

SCHOOL-BASED TEEN PARENT PROGRAM

MISSION STATEMENT

The **School-Based Teen Parent Program** provides an environment where teenage parents can complete their education in a supportive comprehensive high school. School-based programs help teen parents mature and become responsible, nurturing parents and self-sufficient, contributing members of society. Teen parents benefit from the program in many ways, including:

- High school graduation
- Knowledge, skill, and motivation to become economically self-sufficient
- Strong parenting skills and ability to actively seek out opportunities to improve their children's well-being and development
- Encouragement to delay a subsequent pregnancy until a more appropriate time
- Success in creating a safe and nurturing environment for children with reduced risk of child neglect or abuse
- Physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of their children within age norms
- Opportunities for further education and/or employment

The school-based **Infant-Toddler Center** is an essential component of the comprehensive School-Based Teen Parent Program. The center provides a stable, safe, nurturing environment where children benefit both from direct services provided to them and from the enhanced parenting skills and educational success of their parents. The center staff provides enriched, developmentally-appropriate care for the children and models appropriate caregiving skills for the parents. This early intervention approach with the children of teen parents increases the likelihood that these children will succeed in school and move into a healthy, productive adulthood. The advantages of school-based child care include the abilities to:

- Help parents monitor a child's growth and development
- Allow teen parents and their children to travel together to the same destination
- Supervise and model parent/child interactions
- Benefit from access to all school resources
- Facilitate coordination between the school and the child care program

TEEN PARENT PROGRAM CURRICULUM RATIONALE

Instruction in parenting and child development is a critical component of school-based programs serving pregnant and parenting students. Adolescent parents, like many new parents, lack knowledge about the developmental abilities of children, about creating environments which nurture children and stimulate their development and about pre- and post-natal health care. This lack of knowledge is complicated by the fact that adolescent parents are themselves still developing, and may not be fully prepared to take responsibility for themselves and their children.

The program must also help teen parents explore opportunities for further education, careers and/or employment, and assist them in preparing for their future. Program planning must include career guidance and assistance in making the transition from high school to further education or employment.

By providing services to pregnant and parenting teens and their children, school-based programs build on the developmental focus and educational mission of schools. However, school systems cannot implement comprehensive strategies alone; the resources and expertise of other systems, including health care and social services, must be tapped to improve the chances for success of adolescent parents and their children. Collaboration between the school-based program and community agencies, guided by an active advisory committee comprised of representatives of local service providers, is essential.

STANDARDS FOR ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE TEEN PARENT PROGRAM

Comprehensive school-based programs for adolescent parents and their children have the potential to help young families grow and develop to become healthy and productive members of society. Such programs can help increase the educational attainment and employability of young parents, and improve the health and development of their children. Schools are logical sites for comprehensive interventions with teen parents and their children. They provide opportunities to identify and begin to work with pregnant adolescents, and to keep them in school during their pregnancy and after delivery. Such early intervention makes receipt of prenatal care and other critical supports possible, and also avoids the costs of dropout retrieval by giving young parents the chance to obtain a high school diploma, generally of greater long-term value than a GED certificate. Early intervention with pregnant and parenting teens offers opportunities to help parents provide critical services to their infants and young children, including access to child development programs and preventative health care.

The following elements are essential for a program to be effective in improving educational and self-sufficiency outcomes for adolescent parents, and contribute to the health and development of young children:

	<i>Program Assessment</i>			<i>Continuous Improvement Plan</i>			<i>NOTES/ COMMENTS</i>
	<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Emerging</i>	<i>Meets Standard</i>	<i>Goal for the Year</i>	<i>Technical Assistance Needs</i>	<i>Resource Needs</i>	
1. Flexible Schools with Features Such as:							
• Credit for partial semesters							
• Open entry							
• Educational support after delivery of child & before returning to school							
• Flexibility in scheduling							
• Flexibility in attendance policies that take into account the need for adolescent parents to be absent for legitimate reasons, such as child's illness							
• Possibility of summer programs							
• Program support & commitment from faculty, staff, & administration							

2. Educational Support or Remediation for Pregnant & Parenting Adolescents Who May Have Been Performing Poorly in School Before they Became Pregnant:						
• Assessment procedures to identify special needs						
• Guidance & counseling services						
• Tutoring options available						
• Incentive programs to encourage achievement						
3. Availability of Reliable, Quality Child Care Acceptable to Teen Parents:						
• During the school day						
• During transitions between school & continued education, job training, or employment						
• Assistance in securing child care after completion of high school						
4. Access to Basic Health Care:						
• Prenatal & postnatal care						
• Family planning information						
• Well-baby checks						
• Immunizations						
• Dental care						
5. Parenting & Child Development Education						
6. Specialized Systems in Place for Planning for Post-Secondary Education & Job Training:						
• Goal setting						
• School-to-career opportunities						
• Assistance with applications (e.g., college, university, jobs, financial aid)						
• Preparation of resumes, cover letters, letters of application						
• Planning for work & family						
7. Access to Appropriate Mental Health & Counseling Services						

8. Critical Support Services:							
• Transportation assistance							
• Housing information							
• WIC (Women's, Infants, & Children's food program)							
• Healthy Start programs							
9. Case Management Services:							
• Assessment of student's needs							
• Development of individualized service plans							
• Referral & assistance in accessing non-school-based services							
• Monitoring that services are actually received							
• Periodic reassessment							
• Helping students learn to negotiate the system themselves							
10. School-Community Advisory Committee:							
• Regular meeting schedule							
• Representatives from community agencies, such as Department of Human Services, Head Start, Housing Authority, WIC, etc.							
• Teen parent representative							
• Representative from parents of teen parent							
• School administration and/or faculty							
• Healthy Start							
• Local Commission on Children & Families							

STANDARDS FOR ESSENTIAL CURRICULUM CONTENT

School districts will provide access to the full range of class options for adolescent parents in a comprehensive high school. In addition, they will be enrolled in a seminar or class specifically designed to meet their unique needs. The curriculum that follows identifies content for this seminar or parenting class.

