

# Teen Pregnancy & Teen Parenthood Community Change Paper

**TEENAGE PREGNANCY** is technically defined as occurring when women under the age of 20 become pregnant, although in the U.S. the term usually refers to girls younger than 18 years of age. Barring both medical and physical concerns, problems of teenage pregnancy arise from *individual, familial, and social factors*. These include but are not limited to: *culture, religion, moral values and beliefs, law, education, economic circumstances, lack of support structures* such as finding access to health care, contraception, and other resources, and *mental and emotional well-being*.

Data supporting teen pregnancy as a *social issue* in developed countries include *lower educational levels, higher rates of poverty, and other poorer "life outcomes"* in children of teenage mothers. Teenage pregnancy in developed countries is usually *outside of marriage*, and, for this reason, it *carries a social stigma* in many communities and cultures. [Wikipedia]

**COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION PROGRAMMING**, according to the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, would include components of biology, psychology, socio-cultural and spirituality that would teach teens *communication, critical thinking and decision-making skills* and *facilitate the exploration of attitudes, feelings and values that teens hold in regard to sexuality* [National Guidelines Task Force, 2004].

## PREGNANCY AND SEXUAL ACTIVITY AMONG TEENS IN CLARKE COUNTY

- Clarke County has a teen birth rate more than four times the rate in Germany.
- Clarke County's teen birth rate is higher than the rate in the United States.
- Georgia has one of the highest teen birth rates in the U.S.
- The United States has the highest teen birth rate in the developed world.

Abstinence from sexual activity is by far the safest choice to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

- Many teens, however, still choose to have sex despite the risks.
- In a survey of 1,926 Clarke County teens, 64% of 17 and 18 year olds reported having had sexual intercourse.

Among all sexually experienced teens:

- 66% have had more than one sexual partner.
- 26% did not use a condom the last time they had sex.

Behaviors like these result in high rates of sexually transmitted disease, infertility, and cervical cancer.

Clarke County Health Department, January 2005

This **COMMUNITY CHANGE PAPER** lists information about past efforts to reduce teen pregnancy, essential questions about teen pregnancy, public health vital statistics and survey results, local school district policies, child abuse protocols and suggested recommendations to begin addressing

- how to reduce teen pregnancy
- how to address teen parenthood and
- how to arm parents with information needed to communicate with their children about sexuality.

## 10 ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS ABOUT TEEN PREGNANCY IN CLARKE COUNTY

### 1. WHAT ACTIONS HAVE BEEN USED IN THE PAST TO REDUCE TEEN PREGNANCY?

Family Connection successfully lead efforts in the 1990's to reduce teen pregnancy. Since then the Clarke County Health Department has operated a Teen Pregnancy Prevention Task Force that is still in operation today.

For the past ten years, Clarke County Health Department's Teen Matters has provided family planning services and health education to Clarke County teens.

- In the past, Clarke County Health Department had health educators housed in Clarke Central High School, Cedar Shoals High School, and Burney Harris Lyons Middle School.
- There were also two social workers housed at Teen Matters.
- The one health educator position housed at Teen Matters still provides sexual health education in the high schools and throughout the community.
- The health educator also provides parenting education classes on communicating with teens about sex.
- Teen Matters also provides a health resource library with videos, brochures, and books available to anyone in the community to borrow.

### 2. WHAT DO CLARKE COUNTY STUDENTS REPORT ABOUT HAVING SEX?

#### CLARKE COUNTY SCHOOLS BEHAVIOR AND RISK FOR TEENS (BART) SURVEY- WINTER 2005

In January 2005, 62 percent of Clarke County School District high school students (grades 9, 10, 11, 12 = 1,926 students) responded to the BART survey. The report showed the following:

- 46% of all participating students have had sexual intercourse
- 22% of all sexually active students had been using alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse
- 59% of non-sexually active students have not had sexual intercourse because they are concerned about pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted diseases
- 49% of sexually active students have had 3 or more sexual partners
- 6% of all participating students have been diagnosed with an STD
- 86% of sexually active students used a method of contraception (including condoms) the last time they had sexual intercourse
- 25% of 17 year-olds interviewed said they had unprotected sexual intercourse at least three times.

