

Teen pregnancy

Children from homes run by teenage mothers have to face almost insurmountable obstacles in life. The incidents of depression and mental health problems, the lack of father figures, and the high rate of poverty often connected to children in homes run by teenage mothers put them at serious disadvantages when compared to children raised in nuclear families. Many people believe that the implementation of sex education in schools and the addition of more federal aid for single parents are major causes for the country's high rate of teen pregnancies. When the true purpose of sex education and federal aid is to help strengthen the mother and her child so that they can eventually lead productive lives.

Facing an unplanned teen pregnancy can be hard. The effects of teenage pregnancy are not limited to having to decide whether or not to keep the baby, how to cope with motherhood or whether to make an adoption plan. One of the most immediate effects of teen pregnancy is how the growing baby changes a teenager's body as well as their lifestyle.

Because a teen's body immediately begins the process of carrying a child and preparing for childbirth, a teenager needs to consider the effect that her physical activities may have on her developing baby.

Common methods of birth control include:

- the birth control pill or patch
- condoms
- intrauterine devices (IUD)
- the Depo-Provera injection
- diaphragms
- spermicidal
- cervical caps

Each of these birth control methods can fail even when used correctly. However, studies show that teens are more likely to use birth control methods improperly, leading to a higher likelihood that they may fail and cause a teen pregnancy to occur.

The absence of a father figure in the home brings about a chain reaction of dilemmas. The emotional problems that children suffer because there is no father in their life can be potentially hazardous to their future. Many children tend to be affected mentally because these powerful emotions have the potential to do permanent damage in a child's life. Children may experience sadness and depression, aggressive behaviour, frequent illness, difficulty in school, eating problems, and sleeping disorders.

Many children also suffer from various social difficulties and self-esteem problems that come along with living in a one-parent household. The pressure that children raised by teenage parents go through is tremendous. Children who don't have fathers present in the home often feel unloved. There is no trauma as excruciatingly painful as parental rejection and there is probably no worse of a way to wreck a person's life.

The overall teen birth rate has declined by 16 percent from 1991 to 1997. "All states are recording a decline and it is the sixth year in a row that the teen birth rate has declined,"

stated Donna Shalala, HHS secretary of U. S. Newswire. Although the birthrate among teens is decreasing and the percentage of teenagers who have had sexual intercourse is declining, it is a multi-fauceted problem affecting today's youth. The government is taking in to consideration all possibilities and conditions with teen births to make an affective way to prevent it.

Teenage pregnancy is a condition that can be controlled in many instances. Congress' campaign is "To reduce the teenage pregnancy by supporting values and stimulating actions that are consistent with a pregnancy-free adolescence," stated the Speaker pro tempore Mr. Taylor of North Carolina. Congress' goal is to balance the budget and reduce spending in the area of Medicaid funds, food stamps, and AFDC funds that are especially hard-hit by the teenage pregnancy problem. Reducing teenage childbearing through this campaign is likely to require more than eliminating or manipulating welfare programs.

A form of prevention funded by the Department of Public Health in Massachusetts is The Challenge Fund. It is a community-based approach to teen pregnancy prevention. These coalitions unite youth, family, and community in order to create and increase opportunities for youth development and leadership. It also increases awareness of ownership of the risks, costs and problems of teen pregnancy.