors become

friends with their students and continue their relationship for a long time. Mentors must be confident, enthusiastic about the program, and genuinely interested in the student, and they must meet with their student at least once a month. Primary responsibilities include helping the student with study habits and school assignments, working with the student to overcome difficulties standing in the way of future success, showing the student how to use outside resources, and guiding the student in setting and reaching short- and long-term life goals.

Mentors are also in contact with the student's parents, teachers, and counselors and may receive a copy of the student's report card, attend school functions, participate in academic activities, and go to other outside events with their student. They document a

student's progress on a quarterly basis with simple forms that record specific goals set and attained, offering important feedback and encouragement.

Project ASPIRE has developed specific mentoring components to meet the needs of three different types of students—high-risk teens, career-oriented youth, and college-bound students.

For high-risk teens, mentors,

- meet with parents and teachers to set goals for the student;
- help encourage good study habits;
- offer tutoring and counseling when necessary; and
- periodically evaluate goals to attaining specific skills and attitudes.

MEASURING SUCCESS IN NUMBERS

Since Project ASPIRE began:

- **the dropout rate and the number of discipline referrals at Woodward High School have declined**

In 1990:

- **86% of ASPIRE students graduating from high school went on to college, while only 25% of non-ASPIRE students went to college**

MEASURING SUCCESS IN WORDS

“...what I like about my mentor is that I can trust him and he can help me with any problem I have.”

Terrell Larkin, a Project ASPIRE student

For work-oriented youth, mentors:

- encourage the student to participate in job-preparation programs;
- offer information on careers;
- help the teen select a course of study in high school;
- assist in developing work habits and good conduct;
- help the teen build a resume; and
- encourage the student to dress neatly and use proper language.

For college-bound students, mentors:

- help the teen prepare admissions and financial aid applications;
- visit or arrange visits to college campuses and information sessions;
- assist students in study skills and test preparation; and
- help with decisions on courses of study.

BIG BROTHERS/BIG SISTERS WORKS

According to a rigorous evaluation, mentored teens were:

- **46% less likely to start using drugs**
- **27% less likely to begin using alcohol**
- **33% less likely to hit someone**

and they demonstrated better:

- **school attendance**
- **school performance**
- **attitudes toward completing schoolwork**
- **peer and family relationships**

than unmentored teens

Public/Private Ventures, 1996

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America is the country's oldest mentoring organization and currently maintains 100,000 active mentoring relationships nationwide. Each local Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America agency is autonomous. Affiliates adopt a set of national standards governing the screening of mentors and youth, the training of mentors, the matching process, required meeting frequency, and ongoing supervision.

Most local agencies recruit and screen volunteer mentors, screen and accept youth candidates, and carefully match youth with mentors based on background, stated preferences of youth and adults, and geographic proximity. Most matches meet for three to four hours every week. The adult volunteer is asked to commit at least one year to the match. Many agencies have alternative programs for volunteers who

cannot meet the traditional time requirement.

Boys and Girls Clubs of America

Boys and Girls Clubs of America has a long history of helping teens reach their full potential. First established in 1860 as the Boys Club, this nationally recognized organization expanded its focus to serve the needs of all youth in 1990 when it became the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Boys and Girls Clubs of America now serves some 2.8 million youth annually in over 2,000 clubs across the country.

The Clubs' Skills Mastery and Resistance Training (SMART Moves) and Skills Mastery and Resistance Training for Girls (SMART Girls)

programs focus on primary prevention of drug and alcohol use and premature sexual activity among youth ages 6-15. SMART Moves is based on a team approach to prevention. Its six-component curriculum stresses life skills enrichment, resistance skills, stress reduction, parent-child communications, and community involvement. Club staff, volunteers, and community leaders are trained to provide guidance

Ten innovative ideas for involving adults with teens

1. Ask faith communities, service clubs, and employers how an organization can get involved with area youth.
2. Encourage adults to volunteer at a local school as tutors, mentors, coaches, or advisors to clubs.
3. Meet with the school district's administration to ask them how they are promoting adult involvement and teen pregnancy prevention.
4. Organize a Career Day for youth at worksites, religious institutions, schools, or service clubs.
5. Institute an internship program through worksites, religious organizations, or service clubs.
6. Help youth organizations (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, YMCA, YWCA, schools) implement career planning programs.
7. Provide financial contributions to youth/teen programs or offer a scholarship to teen parents through a local community college.
8. Develop opportunities for youth to meet with adults in social settings, at schools, faith communities, and youth community centers.
9. Help develop a community center where youth and adults can meet. Arrange for intergenerational activities, community campaigns, or skills exchange programs.
10. Encourage adults to be a role model in the life of the child of a close friend or relative.

Starting and maintaining an adult-youth mentoring program

- ☐ Collect information on mentoring programs in this and other communities to learn from their experience.
- ☐ Organize a steering committee that includes parents, business leaders, youth, and other members of the community.
- ☐ Contact the local school administration to help design a program that meets the community's specific needs.
- ☐ Develop program plans, goals, and objectives.
- ☐ Establish procedures to ensure the safety of all participants.
- ☐ Choose a program coordinator who can skillfully recruit students and mentors, provide materials, suggest activities, help resolve conflicts, and evaluate the program. This person will be crucial to the program's success.
- ☐ Begin recruiting mentors.
- ☐ Recruit student candidates. Work with school administrators and teachers to target those who will benefit most from a mentoring relationship.
- ☐ Inform parents and get their permission for students to participate.
- ☐ Develop lists of suggested activities for participants.
- ☐ Set goals for program meetings.
- ☐ Develop goal-setting and feedback forms.
- ☐ Build into the program opportunities for sharing experiences, both mentor-to-mentor and student-to-student.
- ☐ Include opportunities for older students to mentor younger students.
- ☐ Offer volunteer opportunities for those who want to become involved but who may not feel comfortable entering into a mentoring relationship. These opportunities can include:
 - tutoring;
 - judging a science fair;
 - serving on a school committee;
 - speaking in a classroom; or
 - answering the phone for a student hotline.
- ☐ Check in regularly with mentors and students.
- ☐ Conduct program evaluation.

In 1983, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. adopted a resolution including sexuality education and human sexuality programming as components of the Girl Scout program.

on offering the clear and consistent "Say No" message to teens.

The similar SMART Girls program helps young girls ages 10-15 develop healthy and positive attitudes, useful life skills, and enriching lifestyles, and helps them make sound, positive decisions. Female mentors play an important role in the SMART Girls program.

Boy Scouts of America

Founded in 1910, the Boy Scouts of America provides educational programs to boys and young men that build character, citizenship, and personal fitness. Community-based organizations that have goals similar to those of Boy Scouts of America can receive a national charter to become a part of the Boy Scouts of America program. Starting with Tiger Cubs in first grade, Boy Scouts of America has family and community-based programs for boys up to young adulthood, offering participants outdoor activities, life skills training, and character education.

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., the world's largest organization for girls, is open to ages 5 to 17. Its membership totals over 2.5

million girls and over 850,000 adult members, including volunteer leaders, consultants, board members, and staff specialists. Its goal is to meet the special needs of girls in partnership with adult volunteers. Adult troop leaders help young girls live up to their full potential through self-discovery activities in science, the arts, the outdoors, and with people.

Recognizing that teen pregnancy is a serious problem, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. developed a booklet called *Contemporary Issues: Preventing Teenage Pregnancy—Decisions for Your Life*, which outlines specific teen pregnancy prevention activities for troops. These activities include:

- offering factual information to young girls about pregnancy prevention and abstaining from sexual activity; and
- fostering self-esteem and peer support among girls.

The booklet also discusses risk factors for teen pregnancy and various approaches that may help troop leaders in their prevention activities.

Other booklets in the *Contemporary Issues* series offer program suggestions for girls who may be having problems with family conflict or difficulties

in developing a positive self image. *Growing Up Female—Girls are Great* helps troop leaders deal with eating disorders, self-esteem issues, the media, school and social roles, stress, sex roles, and stereotypes. *Facing Family Crises—Caring*

and Coping offers suggestions for dealing with poverty, homelessness, divorce, remarriage, or a death in the family. Both booklets help adult troop leaders develop positive interactions with young girls.

Parents and other adults working together to benefit youth

The two programs highlighted below work to involve both parents and the broader community in the lives of children of all ages, including teens.

EPIC combines the efforts of parents and other adults

Founded in Buffalo, New York,

Every Person Influences

Children, Inc. (EPIC) is a non-profit organization that sponsors community programs throughout New York State and in other areas of the country, including North Carolina, New Jersey, Texas, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania.

EPIC seeks to draw communities together, positively influencing children and strengthening families to prevent teen pregnancy, substance abuse, crime, and juvenile dropout. EPIC offers workshops for parents and training for teachers and support staff, and it encourages collaboration among social service agencies, faith communities, governmental agencies, local businesses, and health care providers.

Workshops, led by EPIC-trained facilitators, are centered around supportive discussions that

WORKING ACROSS THE AGES AND ACROSS THE COMMUNITY TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES

EPIC sponsors:

- workshops for parents
- workshops for fathers
- training for teachers and support staff
- efforts to promote collaboration among community groups

allow parents to exchange experiences and techniques. Information on child/youth developmental stages and ideas to help parents build skills are offered in manuals provided in both English and Spanish.

EPIC offers a range of workshops, in both English and Spanish, for parents of children of all ages—from toddlers to teenagers. It even offers a “Just for Fathers” workshop. For example, workshops for parents of children offer information on:

- communicating with teachers;
- structure and limits;
- coping with daily conflicts;
- rewards and punishments;
- sexuality education in the home;
- sibling rivalry;
- coping with the guilt and stress of working while parenting; and
- building character, conscience, and values.

Workshops for parents of adolescents cover:

- character development;
- communications problems and strategies;
- peer groups and friends,

- identity and independence;
- making and revising rules;
- school issues;
- teen value systems;
- emerging sexuality and teen pregnancy; and
- self-destructive thoughts and actions.

EPIC teacher and support staff training emphasizes character and life skills development. It tries to build strong home/school partnerships and help teachers identify and overcome barriers to parental involvement in the education of their children. EPIC also offers programs for child care providers of very young children.

One innovative example of EPIC's work took place in Westchester County, NY, where the Department of Corrections recently asked EPIC to work with teens who had had their first run-in with the law. EPIC is providing its workshop for parents of young adolescents to the youths' parents, as well as specialized joint parent-teen workshops to help the Department reach its goal of reducing recidivism by at least 15 percent.

The Teen Outreach Program

The Association of Junior Leagues International developed the nationwide **Teen Outreach**

MEASURING A PROGRAM'S SUCCESS BY A TEEN'S SUCCESS

J.T., a young man who often struggled with the temptation to become involved in drug dealing, volunteered with TOP to read to kindergartners in his neighborhood elementary school. His ability to inspire confidence in a shy kindergartner became his motivation to finish high school and begin a career in the military.

Program (TOP) to offer at-risk youth the opportunity to volunteer their services to others in a school-based setting.

TOP offers volunteer opportunities through partnerships with the local health department, area schools, faith communities, local nursing homes, preschools, museums, area businesses, and service clubs such as the Junior League. These partners provide participants, places for volunteer activities, mentors, tutors, role models, and support in celebrating the contributions of youth.

One of the most important elements in TOP Roanoke's program is its family involvement component:

- It plans monthly celebration activities, called "Family Night Out Events," where student participants make presentations showcasing their volunteer activities to their families.
- It works to bridge the gap between home and school by encouraging parents to attend parent-teacher conferences (providing transportation and child care if necessary) and by helping families who might be struggling to communicate

with school personnel. Parental ideas are always sought, from opinions on curriculum content to suggestions for volunteer activities.

One of TOP's main goals is opening lines of communication between teens and their parents. TOP Roanoke empowers parents to share personal values with their children while showing respect for their teens' decisions and values.

TOP Roanoke has a strong mentoring element as well. Adult supervisors from TOP or at the volunteer site act as mentors and role models to teen participants, offering encouragement and guidance in everyday life as well as on the job. Mentors often stay in contact with the young people long after the volunteer experiences have ended.

Conclusion

There are many ways that programs can support increased communication between parents and children and foster stronger connections between adults and young people. One thing that most successful programs have in common is that they help adults make their values known while still respecting young people's values and concerns. At the same time, they convey to youth participants the need to respect and listen to the views of the parents or adults

involved. This mutual respect, seemingly missing from the media's portrayal of youth-adult interaction, is absolutely vital for healthy communication and for healthy youth development. As research affirms, this solid foundation can help teens achieve their full and positive potential and avoid a host of problems, including too-early sexual activity, pregnancy, and drug and alcohol abuse.

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*Executive summary: Making a
difference. An impact study of
Big Brothers/Big Sisters.*
Philadelphia, PA: author
(<http://cpn.org/ppv/ppbbbs.html>)

Programs mentioned in this chapter

Advocates For Youth

Barbara Huberman
Director of Training and Sexuality
Education
1025 Vermont Ave., NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 347-5700

Ask about:

- Let's Talk Month
- *Open Up, Listen Up! Family
Communication about Sexual Health*
- *Talking with TV: A Guide to Starting
Dialogue with Youth*
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention
Clearinghouse

Big Brothers/Big Sisters Of America

230 North 13th St.
Philadelphia, PA 19107-1510
(215) 567-7000
www.bbbsa.org

Ask about:

- Mentoring

Boys and Girls Clubs Of America

Jan Still-Lindeman
1230 West Peachtree St., North
West
Atlanta, GA 30309
(404) 815-5700
Fax: (404) 815-5757

Ask about:

- SMART Moves
- SMART Girls

Boy Scouts Of America

Marilyn Herrington
1325 West Walnut Hill Ln.
Irving, TX 75015-2079
(972) 580-2224

EPIC, Inc.—Every Person Influences Children

Vito Borrello, President
State University College at Buffalo
1300 Elmwood Ave.
Cassidy Hall, Room 340
Buffalo, NY 14222
(716) 886-6396
Fax: (716) 886-0221

Ask about:

- Parent and teacher communications
materials
- EPIC can be purchased as a fully
integrated program with training,
materials, and technical assistance.

Family Guidance Center

Anne Douglas
910 Edmond St.
St. Joseph, MO 64501
(806) 364-1944

Ask about:

- Parent-child sexuality course
materials
- *The Human Sexuality Game*

Other useful resources

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition

Adolescent Pregnancy and Related Health Issues Committee
409 12th St., SW
Washington, DC 20024-2433
(202) 863-2458
Fax: (202) 554-4346

Ask about:

- *Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention: A Compendium of Programs*

Not Me, Not Now

John Riley
Director
Monroe County Department of Communications and Special Events
39 West Main St., Suite 204
Rochester, NY 14614
(716) 428-2380
Fax: (716) 428-3268
www.notmenotnow.org

Ask about:

- *Unlocking the Secret: A Parent's Guide to Communicating with your teens*

One-To-One/The National Mentoring Project

Gail Manza, Executive Director
2801 M St., NW
Washington, DC 20007
(202) 333-3344
www.mentoring.org

Ask about:

- National Collaboration for Youth guide: *Screening Volunteers to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse: A Community Guide for Youth Organizations*
- *ABCs of Mentoring Kit*
- *Partnerships for Success: A Mentoring Program Manual*
- *The Mentoring Training Curriculum*

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

2100 M St., NW
Washington, DC 20037
(202) 261-5655
www.teenpregnancy.org

Ask about:

- *Ten Tips for Parents to Help Their Children Avoid Teen Pregnancy*
- *Families Matter: A Research Synthesis of Family Influences on Teen Pregnancy*
- *Snapshots from the Front Line II: Lessons from Programs That Involve Parents and Other Adults in Teen Pregnancy Prevention*

Project Taking Charge

American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences
1555 King St., 4th Floor
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 706-4600

Ask about:

- *The Project Taking Charge* family life curriculum for young adolescents

Search Institute

700 South Third St., Suite 210
 Minneapolis, MN 55415-1138
 (612) 376-8955
 Fax: (612) 376-8956
www.search-institute.org
 Ask about:

For parents—

- *150 Ways to Show Teens You Care*
- *Creating Intergenerational Community*
- *Ideas for Parents*
- *It Takes More Than Love*
- *Living with 10- to 15-Year-Olds*
- *Parenting with a Purpose*
- *Starting Out Right*
- *What Teens Need to Succeed*

For other adults—

- *101 Asset-building Ideas*
- *All Teens Are Our Teens*
- *A Portrait of Young Adolescents in the 1990s*
- *Working Together for Youth*
- *Understanding Early Adolescence*

SIECUS

Sexuality Information Catalogues
 SIECUS Publications
 130 West 42nd St., Suite 350
 New York, NY 10036-7302
 (212) 819-9770
www.siecus.org
 Ask about:

- *How to Talk to Your Children about AIDS* booklet
- *Talk about Sex*
- *Now What Do I Do?*

(These resources are also available in Spanish.)



Involving the Faith Community in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

by Tom Klaus

T H I S C H A P T E R

Explains the importance of including faith communities in teen pregnancy prevention;

Describes the many assets that faith communities can bring to pregnancy prevention efforts;

Describes ways in which programs and faith communities can work together for pregnancy prevention; and

Provides references and resources for further information.

Key Ideas

in this Chapter

Faith communities are natural and important allies in efforts to reduce teen pregnancy. Their contribution may take a variety of forms, many of which focus on youth development and stronger families generally, rather than sexual behavior specifically.

