

## **Working with Pregnant and Parenting Teens**

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### **AVAILABLE RESOURCES:**

- Youth from 12+ years old have the right to confidential reproductive health services and can sign themselves out of school to access those services. Even if the youth's parents call the school while the youth is out at an appointment, the school can only say that the student is at a confidential medical appointment.
- For more detailed information about California Minor Consent laws, go to this website: [www.youthlaw.org](http://www.youthlaw.org).
- "Minor Consent MediCal" is a type of MediCal that youth **cannot** get at Planned Parenthood. This is a type of emergency MediCal youth can access through the County to pay for prenatal care, abortion services, etc.
- For a pregnant or parenting teen with disabilities, PVUSD could make appropriate referrals for services. Also, the Central Coast Center for Independent Living ([www.cccil.org](http://www.cccil.org)) could offer assistance.
- CalSafe offers many resources, such as free childcare for parents and early childhood education. Students are referred to these services through their schools. There is a CalSafe Coordinator at PVUSD. In the Santa Cruz City School District, CalSafe programs are run through the Walnut Ave Women's Center, Watsonville Community School, and Santa Cruz High School.
- The resource boxes from First 5 are a great resource. A new resource box came out in February of 2008. To get a box, contact [bdana@first5scc.org](mailto:bdana@first5scc.org). Boxes are available in English and Spanish.

### **TIPS WHEN WORKING WITH PREGNANT/PARENTING TEENS:**

- Listen.
- Learn the teen's culture, language and communication style.
- Honor their right to make their own decisions. Try to remain neutral about their decisions (e.g., whether or not to have the child; whether or not to relinquish the child; etc.). If the teen is having a difficult time making a decision, assist the teen in creating a pros/cons list.
- Recognize your own judgments and biases, and try not to allow them to affect your interactions with the teens.
- Enlist the support of the teen's adult support system, with the teen's permission, after building a good relationship with the teen.
- Create a support team with the teen. Find team members from community resource centers (e.g., Mountain Community Resource Center; Live Oak Family Resource Center; La Manzana Community Resources; Familia Center; Davenport Resource Service Center), WIC, and any other appropriate community programs.

- These teens will need some hand-holding. Take them to the various community service organizations where they can receive services and support. Ensure that the resource providers treat the teen respectfully as being treated with respect will open the teens up to accessing resources.
- Younger teens are concrete, not abstract, thinkers. You will need to point out to them all the potential decisions they could make, the steps they will need to take, and the consequences of each potential decision.
- Be a positive mentor and role model.
- Keep the teen in school.
- Try to get the baby's father involved, if at all possible.
- Honor the young mother's connection to the child's father. If the father has some questionable or unsafe behaviors, help the teen understand the importance of creating good, clear boundaries to keep her and her baby safe.
- Try to connect the teen to other moms so she can develop a network. Get those moms' contact information (with the teen's permission) in case the teen falls out of touch with you.
- If teens are not following through on accessing services or are not being safe with their babies:
  - Be firm and non-shaming
  - Be clear about your mandated reporting role
  - Acknowledge all of the teen's small accomplishments
  - Don't make assumptions about why the teen is not following through. Instead, try to find out why from the teen & help her find solutions to any barriers. Role play situations with her and work through the specifics of all steps she will need to go through.