

# Teen Pregnancy and School Success

## What is the Connection?

*Teen Pregnancy is the Number One Reason for School Drop Out among Girls and Educational Failure is a Key Predictor of Teen Pregnancy*

### The Facts

- By the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 60% of adolescents report having had sexual intercourse<sup>1</sup>, and 1 in 5 adolescents report having had sex by age 15.<sup>2</sup>
- 1 in 5 teen girls in Georgia becomes pregnant at least once before age 20 — that's over 21,000 pregnancies a year.<sup>3</sup>
- Georgia has the 8<sup>th</sup> highest teen birth rate in the nation and the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest repeat teen birth rate. Our state also has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest percentage of high school dropouts.<sup>4</sup>
- The teen pregnancy rate in Georgia is 67 pregnancies per 1,000 girls. The rate is 157 for Latinas, 83 for African Americans, and 44 for Whites.<sup>5</sup>
- 70% of young mothers drop out of high school, making early motherhood the number one reason for dropping out among females.<sup>6</sup>
- In Georgia, nearly 30% of teen pregnancies are repeat pregnancies.<sup>7</sup>
- Children born to teen mothers experience more trouble in school than those born to older parents.<sup>8</sup>
- Teen fathers complete about one less semester of school than men who delay fatherhood until at least age 21, and the missed semester is often the crucial one that determines whether they earn a high school diploma. Teen fathers are also more likely to face economic challenges, less stable marriage patterns, and employment challenges.<sup>9</sup>

## What Can Parents and School Officials Do?

### Be Someone to Talk to

Teens need safe places to talk and people who can listen without judgment. Both male and female students who can identify at least one trusted adult at school are more likely to delay sexual involvement and use contraception if they do become sexually active.<sup>10</sup>

### Encourage Pregnant and Parenting Teens to Stay in School

Keeping pregnant and parenting teens in school is important because it increases the academic achievement of the young mother, reduces repeat pregnancy, and contributes to the health of the baby.<sup>11</sup> Georgia state law specifically outlines the rights of pregnant or parenting students to remain at the school in which they are enrolled. The law also allows schools to create alternative programs beyond regular school hours for students who are pregnant or parenting.<sup>12</sup>

### Advocate for Effective Sexuality Education

Youth that receive education on sexuality

and pregnancy prevention as part of a skills-based comprehensive health education curriculum are significantly more likely to delay sexual debut and use contraceptives when sexually active.<sup>13</sup> Both state law and the State Board of Education leave discretion to local school boards regarding age-appropriate curriculum decisions for each grade.<sup>14,15</sup> All local school systems can and should choose to include comprehensive sexual education topics such as abstinence and contraception methods.

### Promote School-Based and School-Linked Health Care Services

Having access to general health care services in schools can reduce teen risk-taking behavior. School administrators can join forces with public health and social service officials to facilitate access to affordable healthcare for all students.<sup>16</sup>

### Encourage School/Business Partnerships

Teens who have high hopes for their future are less likely to become involved in a teen pregnancy.<sup>17</sup> Schools can form

relationships with local businesses to make the connection between academics and future employment real for students. Internships and part-time work opportunities are some examples.

### Support Service Learning Opportunities

Studies have shown that community service learning programs increase skills, develop opportunities for the future and reduce the likelihood that youth will participate in risky behaviors such as unprotected sexual activity, drug and alcohol use and crime.<sup>18</sup>

### Conduct a Survey of Youth Risk Behavior

Assessing the health risk behaviors of high school students over time will allow measurement of important trends and help in designing effective prevention programs. One example is the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.<sup>19</sup>



# How G-CAPP Can Support Your Efforts



- Providing data, information, research and resources on teen pregnancy in Georgia and effective programs and methods for preventing teen pregnancy in a school setting.
- Helping to inform and educate parents, the community and school officials about the effects of teen pregnancy and the need for effective programs.

