

Help or Hindrance: Promoting Effective Policy

PROMOTING WHAT WORKS: A SYMPOSIUM OF APPROACHES FOR SUPPORTING PREGNANT AND PARENTING ADOLESCENTS

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Today's Objectives

- Increase sense of urgency for advocacy
- Increase knowledge of policy issues affecting pregnant and parenting teens
- Expose to supportive resources
- Bring recipients into the room



The Dual Edge of Legislation and Policy

- Social services and programs rely on legislation to function
 - Public Health Service Act (Title X); Social Service Act (Title V)
- Provide support for development and implementation of services and supports to populations of need
 - Adolescent Family Life Research and Demonstration Program
- Legislation can be somewhat detrimental even if based in well meaning intentions
 - No Child Left Behind, Temporary Assistance to Need Families



Advocacy is Critical

- Legislators do not truly understand the impact of policy at the individual or community level; education and advocacy can impact their decisions
- They are responsive to their constituents from all levels- researchers, providers, program recipients
- More challenging AND more critical when related to lightning rod issues such as sex ed, contraception, or teen pregnancy and parenting
- Teen parents can and should be supported to self advocate



“We do need help”. Alba
Age 22, Two sons ages 4 and 2



Connecting Policy to Outcomes

- Our role is to understand the link between policy and outcomes for our target population and to create clear and concise messages which convey that understanding to legislators and their aides, most of whom do not have our background or the luxury of time to really understand the issue.

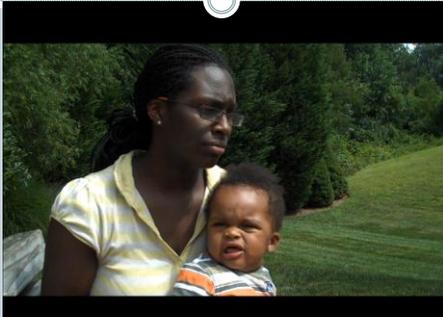


Connecting Policy to Outcomes

- **Young Family Policy Platform, 2009**
 - Multi-disciplinary advisory team
 - Utilized a comprehensive set of desired outcomes across several life domains that stem the cycle of poverty for this population:
 - Healthy pregnancies and babies
 - Delayed subsequent births
 - Stable housing
 - Educational attainment beyond high school
 - Viable employment opportunities
 - Healthy relationships and effective parenting
 - School ready children



"Everything is more difficult". Uniqwa Age 16, One Son-13 months



Linking Life Domains to Programs

- **Health and Human Services** – Young families benefit from pre- and postnatal health care that aims to prevent premature and low birth weight infants, promote maternal and child nutrition, ensure healthy child development, and reduce and/or delay repeated pregnancies, among other outcomes.
- **Housing** – Young families benefit from stable and supportive housing arrangements where they can live as an intact unit, whether with family members, in transitional, independent, or custodial living program, or independently.
- **Education** – Young parents benefit from completing secondary and postsecondary education, which allows them to attain stable employment and a living wage that will provide for themselves and their children.



Linkages cont'd

- **Workforce and Life Skills Development** – Young parents benefit from training for long-term employment that affords growth opportunities and that pays a wage on which they can support a family.
- **Child Welfare and Development** – The children of young parents benefit when they have access to early learning and development opportunities and when their parents learn parenting skills that ensure their safe and healthy, mental and physical development.
- **Income Security** – Young families benefit from having available a temporary income safety net for times when other supports and resources are not readily accessible.
- **Knowledge Development and Transfer** – Young families benefit from more focused attention on trends among the population and the identification of effective practices for supporting their health and success.



Connecting Policy to Outcomes

- **Young Family Policy Platform, 2009**
 - Reviewed existing legislation
 - 59 existing programs ranging from Title V to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act
 - Looked for 'easy' insertions to existing programs/legislation
 - Created new/amended legislation
 - Identified five gap areas
 - Developed signature recommendations or proposed significant changes to existing legislation
 - Developed action steps
 - Disseminated broadly with Action Steps to facilitate use



Health and Human Services

- **Adolescent Family Life Program**
 - Suggested broadening this program to create Young Family Resource Centers across the U.S.
 - Central data base
 - Full options counseling
 - Mandated set of services
 - Move from demonstration to evidence-based
- **Maternal and Child Health Block Grant**
 - Add "programs designed specifically to improve the health outcomes of pregnant and parenting youth and their children" as an eligible purpose of the SPRANS component of the MCH program
 - Require states, as part of their maternal and child health needs assessment, to assess the needs of pregnant and parenting youth in their state



“I wish I’d known sooner”. Alba



Housing

- **Suggested amendments to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act which supports maternity group homes**
 - Extend the age from age 21 to age 24.
 - Establish standards on the care of young children who accompany youth residents of such programs.
 - Ensure that any HHS studies include programs targeting young families.
 - Ensure that the national estimate of prevalence includes information specific to young families.
 - Rename the maternity group home program the “young family transitional living program” to emphasize that fathers and couples are eligible parents and that housing options other than group homes are eligible for funding.