The key to working effectively with the faith community is trusting, personal relationships built on:

- a shared interest in youth development;
- time invested up front in learning about local faith communities and identifying potential partners; and
- persistent, patient, and continuous efforts.

Involving the Faith Community in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Why involve the faith community?

Programs to reduce teen pregnancy and faith communities are natural partners. A shared interest in strong families and the healthy development of young people provides an excellent foundation for mutually beneficial activities. This chapter describes a variety of ways that religious communities and programs to prevent teen pregnancy can work together productively.

There are at least five reasons to involve faith communities in preventing teen pregnancy. Faith communities:

- focus on values;
- have community credibility;
- have access to young people, parents, and potential volunteers;
- have skills in reducing conflict; and
- are willing to provide in-kind contributions.

Focus on values

Preventing teen pregnancy involves more than just biology. In fact, it touches complex issues of values, personal standards of behavior, power, parent-child relationships, feelings, and beliefs. These issues are at the

core of religious communities—what they teach about, pray over, and communicate. As such, they are natural allies for any program seeking to change the high-risk behavior of teens.

Interestingly, research is beginning to show what many have long known from working with teens—that religious faith and a strong moral sense play vital roles in protecting teenage boys and girls from too-early sexual activity and teen pregnancy. By teaching and preaching religious values, faith communities help shape the character of our children and give them answers to their most heartfelt questions.

- According to the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, 48 percent of 15- to 19-year-old girls said that they were virgins, and nearly one-half of these young

WHAT DOES “FAITH COMMUNITY” MEAN?

In this chapter, the phrase is used in the most inclusive way to refer to churches, synagogues, mosques, meeting houses, and temples within a neighborhood, city, county, or state.

RESEARCH SHOWS...

Religious faith and a strong moral sense play vital roles in protecting teenage boys and girls from too-early sexual activity and teen pregnancy.

women said that the main reason they had abstained from sex was that it was against their religion or morals. No other single reason was cited more often (NCHS, 1995).

- Adolescents who feel religion and prayer are important are more likely to delay sexual

activity than are other teens (Blum and Rinehart, 1997)

- Adolescents reporting regular attendance in religious services are less likely to be sexually active than are other teens (Ecklin and Rochkepertain, 1992).

Community credibility

Many churches and other religious organizations are deeply involved in their communities.

CASE IN POINT

HEART of OKC

When **Healthy, Empowered, And Responsible Teens of Oklahoma City (HEART of OKC)** went looking for partners in the faith community, it was not disappointed. It involved the faith community through an intentional, respectful outreach.

During the planning phase of HEART of OKC, youth and adult members of the faith community were actively involved. They helped identify needs and assets, create neighborhood task forces, and outline a positive youth development plan. Their work focused on selected high-needs neighborhoods.

Through needs assessment activities, the project identified many inner-city congregations that were currently involved in youth development, or had the potential to provide significant and positive resources. HEART of OKC staff members also conducted a personal survey of congregational

leaders from different denominations serving central city neighborhoods.

The survey process showcased several particularly innovative programs that were already actively engaging youth. One included a collaborative sexuality education program co-sponsored by Temple B'nai Israel and the Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ. Every two years these congregations combined their middle school youth groups and provided a four-week program on sexuality and growing up. The series also offered an orientation session for parents. The final session featured the senior clergy from both congregations. Together they talked with the youth about how sexuality and growing-up issues relate to their spiritual growth. The program has been offered for six years now, and rave reviews from youth, their parents, and their congregations follow each series.

Their leadership can help teen pregnancy programs strengthen their presence in the areas they already serve. Even more, faith communities can open doors to new groups. A recent study funded by the American Association of Retired Persons found that each American belongs, on average, to four community groups. The most commonly cited is a religious organization (Love, 1997). The networking potential is substantial.

Moreover, in some communities, religious organizations are some of the only institutions that still function well, have credibility, and can reach out to families with a values-based message.

This community credibility that faith communities bring to a partnership is crucial because it can broaden the perception of a pregnancy prevention effort from a limited, "special interest" project to one that is seen as more closely tied to the larger community.

Access to young people, parents, and potential volunteers

Faith communities typically have a variety of special programs for young people, both boys and girls, and for parents—just the groups that most programs to prevent teen pregnancy target. As such, faith communities should be at the top of any community outreach list.

Parents in particular have an important part to play in preventing adolescent pregnancy, and religious congregations are a good place to reach them.

Parents who are active in a congregation also tend to be active in the lives of their children, and faith communities typically support parents who are concerned for and want to be involved with the lives of their teens.

Faith communities also can be a source of the volunteer help and expertise that many programs need. For example, many churches and other religious organizations have strong traditions of community service

IT TAKES TWO

The **IT TAKES TWO** pregnancy prevention program, which involves professional male and female presentation teams delivering lively, motivational presentations in local schools, began in Des Moines, Iowa, over ten years ago. As it expanded to communities across the state and country, many programs

looked to volunteers from the community. Several turned to the faith community for help. Numerous clergy, representing a variety of traditions and denominations, have been trained as program presenters. These clergy have taken the program to the community and to their own congregations.

FOR MORE ON HANDLING CONFLICT

See Chapter 17 (Volume 3), "Moving Forward in the Face of Conflict."

and volunteering, and can help programs find mentors, public speakers, and other key players. There are few places a program could go to get better expertise or more diverse skills and professional abilities.

Skills in reducing conflict

One of the biggest stumbling blocks to reducing teen pregnancy is the amount of conflict and acrimony that this topic can cause among adults. Accordingly, finding ways to "turn down the heat" is often central to making any progress, and in this connection faith communities may be helpful.

Religious leaders are often skilled at finding common ground between people with diverse views and developing values of tolerance for differences. They strive to bridge differences and make personal connections even in difficult circumstances. These are all essential skills in decreasing the conflict that can surround community-based programs to prevent teen pregnancy.

Willingness to make in-kind contributions

Finally, faith communities can offer significant in-kind contributions, such as mailing lists, space in newsletters and newspapers, meeting facilities, child care, office support, help with transportation, and related services.

Getting started on a partnership

Local faith communities generally are structured around congregations, religious organizations, or

individuals. In addition, many communities have a variety of "interfaith" or ecumenical councils where leaders of various faith groups come together for common purposes. Statewide, they may be represented by denominational offices, affiliates of national religious organizations, or public issue groups with religious affiliations. Some major faiths also have national and even international organizations. Programs may choose to focus on individual

THINKING ABOUT THE MEANING OF CONGREGATION...

A congregation is a place where parents and their children can be found at regular weekly activities, such as worship times, religious education, family fellowship, and committee meetings, as well as at special faith-based family events.

congregations or pursue relationships with these larger entities.

Forming partnerships with faith communities requires some up-front research and some leg work. Here are several ideas of where to begin and what to do.

Learn about local faith communities

Programs can begin by learning about the number and variety of faith communities in the area or region. They should also be aware of the longstanding involvement of many religious organizations

in community action and social work generally. The YMCA, YWCA, Lutheran Social Services, B'nai Brith, and Catholic Charities are among the oldest and best-known youth-serving agencies. Other faith-based service groups, such as Habitat for Humanity, are more recent. Many individual congregations and faith communities are active in social service work and youth development activities, such as working with homeless families, outreach groups, religious education, athletics, child care and preschool programs, and scout troops.

FIELD NOTES

10 tips for program staff who work with faith communities

1. Believe that the work requires the involvement of the faith community as a whole.
2. Put faith communities on a list of key friends and allies.
3. Get to know the members of individual congregations, parishes, temples, mosques, and other faith communities. Learn and understand everything possible about the beliefs and practices of each.
4. Acknowledge and respect the values of a faith community, even if they differ from those of the program staff.
5. Ask members of a faith community to explain their traditions, beliefs, and perspectives. Staff should not act as though they know these traditions when they do not.
6. Acknowledge biases or stereotypes. Staff should ask trusted members of a faith community to speak up when they see them operating from these biases.
7. Receive a faith community as a full partner in the program's efforts. Allow it to inform staff just as staff would like to inform it.
8. Focus on the points of agreement the program has with a faith community. Do not let the points of disagreement prevent collaboration on specific activities.
9. Publicly and privately acknowledge and appreciate the work a faith community has already been doing with its own youth.
10. Consistently do all of the above with every member of a faith community.

WAYS TO LEARN ABOUT FAITH COMMUNITIES

- **talk to others in the program who may be active in various faith groups or know about this general area**
- **talk to community leaders**
- **seek the advice of local foundations, who typically know their community well**
- **use the library**
- **visit public meetings of various faith communities, including worship services**
- **read their publications (this is a good way to learn a lot about the membership and its faith and practices)**

Select potential partners

After developing a general understanding of the faith communities active in the area, programs will need to select a few as potential partners. The most promising possibilities will be those that already show signs of being interested in the issue of preventing teen pregnancy. For example, potential faith community partners are probably:

- known for their work with teens (for example, they might have a youth office and staff member assigned to youth work, activities and programs for kids and teens, youth serving in leadership roles); the more involved a particular faith community already is with youth, the more likely it is to become involved with a pregnancy prevention project;
- involved in community initiatives on other youth social problems, like drug and alcohol abuse, tobacco use, violence, poverty, and juvenile crime; and

- already partnering with other nonprofit organizations on issues involving youth.

A second, important step, forgotten by many of those seeking to work with the faith community, is to understand the faith context of that organization and how it might influence a group's approach to teen pregnancy prevention. Each faith community will have a different "starting point" on teen pregnancy—that is, its basic ideas and beliefs about young people, sexuality, and outreach to the community.

Programs also should learn about who makes decisions. Some faith groups are governed locally, with each individual house of worship or faith leader exercising autonomous decision-making. For others, a leadership group (such as a parish council or board) will be the decision-making body. Some faith communities involve the whole membership in decisions. Still others are guided by regional and national leadership groups that establish policy and set priorities within a denomination.

Reach out respectfully and carefully

With the basic research done, programs can make concrete overtures to specific faith communities by:

- asking to meet with faith leaders—the best place to start is usually one-on-one meetings;
- outlining the problem of teen pregnancy;
- explaining what the program is already doing; and
- raising the issue of the faith community becoming more involved in teen pregnancy prevention.

In beginning the process of establishing a relationship—and possibly even a concrete program—with one or more groups, there are two key ideas for programs to keep in mind.

If faith communities are to sign on as partners in preventing teen pregnancy, they must first agree that teen pregnancy is a problem. This may seem like stating the obvious, but it bears emphasis. Not all groups and individuals see teen pregnancy as a problem, or perhaps not as a very important one, so it is essential that any real relationship begin with some basic information and explanation. Points to cover:

- Why is teen pregnancy a problem?
- What are its consequences?
- How large a problem is it in the community?
- Is it getting worse or getting better?
- What is its relevance to this particular faith community and why should this group care?

KEYS TO SUCCESS WHEN SELECTING POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Recognize that faith communities have varied starting points on teen pregnancy:

- **basic ideas and beliefs about young people, sexuality, and community outreach will differ from community to community.**

Recognize that faith communities have varied decision-making structures. Decisions can be made by:

- **individual faith leaders;**
- **leadership groups, such as a parish council;**
- **the entire membership; or**
- **regional or national denomination leaders.**

At any initial meetings, staff should be prepared to cover this ground. Without a common understanding of the problem, little energy for a real partnership will develop.

To help reduce teen pregnancy, faith communities do not have to implement sexuality education programs or become family planning clinics. In particular, they do not have to change their position on the value of delaying sex until marriage. This may be the most important idea of all. Much of what faith communities already do is helping to reduce teen pregnancy, and at no point should it be suggested that unless they begin providing sex education or related services, they are not helping to solve the problem. It may be that a particular faith community *will* want to support contraceptive clinics or sexuality education, but many will not, and it is vitally important that whatever their take on sex education, they still be among a program's friends and colleagues.

Faith communities are already making an enormous contribution through their work with youth generally, their support of families and marriage, their efforts to improve parent-child communication, their child care services and after-school programs, their sport and recreational activities, and their direct engagement with values and moral choices. Make it clear that regardless of what specific activities are undertaken, programs and faith communities can support each other as each tries to reach the young people within their particular sphere of influence. The main message to faith groups is one of support and respect.

At some point, a program may want to ask a community to do something more explicitly aimed at preventing teen pregnancy, but in making such a pitch, it is essential for programs to honor what faith communities are already doing.

One model for faith-based youth development is **Uniting Congregations for Youth Development**. This is a multi-year project designed to equip faith communities to strengthen the developmental foundation that all children and youth need to grow up healthy. The project offers the opportunity for youth workers to participate in inter-faith networks. They receive

REMEMBER...

Research increasingly suggests that broad youth development programs—some of the best of which are offered through faith communities—can make significant dents in teen pregnancy.

training and resource material. They also develop community-wide strategies for positive youth development.

The project is now being piloted in seven communities throughout the country.

As shown by the **Church Mentoring Network**, mentoring is a strategy that teen pregnancy prevention initiatives and the faith community may have in common. Formed in 1991, the Network believes that

congregations are key players in positive youth development. The Network's goal is to take a leadership role in starting mentoring and tutoring projects in faith communities. It also replicates successful mentoring projects in other faith communities. In addition, it serves as a resource center for organizations establishing their own programs. Volunteers trained by the Church Mentoring Network learn how to be mentors and how to train other mentors in their own faith communities.

CASE IN POINT

Fellowship of Friends

The **Chicago Fellowship of Friends** has a 22-year history of working in the Cabrini-Green Housing Project. For years, this Quaker congregation has been providing after-school programming for students in kindergarten through grade seven. Parents sign a release to allow some religious instruction. However, students are also taught basic social skills, friendship skills, and nonviolent conflict resolution skills.

The Chicago Fellowship of Friends originally started as a youth ministry in the 1970s. It has now become a faith community in its own right for people of all ages. Young men and women who grew up with the Chicago Fellowship of Friends are bringing their families back. They also

want to give back by offering to other youth what they received themselves.

The surrounding neighborhood turned to the Chicago Fellowship of Friends when violence nearly closed down a neighborhood school. The Fellowship and the local ministerial association created a plan to keep the school open and free of violence. The Superintendent of Schools agreed to let them try it. The plan included parents' meetings, Saturday activities for students, and escorts to accompany children to school. The school also provided a room where families could receive social services. The project quickly became a pilot program that will soon be expanded to several other schools in the district.

Be concrete

Once on firm ground, programs can offer some concrete suggestions about what the faith community might do to help reduce teen pregnancy and how such activities would fit in with other parts of the program. For example, in *Nine Tips to Help Faith Leaders and Their Communities Address Teen Pregnancy*, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy provides suggestions and resources to faith communities (see Appendix at the end of the chapter). A faith community will not join in an activity that conflicts with its beliefs and values, so programs should not require the church to support everything a prevention program does as a condition of partnership. However, a conflict in one area may still mean that a faith community can participate in other areas.

Offering a list of work needed, resources required, and activities to be undertaken gives a faith community the opportunity to choose activities that suit it best. Examples of tangible activities include:

- providing worship service bulletin inserts and flyers that draw attention to teen pregnancy;
- creating teen pregnancy-focused interfaith/interdenominational worship services with clergy;
- offering to speak to religious education classes;
- sponsoring a coffee or brunch for clergy and other faith community leaders;
- visiting ministerial or clergy associations to raise awareness of the teen pregnancy problem;
- inviting faith community leaders to attend professional conferences, seminars, and training sessions;
- sponsoring seminars and other learning events just for the faith community or its leaders;
- using direct mail to keep the issue of teen pregnancy before the faith community;
- talking with faith community leaders to exchange information about each other's work; and
- writing, printing, and distributing placemats or other materials that provide facts and information about teen pregnancy for use at fellowship dinners.

An additional way to engage a given faith community is to ask for its participation in a community-wide coalition focused on preventing teen pregnancy. A faith community can actively participate in a coalition by:

- becoming full members;
- sending representatives to regular meetings;
- acknowledging coalition leadership at worship services and other public meetings of the congregation;
- printing coalition announcements in publications;
- bringing the concerns of the coalition before the membership through sermons, lessons, and other types of presentations;
- inviting coalition leaders to speak to groups, committees, and classes within the faith community; and
- publicly supporting the work of the coalition.

Some faith communities may be willing to help offer sexuality education and even family planning services within the context of their faith traditions. A strong case can be made that providing such information in the context of personal faith and spiritual values can be very effective.

Many young people are receptive to such education when it comes from their faith community. Parents in particular are unlikely to object because they are confident that the instruction offers good information in the context of their faith's teachings. Most important, sexuality education from the viewpoint of a faith community encourages young people to consider sexuality in the context of faith and spiritual values.

If a faith community is uncomfortable with highly visible roles, it can still be a vital "behind the scenes" player by, for example, offering volunteer leaders for

CASE IN POINT

Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington

Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington learned just how much a faith community can offer. Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church offered two day care centers for the community. But Allen Chapel's pastor saw a greater need. He had a vision for a family planning clinic that would offer on-site services. He brought together leaders of his congregation and of Planned Parenthood

of Metropolitan Washington to share his vision. The result was a successful collaboration that continues today. The church provided space and other basic support for the clinic. Planned Parenthood provided the expertise and staff to run the clinic for 15 to 20 hours each week. Together a congregation and a Planned Parenthood helped a community receive much-needed services.

events and programs, or providing meeting space for program activities and special events.