DRAFT

### 3. What the Family Planning program under Title X; Where are Title X family planning services for youth provided in Clarke County?

The **Family Planning Program** is authorized under Title X of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. § 300). The implementing regulations are found at 42 CFR Part 59. The program, referred to as Title X program in this memorandum, is designed to *provide access to contraceptive supplies and information, with priority given to low income persons*. The Office of Family Planning, which administers the Title X program, is part of OPA in the Office of Public Health and Science; the Office of Family Planning's budget line is located within the Health Resources and Services Administration appropriation. In each of the 10 regional offices, OPA has a regional program consultant who administers the Title X program in his or her regions. Clarke County is located in Region IV.

**Teen Matters**, the adolescent health / teen center under the Clarke County Health Department, is a full service health clinic for teenagers between 11 and 19 years old. Teen Matters offers a variety of medical services, as well as, health education programs, guidance counseling, family planning and community involvement opportunities.

TEEN MATTERS: 1077 Baxter Street • Athens , GA , • 706-369-5670

### 4. WHAT DO TEEN PARENTS SAY ABOUT WHAT THEY NEED?

#### WHAT DO YOU NEED AND WHAT DO YOUR CHILDREN NEED TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS?

- After school programs
- Mentors
- Sex Education
- Support System: someone you can talk to other than your parents - sometimes parents should believe you or look out for you, but they don't
- Need people who know what you're going through- People who made it through similar experiences
- Education for the girls to delay pregnancy- they think having a baby is cute or it will help them keep the boys, they don't realize how hard it is to be a teen mom
- Several women talked about being abused by their father or step-father- in relationships they were looking for a father-figure

October 3, 2006 Performance Learning Center Teen Parents

#### WHAT DO YOU THINK TEENS NEED TO KNOW IN ORDER TO MAKE HEALTH CHOICES ABOUT HAVING SEX?

- have condoms
- better communication with parents, instead of being disciplined
- parents smack you for talking about sex - scared
- not going to take the pill even if your mom gets you on it
- don't listen to parent - teens will do whatever they want
- don't know
- a job
- be in extra activities, sports
- need good guidance from parents (need comm., respectful and understanding that you *will* have sex; get you birth control)
- there is not a way to answer this question
- good guidance leads to sneaking out the window
- need to see healthy relationships - if see that they will model that
- I will do what I want to do
- I don't feel like a teenager - I felt like I was an adult because my mother wasn't there and giving me guidance; I always had to take care of myself; If had somebody there...
- seeing people do bad makes you push to do better

February 1, 2006 Early Head Start Teen Parents

## 5. WHAT DID SOME PARENTS SAY WHEN ASKED, “WHAT DO TEENS NEED IN ORDER TO MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES ABOUT HAVING SEX?”

- Condoms
- need to lock them away
- need their parents
- need more education about relationships-what to look for in those relationship
- parents need help about how to talk to kids about sex
- need sex ed
- parents need to set a better example-kids see that and think its ok
- not sure
- talking about it early on-more discussion when young - the more aware they will be about making decisions
- now is the time to talk to them
- husband says “no boys” to daughter
- Redo how teach sex ed
- give out condoms
- parents need to know how to talk about good touch bad touch
- kids need to know how body parts are called
- need to know what to do if someone touches them
- what to do if someone touches you
- need to know body parts
- need to know how to react
- if put them on birth control – better than pregnancy

February 9, 2006 Early Head Start adult parents

## 6. WHAT IS THE CURRENT BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY ON SEX EDUCATION?

SEX EDUCATION / AIDS EDUCATION is a planned program that shall include instruction relating to the handling of peer pressure, promotion of high self-esteem, local community values and abstinence from sexual activity as an effective method of preventing acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and the only sure method of preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

This instruction shall *emphasize* abstinence from sexual activity until marriage and fidelity in marriage as important personal goals.

Sex education and AIDS education shall be part of a comprehensive health program.

Prior to the parent or legal guardian making a choice to allow his or her child or ward to take the specified unit of instruction, he or she shall be told what instruction is to be provided and shall have the opportunity to review all instructional materials to be used, print and nonprint. Any parent or legal guardian of a child to whom a course of study in sex education is to be taught shall have the right to elect, in writing, that such child not receive such course of study.