Education

- **Young Parent Access to Education Program** – Congress and the Administration should authorize and appropriate funds for a Young Parent Access to Education Program, to be administered by the U.S. Department of Education. The program would provide grants to state and local educational agencies to formulate policy and offer targeted assistance to pregnant and parenting students in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in secondary school, ensuring school completion, and preparing them for postsecondary education.
- Amend five existing programs to better support this population



“Big motivation to graduate”. Uniqwa



Workforce and Life Skills Development

- **Young Parent Workforce Investment Demonstration Program** – The purpose of the Young Parents Demonstration program is to provide educational and occupational skills training leading to family economic self-sufficiency to both mothers and fathers, and expectant mothers. HTN recommended that Congress and the Administration formalize the program and assure its long-term stability by adding it as national program within the Workforce Investment Act.
- Amendments to Workforce Investment Act and John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program



Child Welfare and Development

- **Education Begins at Home Act** – Congress and the Administration should authorize and appropriate funds for a new federal home visitation program by enacting the Education Begins at Home Act (EBAH). This act seeks to expand quality programs of early childhood home visitation that increase school readiness, child abuse and neglect prevention, and early identification of developmental and health delays, including potential mental health concerns.
- Amendments to three more programs including Title V and Head Start



“I felt like I had no help at all.” Alba



“There’s a big waiting list.” - Uniqwa



Income Security

- **Young Families Access to TANF Initiative**—Congress and the Administration should remedy the unintended consequences of the minor parent rules and strengthen the TANF program for teen parents and their children.
 - Support during transition periods
 - Re-visit housing restrictions
 - Commence lifetime limit at age 20 when education is completed
 - Assess for best practices
 - Move toward an outcomes-base rather than quantity based model



Knowledge Development and Transfer

- **Young Families Research and Development Initiative**—Congress and the Administration should authorize and appropriate funds for an array of national activities to advance knowledge and understanding of young families.
 - A periodic assessment of the status of young families, nationally and state-by-state;
 - A multi-year, multi-site research and development study of service delivery models for young families;
 - A research study on effective policies and practices for assisting young parents in enrolling, attending, and completing secondary and postsecondary education, and
 - A national information clearinghouse as a means to develop and disseminate information and materials on young families to youth, service providers, and the public.



Knowledge Development and Transfer

- **Federal Youth Coordination Act (P.L. 109-365)**—establishes a public-private Federal Youth Development Council with the following duties:
 - ensuring communication among agencies administering programs designed to serve youth;
 - assessing the needs of youth and those who work with youth;
 - recommending quantifiable goals and objectives for youth programs;
 - making recommendations for the allocation of resources for youth programs;
 - identifying areas of overlap and duplication among youth programs;
 - identifying target populations of youth who are disproportionately at risk;
 - developing a federal youth plan;
 - assisting federal agencies in collaborating on model programs and demonstration projects;
 - soliciting input from youth and youth providers; and
 - coordinating with federal agencies on youth-related research and evaluation.
- **Amend to include pregnant and parenting teens**



2010

“We will restore science to its rightful place....”



A Flurry of Evidence-Based Activity

- **Office of Adolescent Health**
 - Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (Tiers 1 and 2)
 - Pregnancy Assistance Fund
- **Home visitation program**
- **Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP)**
- **CDC Teen Pregnancy Prevention Community Initiative**

But were we ready?

- **Educating, educating, educating—what it takes to effectively implement evidence-based programs in the field**
- **Activated our base and collaborated to advocate for:**
 - Expanded funding for Runaway and Homeless Youth Act
 - Inclusion of PAF as part of ACA
 - Inclusion of home visiting programs in ACA
- **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**

Action 2010: H.R. 5894--Pregnant and Parenting Students Access to Education Act of 2010 (PPSAE)

- **PPSAE provided the necessary framework and resources to states and school districts to ensure that pregnant and parenting students have equal access to educational opportunity.**
 - Enabled states to create a plan for the education of pregnant and parenting students;
 - Established a state coordinator and school district liaisons
 - Required school district grantees to provide academic support services
 - Allowed school districts to provide a host of support services
 - Provided for collection of data on this population



“Believe in yourself”. Lisette
Two children-Gave birth at ages 15 and 17



Action 2011- What a Difference a Year Makes!

- **Everything we focus on and care about was threatened**
 - Title X
 - OAH and the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative
 - CDC
 - Healthy Start
 - School Based Health Centers
 - Title V, MCH block grants
 - Adolescent Family Life Program



Action 2011-All Hands on Deck!

- **Divide and Conquer**
- **Write, email, call**
- **Hill Day-State leaders, HTN staff and Board visited 12 legislators from both sides of the aisle to support social programs related to our work and educate/support AFL**
- **HTN and NWLC strategizing on how best to re-introduce PPSAE given current budget constraints.**



Adolescent Family Life Program

- President Obama’s proposed budget called for defunding the AFL Care grants because they were ‘duplicative’ of the newly funded Pregnancy Assistance Funds
- HTN led a national effort to educate both sides on the differences between the programs and why maintaining the AFL program was good policy.
- Safe (with cuts) in 2011; need to keep up the effort in 2012



2012-Back to the Future

- All of the above are still threatened and the time is now to educate legislators;
- Given the budget cuts, everyone will be fighting to keep their dollars; collaborations are critical;
- Events related to the budget literally change daily—challenging but important to stay abreast; and
- Now more than ever, make your voice heard—call, write, email, and visit your representatives!



Resources

- www.healthyteennetwork.org
 - Pregnant and Parenting Teens; PPSAE
- www.amchp.org
 - Title V
- www.teenpregnancy.org
 - Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative
- www.NN4Y.org
 - Runaway and Homeless Youth
- www.nfprha.org
 - Title X
- www.guttmacher.org
 - Title X, Confidentiality



Achieving Outcomes
Lisette