Define the relationship

It is important for programs to define the relationship between their initiatives and the faith community. Many questions need to be explored together:

- How will the faith community be affiliated? Will it be an active member? Does it prefer to simply offer support from a distance?
- Does the faith organization feel comfortable making referrals to other members of the coalition (where relevant)?

Is it appropriate to make referrals to the faith organization? For what services?

- How much direction over the characteristics and growth of the community program does the faith group expect to provide? How will this direction happen? Will representatives be appointed to a governing board, various committees, or both?

This discussion helps establish a trusting, respectful, and clear relationship. It also allows programs to get to know, and be known better by, the faith community.

CASE IN POINT

National Black Religious Summit on Sexuality

An extensive effort to increase the capacity of churches to deal with teen pregnancy is currently being conducted by the **National Black Religious Summit on Sexuality**. In the summer of 1997, over 250 people met in the first Summit, which was hosted by the Howard University School of Divinity and sponsored by the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. The Summit addressed issues of sexuality, teen pregnancy prevention, and other matters of

reproductive health. Primarily it sought "to break the silence on previously taboo topics and develop a sound theological framework" from which to address sexuality issues within churches. This Summit is a valuable resource for facilitating similar dialogues at the local or statewide level. A second Summit took place in 1998, and additional Summits are planned. Videos and print materials are available from the 1997 Summit.

Sustaining a relationship with faith community partners

Several activities can help turn a new partnership with the faith community into a long-term relationship.

Make sure communication is regular and personal

A successful partnership needs to be nourished by an ongoing conversation that includes all those involved. This dialogue allows the entire group to find common ground as well as to understand what ground cannot be shared. In addition, programs should solicit feedback on

substantive issues from faith community partners. They are knowledgeable about youth and working in the community, and their feedback, observations, and suggestions can strengthen a teen pregnancy prevention initiative.

As programs establish and continue a dialogue, they need to remember that similar conversations also may be going on within the faith community itself. In many communities, teen pregnancy can be a controversial issue. The members may have agreed that teen pregnancy

CASE IN POINT

Our Lady of Guadeloupe Catholic Church

Members of **Our Lady of Guadeloupe Catholic Church** in Denver, Colorado, were concerned that uninsured people in the predominantly Latino neighborhood could not get decent, basic health care. They decided to establish a free health clinic. Exams, immunizations, and diabetes screening are among the services offered by Clínica Tpeyac. As the clinic's clientele grew, staff began to focus on the needs of the young people in the neighborhood and parish. In response, the clinic started **Nuestros Milagros** (Our Miracles) to provide regular activities for youth.

In September 1997, the clinic conducted a survey of more than 100 parish and neighborhood youth. In the survey, the youth identified two problems that they felt the clinic and the church needed to address—drug abuse and teen pregnancy. Clinic, church, and youth leaders from the Nuestrs Milagros youth group agreed to focus on the issue of teen pregnancy. By the end of the year, they were preparing a training for peer educators and writing curricula for programs. By spring of 1998, the peer educators were ready for their programs.

is a problem, but may have serious disagreements about the best way to solve the problem. Just because congregations sit at one table does not mean they agree on all things. The nature and depth of these differences will affect efforts to unite the faith community on the issue of teen pregnancy. A program's intentional effort to create ongoing dialogue among members of the faith community will help them stay connected to the work.

Recognize the faith community's contribution

Appreciate the efforts made by the faith community to be a partner in prevention. Acknowledge its contributions to building

those personal "assets" that reduce the risks for adolescents. Programs should provide public acknowledgment of the efforts being made by their faith community partners, and express personal thanks to their partners.

Explore additional ways to work together

The more programs involve the faith community, the more opportunities for additional collaboration will materialize. As new ways open for programs and faith communities to work together, programs should be ready to explore the opening frontiers with faith community partners with the idea that it should be good for both.

Conclusion

The faith community is a key constituent in any community or state. When a teen pregnancy prevention program initiates and carries out a partnership with a faith community that is

characterized by positive intention, respect, and careful attention to cultivating areas of agreement and resolving potential areas of disagreement, it has everything to gain.

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Programs mentioned in this chapter

Allen Chapel AME Church

Rev. Leon Lipscombe
2498 Alabama Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20020
(202) 889-7296
Fax: (202) 889-2198

Chicago Fellowship of Friends

Steve and Marlene Pedigo, Co-Pastors
515 W. Oak
Chicago, IL 60610
(312) 944-4493

Church Mentoring Network

Bennie L. Scott, Area Mentoring Director
210 N. Community Center
3601 N. Broad St.
Philadelphia, PA 19140
(215) 223-8574
Fax: (215) 223-2105

Clínica Tpeyac, Nuestros

Milagros, and Our Lady of

Guadeloupe Catholic Church

Florencia Gonzalez or Virginia Munoz
3617 Kalamath St.
Denver, CO 80211
(303) 458-5302
Fax: (303) 433-7452

HEART of OKC

Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy
Sharon Rodine, Project Director
420 N.W. 13th St., Suite 101
Oklahoma City, OK 73103
(405) 236-5437
Fax: (405) 236-1690
Email: sjrodine@aol.com

IT TAKES TWO and Worth The Wait: Pregnancy Prevention

Legacy Resource Group

Tom Klaus, President

P.O. Box 700

Carlisle, Iowa 50047

(515) 989-3360

Fax: (515) 989-3391

Email: legacyrg1@aol.comwww.legacyrgl.com**National Black Religious Summit on Sexuality**

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Rev. Carlton Veazy, Executive Director

1025 Vermont Ave., NW, #1130

Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 628-7700

Fax: (202) 628-7716

Email: info@rerc.orgWebsite: www.rerc.org**Uniting Congregations for Youth Development**

Search Institute

Ann Betz, Project Manager

Thresher Square West

700 South Third St., Suite 210

Minneapolis, MN 55415

Phone: (612) 376-8955 or

(800) 888-7828

Fax: (612) 376-8956

Website: www.search_institute.org

Other useful resources

SIECUS Report, October/November 1997 (Volume 26, Number 4)

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)

Monica Rodriguez, Director of Education

130 West 42nd St., Suite 350

New York, NY 10036-7802

(212) 819-9770

Fax: (212) 819-9776

Email: siecus@siecus.orgWebsite: <http://www.siecus.org>

Every article in this issue of the bimonthly publication would be helpful to program planners. Of particular interest are "The Journey of Sexuality Educators to Faith Communities" by Maggi Ruth P. Boyer and Ann Marie Donohue, as well as "The Sexuality Education Programs of Religious Groups and Denominations" by Elma Phillipson Cole. Also, SIECUS has

numerous annotated bibliographies of resources related to spirituality, religion, and sexuality.

Rochkepartain, Eugene C. (1998). *Building assets in congregations: A practical guide for helping youth grow up healthy*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute. (Cost: \$18.95. To order, call Search Institute at 800-888-7828.)

This resource offers practical ideas for congregations that want to engage in youth development through asset building. Chapter titles include: "Helping Youth Grow Up Healthy: A New Vision for Congregations," "Developmental Assets: A Framework for Focusing Congregational Life," "Integrating Asset Building into Programming for Youth," and "Reaching into the Community for Asset Building."

Nine Tips to Help Faith Leaders and Their Communities Address Teen Pregnancy

Introduction

Research is beginning to show what many of us have long known from working with teens—that religious faith and a strong moral sense play vital roles in protecting teenage boys and girls from too-early sexual activity and teen pregnancy. For example, according to the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, 48 percent of 15- to 19-year-old girls said that they were virgins, and nearly one-half of these young women said that the main reason they had abstained from sex was that it was against their religion or morals. Clearly, the role of faith in preventing teen pregnancy is a vital and important one. By teaching and preaching religious values, faith communities can help shape the character of our children and give them answers to their most heartfelt questions.

To support faith communities in this regard, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy's Task Force on Religion and Public Values has compiled *Nine Tips to Help Faith Leaders and Their Communities Address Teen Pregnancy*. This brochure summarizes a wealth of experience and advice from faith leaders around the country. The members of the Task Force—religious and secular leaders representing a broad ideological spectrum and a range of faith traditions—hope these tips encourage religious leaders of all faiths and denominations to take on issue of teen pregnancy in the context of their religious beliefs. At the end of the tips, you will also find a list of helpful books, lesson plans, and other educational resources available from a number of religious and secular organizations.

Teen pregnancy and birth rates in the United States have begun to decline, although it remains true that our nation still has the highest rates in the industrialized world by far—with nearly one million teen pregnancies every year. Communities of faith know that teen pregnancy is a complicated problem. They also know that their work with young people must compete with messages from a wider culture

This is an eight-page brochure from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. To order, contact the National Campaign, 2100 M St., NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20037, www.teenpregnancy.org. First five copies free. Bulk orders available for purchase.

often at odds with the ethics and morality of their religious traditions and beliefs. That's why it's so important for faith communities to get kids when they're young—and to stay with them through their teen years. As teenagers yearn for spiritual guidance, faith communities are uniquely situated to minister to this need, and faith communities quite properly place questions about sex firmly within the context of religious values and moral traditions.

God bless you as you continue the good work of helping young people meet the many ethical and moral challenges they confront every day.

Sister Mary Rose McGeady

President and Chief Executive Officer, Covenant House International
Member, National Campaign Task Force on Religion and Public Values
November 1998

The Nine Tips

1. Address the need teens have for spiritual fulfillment and help them find answers to the many challenging problems they face.

It is during the teenage years that many young people first struggle with the enduring questions of human existence, and the intensity and urgency of these questions can be very powerful to them. Many teens hunger for a framework of values and faith that can help them make moral decisions and manage the everyday problems of living that can be so stressful in these transition years. They also want help in seeing beyond the present moment. Because faith communities are uniquely able to provide the spiritual guidance that many teenagers crave, they should embrace this responsibility with energy and commitment.

2. Encourage parents to talk with their children about sex and morality within the context of your faith tradition.

Many parents are embarrassed and uncomfortable talking with their children about sex. This is not unusual, but it is unfortunate since parents are children's first and best teachers about values and moral expectations. A faith community is an ideal place for parents and children to learn how to talk with each other about these important topics. Consider sponsoring workshops for parents about how to talk with their children about sensitive subjects, such as human sexuality, according to the children's age and maturity and

within the context of your faith tradition. And help your parents set proper limits for their children's behavior.

3. Enlist adults in your faith community to help young people.

Teenagers develop character and personal values through interacting with respected and empathetic adults. Sometimes faith leaders themselves are available to work directly with teenagers, but often they carry so many responsibilities that they need help from others. If this is the case, ask highly trusted and knowledgeable adults in your faith community to assist in the important work with teenagers. Whether the adults create an organized mentoring program or something more informal, be sure they understand teenagers and can talk about values and relationships within the context of your faith's principles.

4. Make sure the children and teenagers in your faith community understand what your faith tradition says about sex, love, and marriage in general and teen pregnancy, in particular. Use clear and unambiguous language.

Young people need to know and understand where your faith tradition stands on matters of sexuality. Faith traditions can have a strong impact on helping teens avoid too-early sexual activity and pregnancy, but messages need to be clear, direct, and precise. Encourage open, honest, and frank discussions about the challenges—and choices—that young people face in their daily lives. Discussions about sex, love, and marriage within the context of religious faith should begin when children are young, rather than waiting until they're teens.

5. Learn about contemporary youth culture—what your young people are reading, listening to, watching, and doing.

Understanding the world of teens makes communicating with and caring for them easier. The influence of the entertainment media, in particular, on youth culture is extraordinary. Know the music that young people enjoy. Watch the television shows they watch so you'll know which characters they may be trying to emulate. Take a look at the magazines they are reading. With such information in hand, you can better explore with teens how the cultural messages they receive agree with or differ from what is expected of them as members of your faith community.

6. Organize supervised group activities for teenagers in your faith community.

Teenagers need things to say “yes” to, especially when we are asking them to say “no” to too-early sexual activity and pregnancy. Encourage the parents and other adults in your faith community to organize and lead group activities with teens. All the activities that you sponsor for young people—from prayer circles to field trips—are excellent opportunities for fostering fellowship and supportive friendships. By creating a positive and spiritually-oriented peer culture, you can help teens make the right decisions about sex.

7. Reach out to teenagers who are not involved in any faith community.

Though young people seek answers to spiritual questions, some are reluctant to find them in institutions of organized religion. And it is often the teens who are outside of faith communities and unattached to any positive group who are particularly likely to get in trouble. One dynamic youth minister in California reached out to neighborhood teens by encouraging them to structure their own youth program. He also moved his youth activities into a storefront center just a half-block from the church. A youth group of thirty teens that once met in the church basement now numbers in the hundreds.

8. Celebrate achievement and excellence.

By specifically supporting excellence and achievement of young people, faith communities can help to create an environment for young people that reduces the risk of early sexual activity and teen pregnancy. For example, research has shown that early school failure and dropping out of school are closely associated with becoming a teen parent. By encouraging educational achievement, faith communities may be able to help persuade teenagers to stay in school. Organize tutoring, homework assistance, and opportunities for community service. Encourage or offer scholarships for college and vocational training.

Celebrate spiritual and non-academic achievement as well, like volunteer work or excellence in the arts. Consider recognition ceremonies during regular worship services or designate specific days each year to honor teenagers for their accomplishments in a wide range of areas. Give the teenagers in your faith community a place to shine no matter what their abilities or interests.

9. Reach out to other faith communities, neighborhood organizations, and institutions that work with young people.

You don't have to go it alone. Working together, faith leaders can make a real difference in preventing teen pregnancy. Consider coordinating with fellow leaders to preach on the topic of teen pregnancy the same week. Or develop a particular prayer for all young people facing choices about sex and relationships. Look to clergy associations, ecumenical councils, and other local faith networks for support and collegiality in addressing this and other issues important to young people. And remember that other public and private institutions can be valuable partners in helping young people in your faith community—including schools, public health departments, YMCAs and YWCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, libraries, and recreation centers.

Resources for Faith Communities On Talking with Kids About Love, Sex, and Relationships

To help faith communities talk more effectively about important issues like sex and pregnancy, the National Campaign has assembled this short list of faith-based resources. Although most of these materials are designed to be used within the setting of a faith community, they can also be helpful to others who want to teach and instruct young people about issues like sex, love, and marriage within a religiously-based context.

(NOTE: Inclusion in this list does not imply endorsement by the National Campaign. Look to local seminaries, religious schools, and ecumenical councils, as well as churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples, for materials that may be of use. In addition, many major denominations provide materials that can help explain sexuality within the context of their specific faith traditions.)

Hands-On Help for Youth Leaders: Addressing Sexuality—and Sexual Abstinence. The American Baptist Youth Ministry's four-page resource list provides an overview of a variety of print and audiovisual materials for educating youth and their parents about sexuality and the virtues of sexual abstinence before marriage. Contact: Educational Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851, (800) ABC-3USA. Web: www.abc-usa.org.

Abstinence Education Resource Guide 1997. Not every listing in this directory is faith-based, but the guide identifies particular programs as appropriate for religious group settings. Contact: Americans for a Sound HIV/AIDS Policy, P.O. Box 16433, Washington, DC 20041, (703) 471-7350.

Parent-Teen Dialogue. Informal local dialogues between parents and their teens examine many contemporary topics, including sex, within a Jewish context. The B'nai Brith Youth Organization (BBYO) also directs a national effort called "Mind, Body, Attitude" (M.B.A.), which equips teen girls with the tools to make healthy decisions about their bodies. Local chapters of BBYO also sponsor programs on topics like safe sex. Contact: B'nai Brith Youth Organization, 1640 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036-3278, (202) 857-6600. Web: www.hubris.net/bnaibrith.org/bbyo/.

The Catholic Chastity Curriculum Directory. A review of available materials that are acceptable under Catholic teaching. Contact: The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 3214 Fourth St., NE, Washington, DC 20017, (202) 544-3070.

1998 Directory of Abstinence Resources. This up-to-date catalog of programs and curricula includes many that are identified as having Christian content. Contact: National Abstinence Clearinghouse, 801 East 41st St., Sioux Falls, SD 57105, (888) 577-2966. Web: www.abstinence.net.

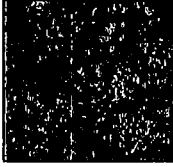
FACTS. This value-based curriculum deals with many issues, including dating, abstinence-until-marriage, and character education. The curriculum has three separate tracts—one for parents, one for junior-high kids, and one for senior-high teens. The organization also offers the Catholic family-life program, "Project Genesis." Contact: Northwest Family Services, 4805 Glisan St., Portland, OR 97213, (503) 245-6377.

A Promise To Keep: God's Gift of Human Sexuality. A Christian-based program using videos, peer ministry, and dialogue activities to teach teens to be abstinent outside of marriage. The peer ministry component is designed to have older, high school-aged students interact with 6th to 9th graders. Contact: A Promise to Keep, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46202, (317) 236-1473.

The Role of Religious Congregations in Fostering Adolescent Sexual Health. A paper written by an experienced sexuality education leader that details how communities of worship can build adolescent sexual well-being. Contact: The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, 1025 Vermont Ave., NW, Suite 1130, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 628-7700. Web: www.rerc.org.