The Clarke County Board of Education shall appoint a committee to periodically review sex/AIDS education instructional materials and make recommendations concerning age/grade level use. Recommendations made by the committee shall be approved by the Clarke County Board of Education before implementation. The committee shall be composed primarily of nonteaching parents who have children enrolled in the Clarke County public schools and who represent the diversity of the student body augmented by others such as educators, health professionals and other community representatives. The committee shall also include one male and one female student currently attending Clarke County high schools. One of the students shall be classified as an eleventh grader and the other shall be classified as a twelfth grader.

The Clarke County Board of Education shall not permit instructional materials to be used print or

nonprint, that emphasize anything other than abstinence from sexual activity until marriage and fidelity in marriage as important goals.

Date Adopted: 9/12/1991 Last Revised: 10/10/2002

## 7. WHAT IS THE CURRENT BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY ON HEALTH EDUCATION?

The Clarke County Board of Education recognizes the value of comprehensive learning experiences in health and physical education for all students. Health and physical education instruction can be provided in accordance with State requirements.

The health and physical education program shall include concepts and skills dealing with the following areas:

- Alcohol, tobacco, and drug abuse
- Disease prevention
- Environmental, community and national health resources
- Nutrition
- Personal health
- Safety and first aid
- Mental and emotional health
- Structure, function, and care of the body
- Consumer health
- Outdoor education
- Health services
- *Sex education and AIDS education*
- Community health
- Health careers
- Family living
- Motor skills
- Physical fitness
- Lifetime sports

Students in grades K-5 shall receive a minimum of 90 hours of instruction at each grade level in health and physical education. Each school containing any grade 6-12 shall make available instruction in health and physical education.

Each student in each grade K-12 shall receive alcohol and drug abuse prevention education yearly.

Date Adopted: 9/12/1991 Last Revised: 10/10/2002

## 8. HOW DO LOCAL OFFICIALS DEFINE SEXUAL ABUSE?

In May of 1989 the school district along with many other organizations developed the Athens Clarke County Child Abuse Protocol. It was revised in June of 2004. The protocol describes procedures for interagency coordination and cooperation in handling child abuse and neglect and defines sexual abuse.

### ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY CHILD ABUSE PROTOCOL EXCERPT ON SEXUAL ABUSE

“SEXUAL ABUSE” means a person’s employing, using, persuading, inducing, enticing, or coercing any minor who is not that person’s spouse to engage in any act which involves:

Sexual intercourse, including genital-genital, oral-genital, anal-genital, or

- 1) oral-anal, whether between persons of the same or opposite sex;
- 2) Bestiality;
- 3) Masturbation;
- 4) Lewd exhibition of the genitals or pubic area of any person;
- 5) Flagellation or torture by or upon a person who is nude;
- 6) Condition of being fettered, bound, or otherwise physically restrained on the part of a person who is nude;
- 7) Physical contact in an act of apparent sexual stimulation or gratification with any person’s clothed or unclothed genitals, pubic area, or buttocks or with a female’s clothed or unclothed breasts;
- 8) Defecation or urination for the purpose of sexual stimulation; or
- 9) Penetration of the vagina or rectum by any object except when done as part of a recognized medical procedure.

“SEXUAL ABUSE” shall not include consensual sex acts involving persons of the opposite sex when the sex acts are between minors or between a minor and an adult who is not more than five years older than

the minor. This provision shall not be deemed or construed to repeal any law concerning the age or capacity to consent.