## Resources

- The Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention 404-524-2277 [www.gcapp.org](http://www.gcapp.org)
- Advocates For Youth [www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org)
- The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy [www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org)
- National School Boards Association [www.nsba.org](http://www.nsba.org)
- National Association of State Boards of Education [www.nasbe.org](http://www.nasbe.org)

## Endnotes

- 1 Advocates for Youth. (2006). "Fact Sheet: Adolescent Sexual Behavior. 1: Demographics." Washington, DC: Advocates for Youth.
- 2 The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. (2006). "Fact Sheet: Science Says: The Sexual Behavior of Young Adolescents." Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.
- 3 Department of Human Resources, Division of Public Health, Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS). Available at <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/qrvMCH.aspx>. (Note: 2005 is the latest year for which state data is available; data is for 15 to 19 year olds.)
- 4 The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2006). Kids Count Online Database. Retrieved June 7th, 2006 from [http://www.kidscount.org/sld/compare\\_results.jsp?i=20](http://www.kidscount.org/sld/compare_results.jsp?i=20).
- 5 Department of Human Resources, Division of Public Health, Online Analytical Statistical Information System (OASIS). Available at <http://oasis.state.ga.us/oasis/qrvMCH.aspx>.
- 6 Ehrlich, Ginny. (2000). "The Impact of Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood on Educational Achievement: A Blueprint for Education Policymakers' Involvement in Prevention Efforts." National Association of State Boards of Education. Retrieved June 29th, 2007 from <[http://www.nasbe.org/Educational\\_Issues/Reports/teen\\_pregnancy.pdf](http://www.nasbe.org/Educational_Issues/Reports/teen_pregnancy.pdf)>.
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- 8 Academy for Educational Development. (2006). "Schools and Teen Pregnancy Prevention: A Primer for Action". New York, New York. Retrieved June 29th, 2007 from <http://www.aed.org/ToolsandPublications/upload/TeenPregPresentation.pdf>.
- 9 Healthy Teen Network. (2007). "Fast Facts: The Unique Needs of Young Fathers." Retrieved June 29th, 2007 from <<http://www.healthyeennetwork.org/vertical/Sites/{B4D0CC76-CF78-4784-BA7C-5D0436F6040C}/uploads/{831934FA-3A1B-42BB-8ED4-425528E23D5E}.PDF>>.
- 10 Ehrlich, Ginny. (2000). "The Impact of Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood on Educational Achievement: A Blueprint for Education Policymakers' Involvement in Prevention Efforts." National Association of State Boards of Education. Retrieved June 29th, 2007 from <[http://www.nasbe.org/Educational\\_Issues/Reports/teen\\_pregnancy.pdf](http://www.nasbe.org/Educational_Issues/Reports/teen_pregnancy.pdf)>.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 20-2-150. Eligibility for Enrollment. Retrieved July 2nd, 2007 from <<http://www.lexis-nexis.com/hottopics/gacode/default.asp>>.
- 13 National Association of State Boards of Education. (1998). "A Call to Action: What Schools Can Do to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and Promote Student Achievement." Retrieved June 29th, 2007 from <[http://www.nsba.org/sitege\\_micro.asp?TRACKID=&CID=1150&DID=31421](http://www.nsba.org/sitege_micro.asp?TRACKID=&CID=1150&DID=31421)>.
- 14 Georgia Department of Education. State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.12 Retrieved July 2nd, 2007 from <[http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/\\_documents/doe/legalservices/160-4-2-.12.pdf](http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/_documents/doe/legalservices/160-4-2-.12.pdf)>
- 15 Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 20-2-143. Sex Education and AIDS Prevention Instruction. Retrieved July 2nd, 2007 from <<http://www.lexis-nexis.com/hottopics/gacode/default.asp>>
- 16 Ehrlich, Ginny. (2000). "The Impact of Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood on Educational Achievement: A Blueprint for Education Policymakers' Involvement in Prevention Efforts." National Association of State Boards of Education. Retrieved June 29th, 2007 from <[http://www.nasbe.org/Educational\\_Issues/Reports/teen\\_pregnancy.pdf](http://www.nasbe.org/Educational_Issues/Reports/teen_pregnancy.pdf)>.
- 17 Academy for Educational Development. (2006). "Schools and Teen Pregnancy Prevention: A Primer for Action". New York, New York. June 29th, 2007 from <http://www.aed.org/ToolsandPublications/upload/TeenPregPresentation.pdf>.
- 18 Ehrlich, Ginny. (2000). "The Impact of Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood on Educational Achievement: A Blueprint for Education Policymakers' Involvement in Prevention Efforts." National Association of State Boards of Education. Retrieved June 29th, 2007 from <[http://www.nasbe.org/Educational\\_Issues/Reports/teen\\_pregnancy.pdf](http://www.nasbe.org/Educational_Issues/Reports/teen_pregnancy.pdf)>.
- 19 See <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbfs/>.

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