Religion, Spirituality, and Sexuality. This annotated bibliography includes a broad range of resources, including curricula for religious settings, that encourage a comprehensive approach. One of these resources, "Family Sexuality Education: A Course for Parents," by Rev. Joe Leonard, is a five-unit, twelve-hour course that includes exercises for teenagers. Contact: Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), 130 West 42nd St., Suite 350, New York, NY 10036-7802, (212) 819-9770. Web: www.siecus.org.

Christian Sex Education Set. Published by the Southern Baptist Convention, the set contains *Boys and Girls—Alike and Different* (for ages 4-7), *My Body and Me* (for ages 8 and 9), *Sex! What's That?* (for ages 10-13), *Sexuality: God's Gift* (for ages 14-17), and *Christian Sex Education: Parents and Church Leader Guide*. Also available, "True Love Waits," a popular abstinence campaign used in many faith settings. Teens sign commitment cards to abstain from sex before marriage. Supporting materials include promotional items, like t-shirts and jewelry, and religiously-based sex education information in four languages. Each item is also available separately. Contact: LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, 127 Ninth Ave. North, Nashville, TN 37234, (615) 251-2000.



Involving the Business Community in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

by Karen Troccoli

T H I S C H A P T E R

Explains the importance of involving the business community in efforts to prevent teen pregnancy;

Describes the various roles that businesses can play and activities that they can become involved in;

Provides strategies for business involvement; and

Provides references and resources for further information.



Key Ideas in this Chapter

Businesses may not realize that teen pregnancy affects them, or that they have an important role to play in its prevention—part of the job is educating them.

The bottom line—dollars and cents—drives decision-making among business leaders. The relevance of teen pregnancy to their world must be framed in terms of real outcomes.

Getting one executive to ask another to help is a useful strategy.

Businesses will vary in how they want to approach teen pregnancy. Some will prefer to take on workplace activities, while others will be attracted to community-focused initiatives or volunteer service by their employees. Programs need to be flexible and creative in the ways they work with business.

Involving businesses can help programs prevent teen pregnancy, but it will also mean added work for the programs. Businesses will likely ask for help in developing materials, coming up with ideas for activities, and carrying out initiatives. Chances are it will be well worth the time and effort.

“You need to ask businesses for more than money. Ask them for their time and talent and, above all, their leadership.”

Jim Renier, retired CEO, Honeywell

Involving the Business Community in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Why involve the business community?

Businesses can make a real difference in teen pregnancy prevention. Executives tend to be well-positioned in the community to take a leadership role. They can provide a variety of resources. Community leaders who have worked with businesses know from experience that it takes hard work, persistence, creativity, and insight into how business leaders think to draw them in as participants in teen pregnancy prevention efforts, but the payback can be well worth it. Programs will benefit from the business's contribution, which comes in many forms; the community will benefit from the enhanced activities; and the business may enjoy favorable publicity and satisfaction from participating in an important cause.

Businesses have a vested interest in working to prevent teen pregnancy because it has financial, social, and workforce-related consequences, all of which affect the for-profit world. However, business leaders may not be aware of the effect teen pregnancy has on their companies, and, therefore, education and explanation are often the first step to getting them involved.

"It is important to use statistics and the media to show the impact of the problem and its implications for society clearly. Once they see, some businesses will want to get involved," explains Skip Oppenheimer, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Oppenheimer Companies, Inc., and Chairman of the Governor's Council on Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention in Idaho. In addition to providing basic teen pregnancy statistics (the number of annual teen births in the community, for instance), programs can also use the following points to help make the case to business:

- *Lost productivity and economic growth.* A Robin Hood Foundation study estimated the annual cost to U.S. taxpayers of adolescent child-bearing in 1996 dollars at \$6.9 billion (Robin Hood Foundation, 1996).

3 BIG REASONS FOR BUSINESSES TO GET INVOLVED

Teen pregnancy leads to:

- **lost productivity and economic growth**
- **increased federal spending**
- **increased poverty**

- *Increased federal spending.* In fiscal year 1995, the federal government spent approximately \$39.3 billion to assist families that were begun when the mother was a teenager, and \$131 million on programs to prevent teen pregnancy (Flinn & Houser, 1998).
- *Increased poverty.* Teen parents and their children are less likely to complete high school and more likely to be poor. Teen mothers are also more likely to have low birthweight babies, who are at risk for lifelong developmental and health problems, all of which may prove to be

CASE IN POINT

Success by 6 in Polk, Highlands, and Hardee counties, Florida

In 1995, community representatives discussed starting a community-wide initiative to help Central Florida's children. The group reviewed several programs and chose **Success by 6**, a United Way program, as their vehicle. Success by 6 creates a community-wide partnership of private businesses, government, religious groups, labor, education, and health and human services organizations to focus on children's issues. Teen pregnancy is a frequent topic for the Florida program because these three counties have the highest teen pregnancy rates in the state, and everyone understood that by reducing teen pregnancy rates, child health and well-being would improve.

The Florida Success by 6 is guided by three prevention strategies: advocacy, collaboration, and access to services. The advocacy committee has developed a video and script featuring business leaders asking their peers to become involved and has produced a "What You Can Do Guide"

for businesses who want to become involved. The collaboration committee is working to help the communities' home visitors better coordinate their efforts and has developed a Home Visitor Clearinghouse. The access to services committee is using social marketing to expand parent education in the three counties to reach a wider audience.

A key leader of this initiative has been Carol Jenkins Barnett, Chair of **Publix Super Markets Charities, Inc.** Ms. Barnett was one of several volunteers who were sent by the local United Way to a United Way of America leadership training session. While there, she was sold on Success by 6 and, upon her return, became committed to using it to involve more business leaders in the local effort. She helped recruit executives for the board by issuing invitation letters to meetings and breakfasts. No one turned her down. The result was a 32-member board of CEO-level officials from the public and private sectors.

very costly (Southern Regional Project on Infant Mortality, 1997).

All of these factors affect the quality of the current and future workforce, an issue of great interest to businesses.

The business community has many potential roles

Preventing teen pregnancy requires a broad-based campaign that addresses health, economic, policy, social, and other issues. While that may make the task seem overwhelming, it also means that businesses can play a wide variety of

roles and that businesses of all sizes and types can join in.

Convener

An invitation from one CEO to another to participate in a meeting or initiative carries a lot of weight. Carol Jenkins Barnett, Chair of Publix Super Markets Charities, Inc., has played this role very successfully.

Leader

The box below shows how a business leader like Jim Renier of Honeywell, who is willing to champion teen pregnancy issues, can create a big impact

Honeywell's New Vistas School

The **New Vistas School** in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is another example of the United Way's Success by 6 program in action. New Vistas opened in 1990 for students in grades 10 through 12 who are mothers or who are expecting a child. It offers individualized and small group instruction, as well as health and social services and parenting classes; there is also a clear emphasis on preventing repeat teen pregnancies. The school also provides child care and early childhood education for the students' children. There have been 142 graduates since the program began, and many have gone on to employment or further education. Repeat pregnancies are significantly lower among New Vistas students than would be expected, given national statistics. Honeywell started the school and provides the space for it. Partners in this

venture include the Minneapolis Public School System, the Minneapolis Health Department, and other organizations.

The champion behind this innovative school is Jim Renier, former CEO of Honeywell. His interest in children comes from two sources: his personal experience—he is a father of eight—and his corporate perspective, from which he understands the importance of investing early in children's lives to ensure a strong, educated workforce. "It's one of the most self-serving things in the world for a corporation," Mr. Renier says. Citing the Minneapolis experience, he also emphasizes that no single entity can tackle teen pregnancy. It requires community collaboration between business, government agencies, schools, parents, and kids themselves.

on a community and recruit other executives and community leaders at the same time.

Spokesperson

Business leaders often hold prominent positions within the community and attract the spotlight when they speak out. This can draw much-needed attention to issues such as teen pregnancy prevention. Once a business leader understands the importance of preventing teen pregnancy, he or she may be willing to serve as a public spokesperson on the issue. This increases attention paid to teen pregnancy prevention and can generate

favorable publicity for the company. A business spokesperson can be useful at legislative hearings, press conferences, public service announcements, or other public forums.

Program manager

A business may be comfortable developing and administering a youth development or teen pregnancy prevention program. Gunstock Ski Resort is a good example of this role.

Supporter

Local programs can always benefit from financial or in-kind

CASE IN POINT

Gunstock Ski Resort

Gunstock Ski Resort sponsors many activities that benefit youth, including mentoring programs with area schools, work programs with correctional facilities, and reduced rate children's skiing programs. Gunstock provides school "Outreach" skiing programs to over 55 New Hampshire area schools, involving over 8,000 students aged 5 to 18. These programs offer children the opportunity to ski at affordable rates, while providing a safe and social learning environment.

Gunstock works with several schools, including Gilford Middle High School, on a "School to Work" program. Students in this program enter

an individual mentor program with a Gunstock staff member who works in an area of the student's interest. Gunstock also develops various community projects with the Genesis Counseling Group, an organization that helps individuals and families cope with problems.

Gunstock management notes "that through educating and guiding the underprivileged and troubled youths of today, contributing members of society are likely to be formed for tomorrow." Gunstock also recognizes that the children involved in these programs may be future employees in the area and that these programs will benefit the county and Gunstock.

contributions, and many businesses are able to contribute in this way. The **Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention, and Parenting** has enjoyed such support.

Specific programs appropriate for businesses

While it is helpful to think of roles in broad terms, such as those above, it is important also to think of specific examples of what a business can do. The type of activities a business chooses to undertake will depend upon factors ranging from the size of the company to the chief executive's motivations. One business may find it best to sponsor a workplace program to assist employees in addressing teen pregnancy

prevention issues within their families. Another may become involved in community activities because they are concerned about the youth who are their future workforce. Still another may choose public policy activities to help shape better programs for at-risk children and families. All in all, no single activity is a cure-all for teen pregnancy. Each initiative is an important contribution.

Below are a sampling of the kinds of initiatives that businesses can spearhead. Some specifically address teen pregnancy prevention, while others focus more broadly on youth development. The latter may appeal to business leaders who understand the importance of investing in the future workforce.

MOAPPP

The **Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention, and Parenting (MOAPPP)** has been successful in getting many types of businesses to support their efforts with in-kind and other donations. For example, a marketing firm has taken on MOAPPP as a pro bono client and developed a new logo for the organization. The firm also provided templates for the group's brochures and conference materials. Another business has donated used copy machines to MOAPPP.

At a recent MOAPPP fundraiser, which featured Minnesota Attorney General Hubert H. Humphrey III and actress Jane Fonda, restaurants donated food for the reception and The Aveda Corporation donated a ballroom for the dinner. "Personal contacts are key," explained Donna Fishman, Co-Director of MOAPPP. "We rely on contacts we have developed over the years, and on our board members' contacts, to create interest in our work and convince businesses to help out." In return, MOAPPP makes sure to publicly acknowledge businesses' contributions.

PROGRAM OPTIONS FOR BUSINESS

- mentoring
- summer jobs
- youth development
- adopt-a-school
- workplace initiatives
- coalition membership
- business partnerships

but who may not want to limit their focus to teen pregnancy prevention.

Mentoring programs for youth

Businesses can participate in community mentoring programs by encouraging their employees to serve as volunteers in after-school tutoring programs, "Big Brother/Sister" programs, or similar efforts. For example, the Gunstock Ski Resort's applied learning program helps students connect study subjects to actual work environments. Companies can hold a "Bring Youth to Work Day," where they host students at the workplace and show them a typical day at the office. This exposes young people to an office setting, often for the first time in their lives.

"Support of mentoring programs lends itself well to corporate objectives of better utilizing human resources by promoting employee involvement and volunteer efforts in the community."

Committee for Economic Development, 1991

Summer jobs programs for youth

Providing youth with work experience can go a long way toward inspiring them to stay in school and in preparing them to enter the workforce as adults. Businesses can develop summer jobs programs and/or internship programs for community youth. Many cities spearhead summer jobs programs.

Youth development activities

In many communities, advocacy organizations and family support agencies create innovative youth development programs with temporary funding, such as foundation grants. By becoming a long-term sponsor of such a program, a business gains visibility and recognition as a supportive community member. Most businesses will give to programs that operate in their neighborhood or community. Monetary or in-kind contributions are helpful.

Adopt-a-school programs

A business can make a commitment to a local school and provide donations, volunteers, and other support as needed. This can help ensure that schools can adequately serve students so they will be better prepared to enter the workforce as adults. It also can bring recognition to the business as an active community member.

Workplace initiatives

Companies can carry out workplace programs that teach employees how to communicate with their children about sexual decision-making and teen pregnancy. Strategies range from disseminating information through bill stuffers, placemats, and bulletin boards to hosting brown-bag lunches with guest speakers. Business leaders can also encourage employees to volunteer at community youth development and/or teen pregnancy prevention programs by allowing them to use time during the work day. **Johnson & Johnson** not only allows its employees to use time during the workday to volunteer, but also makes cash grants to the

organizations in recognition of the volunteer. **Target Stores** also encourages volunteerism among its employees.

Membership in teen pregnancy prevention coalitions

Many communities have active teen pregnancy prevention coalitions that would welcome the participation of the business community. Businesses may also want to partner with individual organizations that are working on teen pregnancy as **Johnson & Johnson** has done with the National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention (NOAPPP).

CASE IN POINT

Target Stores

Target Stores promotes family volunteering through the Points of Light Foundation's **Family Matters** volunteer initiative. The program, which Target has introduced nationwide, encourages Target team members to work with family members on volunteer projects. The headquarters office assists local efforts by providing direction, support, encouragement, funds, and opportunities for team members and their families to volunteer. Projects range from building school partnerships to delivering meals to the elderly.

A research report by The Conference Board found that this family volunteering program boosted employee morale, enhanced family life by providing "quality" time for family interaction, and improved Target's image in the community.

Through charitable contributions, Target contributes five percent of its pretax profits to the communities in which it does business. Target has received many awards for its community involvement, including the President's Service Award for its Family Matters program.

"Coalitions are required because so many organizations are involved in various aspects of developing human resources. Business is particularly well-suited to deal with this complex array of needs and institutions because of both the substance and geographic reach of its activities."

Committee for Economic Development, 1990

Business partnerships

Businesses may wish to initiate their own coalitions or partnerships to focus on youth development or teen pregnancy prevention. Many local business groups, such as Kiwanis and the Rotary Club, offer ready-made

gatherings at which to raise these issues. National organizations, such as the Committee for Economic Development and The Business Roundtable, also can provide business leaders with resources and contacts.

CASE IN POINT

Johnson & Johnson

Johnson & Johnson and the National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention (NOAPPP) have joined together to form the **National Urban Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program**. This three-year initiative is locating and evaluating urban pregnancy prevention programs that have operated for at least three years. To date, seven programs have been selected for in-depth evaluations by the program's Advisory Panel and Lead Evaluators. Each will also receive \$25,000 for their program.

Program staff are eager to have their programs evaluated and effectiveness documented. Potential funders will use results as guides for future program funding.

Johnson & Johnson joined in this effort because it understood the importance of having solid evaluation information about teen pregnancy prevention. It funds this effort through its Office of Corporate Contributions and participates on the Program's Advisory Committee.

Program strategies for involving business in teen pregnancy prevention

Results from numerous initiatives and collaborations that have involved business suggest a number of strategies to follow in creating and sustaining meaningful business involvement in teen pregnancy prevention efforts.

Generate a list of business prospects

Once a program, group, or coalition has developed clear ideas for activities that are appropriate for business to take on, the next step is to decide what kinds of businesses to target. Programs should think about which businesses, companies, and associations in the community would be receptive. One company might be interested in these issues because it is community-based and therefore interested in the welfare of the community itself. Another may be in the health care field and have an interest in women's health issues. Still another may be run by a business leader who has been affected by teen pregnancy or youth issues in his or her life and wants to take action on a more public level. Other businesses, such as advertising or media companies, may simply be logical partners in a community-based initiative.

One good place for a program to start researching potential prospects is a business's own publications. An annual report on company contributions or a community affairs publication will reveal a lot about a company's past involvement and potential interest in a teen pregnancy prevention effort.

Another approach is to contact business groups and membership organizations, such as the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, and national social-issue organizations, such as The Business Roundtable and the Washington Business Group on Health. (See the resources section of this chapter for contact information for these and similar organizations.) These groups can provide information on the kinds of activities the members are involved in and may even be able to help identify businesses that would be particularly interested in teen pregnancy prevention.

Sometimes businesses are already involved in related activities or are already connected with other community-based or nonprofit organizations.

New Jersey's **New Brunswick Tomorrow** is a community-based revitalization initiative that includes business leaders on various committees. Coalitions such as these may be promising partners for related youth development activities.

Approach the business community

In many ways, approaching a company or organization is the most difficult part of involving business. Even those who have been successful in getting businesses to participate in youth development and/or teen pregnancy prevention activities find this to be the most challenging part of the task. This is because:

- Businesses receive frequent requests to participate in philanthropic activities and may resist additional commitments.

- Businesses may not understand how teen pregnancy affects their bottom line.
- Businesses may be hesitant to become involved in what they see as a controversial issue.
- Businesses may not see a clear role for themselves.

Programs need to tailor their approach in such a way that it takes into account these potential roadblocks to getting businesses on board. Success is more likely if programs approach business in a business-like style, with the following points in mind.

Talk the talk

For business, the bottom line is the bottom line. Business leaders want reassurance that their investments will result in a payback down the road. The challenge is to make a pitch in the context of results. This can be done by stressing the enormous impact that teen pregnancy has on businesses and citing statistics such as those included in the introduction to this chapter.