The *protocol* is signed by the representatives from the following organizations: Athens Regional Medical Center, Magistrate Court, St. Mary's Hospital, Northeast Health District, Clarke County Sheriff's Department, Clarke County Coroner's Office, Clarke County School District Board of Education, Athens-Oconee Court Appointed Special Advocate Program, Department of Family and Children Services, Athens Clarke County Police Department, Sexual Assault Center of Northeast Georgia, Western Judicial Circuit, Solicitor General, Athens Neighborhood Health Center, Athens Area Child Abuse Prevention Council, Department of Juvenile Justice, Advantage Behavioral Health Systems

## 9. WHAT DOES THE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORT ABOUT TEEN SEXUALITY?

The most recent statistics from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website say that

- in 2002 there were 425,493 live births among teens 15 to 19 years old;
- in 2003 approximately 45.3% of female and 48% of male teens had sexual intercourse;
- 4.2% of females and 10.4% of males had sex before the age of 13;
- 11.2% of females and 17.5% of males had four or more sexual partners;
- 34.6% of females and 33.8% of males were currently sexually active;
- 57.4% of females and 68.8% of males used condoms the last time had sex;
- 4.9% of females and 3.5% of males had either gotten pregnant or impregnated someone more than once; and
- 88.7% of females and 87.2% of males report being taught about AIDS/HIV in school.

## 10. WHAT ARE SOME **PRELIMINARY** RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINUING TO ADDRESS TEEN PREGNANCY IN CLARKE COUNTY?

**Seek** the aid and involvement of the Partners for a Prosperous Athens Co-Conveners to obtain a renewed commitment by departments / organizations such as Public Health, UGA College of Public Health, Clarke County School District, etc., that have expertise in developing and implementing sex education policy / programming / curriculum in schools to reduce teen pregnancy

**Evaluate** of the effectiveness of the implementation of current school board sex education policy and curriculum.

**Research** comprehensive sex education programs that are proven affective.

**Develop** an action plan for reducing teen pregnancy in Clarke County.

**Provide** parents with educational training on how to communicate with their children regarding sexuality (healthy decision-making, peer pressure, self-esteem, safety, good touch/ bad touch).

**Develop** and **implement** specific interventions to be utilized by parents, school district staff and other community members for teens who are already parents with the goal of preventing repeat pregnancies.

**Awareness:** Visual diagram for the community showing that Clarke's teen pregnancy rate is higher than the district, state, georgia, US, and Europe. The goal of this is to increase awareness of the problem of those in the community that are unaware of the problem.

**Encourage** what works: Provide an Early Learning Center at each public school based on what is

working at PLC.

**Keep** kids in school: Have pregnancy listed as a qualification for homebound teaching. Also relax attendance policy to allow greater than 8 absences for medical conditions such as pregnancy, chronic diseases, or those specified by a doctor.

**Create** a model for teen pregnancy prevention: Utilize teen parents as a peer educator in classroom presentations (service learning opportunity for students at PLC) and include health education on methods of contraception, self-esteem, and relationships. Provide education to parents of adolescents on sexual health. Because health and family and consumer science are the two classes students get this type of information, spread education efforts to other subject areas.



## **PARTNERS FOR A PROSPEROUS ATHENS REFERENCES**

...Athens high school drop-out rate and the rate of **teen pregnancy** are problematic; and Athens ranks near the bottom on several key indicators of community wellbeing including child and elder poverty. THE NEED: We know that the...<http://www.prosperousathens.org/about/index.html>

...Young children who are in families challenged by **teen parenthood**, domestic violence, mental illness, substance abuse, poverty or parent's history of childhood maltreatment need resources and support to address these challenges.

41%...<http://www.prosperousathens.org/committees/dependent/learnings.html>

...Lack of adequate prevention education and services, such as **teen family planning**, obesity prevention and early treatment of diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease, contributes to poverty in Athens. Recurring Themes and...<http://www.prosperousathens.org/committees/health/learnings.html>

### **OTHER DATA:**

Other statistics from 2003 show that while 1 in 5 teens reports having sex before the age of 15, almost half of the high school students surveyed are experienced sexually and by the time these students graduate high school 6 out of 10 will have had sex (Manlove, Papillio & Ikramullah, 2004).

According to Amaro, Raj, and Reed (2001), statistics in 2000 state that the majority of youth that have HIV are adolescent girls and that 1 in 10 adolescent girls have chlamydia.

### **OTHER REFERENCES**

Amaro, H., Raj, A. & Reed, E (2001). Women's sexual health: the need for feminist analyses in public health in the decade of behavior. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 25, 324-334.

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Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SEICUS). (2004). *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education*. Retrieved October 17, 2006 from <http://www.siecus.org>