



Success Story: State of Vermont

The Learning Together Program Helps Teen Parents and Their Children Succeed

The relationship between academic failure and teen pregnancy is strong: parenthood is a leading cause of school dropout among teen girls, and fewer than two out of five (38%) of moms who have a child before they turn 18 have a high school diploma. Even more disturbing is the rate of repeat pregnancies among women aged 15 – 19. According to the Vermont Department of Health, for the years 2006 – 2008, there were 1,596 first pregnancies among women age 15 to 19 in the state. Of those women, 583, or 36%, had a second or higher pregnancy while in that age cohort.

The Vermont Department for Children and Families Child Development Division is providing support for pregnant and parenting teens through the Learning Together Program (LTP). For fiscal year 2012, 294 young parents participated in the 16 LTP sites statewide. Most of the participants in the LTP enter with multiple challenges such as unstable homes, poverty, violence, neglect, and physical and sexual abuse. Many participants lack confidence in both themselves and in those institutions designed to support them. They struggle to become self-supporting, contributing workers, citizens, and parents because they lack the most basic information and skills needed to meet multiple demands. The goal of LTP is to give program participants the knowledge and skills they need to be successful parents, citizens, students, and employees.

Available at high schools and community services centers, LTP focuses on building pregnant and parenting teens:

- Self-esteem,
- Communication skills,
- Job readiness skills, including high school completion, and
- Parenting skills.

The department works with partnering community-based organizations to reach pregnant and parenting teens and women by providing intensive pre-vocational, interpersonal, and parent training. LTP strives to ensure that all enrolled parents will demonstrate an enhanced ability to care for themselves and their children.

Using the Pregnancy Assistance Fund grant from the Office of Adolescent Health, the state hired an independent evaluator to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the program. The evaluation plan includes several components:

- an evaluation of the parent child centers (PCC) to determine the stage of LTP program development,
- an evaluation of LTP program participants to determine if the desired outcomes were being achieved, and
- a community assessment to identify ways to reach out to teens not participating in the LTP.



Success Story: State of Vermont

Additionally, LTP participants were also asked to complete a written participant satisfaction survey. A total of 136 survey responses were received and the results were analyzed. Overall, respondents were highly satisfied with the LTP programs, feeling that the programs were respectful, responsive, and made a difference in their lives.

Contact Information

Karen Garbarino, MPA

Children's Integrated Services Director

Vermont Department for Children and Families

(802) 769-6179

Karen.garbarino@state.vt.us