Make it a "win/win proposition"

Help businesses understand that taking on teen pregnancy prevention issues will benefit them as well as the community. Emphasize that employees view in-house parent education

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Recognize the diversity of the business community

Big companies have a lot of clout, but "mom and pop" businesses with ties to a community also may be very interested in getting involved.

Think broadly when considering how to contact businesses

Programs can reach a diverse group of business leaders through ethnic business organizations and neighborhood business associations.

programs as a benefit, and that such programs help to create a family-friendly workplace. For example:

- The company could offer a seminar on how to talk to children about sex, love, and relationships in developmentally appropriate ways that build on the values parents hold. Not only would such a program be appreciated by the employees, but it may contribute to fewer teen pregnancies and, consequently, a stronger future labor force.
- A summer jobs program for youth could benefit the company in the long and short run by providing inexpensive employees and contributing to the development of an experienced future workforce.

Address the cultural differences

Even when they share common concerns about an issue, advocacy organizations and businesses are different kinds of operations with different cultures. Businesses are very focused on management and outcomes—they care about results over process, setting and sticking to timelines, and the appearance of written products, for example. It is important that programs accommodate these priorities. A program's planning

“Business people know that it is less expensive to prevent failure than to try and correct it later—each year taxpayers spend \$16.6 billion to support the children of teen parents.”

Committee on Economic Development, 1991

may need to be more detailed than usual, and its written materials should be of the same quality as the business's own.

Make an effective case

Before a program goes knocking on a business's door, it needs to think carefully about who should do the knocking and on which door. The program may be inclined to make the initial contact because it knows the issues well, has ideas for how businesses can get involved, and has done all the legwork up to that point. But it may be more effective to have a business leader who already works with the program make the contact.

Here are a few more tips to maximize the chances of getting a positive response.

Go straight to the top

A CEO has the ultimate decision-making power about whether or not the business should take on community activities. Such a high-profile person will attract more attention to an issue than will a less senior employee. However, reduced access comes with that higher rank. Be prepared for the request to move down through the business

hierarchy. With CEO endorsement, a staff member may be assigned to work on the project. Public affairs or community liaison offices are often the contact points for community efforts such as teen pregnancy prevention. These staff are often dedicated to community activities and typically have the CEO's ear.

Use peer pressure

Many advocates have found that asking one business leader to ask another is effective in getting businesses to participate in activities. Programs can find their way to an executive through his or her existing contacts. This works because executives speak the same language and can discuss concerns and questions comfortably and candidly. Possible strategies for getting one business leader to involve others include:

- signing an invitation letter to a meeting;
- hosting a breakfast for interested community members; or
- asking other CEOs to join him or her on an advisory board.

A member of the **Minnesota Organization on Adolescent**

Pregnancy, Prevention, and Parenting's (MOAPPP) board convinced her husband to donate free advertising space in his business magazine to MOAPPP so the organization could advertise for interns at the state university.

Respond to objections

Even if a program's initial presentation to the CEO or his or her designee is perfect, programs may still encounter resistance. Below are examples of the kinds of concerns that executives may express when asked to become involved in teen pregnancy prevention. They are followed by points that programs can use to respond.

Teen pregnancy does not affect my business. Teen pregnancy affects everyone, including businesses. Teen parents are more likely to drop out of school, live in poverty, be unemployed, and have children who suffer the same fate. This means a less competitive and productive workforce. It also means a heavy hit to the pocketbook.

We do not have time to get involved. There are lots of ways to get involved, and any amount of participation would be welcomed and valuable. The business can spend as much or as little time as it chooses:

FOR MORE SUPPORT IN RESPONDING TO OBJECTIONS

See the introduction to this chapter and the info sheet at the end of the chapter.

- If time is limited, the business could simply agree to make a donation or sponsor an ongoing teen pregnancy prevention initiative.
- A slightly more intensive time commitment might include such activities as having the CEO or another company official speak at a conference or at public hearings on an issue related to teen pregnancy.
- A substantial time commitment might involve such activities as convening a business coalition to focus on these issues.

Aren't community organizations already taking care of teen pregnancy? Community organizations play a critical role in mobilizing support for teen pregnancy prevention and in developing innovative programs. Teen pregnancy is complex, involving social, economic, and health issues. No one entity or approach can singlehandedly tackle it. If all sectors of a community participate—advocacy organizations, businesses, government, social service agencies, the media, and others—we can make a difference.

There's nothing I can do about teen pregnancy. Businesses can take on many roles in teen preg-

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Be creative in overcoming initial reluctance:

- **develop a list of potential activities**
- **provide technical assistance**
- **offer to help with tasks**

nancy prevention, as noted at the outset of this chapter.

This issue is too controversial. There's little disagreement that teen pregnancy and childbearing are not good ideas, and there are many non-controversial ways to help kids that are perfect for business to be involved in, such as youth development and jobs programs.

Think ahead about what to leave behind

Once the initial meeting is over, it is important for a potential business partner to have appropriate, user-friendly materials to review later. Chances are that the executive will want to discuss a program's proposition with others in his or her office before making a commitment. Programs need to make sure business leaders are left with written information that can be shared with those in the company who would do the day-to-day work. Such materials could include:

- the handout at the end of this chapter, which explains why and how business leaders should get involved;

- fact sheets on teen pregnancy in the community;
- a video that the program or another organization has developed; and
- materials from the program's existing activities.

Sustain the relationship

Getting businesses involved in teen pregnancy prevention issues does not happen overnight. It requires careful planning, material development, networking, and other hard work to cultivate and sustain the relationship.

Follow up

Follow up involves phone calls to set up appointments with the right people in each company, thank-you letters for meetings or referrals, responses to requests for more information that are made during meetings, and more phone calls after meetings to keep the issue alive and moving through the company's decision-making machinery. If the program was the one who made the initial contact with the executive, it can also ask other business community partners to make a follow-up phone call encouraging him or her to join the effort.

Stay connected and be a resource

Keep in mind that, as beneficial as it may be, involving busi-

nesses in your efforts will also mean more work for a program. Programs will need to provide businesses with suggestions for roles they can play and specific activities they can undertake, and they must be prepared to provide technical assistance and guidance throughout their involvement. That assistance may include:

- helping develop information materials for workplace programs;
- drafting talking points for a CEO who has agreed to speak at a public forum; or
- planning meetings that a business has agreed to host.

Shine the spotlight

Businesses want recognition for their philanthropic activities. Before seeking the involvement of a business, programs should think about how to publicize their efforts. Possibilities include:

- announcing a newly-formed partnership;
- providing a CEO with the opportunity to speak at an upcoming conference or meeting on teen pregnancy prevention;
- arranging an awards dinner for businesses who have

made important contributions to the community; or

- arranging for a CEO to speak out publicly on an issue related to teen pregnancy.

Conclusion

Involving businesses in teen pregnancy prevention is not an easy task. It requires persistence, creativity, flexibility, and—above all—hard work. Just as a program will need to convince business leaders that their investment of time and effort will pay off in the long run, programs must believe that their time and effort to involve

business leaders will, too. Through workplace initiatives, community-focused activities, or other public forums, businesses can contribute to teen pregnancy prevention efforts in unique ways. The challenge is to convince them of the importance of their participation and then make it easy and exciting for them to do so.

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Washington Business Group on Health. (1996). *Business, babies and the bottom line: Corporate innovations and best practices in maternal and child health*. Washington, DC: Author.

Programs mentioned in this chapter

Gunstock Ski Resort

Gunstock
P.O. Box 1307
Laconia, NH 03247
(800) 486-7862

Honeywell, Inc.—New Vistas Schools

Chris Bremer, Manager
Education Programs
Honeywell, Inc.
MN12-5278
P.O. Box 524
Minneapolis, MN 55440-0524
(612) 951-2066

Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention, and Parenting (MOAPPP)

P.O. Box 40392
St. Paul, MN 55104
(651) 644-1447
Toll Free in MN (800) 657-3697
Fax: (651) 644-1417
www.cyle.umn.edu/moappp/

National Urban Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program

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1 Johnson & Johnson Plaza
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Success by 6—Florida

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Director
Success by 6, United Way of Central Florida
P.O. Box 1357
Highland City, FL 33846-1357
(941) 648-1500

Target Stores

Annette Watz
Community Involvement Coordinator
33 South Sixth St.
P.O. Box 1392
Minneapolis, MN 55440-1392
(612) 304-8543

Other useful resources

The following organizations may be helpful in identifying businesses that are concerned about youth development and teen pregnancy issues. Others have information materials that may be useful in teen pregnancy prevention work.

America's Promise

909 N. Washington St.
Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 684-4500
Fax: (703) 684-7328
www.americaspromise.org

America's Promise—the Alliance for Youth is the multi-year, national campaign to further the mission and goals of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, held in April 1997. The organization works to help America's youth reach their full potential by building an alliance of corporations, foundations, organizations, communities, public agencies, and individuals. America's Promise offers written materials, how-to guides, videotapes, advertising/paid media materials, and event materials to interested communities.

The Business Roundtable

1615 L St., NW
Suite 1400
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 872-1260
Fax: (202) 466-3509
www.brtable.org

The Business Roundtable (BRT) is an association of chief executive officers who examine public issues that affect the economy and develop positions that seek to reflect sound economic and social principles. It believes that the basic

interests of business closely parallel the interests of the American people. The member CEOs work in task forces on specific issues, direct research, supervise preparation of position papers, recommend policy, and speak out on issues.

Businesses for Social Responsibility

609 Mission St.
Second Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 537-0888
Fax: (415) 537-0889
www.bsr.org

Businesses for Social Responsibility (BSR) is a membership organization for companies of all sizes and sectors. Its mission is to help its member companies achieve long-term commercial success by carrying out policies and practices that honor high ethical standards and meet their responsibilities to all who are affected by their decisions. Its initiatives include the **Business & Community Program**, which seeks to facilitate greater and more effective involvement of the business sector in the community. Its goal is to work with companies and other groups to promote the innovative and effective use of corporate assets that results in economic benefits to disadvantaged communities.

Children's Defense Fund Child Watch Visitation Program

25 E St., NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 628-8787
Fax: (202) 662-3510
www.childrensdefense.org

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is a nonprofit advocacy organization working on issues that affect children, particularly those who are poor and disadvan-

Child Watch Visitation

Program was designed by CDF to allow leaders to see first-hand what is happening to the nation's children by adding faces to the statistics and reports. Organized by volunteers and advocates in local coalitions around the country, the Child Watch Program uses onsite visits to programs serving children and families; briefings by public policy experts; written background materials; and experiential activities to educate and move executives and other community leaders to action on behalf of children and families.

Committee for Economic Development

477 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10022
(212) 688-2063
Fax: (212) 758-9068
www.ced.org

The Committee for Economic Development (CED) is an independent nonprofit, trustee-directed business organization. Through a business-academic partnership, CED seeks to develop policy statements and other research materials that serve as guides to public and business policy and that influence the formation of business and public policy. In recent years, CED's work on school reform has been credited with increasing business involvement in education. CED's trustees promote CED's positions through activities such as congressional testimony, local initiatives, and speaking at conferences.

March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation

National Office
1275 Mamaroneck Ave.
White Plains, NY 10605
(914) 428-7100
Fax: (914) 428-8203
www.modimes.org

The March of Dimes (MOD) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the health of babies by reducing birth defects and infant mortality. It is one of the 10 largest voluntary health agencies in the country, with 101 chapters nationwide. Among its numerous activities, MOD has

focused on helping employers reduce their maternity-related health care costs and improve birth outcomes. Its programs, "Babies and You," and "Healthy Babies, Healthy Business," are widely used.

United Way of America

701 N. Fairfax St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 836-7100
Fax: (703) 683-7840
www.unitedway.org

United Way of America is the national service and training center for local United Ways nationwide. Its many programs include the **National Corporate Leadership Program (NCL)** and **Success by 6**. NCL seeks to increase funds and volunteers from the corporate community by heightening needs awareness and increasing partnerships with United Ways, companies, and employees. Success by 6 is a community-wide children's initiative that brings together resources from a partnership of private business, government, religious groups, educators, health and human service organizations, and neighbors and parents.

Washington Business Group on Health

777 North Capitol St., NE
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 408-9320
Fax: (202) 408-9332
www.wbgh.com

Washington Business Group on Health (WBGH) is a national nonprofit organization exclusively devoted to the analysis of health policy and related worksite issues from the perspective of large employers. Business group members are generally Fortune 500 and large public sector employers. Its initiatives include WBGH's **National Business Partnership to Improve Family Health**, which has worked to stimulate creative programs and spotlight corporate innovations in maternal and child health. WBGH provides a forum for the exchange of information on best practices that increase corporate competitiveness and productivity.

Businesses' role in teen pregnancy prevention: Why and how

Why should businesses become involved in teen pregnancy prevention?

- A Robin Hood Foundation study estimated the costs to taxpayers of adolescent childbearing in 1996 dollars at \$6.9 billion. This represents the "amount by which the social welfare of the nation would have increased" if society had implemented a policy (13 years ago) that successfully delayed childbearing until adolescents reached the age of 20 or 21 (Robin Hood Foundation, 1996).
- In fiscal year 1995, the U.S. government spent approximately \$39.3 billion to assist families that were begun when the mother was a teenager, and \$131 million on programs to prevent teen pregnancy (Flinn & Hanser, 1993).
- Teen parents and their children are less likely to complete high school and more likely to be poor. Teen mothers are also more likely to have low birthweight babies, who are at risk for life-long developmental and health problems (Southern Regional Project on Infant Mortality, 1997).

These factors affect the quality of the current and future workforce, an issue of great interest to business.

How can business become involved?

Businesses can make a real difference in teen pregnancy prevention efforts. They tend to be well-positioned in the community to take leadership roles and can provide a variety of resources. The list below offers a sampling of the kinds of initiatives that businesses can spearhead. Some specifically address teen pregnancy prevention, while others focus more broadly on youth development.

Mentoring programs for youth

The Committee for Economic Development states that "support of mentoring programs lends itself well to corporate objectives of better utilizing human resources by promoting employee involvement and volunteer efforts in the community" (CED, 1991). Businesses can participate in community mentoring programs by serving as volunteers in after-school tutoring programs, "Big Brother/Sister" programs, or similar activities. Companies can also hold a "Bring Youth

to Work Day" where they host students at the workplace and show them a typical day at the office. This exposes young people to an office setting, often for the first time in their lives.

Summer jobs programs for youth

Providing youth with work experience can go a long way toward inspiring them to stay in school and preparing them to enter the workforce as adults. Businesses can develop summer jobs programs and/or internship programs for community youth.

Support of youth development programs/activities

In many communities, advocacy organizations and/or family support agencies have spearheaded innovative youth development programs that rely on temporary funding, such as foundation grants. By becoming sponsors, businesses can help ensure these programs continue while gaining recognition as supportive community members. Most will give to programs that operate in their neighborhood or community. Monetary donations or in-kind contributions also are helpful.

Adopt-a-school programs

A business can make a commitment to a local school and provide donations, volunteers, and other support as needed. This can help ensure that schools can adequately serve students so they will be better prepared to enter the workforce as adults. It also can bring recognition to the business as a proactive community member.

Workplace initiatives

Companies can carry out workplace programs that teach employees how to communicate with their children about sexual decision-making and teen pregnancy. Strategies range from disseminating information through bill stuffers, placemats, and bulletin boards to sponsoring brown bag lunches with guest speakers. Business leaders can also encourage employees to volunteer at community youth development and/or teen pregnancy prevention programs by allowing them to use time during the work day.

Membership in teen pregnancy prevention coalitions

Many communities have active teen pregnancy prevention coalitions that would welcome the participation of businesses. According to the Committee for Economic Development, "Coalitions are required because so many organizations are involved in various aspects of

developing human resources. Business is particularly well suited to deal with this complex array of needs and institutions because of both the substance and geographic reach of its activities" (CED, 1990).

Convener of a business partnership

Businesses may wish to initiate their own coalition or partnership to focus on youth development or teen pregnancy prevention issues. Many local business groups, such as Kiwanis and the Rotary Club, offer ready-made gatherings at which to raise these issues. National organizations, such as the Council for Economic Development and The Business Roundtable, also can provide business leaders with resources and contacts.

Spokesperson for legislative hearings, press conferences, public service announcements, or other public forums

Once a business leader understands the importance of preventing teen pregnancy, he or she may be willing to serve as a public spokesperson on the issue. This benefits the issue by increasing attention to it and can generate favorable publicity for the company.

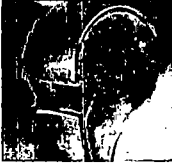
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Flinn, S., & Hauser, D. (1993). *Teenage pregnancy: The case for prevention*. Washington, DC: Advocates for Youth.

Maynard, R.A. (Ed.). (1996). *Kids having kids. A Robin Hood Foundation special report on the costs of adolescent childbearing*. New York, NY: Robin Hood Foundation.

Southern Regional Project on Infant Mortality, (1997). *Expenditures and investments: Adolescent pregnancy in the South*. Vol. II. Washington, DC: Author.



Involving Schools in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

by Joy Dryfoos

T H I S C H A P T E R

Suggests roles that schools may play in a community's effort to prevent teen pregnancy;

Suggests strategies for involving schools in teen pregnancy prevention;

Describes five main types of school-based programs; and

Provides references and resources for further information.

