

# Healthy Outcomes for Adolescent Mothers and their Children

Promoting What Works  
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Lee Savio Beers, MD  
[lbeers@childrensnational.org](mailto:lbeers@childrensnational.org)

Director, Healthy Generations Program  
Goldberg Center for Community Pediatric Health  
Children's National Medical Center



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Adolescent mothers and their children are at *risk* for a number of negative health outcomes,



However, with appropriate supports, most can be healthy and successful



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## Health Risks for Mothers

- Pregnancy complications
  - Anemia
  - Poor weight gain
  - Increased mortality
  - Premature delivery
- Depression
- Effect of Maternal Age vs. Environment



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## Health Risks for Children

- Prematurity and/or low birth weight
- Developmental and behavioral problems
- Later effects
  - Substance abuse
  - Early sexual activity
  - Increased likelihood of adolescent parenthood
- Child maltreatment—mixed evidence



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## Expert Policy Recommendations

- Create a comprehensive medical home for adolescent parents and their children
- Adapt counseling to developmental level of adolescent parent
- Encourage positive parenting by adolescent
- Closely monitor the developmental progress of both the teen and the child
- Encourage positive involvement of extended family and partner/baby's father
- Provide family planning counseling
- Encourage educational achievement

American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement, 2001



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## Promising Interventions

- **School-based programs**
  - School-based clinics (Strunk 2008)
    - ↑Immunization rates
    - Improved parenting skills
    - ↑Birth weight
- **Community-based programs**
  - Statewide case management program (Sangalang 2006)
    - ↑likelihood normal birth weight and full term birth
- **Medical/Clinic-based programs**
  - “Teen-tot” clinics (Akinbami 2001, Corcoran 2007)



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## “Teen-tot” Programs

- Comprehensive primary care for adolescent parents and their children
- Multi-disciplinary services
- Single setting

### *Typically focus on*

- Access to health care
- Prevention of repeat pregnancy
- Social and parenting support
- Education



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## Health (and other) Outcomes

- Improved immunization rates\*\*
- Healthy weight for infants
- Improved clinic attendance
- Increased number of prenatal visits
  
- Decreased repeat pregnancy rates
- Increased contraceptive use
- Increased school attendance and employment



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## Healthy Generations Program

- A “Teen-tot” program
- Began in 1995
- Located in pediatric clinics in Washington DC
- Multi-disciplinary services
  - Comprehensive medical care
  - Social work and case management support
  - Mental health
  - Fathers’ program
- Between 450-500 families served each year



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## Program Evaluation

- Funded through the Adolescent Family Life Program
- Baseline characteristics before intervention (n=156)
  - Average age **17.4 yrs.**
  - **97%** African American
  - **70%** in school or graduated (**39%** ever repeated grade)
  - Preterm birth **19%**
  - Age of first sexual encounter **14.4 yrs**
  - **43%** reported clinical levels of depressive symptoms



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## Selected health outcomes by medical record review at 24 month follow up

- 117 eligible mothers (enrolled for  $\geq 24$  months)
- Immunizations up to date (n=115)
  - 91% up to date
  - Compared to 75% at age 2 in Washington DC
- Adolescent well visits (n=113)
  - 91% completed at least one well visit
    - 71% documented in med record, 29% by report
  - Compared to 40-75% nationally



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## "Teen-tot" Programs: A Promising Practice

- Preliminary data suggesting improved health outcomes
- Easily integrated into existing health care settings
- Potential for replication
- More research is needed
  - Improved comparison groups
  - More specific descriptions of services and dosage
  - Closer look at more detailed and nuanced outcomes
  - Cost-benefit



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## Thank you!

Lee Savio Beers, MD  
202 476 3797  
lbeers@childrensnational.org



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