



Success Story: Connecticut State Department of Education

Offering Comprehensive Services to Support Expectant and Parenting Teens and Their Children in Connecticut

Supports for Pregnant and Parenting Teens (SPPT) is a school-based program that serves expectant and parenting teens and their children in six cities in Connecticut. Not only is poverty in these communities twice as high as in the rest of the state, but 52% of all teen births in Connecticut occurs in the cities served by the SPPT program.^{1,2} Consequently, teens in these communities face a myriad of hardships including poverty, exposure to trauma, homelessness, repeat pregnancy, and truancy.

In an effort to address these challenges, SPPT was designed to improve the education, health, and social outcomes for these teen parents, as well as to promote the healthy development of their children. Investing in the long-term well-being of this population, SPPT strives to build the capacity of these communities to provide and sustain supports for families beyond federal funding.

Staffed with a social worker and nurse, the program comprised of a host of services including academic support, prenatal care, child care, parenting and life skills education, individual and group counseling, case management, service referral, and home visits. Participants have access to the program five days a week when school is in session, and the social worker is on call 24 hours a day for emergencies.

SPPT has employed a wide array of strategies to engage and retain their participants. Strategies for reaching attendance goals range from daily contact with participants through texting, phone calls, and home visits to providing incentives, such as car seats and high chairs. They have also offered unique opportunities such as a summer workforce development program with paid employment.

SPPT's hard work has paid off and they have already begun seeing positive changes. In year two of program implementation, of the 263 participants and their children, 99% of children in the program were up-to-date on their well-child visits, 77% of participants graduated or remained in school, and the prevalence of repeat pregnancy rate was down to less than 2%. But the impact of the program extends beyond just the statistics; participants report the significance of the program in their lives. One participant notes, "The program is very helpful for me and my young family. I feel like this is my family apart from relatives at home. There was so much help during my pregnancy and after that I can honestly say that with the support, I have so much motivation towards finishing school and making a great life for my daughter."



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Contact Information

Shelby Pons

Project Director

860-807-2103

shelby.pons@ct.gov

¹ Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. (2010). *A tale of disproportionate burden: The special needs of Connecticut's poorer cities*. New Haven, CT. Retrieved April 2, 2014, from <http://hartfordinfo.org/issues/wsd/taxes/ccm-poorer-cities.pdf>

² Connecticut Department of Public Health. (2012). Vital Statistics: Connecticut Resident Births 2010- births to teenagers, low birth weight births and prenatal care for county, health district and town by mothers race and Hispanic ethnicity (Table). Hartford, CT. Retrieved April 2, 2014, from <http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3132&q=394598>