THE
NATIONAL
CAMPAIGN TO
PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY

Key Ideas in this Chapter

The most important role for schools in pregnancy prevention is to offer all students the opportunity to succeed. Young people who are engaged in academic pursuits and have high expectations for the future are less likely to become involved in early sexual activity.

Young people who feel “connected” to school are more likely to avoid teen pregnancy and other problems.

Families, schools, community agencies, and youth can work together. Integrated approaches to teen pregnancy prevention that are carried out through partnerships are more likely to succeed.

The vast majority of schools provide some form of education about sexuality, abstinence, and/or contraception, but the programs differ in quality, quantity, timing, setting, and effectiveness.

An increasing number of schools provide access to reproductive health care. In more than 1,200 schools, health agencies operate school-based primary health care clinics. Few provide contraception, but almost all refer students to community health agencies for such assistance.

Involving Schools in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Why involve schools in teen pregnancy prevention?

Because young people spend so much time in school, it is appropriate to ask what this major institution can do to help prevent teen pregnancies—especially when school failure, school disengagement, and dropping out are principal predictors of this problem. At the same time, schools have become battle grounds in many communities, the sites of intense struggles over many issues, such as teacher competence, student scores and

academic performance, safety, vouchers, and sexuality education.

There are ways in which schools can help, many of which are not at all controversial and are directly consonant with their core mission of education. This chapter describes five strategies that schools can pursue. These strategies help give students support, knowledge, and a sense of the future, all of which will help them delay sexual activity and avoid unprotected sex.

Strategies for involving schools

Several of these strategies will be acceptable to many communities, others less so. Some schools will have the resources and time to concentrate on only one type of intervention; others can do several simultaneously. A few schools are already doing all of them. Communities will choose those activities best suited to their own values, their own children, and their own schools. However, regardless of which activities are chosen, parent involvement is critical.

The five strategies are:

- promoting educational success and providing an enhanced sense that life holds positive options;

RESEARCH AND EXPERIENCE SHOW...

- **educational failure is a key predictor of teen pregnancy**
- **a strong connection to school and higher achievement is associated with delayed sexual intercourse**

- helping youth create and maintain strong connections to parents and other adults;
- providing knowledge, reinforcing positive social norms, and enhancing social skills through various types of abstinence or sex education;
- offering contraceptive services (either in school or nearby) or making referrals for them; and
- carrying out multiple approaches through school/community partnerships.

Promoting educational success and providing an enhanced sense that life holds positive options

Young people are more likely to avoid teen pregnancy when they believe in a positive future for themselves. Schools and communities must formulate powerful strategies for those young people who live on the margins, who are unsuccessful in school,

who do not have nurturing families, and who live in disadvantaged communities. These very high-risk young people must be convinced that delaying parenthood will have benefits, *and* that not having a baby will improve their chances in life.

But this strategy is not just a matter of motivating young people to abstain from sex until they are older or to avoid unprotected sex. It is a matter of changing their circumstances so that they truly do have access to quality education and employment opportunities, so they can set and meet high goals for their lives, so that they feel that the future holds the promise of positive options.

Teachers, guidance counselors, and other school personnel are in an excellent position to identify young people who are at high risk of teen pregnancy. One sure marker of vulnerability is

FOR MORE ON THESE STRATEGIES, SEE OTHER CHAPTERS IN *GET ORGANIZED*

Previous chapters have highlighted promising pregnancy prevention programs. Many of these are school-based; others, which are community-based, can be adapted for school use.

Some of the school-based programs described here are specifically focused on pregnancy prevention; others are not, even though they have been shown to prevent pregnancy.

Note: While all of these efforts take place in school buildings, most of them represent shared responsibilities between the school and one or more outside organizations.

THE LINK BETWEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Involving youth—particularly high-risk youth—in thinking about and planning for higher education and career opportunities decreases their vulnerability to high-risk sexual activity and other problems.

Youth development programs convey high expectations to young people, and then give them the chance to achieve those expectations.

being left back in school. Young people who are two or more years older than their classmates are more likely to drop out and become parents while teenagers. Once high-risk teens are identified, it is essential to make sure that they receive early and intense interventions that will help them overcome the odds.

Many school systems have programs targeted to high-risk youth. There are thousands of alternative schools, schools-within-schools, mentoring programs, full-service community schools, and special projects that attempt to give needy young people individual attention and that tailor classroom experiences for different learning styles. Many of these schools are open from early in the morning until late at night and offer an array of health, mental health, social, and recreational services for the student and his or her family.

A new federal initiative, the **21st Century Community Learning Centers**, will provide support for after-school programs in many needy school districts

for middle-school children who are particularly vulnerable to risky behaviors during the hours after school. After-school programs can effectively offer educational enrichment and creative recreational opportunities that expand life options.

Community service is another way to expand the life options open to young people while they are still in school. Examples include:

- assigning students to community agencies, such as nursery schools, hospitals, or senior citizen's homes, where they provide services to clients under the supervision of the agency staff, and bring back their experiences to the classroom: this exposes young people to the world of work and helps them to understand how to prepare for careers; and
- encouraging high-risk students to participate in school-based peer programs, such as tutoring; such arrangements can help both groups because the peers gain confidence and

SUCCESS LEADS TO SUCCESS...

- **More than 80 Beacon Schools have been funded by the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development.**
- **The Beacon model has also been widely replicated around the country, as has the TOP program.**

status and the tutored students do better in school.

The **Teen Outreach Program (TOP)**, originally sponsored by the Association of Junior Leagues, combines volunteer community work assignments for high-school students with school-based group counseling and discussion groups. The discussions are guided by a curriculum emphasizing life planning and goal setting. Recent research from the program has shown that participating students have lower rates of school failure, school dropout, and pregnancy (The Association of Junior Leagues International, 1995).

The **Countee Cullen Community Center** is a Beacon School in New York City. This school-based program operates from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day of the week, serving hundreds of youth and their families. It:

- has a Teen Youth Council that works on community beautification;
- sponsors workshops on job readiness and employment skills;

- runs a peer mediation program to prevent youth violence; and
- houses Narcotics Anonymous, Boy Scouts, and a Family Development Program with case managers who work with high-risk families.

An evaluation of the program has demonstrated its diverse benefits, including improved students' performance on reading tests and improved community safety.

Helping youth create and maintain strong connections with adults

Both research and everyday experience teach us that every young person needs at least one strong, authoritative, and dependable adult in his or her life. For most young people, this will be parents, but some parents have great difficulty communicating with their own children, not just about sex, but about many issues. School personnel, such as teachers, guidance counselors, coaches, school nurses, and other support staff, can play a significant role in helping to fill this gap, guiding young people and helping them to make responsible decisions about their futures.

Aware that vulnerable students in particular benefit from a connection with an adult, many schools attempt to link each

student to a school staff member, case manager, or volunteer. Some schools are organized around "family" groups in the homeroom, with the teacher taking the responsibility for checking in with each student every day to make sure everything is going well. For example, school/community partnerships that focus on mental health often bring outside counselors into the school for prevention and treatment. In a few schools, teachers or special outreach workers make home visits when parents need to be involved.

Along these same lines, "student assistance" workers or case managers are another strategy for preventing school dropout, delinquency, and substance abuse.

Communities-in-Schools (formerly Cities-in-Schools) has established hundreds of sites

where social workers are relocated from community agencies into schools. They focus specifically on high-risk youth and give them plenty of individual attention.

Quantum Opportunities, Inc., is an intensive program, originally created as an after-school intervention in five pilot community-based sites. High-risk 9th graders join the program for a four-year intervention that includes daily educational remediation, life skills training, community service, and family involvement. Participants are paid an hourly rate for attendance and the money is banked until graduation to help pay for college or vocational school. This program has been shown to prevent high school dropout, delinquency, and teen childbearing. Replications are now underway in seven cities, and some of them are located in schools in order to

WAYS TO DISPROVE THE WELL-KNOWN AXIOM, "THE OLDER THE STUDENT, THE HARDER IT IS TO INVOLVE PARENTS."

Some middle and high schools have established good connections with parents by offering them needed services, such as:

- **English as a Second Language classes;**
- **individual guidance on family problems; and**
- **family recreational experiences.**

Other schools have organized workshops that bring together parents with other people's children. This often makes adult-child communication easier.

link together the classroom and after-school experiences.

A few school-based programs involving outside social workers that focus specifically on teen pregnancy prevention have been identified.

Teen Choice is a pregnancy prevention program operated by Inwood House, a voluntary social service agency in the New York City public schools. Specially trained social workers staff three components: small groups, individual counseling and referral, and classroom dialogues.

The small groups meet once a week for a semester and cover sexuality issues, birth control, values clarification, and peer pressure. The workers are assigned to a school where they have private offices, ensuring confidentiality.

Increasing knowledge and social skills through various types of sexuality education

Young people need the knowledge and skills to make responsible decisions about whether and when to initiate sex, with whom, and under what circumstances. Schools are one of the places where they can receive this information and guidance, supplementing what parents, faith communities, and others teach.

These programs come in many different varieties, and they vary a lot in whether and how contraception is presented:

- Most of these programs address how to delay sexual activity or avoid unwanted sex.
- Some are considered "abstinence-only," meaning they emphasize abstinence as the 100-percent effective way to avoid pregnancy and STDs, while others are called "abstinence-plus" because they also include discussion of contraception.
- Some, often called "comprehensive" sexuality education programs, teach young people about human sexual development, pregnancy and reproduction, and contraceptives and how they work. They also help teens learn how to refuse

STATE LAWS ON SEXUALITY EDUCATION

- **19 states and DC require schools to provide sexuality education**
- **Of these, 4 states require abstinence education and 10 require abstinence education and information about contraception**
- **34 states and DC require schools to provide STD/HIV/AIDS education**

sex if they are not ready for it and how to negotiate contraceptive use. STD/HIV education programs focus especially on “safer sex” practices.

Many well-regarded programs focus on helping young people learn how to make decisions about their behaviors, and carry out those decisions through experiential education, such as role playing about real-life situations, exposure to media influences, and dealing with peer influences. An emphasis on abstinence has new visibility, however, because of provisions in the 1996 welfare reform law, which allocated \$250 million over five years (fiscal years 1998-2002) to states to develop and to put in place a set of abstinence-only education programs to prevent teen and out-of-wedlock pregnancy and births.

In the past, curricula that focused on family life decisions were quite popular. For example, Advocates for Youth promulgated the **Life Planning Curriculum**, which required students to produce detailed plans about their careers, marriage, family life, and budget.

In recent years, to strengthen the message about the difficulties of early parenthood, some school systems have invested in the purchase of “Baby Think it Over” dolls, which are plastic

replicas of infants. They cry frequently and are, in some ways, as demanding as a young baby. Students are asked to take care of these dolls (or other surrogate babies such as eggs or flour sacks) for short periods of time, to acquaint them with the demands of infant care. No strong evaluation has been conducted of the effectiveness of this approach, although many teachers and students report that such tools (when used as part of a broader curriculum) can help break through adolescent disinterest in the burdens of early parenthood.

In addition to providing classroom curricula, some schools use their resources to support in-service teacher training in sexuality education, though the focus has been primarily on HIV prevention. Among health education teachers, one-third of middle school and senior high school teachers reported training in HIV prevention during the preceding two years, while only 6 percent received training in pregnancy prevention (CDC, 1996).

Only a few school-based programs of any type have been evaluated and have proved that they can influence behaviors, such as the onset of sexual intercourse or contraceptive use. Many programs affect knowledge and attitudes about these issues, but have not been

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT...

more than knowledge is required to effect behavior change

Kirby, 1997

proven to have much impact on actual sexual behavior. However, more recently designed AIDS prevention and pregnancy prevention curricula have seemed to produce better results (Kirby, 1997).

It has become clear from considerable study of prevention programs, not only in regard to teen pregnancy but also substance abuse and violence prevention, that more than knowledge is required to effect behavior change. The most recently developed classroom-based approaches focus more on what is called social skills training—helping teens develop the skills they need to act responsibly in social settings, using the knowledge they have acquired. Most important, they give a clear message about abstinence or avoiding unprotected sex.

Reducing the Risk uses a 16-session curriculum to change high-school students' norms about unprotected sex, as well as to strengthen parent-child communication concerning abstinence and contraception. Experiential components, such as role playing, are featured. Evaluation of Reducing the Risk showed that the program reduced the likelihood that students would become sexually active, although it had less effect on those who

were already sexually experienced (Barth et al., 1992).

AIDS Prevention for Adolescents in School provides a six-session curriculum for 9th-11th graders that focuses on teaching the correct facts about AIDS; promoting cognitive skills to appraise the risk of transmission; increasing knowledge of prevention resources; and teaching skills to delay intercourse and consistently use condoms. An evaluation found a decrease in high-risk behaviors (Kirby, 1997).

Safer Choices is a multi-component, school-based program designed to reduce pregnancy, STD, and HIV by reducing sexual activity or increasing the use of condoms or other forms of protection. It includes a school council to produce school-wide change, a 20-session curriculum spread over two years (9th and 10th grade), peer and school-wide activities, a parent component, and a community component. It has increased condom use and decreased the frequency of unprotected sex (Kirby, 1997).

Offering reproductive health services and contraception

A fourth approach to reducing teen pregnancy that some schools have chosen is to provide direct access to contraception to prevent early pregnancy and

STDs. Traditionally, schools are not expected to provide reproductive health care to teenagers, and most school systems do not assume formal responsibility for ensuring that sexually active students have access to birth control services. In other schools, sexually active students are referred to local Planned Parenthood facilities, family planning clinics in health facilities, or private physicians. School personnel may refer students to outside health agencies and, in some cases, follow up with the agency to make sure that the student arrived at the facility and received the necessary care. Parental consent, notification, and involvement are important issues to address in this approach.

Family planning services offered by public health clinics, community-based agencies, private physicians, and school-based clinics can provide the necessary counseling, physical examination, prescriptions, and, in particular, follow-up that young people need to ensure adequate protection against pregnancy and STDs.

In recent years, the country has seen a substantial growth in the number of school-based primary health care clinics—only about one-third of which provide contraception. In 1983, only 10 such programs could be identified.

The most recent survey showed that close to 1,200 schools now house school-based clinics, about half in high schools, with a growing number in middle and elementary schools.

Although these clinics exist in only a small percentage of the 85,000 public and 25,000 religious and independent schools in the United States, they currently serve about 2 million students, more than half of whom are probably old enough to be at risk for pregnancy. The clinics typically serve about half of the students in any given school.

These primary care facilities are operated by health centers, hospitals, and other community providers. Most are staffed by nurse practitioners and social workers.

RESEARCH SHOWS...

- **48 percent of 15- to 19-year-olds report having had sexual intercourse**

MANY SCHOOLS ARE RESPONDING...

- **about 1,200 have primary health clinics**
- **some make condoms and medically prescribed contraceptives available**
- **many refer students to clinics and physicians in the community**

Almost all such high-school clinics provide treatment for minor illnesses, offer immunizations, and do comprehensive health assessments and sports physicals. More than three-fourths include mental health counseling services, such as case management and crisis intervention, and many conduct group counseling sessions on specific topics related to drugs, sex, violence, and interpersonal relationships (Dryfoos et al., 1996; Fothergill, 1998; Making the Grade, 1998).

Self Center, a school/community agency program in Baltimore, Maryland, combined sexuality and contraceptive education and individual and group counseling in schools with family planning services in a nearby clinic site. The staff (a social worker and a

nurse practitioner) worked in both places.

The **In Your Face Program**, run by New York's Columbia University Center for Population and Family Health, emphasizes group counseling with Hispanic students who are at high risk of early unprotected sex. Specially trained Hispanic health educators work intensively with students to develop ways to prevent unwanted pregnancies, including abstinence. The educators escort the students to a hospital-based family planning clinic if they are sexually active and want contraception.

The Pinelands Regional High School, in New Jersey, has a state-supported **School-Based Youth Services Program**. A family planning educator from the local Women's Health and Counseling Center teaches 9th and 11th graders as part of the school's comprehensive family life education program. The four-part presentation includes information about methods of birth control and disease prevention and introduces the availability of individual confidential counseling as part of the school program. The family planning counselor who comes to the school is also at the community-based center, so that if students choose to go to the center they meet the same person they know from the school.

FACTS ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL-BASED PRIMARY HEALTH CLINICS

- **85 percent offer pregnancy tests**
- **74 percent offer birth control counseling and gynecological exams**
- **1/3 provide birth control pills or condoms**
- **more than 400 schools allow condoms to be made available in the school building**
- **more than one-half have referral agreements with community family planning clinics**
- **many staff provide sexuality education in the classroom**

*Fothergill, 1998;
Making the Grade, 1998*

Carrying out multiple approaches through school/community partnerships

As seen in the following examples, recognition is growing within schools and community agencies that partnerships that include schools can go even farther to strengthen initiatives to help children and families.

Florida supports **Full Service Schools**, encouraging public agencies—health, mental health, and social services—to relocate and integrate services in school buildings. Some Florida schools have used the money to develop comprehensive family resource centers, while others have opened school-based primary health care centers.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has created the **Joint Work Group on School-based Teen Pregnancy Prevention**, which includes representatives from such national organizations as the National School Boards Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the National Education Association. This group is exploring the roles of state and local education and health policymakers, administrators, and school personnel.