	<i>Program Assessment</i>			<i>Continuous Improvement Plan</i>			<i>NOTES/ COMMENTS</i>	
	Needs Improvement	Emerging	Meets Standard	Goal for the Year	Technical Assistance Needs	Resource Needs		
1. Orientation of Students to the Teen Parent Program								
1a. Description of services available to student enrolled in program:								
• On-site child care; use & policies								
• Community agencies involved in program								
• Mental health services								
• Counseling & guidance								
• Health services								
• Educational planning								
• Educational support services								
• Expectations of students in program								
• Other services								
1b. Description of services available to children of teen parents:								
• Program for children in Infant & Toddler Center or Child Development Center								
• Community services available to young families								
2. Continuing Concern: What Should I Do Regarding Parenting?								
2a. Adjustment to parenting:								
• Attitudes, roles, & expectations of parenting								
• Realistic expectations								
• Rights & responsibilities								

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	Needs Improvement	Emerging	Meets Standard	Goal for the Year	Technical Assistance Needs	Resource Needs	
• Teen parenthood							
• Interactive relations between parents & children							
2b. Child development:							
• Understanding developmental stages & influences							
• Developmental assessment							
• Physical, cognitive and affective development							
• Bonding & attachment							
• Enhancing child's development							
• Early brain development							
2c. Child care:							
• Nutrition, health, & safety issues of caring for young children							
• Infant routines & schedules							
• Healthy eating patterns							
• Physical care of infants & toddlers							
• Emergency care							
• Childhood illnesses							
• Immunizations							
• Choosing quality child care							
2d. Family relationships:							
• The family's influence on development							
• Guidance & discipline							
• Effective communication with children							
• Common parenting concerns (toilet training, teething, sleeping)							
• Childhood stress							
• Child abuse & neglect							
• Family law							
• Father's role							
• Three generational living situations							

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3. Continuing Concern: What Should I Do Regarding Development of a Positive Self?							
3a. Development of a sense of self in parents & children:							
• How individuals can examine & effect their own self-formation, & how parents can guide their children in process							
• Identity & self-esteem							
• Values & goals							
• Pregnancy options							
• Healthy lifestyles							
• Conflict management							
• Dating & marriage							
• Healthy families							
• Ways to manage personal stress							
• Time management							
3b. Sexuality education in the family							
• Role parents play in children's sexuality education							
• Importance of communication between parents & children about sexuality							
4. Continuing Concern: What Should I Do Regarding Pregnancy?							
4a. Wellness lifestyle: importance of a healthy lifestyle before & during pregnancy:							
• Nutrition							
• Substance abuse							
• Sexual decision-making							
• Sexually-transmitted diseases							
• Fitness							
4b. Cost of parenthood: financial planning for pregnancy & parenting:							
• Prenatal costs & access to medical care							

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	Needs Improvement	Emerging	Meets Standard	Goal for the Year	Technical Assistance Needs	Resource Needs		
• Equipment for baby								
• Legal issues of teen parenting								
• Community resources								
4c. Importance of prenatal care: understanding how good prenatal care contributes to health of child:								
• Confirmation of pregnancy								
• Maternal development								
• Fetal development								
• Pregnancy complications								
• Labor & delivery								
4d. Postnatal care: care of mother & child after birth:								
• Postpartum care								
• Newborn at the hospital								
• Newborn care								
• Newborn feeding								
5. Continuing Concern: What Should I Do About Managing the Interaction of Work & the Family?								
5a. Understanding the importance of balancing multiple life roles:								
• Balance multiple roles for well-being of the individual, family, & society								
• Analyze personal choices as they relate to life roles								
• Relate beliefs & attitudes to success/failure in balancing multiple roles								
5b. Equity in work & family roles:								
• Evolution of family roles & responsibilities								
• Developing strategies to promote equity in work & family roles								
5c. Creating communities that support families:								
• Healthy communication among individuals, & building community support								

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize situations in work and personal life where it is necessary and appropriate to seek support 								
5d. Child care issues:								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The underlying factors that influence child care issues 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying quality child care for infants, toddlers and preschool children 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of consistent child care 								
6. Continuing Concern: What Should I Do Regarding Economic Independence?								
6a. Career exploration: assessing the needs and values in working								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal assessment 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupational choices 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nontraditional jobs 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career goals and decisions 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional education and/or training 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of career choice on long term financial security 								
6b. Employability: understanding the process of securing and keeping a job								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to employment 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job search 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family friendly workplace 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity in the workplace 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job success 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional image 								
6c. Economic resources: financial planning for self-sufficiency								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Credit 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgeting 								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial considerations of employment 								

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	Needs Improvement	Emerging	Meets Standard	Goal for the Year	Technical Assistance Needs	Resource Needs	
• Savings and checking							
• Insurance							
• Finding affordable housing							