



Fact Sheet

Teenage Pregnancy

U.S. teen pregnancy rates continue to be a significant problem, despite declining 9% in 2010. In Indiana, 62 of every 1,000 teens ages 15–19 get pregnant each year, resulting in 13,740 pregnancies annually. Nearly 3 in 10 (29.5%) of these pregnancies occur to teens under the age of 18. Rates are double among African American and Hispanic teens compared to non-Hispanic white teens. Being poor, a victim of child abuse, living in a single-parent household, substance abuse and early or unprotected sex are all predictors of teen pregnancy risk. Teen mothers are less likely to receive prenatal care, and their children are more likely to be born early, have low birth weights and/or developmental delays.

Teachers should be aware of the following facts based on national data in the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS): Just over half (52%) of students in grades 9 to 12 reported that they had not yet had sex; 39% of sexually active students did not use a condom at last sex; 16% of sexually active students used birth control pills at last sex; and 10% of students reported having experienced dating violence.

What Can Teachers Do?

Teachers can impact teen pregnancy in three important ways:

1. Teach prevention
2. Address teen pregnancy that has occurred
3. Support teen mothers to return to school

Teach Prevention Methods to reduce teenage pregnancy should include sexuality education, strategies for pregnancy prevention, and changing teenage behavior in relationships. At least 30 evidence-based curricula have been developed that teach teenage pregnancy prevention. In general, prevention programs should reinforce attitudes that both girls and boys are responsible for preventing teen pregnancy, and address peer influence through teaching behavioral skills and changing perceptions. Teaching about sexual infection prevention also can engage teens to address methods to prevent both pregnancy and infection, as they may perceive infections as a more

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immediate and real possibility. In addition to using effective curricula, other important factors in teen pregnancy prevention include positive relationships with teachers and counselors, youth development programs, and athletics.

Education should include accurate knowledge about sex and sexuality as well as asset building and communication skills that teach a responsible approach to sexuality. Curricula are shown to be more effective when they are longer than fourteen hours in cumulative length. Information on effective pregnancy prevention programs is available online from [The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy](#). Comprehensive programs that support both abstinence and the use of condoms and contraceptives are shown to have positive behavioral effects including delayed or reduced sexual activity, reduced number of sexual partners, or increased condom or contraceptive use. Youth who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, transsexual or bisexual (LGTB) are also found to be at risk for unwanted pregnancies while perhaps at a lower frequency rate than peers and should still receive counseling on risks.

The 2012 **National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy** takes place on **May 2, 2012**. Teens can participate at www.stayteen.org with a national quiz, interactive game, and parent information. The American Social Health Association sponsors another useful site for teens at www.iwannaknow.org.

Address Teen Pregnancy When a teen becomes pregnant, this is often a time of crisis and high stress for the student and her family. She may show signs of denial, anxiety, fear, depression, and shock. Teachers can have a significant influence in encouraging pregnant teens by listening to them. Teachers can also encourage teens to seek proper prenatal care, eat a healthy diet, stay physically active, and avoid substances or behaviors that can place her unborn child at risk.

Support Teen Mothers to Complete School Teenage mothers are less likely to complete high school and attend college. About half of all teen mothers drop out of high school before they are pregnant; the other half drop out after becoming pregnant. Attending school can also reduce the chances for a subsequent teen pregnancy. Teachers should encourage teen to return to school and complete their high school diplomas. ♦

References

www.thenationalcampaign.org

www.etr.org/recapp

www.solutionsforamerica.org/healthyfam/teenage-pregnancy.html