The **School/Community Program for Sexual Risk Reduction Among Teens** is a multi-component program piloted in South Carolina. The program has nine components, including:

- teacher training;
- K-12 sexuality education;
- access to health services and contraception;
- collaboration with school administrators;
- use of the media;
- training of peer leaders;
- alternative activities for youth;
- community linkages; and
- programs in religious organizations.

The theory underlying this program is that the greater the number of changes in schools and community, the greater the likelihood of reducing teen pregnancy. The original research, which *developed the model*, showed lower pregnancy rates in the target area, but the rates returned to high levels after the intervention was over. The Kansas Health Foundation has supported a replication of the program in three Kansas counties.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

"The 'full-service school' as a community-based vehicle for organization and delivery of educational, social, and health services provides an excellent framework for community planning and action to address the health and educational needs of young people who are highly distressed and engaged in serious health-compromising behaviors."

Resnick et al., 1997

The **Hartford Action Plan on Infant Health**, a partnership between the City of Hartford and the Hartford Public Schools, seeks to eliminate births to those younger than 15 and reduce the birth rate among older teens by half. Among its offerings are:

- the *Postponing Sexual Involvement* curriculum to all 5th graders;
- a *Plain Talk* youth/adult community communication program;
- the *Adult Advisors Academy* to train volunteers to work with youth;
- a Males Forum;
- health care interventions; and
- youth activities.

The Plan includes a number of components in its recommended

comprehensive approach to reducing teen pregnancy, only some of which involve the schools. These include:

- annual screening exams for all adolescents and guidance and health education for youth and parents on pregnancy issues;
- a comprehensive set of "teen-friendly" preventive health services, including family planning;
- use of school clinics for reproductive health services or referral, and to ensure follow-up;
- use of satellite clinics where youth congregate (including malls and community centers);
- case management for high-risk youth;
- use of Medicaid managed care for funding health services and case management; and
- efforts to promote an understanding within the community that the vast majority of Hartford students are sexually active and need protection.

The Children's Aid Society in New York City has joined forces with the local community school district in Washington Heights to create four **Community Schools**. These "settlement

houses in schools" include the following features:

- They are open long hours and include family resource centers and primary health, mental health, and dental services.
- At the middle-school level, the clinic focuses on the need for reproductive health care and can refer students for family planning if necessary.
- "Town Meetings" enable small groups of students to discuss dating, violence, and peer and parent relationships.

- An extensive after-school program augments the classroom experience.

- Parents are involved in classrooms, community activities, family counseling, and extended learning programs.

The goal of these community schools is to improve academic outcomes, enhance the safety of the community, and help young people and their families reduce their vulnerability to problems. Preliminary results show promising gains in meeting these goals.

Putting the strategies into action

With these five possible strategies in mind, communities can develop a variety of approaches for preventing teen pregnancy through schools. Doing so is similar in many respects to developing a community-wide initiative. In large measure, careful attention to the details involved in two major phases is important: planning and designing the program and carrying it out.

Planning and designing a program

Several steps specific to an educational environment are involved in planning and designing a

successful pregnancy prevention program that is school-based or, at a minimum, closely tied to schools.

Create an inclusive planning committee that represents the community

All the key players on the planning committee need to be involved from the beginning. These players include:

- parents;
- students;
- school board members;

- the school superintendent;
- the principal;
- teachers;
- school nurses;
- counselors;
- other school employees;
- service providers in the community;
- youth development organizations;
- community members;
- religious leaders;
- business leaders; and
- the media.

An effort should not proceed without the support of the school principal, for he or she is the pri-

mary gatekeeper for the school building and the person who has to take the lead in developing a comprehensive program.

If a school health advisory committee or other decision-making body already exists, a pregnancy prevention effort should build on it, rather than organizing another committee.

Gather data on the need for pregnancy prevention in the school—make the issue personal

It is probably clear how many students are already parents, but it is also important to determine how many are sexually active, pregnant, and expecting to give birth. The local health department has information that may be useful for studying a school community. In addition, compiling information about achievement, attendance, promotion, dropout, and expulsion and suspension rates at the school will help in designing a pregnancy prevention program because academic failure is a key indicator of teen pregnancy risk. Communities may be interested in broad national and state data, but, at the end of the day, it is information on "our own kids" that really moves people.

Other sources of data can be helpful in ascertaining student attitudes and behaviors. For example, many school systems

USEFUL DATA FOR PLANNING AN INTERVENTION

How many students are:

- **parents?**
- **expectant parents (boys as well as girls)?**
- **sexually active?**
- **using contraception?**
- **low achievers?**
- **often absent?**
- **2 or more years older than their classmates?**

Who has recently:

- **dropped out?**
- **been suspended?**
- **been expelled?**

and states now use some form of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, introduced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 1990. This survey elicits confidential responses about sex, drugs, violence, suicidal intentions, nutrition, and exercise, and can be adapted locally.

The planning committee may also want to consult national research, which can clarify certain issues and help schools develop a strong case for instituting a pregnancy prevention program. For example, current research shows that sexuality education programs do not stimulate sexual activity, that school-based clinics require parental consent, and that youth programs can be effective at changing behaviors (Kirby, 1997).

Assess the current status of pregnancy prevention in school

The planning committee should make an unbiased assessment of any existing pregnancy prevention efforts. In addition to gathering information on sexuality education programs of various types, it should look at other prevention programs in the school, including drug education, conflict resolution, and after-school activities that have a potential influence on youth development. A careful review means not only making an inventory of the programs, but

also beginning an assessment of whether they are effective in achieving their stated goals.

If the interventions being considered include new or expanded sexuality education or school-based health services of some type, the committee should also:

- review the state and local policies on sex education and reproductive health care in schools; states have many different policies regarding what can or cannot be included in sexuality education and HIV/AIDS prevention programs, and many also regulate the distribution of medical contraception and condoms in school-based clinics;
- determine whether the local school board has regulated the sexuality education curriculum or school-based health care; and
- determine whether the school system supports the kind of in-service training for its teachers that new programs might require.

Learn about alternative programs

This chapter has described a number of types of programs to be considered. To help in this decision, members should be encouraged to visit prevention

efforts in nearby communities. Another source of information is the many videos that are available about innovative programs in operation. This information should help to raise consciousness in the community about the wide array of programs and activities that could be introduced to make the school climate more conducive to responsible student behavior.

When looking at other programs, planning committee members should pay particular attention to how successful relationships between schools and other organizations are structured, where their financing comes from, and who makes decisions about what.

Members of the planning committee should be given any available information about evaluation so that they can distinguish between programs that have proven effective and those that show promise. There's a big difference.

Develop a plan

Once the planning committee has gathered the information it needs and decided on potential actions, it can begin to draft a preliminary plan for a school-based intervention to reduce teen pregnancy. The plan should clearly explain each component of the initiative, address how the components fit together, and how they link to other aspects of the school experience. The box below lists a number of key questions that can guide the

Nine key questions to ask when developing a plan

1. What program components should be included?
2. Who should be responsible for providing those components? Who are the potential partners in this endeavor? How will they relate to each other?
3. What elements of existing policies will support the plan and what revisions are needed?
4. What are the expected results? What kind of accountability system is there for monitoring and evaluating the program?
5. What will the program cost? What resources can be shared?
6. Will additional space in the school be required and, if so, how can it be made it available?
7. What staffing is required? What training is necessary?
8. How do the pregnancy prevention components fit in with school improvement and/or school reform plans?
9. Are there some components that should be made available outside of the school?

committee in developing a clear and practical plan.

Present the plan

After all the key players have reviewed the plan, the committee should present it to the community as a working document and ask for their comments, ideas, and suggestions. It may well take time and patience to develop a wide consensus on the plan so that it can be implemented with broad-based support. Describing this school effort as an important part of a solution to a community-wide problem will be essential for gaining broad support. Planning committee members need to remember that the school doesn't have to do it all. Individuals and agencies usually respond well to invitations to participate in school/community partnerships.

Carrying out the program

Even the best plans can falter if certain implementation issues are not addressed properly.

Expect and deal with controversy

Developing a school-based pregnancy prevention program is not an easy task. The subject of sex is fraught with conflict in our society—and when sex gets put into the context of the school, controversy is almost sure to follow.

If the planning committee's members fairly represent the school and community, and they have reached consensus on the main elements of the plan, the task of carrying out the program will be easier than if a non-representative group is in charge. Even so, tensions often exist. Sometimes controversy can be defused through openly sharing information about the problem and the proposed solutions, but whatever the approach to reducing conflict, it often takes time and success is not assured.

Maintain support and financing

Schools hesitate to add programs that require the expenditure of school funds. In general, abstinence or sexuality education is included in the school budget, but most of the other programs described in this chapter, such as after-school programs, are "add-ons," which require funding from non-educational sources. School-based health centers are largely funded by states and through third-party reimbursement systems, such as Medicaid and, more recently, managed

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON DEALING WITH
CONTROVERSY...**

**See Chapter 17 (Volume 3),
"Moving Forward in the
Face of Conflict."**

care contracts. The average cost per year for a such a health center is about \$150,000. Family or youth service centers can be established for about \$75,000 if they concentrate primarily on counseling and referral to community agencies.

Ensure quality

If a school chooses to use a pre-packaged curriculum as part of its teen pregnancy prevention initiative, it must be careful to implement it faithfully in the classroom and ensure that teachers are thoroughly familiar with the content and teaching components. The curriculum may have proven effective when the program developer supervised the teachers directly, but if teachers only have a manual or video to turn to for instruction, the results may be less successful. Teacher training is critical to the success of classroom-based prevention programs.

If the chosen intervention includes abstinence or sexuality education of some type, it is sometimes possible to get local community agencies (such as local health departments, colleges, or other youth-serving groups) to help out in the classroom. Mobilizing such outside help has the added advantage of liberating those teachers or staff who would rather not teach sexuality or abstinence education.

Build partnerships

A powerful consensus is emerging around the country that only through combining the forces of families, schools, and communities can we ensure that all children will grow into responsible adults. Clearly, schools cannot (and should not) take the full responsibility for preventing teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Partnerships between schools and community agencies can produce innovative and integrated programs. But it is essential that areas of contention be recognized and resolved. For example, turf issues, such as the position of the school nurse when an outside clinic comes into a school, should be clarified and resolved through careful negotiation of contractual relationships, specifically identifying who does what.

Encourage parental involvement

Parents must know what is going on in the school with their children's education and development. Many of the efforts described here require parental consent for participation. But consent is not the only role for parents. Often parents need help communicating with their children, especially about tough issues like sexuality. Programs that invite parents into the school for workshops and lectures have

met with limited success, but they are not the only possibility for outreach:

- Home visits by trained case managers can produce open communication between the school, the parents, and the students.
- Encouraging parents to volunteer in the school as classroom aides or to organize after-school programs in literacy, computers, or aerobics are effective ways to bring other adults into the school setting.

Conclusion

Schools are a vital part of any community and a logical place to reach teens with pregnancy prevention programs. An increasing number of schools, in conjunction with their communities, are recognizing that they can have an important impact

Ensure coverage during non-school hours

If the complete package of prevention programs takes place in a school, it means that the doors of the school must be open for extended hours (including vacations and summer) and that residents other than students might participate in these school-based events. Schools need to plan for this. Provisions for staffing and security also must be made, and transportation schedules may have to be adjusted so that students can stay after school for enrichment programs and tutoring.

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Programs mentioned in this chapter

Children's Aid Technical Assistance Center for Community Schools

Rosa Agosta
The Children's Aid Society
c/o IS 213 4600 Broadway
New York, NY 10040
(212) 569-2830

Countee Cullen Community Center

Geoffrey Canada
Rheedlen Center
2770 Broadway
New York, NY 10005
(212) 866-0700

Hartford Action Plan on Infant Health

Laura Stone
30 Arbor Street
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 236-2872

In Your Face Program

Lorraine Tiezzi
Columbia University Center for Population and Family Health
School of Public Health
60 Haven Ave.
New York, NY 10032
(212) 305-5240

Other useful resources

Coalition for Community Schools

Martin Blank
Institute for Educational Leadership
1001 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 822-8405

National Institute for Out of School Time

Michelle Seligson
Wellesley College Center for
Research on Women
106 Center St.
Wellesley, MA 02481-8203
(781) 283-2424

21st Century Community Learning Centers

U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20208-5644
(202) 219-2088

Youth Development Institute

Michele Cahill
Fund for The City of New York
121 Sixth Ave.
New York, NY 10013
(212) 678-3369

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Involving Health Care Professionals in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

by Janet Chapin

T H I S C H A P T E R

Describes the important role that health care professionals and organizations play in preventing teen pregnancy:

Explains how health care professionals contribute to pregnancy prevention efforts in their traditional caregiving role:

Shows how health care professionals can get involved in community-wide teen pregnancy prevention activities:
and

Provides references and resources for further information.

THE
NATIONAL
CAMPAIGN TO
PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY

Key Ideas in this Chapter

Health care professionals and health care organizations can be major assets in a community's efforts to prevent teen pregnancy.

A wide range of health care professionals can contribute, including obstetricians-gynecologists, pediatricians, family physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives, and physician's assistants.

Professional medical organizations are good sources of educational materials for use by practitioners, parents, adolescents, and pregnancy prevention programs. Under some circumstances, they can also provide direct advice and assistance.

Working successfully with teens involves creating a teen-friendly medical office environment, ensuring confidentiality, and providing teen-specific services.

Involving Health Care Professionals in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Health care professionals play a critical role

Health care professionals and health care organizations and institutions can be major assets in a community's efforts to prevent teen pregnancy. While health care professionals primarily provide services and education to teens and parents in offices, clinics, schools, hospitals, and other health care facilities, they also can be significant participants in prevention activities and coalitions that are based in a community.

Because of the respect typically accorded them, physicians or nurses can be great allies in educating and influencing other professionals and in serving as visible spokespersons. Many

professional associations encourage their members to participate in teen pregnancy prevention efforts and have developed materials to assist them in doing so.

Health care organizations and institutions—such as hospitals, clinics, health maintenance organizations (HMOs), and other managed care or insurance organizations—also can play a role in a community's efforts to prevent teen pregnancy. Besides offering specific programs or services for their patients or members, they typically distribute educational materials that can include a focus on preventing teen pregnancy.

Which health care professionals should be involved?

A community can recruit from the full range of health care professions, though two types of physicians will likely come to mind first:

- obstetricians-gynecologists, who provide health care to adult and adolescent women; and
- pediatricians, who provide care for children and adolescents.

These two groups of doctors have long been involved in the issue of teen pregnancy prevention. A third group, family physicians, are also often willing to participate in community activities, especially when the emphasis is on prevention and education within families.

Other health care professionals who have had training in health education, family planning, or caring for pregnant teens also may be interested in efforts to reduce adolescent pregnancy. They include:

- licensed, registered nurses, who have 2-4 years basic nursing education and provide patient education in all health care settings;
- licensed, registered nurse practitioners, who have advanced education and provide a wide range of primary care services, including reproductive care;
- certified nurse-midwives, who have education in midwifery and nursing and offer reproductive health, pregnancy, childbirth, and newborn care; and
- physician's assistants, who are educated to provide medical care under the direction and supervision of physicians.

Where to find health care professionals

- To find physicians who might be interested in helping community efforts to prevent teen pregnancy, contact the local medical society or the local affiliate of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists or the American Academy of Pediatrics (see the resources section for more information on these and other organizations).
- To find nurses, contact the local affiliate of the American Nurses Association, the American College of Nurse-Midwives, or the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses.
- Contact hospital departments of obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, nursing, and adolescent medicine. If there is a teaching hospital in the community, contact the residency programs in these specialties.
- Contact the local health department, women's health center, or community health center.
- Ask local foundations which health care professionals are known to be active on this issue.
- Speak directly with obstetrician-gynecologists, pediatricians, or other physicians to see whether they or someone they know would be interested in working on teen pregnancy prevention activities in the community.

Pregnancy prevention in the practice setting

Health care providers do a lot of one-on-one work to prevent teen pregnancy in their practices. In the course of regular check-ups, illness visits, and referrals, pediatricians, obstetrician-gynecologists, family physicians, nurse practitioners, certified nurse midwives, physician's assistants, and nurses can help parents and adolescents address questions of physical and sexual growth and development, abstinence, sexual activity, contraception, and protection against sexually transmitted infections. This assistance can occur in two main ways.

Helping parents talk to their children about sexuality issues

Almost all parents would like help in talking about sex with their children. Health care professionals can provide good, medically accurate information to parents and kids, and they can do so with a sense of authority. By offering information within the context of regular health services, they can make issues seem less threatening for both parents and children or teens. They can also encourage parents not only to explain the "facts of life" but also to communicate about relationships and values. A recent poster campaign suggested, for

example, that parents "Teach their kids about sex, love, and what the difference is."

Regular visits also provide a good opportunity for parents to raise any issues or concerns with the provider. These conversations should occur when their children are young, before a crisis situation might develop, and should continue into adolescence.

Professional medical organizations have developed materials that an individual parent or adolescent can read or that can be distributed to parent or adolescent groups, such as:

- *Sex Education: A Bibliography of Educational Materials for Children, Adolescents, and Their Families*, a pamphlet distributed by the **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)**.
- *Teaching Your Children About Sexuality*, a booklet developed by the **American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)**.
- pamphlets just for teens, also developed by **ACOG**.
- *Points for Parents*, fact sheets about growth and development

that will help parents understand the changes their child is going through, produced by the **American Medical Association (AMA)**.

