

## INTRODUCTION

Learning Together is an intensive pre-vocational parent training program that provides adolescent parents and parents-to-be the opportunity to receive the services they need in order to move forward in their lives, while making a contribution to their community



## PROGRAM GOALS

Contribute to a decrease in teen pregnancy rates:

Increase enrollment in post-secondary educational opportunities after completing the Learning Together program:

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Within one year, enhance the Learning Together Program (LTP) in all 15 Vermont Parent Child Center regions

Within two years, effect a drop in teen birth rates in Vermont

Enhance ability of enrolled parents to demonstrate an increased ability to care for themselves and their children, as measured by self-assessment and clinical observation



## FINDINGS

Learning Together consists of six basic components: On-the-job training; Counseling; Academics; Parenting; Job Readiness Activities; and Interpersonal Skills. These six components, while representing a general framework, are balanced through a schedule that is individualized for each participant. In addition, each participant is assigned a case manager who will help her or him link to other supports such as child care, health care, housing and material resources

In order to track changes in outcomes for participants, the program evaluation follows individual participants from Intake to Status Updates every six months. Data available for the January 1, 2013 – June 30, 2013 reporting period allowed the analysis to compare 446 participants from Intake (baseline) to Status Update, in order to determine if participation in Learning Together resulted in positive impacts for individuals. Key findings include:

Subsequent pregnancies: A total of 21 (7%) of participants had subsequent pregnancies within the last six month data collection period – 5% of participants under age 20 and 10% age 20 to 25. Comparative data from the Vermont Department of Health indicates 19% of mothers under age 20, and 14% of mothers age 20 to 24 gave birth again within 2 years of their first birth.

Use of birth control: Of those not using birth control at intake, 74% were using birth control at Status Update.

Academic achievement: Two-thirds of participants entered the program without a high school diploma or equivalent. By Status Update, 37% of those had achieved this academic goal.

Positive parenting Between Intake and Status Update, a self assessment of parenting skills indicated an increase by an average of 35%



## KEY PARTNERS

Learning Together is a partnership between the State and Vermont's 15 Parent Child Centers and one Community Action Council, which form a network of community-based non-profit organizations serving all of Vermont. All Parent Child Centers share a core philosophy and a core set of services. The focus of each Center is to provide support and education to families with very young children. The goals are to help all families get a healthy start; promote well-being; build on family strengths; and prevent problems, i.e. illiteracy, poor health, welfare dependence, family violence, or sexual, physical and emotional abuse. Vermont's Parent Child Centers are committed to providing, either directly or through referral, at a minimum the following core services to families and children: home visiting, early childhood services, parent education, parent support, on-site services, playgroups, information and referral, and community development

At the Central Vermont Community Action Council, parents model the importance of education to their children by actively working toward a secondary credential, completing a training program or college, and/or improving basic literacy, job and life skills. Families benefit from a comprehensive array of programs and services including adult education, parenting education and parent-child interactive literacy activities. Parents participate in over 20 hours per week in adult education lab time, individual tutoring, and classes designed to build literacy, parenting and life skills.

## HIGHLIGHTED PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

### State level (examples)

Two annual conferences, with about 200 program staff participating in each. 2013 conference keynote speaker was former Vermont Governor Madeleine Kunin.



Independent evaluation by outside contractor

### Local level (examples):

The Family Place in Hartford – *Jewelry-Os* - handmade jewelry created and sold by participants that promote development of math and business skills



Springfield Area Parent Child Center- Garden and Cooking Class- elements of Everyday Math, Science and Nutrition are incorporated in to the curriculum to compliment the gardening and cooking skills utilized in this class.

## NEXT STEPS

Documentary film depicting lives of parenting teens (under development)

Summit for Learning Together participants, with a focus on financial health, physical health, and college readiness

Third Annual Learning Together conference for staff

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