Helping teen patients

Working with teens successfully in any health care setting involves creating an environment in which teens feel welcome and secure and in which they know their needs and interests are important to those providing the

services. Three elements are essential to this environment:

Teen-friendly offices. Health professionals who serve teens should design their offices in ways to make teens more comfortable, indicating to teens that the practice is interested in them and willing to discuss hard issues in a non-judgmental fashion. Some practices have a specific staff member designated to talk to teens and facilitate their care.

An example of materials developed to help parents talk with their children

This chart, adapted from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' booklet, *Teaching Your Children About Sexuality*, can help parents know what to talk about with their children and when to do it.

What Your Child Should Know

By age 5, children should:

- know correct terms for all sexual body parts
- understand the concept of gender: "boy" and "girl"
- know they have a right to say "no" to unwanted touch
- know where babies come from
- feel free to ask adults they trust about sexuality

By age 10, children should:

- understand the facts about reproduction in humans and animals
- know how male and female bodies grow and differ
- know that different sexual orientations exist
- understand basic facts about AIDS

By age 12, children should:

- understand that human sexuality is a normal part of life
- know that sexual feelings are normal
- know what changes to expect in their bodies, including menstruation and "wet dreams"
- understand that sex gives pleasure and is also the way to make a baby
- know about methods of birth control
- be aware of sexual abuse and other forms of sexual exploitation, and know how to respond to such dangers
- know how sexually transmissible diseases are transmitted, prevented, and treated

Reprinted with permission from *Teaching Your Children About Sexuality*, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (1996).

KEYS TO SUCCESS IN WORKING WITH TEEN PATIENTS

- **create a teen-friendly office**
- **ensure confidentiality**
- **provide teen-specific services**

A teen-friendly medical practice has a number of characteristics. It:

- schedules appointments quickly upon request;
- hires friendly, culturally-competent staff;
- has office hours that are convenient for teens;
- provides frequent follow-up visits;
- provides adequate time for the teen and health care provider to talk;
- provides confidential services, as appropriate;
- has a designated staff person whom teens can call if they have further questions;
- provides or refers for counseling services for such issues as violence, abuse, and sexual abuse;
- offers low-cost or free services; and
- welcomes teens' partners, as appropriate.

Some offices use a written, "teen friendly" reproductive health history questionnaire to start a conversation about sexual issues. This allows a teen to disclose information and ask questions about sexual issues as well as other issues that might be of

concern to her or him. For many teens, checking off or writing down questions and concerns is less embarrassing or threatening than doing so verbally. Seeing a sensitive subject on a questionnaire also tells the teen that the health care professional thinks this subject is important and normal.

Confidentiality. The issue of confidentiality for health care services to teens is complicated. Simply stated, there are some health care services that teens can get on their own. These vary from state to state but may include treatment for substance abuse, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, contraception, and other reproductive health services. Many teens say that they will not try to get needed health services if they think the health care provider will tell their parents what they are saying or doing. On the other hand, parents, who worry about their children, want to know what they're doing, particularly on an issue as important as sex—and, if their teenager is having a problem, want to help.

While health care providers have some legal obligations regarding confidentiality, most

FOR HELP IN ADDRESSING CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES

**See the policies and materials
developed by:**

- **the American College of
Obstetricians and
Gynecologists**
- **the American Academy
of Pediatrics**
- **the American Academy of
Family Physicians**
- **the Society for Adolescent
Medicine**

want to establish a relationship with teens that will encourage discussion of risky behavior or problems. At the same time, they want to establish a relationship with the parents that is helpful and supportive. As one physician recently described it:

"When I explain the teen's right to confidentiality, I emphasize to the mother that we're not trying to exclude her from her daughter's life or from concerns about her daughter's health. At the same time, I explain to both the mother and daughter that I feel it is important for the daughter to have a relationship with me on a confidential basis....

Something else I do...is offer the mothers the opportunity to speak with me confidentially. That not only allows the mother to feel more included in the process, but also allows me to get a lot of valuable information" (Hillard, 1997).

Teen-specific services. In some communities, hospitals, clinics, health departments, and

physicians' offices have developed health care services just for teens. These programs often use other teens to help with education and to make their peers more comfortable. Here are a few examples:

Valley Community Clinic, in North Hollywood, California, operates a Teen Clinic that provides low-cost or free reproductive health services to teenagers. It hires and trains teen staff members to create a supportive environment for other teens. The clinic serves an ethnically and racially mixed population of males and females, pregnant and parenting adolescents, and parents of adolescents from urban and suburban neighborhoods. It also provides services in schools and juvenile detention facilities.

The **Gateway Family Health Center**, in Nashua, New Hampshire, operates the Teen-to-Teen Clinic, a walk-in clinic for teens only, one afternoon and one evening each week in a rural/suburban area. In the waiting area for the teen clinic, which is separate from the main clinic's waiting area, refreshments and computer games are available. Adolescents have been trained as peer educators and are available to talk about abstinence, sexuality, and birth control, often in conjunction with the other staff.

As part of its comprehensive adolescent pregnancy prevention program, New York's

Children's Aid Society provides health and medical services on site once weekly with the cooperation of the Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center. Each

adolescent in the Children's Aid Society program receives a complete physical exam, including a gynecologic exam for females, health education and counseling services, medical follow-up care, and urgent care services.

Involving health care professionals in community pregnancy prevention activities

Programs can help health care professionals assist a community's efforts to prevent teen pregnancy by asking them to expand their role beyond traditional caregiving. For example, programs can ask providers to make presentations to groups of adults or teens on the subjects of adolescent growth and development, sexuality, birth control, and other subjects. Schools, churches, or other community organizations can invite health care professionals to speak to groups of parents about teen sexuality in ways that will help parents examine the difficult issues regarding their own values and their children. They also can speak to teens as part of organized educational programs. The checklist on the next page contains suggestions for programs to help speakers prepare,

Programs can also ask providers to:

- advise community coalitions, school boards, and other groups that are developing and carrying out teen pregnancy initiatives to ensure that information is medically and scientifically sound;
- evaluate educational or media materials for community

WAYS HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS CAN PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- **make presentations**
- **advise community coalitions**
- **help develop and evaluate materials**
- **serve on boards and committees**
- **serve as spokespersons**

Checklist for health professional speakers

When asking a health care professional to make a presentation, programs can help by:

Describing the program's expectations for this presentation

1. What are the objectives?
2. What should this speaker accomplish?
3. Why has this speaker been invited?
4. Why is the event being held at this time? Is there a crisis?
5. Is the speaker being asked to speak as an individual, as a professional representative, or as a representative of a specific group? How will he or she be identified on the program?

Describing the anticipated audience

1. What is the approximate number in attendance?
2. What are their ages, interests, social status (married, single, one or both sexes)?
3. What are their educational and professional backgrounds?
4. What are the values of the audience (homogeneous, heterogeneous, conservative, radical)?
5. What does "sex education" or "family life education" mean to this audience?
6. Will there be media coverage—print press, radio, TV?

Explaining the meeting format

1. Will the presenter give a speech or be a part of a roundtable or panel discussion?
2. Will there be a question-and-answer period following the presentation?
3. What is the size and type of the room? (Audiences may be more comfortable asking intimate questions in a living room atmosphere than in a formal lecture hall.)
4. Are there other speakers? Who are they? What are their topics? What is likely to be their point of view? In what order are they speaking?
5. Is this a single talk or part of series?
6. If it is part of a series, how were the previous presentations received? Will the audience be hostile or receptive from the previous presentations? What subjects will follow this speaker?

Adapted from ACOG's *Family Life Education: A Checklist for Getting Involved*

programs, or advise groups as they develop their own materials to ensure that information is accurate and up-to-date;

- serve as board and committee members for community coalitions and help with fundraising; and
- carry the teen pregnancy prevention message to the community as a spokesperson.

This last role—spokesperson—can be particularly helpful in reaching health professional organizations, such as medical societies, state chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics, state sections of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, or nursing organizations.

In some communities, health care professionals have developed

teen pregnancy prevention programs of their own. For example:

The ACOG Pennsylvania section has developed the **PROGRESS Program**—Pennsylvania Residents in Ob-Gyn Reaching out to Educate Students—which trains obstetrics-gynecology residents to educate high school students in ways to avoid unwanted sexual experiences, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases. This ACOG section works with local school boards to arrange for residents to visit local high schools to present their program.

ACOG also has developed a comprehensive resource kit for health care professionals, *Adolescent Sexuality: A Presentation Resource Kit*, which contains slides, outlines for presentations, sample community and adolescent educational materials, and background articles.

Involving health care organizations and institutions in community pregnancy prevention activities

Health care organizations and institutions, such as hospitals, clinics, managed care and insurance companies, and health maintenance organizations, can also assist local efforts to

prevent teen pregnancy. For example, they can:

- offer individuals to serve as advisors and board or committee members;

- provide personnel and financial resources for projects and programs;
- coordinate needed adolescent health services as part of a comprehensive program; and
- organize a specific service or prevention program for their adolescent patient population.

CASE IN POINT

Medical West Associates

This Blue Cross and Blue Shield HMO organized an adolescent pregnancy program among five health centers in western Massachusetts. They created a multidisciplinary team that included providers, nurses, and reception staff from the departments of pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, nursing, and mental health. By gathering data on the numbers of teen pregnancies within the plan for the baseline year and examining the services that were currently offered, the team found that the health plan:

- often saw teens for illness visits but did not ask them about sexual activity;
- rarely provided contraceptive counseling;
- had no clear policy about timing well-adolescent visits;
- had the receptionist give all adolescent pregnancy tests results by telephone and scheduled no follow-up visits; and
- provided no routine postpartum discussion of birth control and did not track postpartum visits for teens.

To fix these problems, the team made several changes. It:

- developed a pediatric department policy requiring that adolescents have annual checkups;
- changed the adolescent medical record so that the following issues had to be tracked: sexual activity, risk screening, contraceptive counseling, and referrals for pelvic exams for females;
- developed an adolescent reproductive health questionnaire for all teen exams;
- created a policy to immediately refer for counseling any patient identified as high risk;
- trained volunteer providers and nurses to be contraception counselors;
- created an obstetric department policy to determine postpartum birth control choices at the 28th week of pregnancy and to provide birth control to the adolescent before her departure from the hospital;
- provided all adolescents who requested pregnancy tests with appointments with a provider skilled in options and contraceptive counseling; and
- began tracking and following up all canceled adolescent postpartum visits.

Conclusion

There are many different ways in which individuals and the community can use the knowledge, skills, and resources of health care professionals, institutions,

and organizations. Rather than being unapproachable, health care professionals are ready and willing to help—but they might need an invitation to get involved.

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Hillard, P. (1997). Preserving confidentiality in adolescent gynecology. *Contemporary Adolescent Gynecology*, 2(3), 4-5.

Programs mentioned in this chapter

Children's Aid Society

350 E. 88th St.
New York, NY 10128
(212) 949-4379

Medical West Associates

Blue Cross and Blue Shield
444 Montgomery St.
Chicopee, MA 01020
(413) 594-3111

Teen-to-Teen Clinic

Gateway Family Health Center,
Reproductive Health
268 Main St.
Nashua, NH 03060
(603) 883-1626

Valley Community Clinic

5648 Vineland Ave
North Hollywood, CA 91601
(818) 763-1718



Other useful resources

Many health professional organizations can provide speakers and materials for teen pregnancy prevention programs. Most national organizations have state or local chapters. By contacting the parent organization, programs can locate local resources for their projects.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Department of Adolescent Health Care

P.O. Box 96920
Washington, DC 20090-6920
(202) 638-5577
www.acog.org
AdolHlth@acog.org

The American Academy of Pediatrics

P.O. Box 927
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007-1098
(847) 228-5005
Fax: (847) 228-5097
www.aap.org

The American Academy of Family Physicians

8880 Ward Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64114
(816) 333-9700
www.aafp.org
fp@aafp.org

The American Medical Association

Department of Adolescent Health
515 N. State St.
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 464-5000
www.ama.org

The American Nurses Association

600 Maryland Ave., SW
Suite 100 West
Washington, DC 20024-2571
(800) 274-4ANA
(202) 554-4444
www.ana.org

The American College of Nurse-Midwives

818 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 728-9860
Fax: (202) 728-9897
www.acnm.org
info@acnm.org

The National Association of Nurse-Practitioners in Reproductive Health

503 Capitol Court, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 543-9693
www.namprh.org

The National Medical Association

1012 12th St., NW
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 347-1895
www.nmanet.org

The Society for Adolescent Medicine

1916 NW Copper Oaks Circle
Blue Springs, MO 64015
(816) 224-8009
www3.uche.edu/~sam

The Association of Reproductive Health Professionals

2401 Pennsylvania Ave., NW,
Suite 350
Washington, DC 20037-1718
(202) 466-3825
Fax: (202) 466-3826
www.arhp.org

The American Hospital Association

One North Franklin
Chicago, IL 60606
(312) 422-3000
Fax: (312) 422-4796
www.aha.org

American Hospital Association members include individual hospitals, other health care organizations, and individuals in the health care field.

The American Medical Women's Association

801 N. Fairfax St., Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 833-0500
Fax: (703) 549-3864
www.amwa-doc.org
info@amwa-doc.org

The American Medical Women's Association is an organization of over 10,000 women physicians and medical students and other members of the medical profession and the public who support women's health issues.

The Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses

2000 L St., NW, Suite 740
Washington, DC 20036
(800) 673-8499
Fax: (202) 728-0575
www.awhonn.org

The American Association of Health Plans

1129 20th St., NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20036-3421
(202) 773-3200
www.aahp.org

The American Association of Health Plans represents more than 1,000 health maintenance organizations, preferred provider organizations, and other managed care entities.

Contributors—Volume 2

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Janet Chapin, R.N., M.P.H., is the Director of the Division of Women's Health Issues at the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). Before coming to ACOG in 1986, she initiated and operated a community-based high blood pressure control program at a rural community health center and managed the primary care program of the West Virginia Department of Health. At ACOG, she is responsible for work on adolescent health care, access to health care for underserved women, and other women's health issues.

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Joy G. Dryfoos is an independent researcher from Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. Her work on comprehensive programs for high-risk adolescents has been supported by the Carnegie Corporation since 1985. Dryfoos is the author of many articles and books, including *Safe Passage: Making it Through Adolescence in A Risky Society* (Oxford, 1998). Her current project focuses on full service community schools.

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Lisa Hoesechele has been working with the ZAP (Zero Adolescent

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Tom Klaus

Tom Klaus is President of Legacy Resource Group in Carlisle, Iowa. For more than 25 years, he has been involved in professional youth work as a consultant, speaker, minister, program developer, and administrator. Klaus is a member of the Board of Directors for the National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting, and Prevention and is one of the creators of the nationally-recognized IT TAKES TWO adolescent pregnancy prevention programs.

Karen Troccoli

Karen Troccoli, M.P.H., has worked on maternal and child health issues for more than a decade. Currently a project director at the American College of

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Tamara Kreinin

Tamara Kreinin, M.H.S.A., has worked extensively in health care and human services for over twenty years. Kreinin holds a master's degree in Health Services Administration from the University of Michigan. She is currently the Director of State and Local Affairs at the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Kreinin started and served as Executive Director of The New Orleans Council For Young Children. She is a spokesperson and resource for the press on issues of importance to children and families. Kreinin lectures and conducts workshops frequently on a variety of topics.

Susan M. Kuhn

Susan M. Kuhn is a Washington-based consultant who helps nonprofit organizations launch new activities and products. A 20-year veteran of the nonprofit and philanthropy fields, she has started

new organizations, created new publications, authored and edited books, and designed and implemented new organizational strategies and structures. Kuhn's background is in development, editorial work, and strategic planning.

Anne Brown Rodgers

Anne Brown Rodgers has been a writer and editor for more than twenty years, working on publications for technical as well as lay audiences. Her primary focus is on health-related issues, and she has covered a broad range of topics, including women's health, prenatal care, HIV/AIDS, cancer, rural health care delivery, nutrition, and managed care. Since 1992, she has run her own writing and editorial services business.

John Hutchins

John Hutchins is Senior Editor for the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. He has worked for the past twelve years as a writer, editor, policy analyst, and public relations professional for health care associations and public policy organizations in Washington, DC. Hutchins is the author of *Coming Together for Children and Families: How Cabinet-Level Collaboration is Changing State Policymaking* (Family Impact Seminar, 1998) and co-editor of *Charting a Course for the Future of Women's and Perinatal Health* (Johns Hopkins University, 1999).

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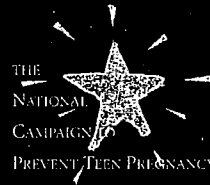
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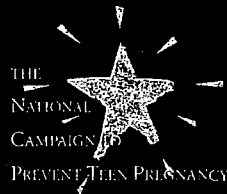
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The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy is a nonprofit, nonpartisan initiative supported almost entirely by private donations. The Campaign's two-part strategy involves (1) changing the culture by working with the entertainment media, parents, teens, and others, and (2) building a more coordinated and effective grassroots movement by working with local communities. Both components of our strategy are anchored in strong research on effective approaches and respect for the role of religion and values in shaping solutions.

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www.teenpregnancy.org



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