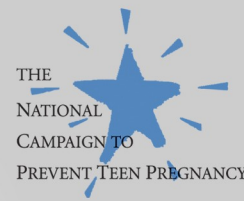


Why It Matters



Teen Pregnancy and Education

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Because the relationship between academic failure and teen pregnancy is so strong, and because teen pregnancy affects the educational achievement of teens themselves as well as that of their children, those concerned about educating young people should also be concerned with preventing teen pregnancy. Moreover, given the increasing demands in schooling necessary to qualify for a well-paying job, it is more important than ever for teens to finish high school and attain post secondary education when possible.

- Overall, about half (51%) of teen moms have a high school diploma compared to 89% of women who didn't have a teen birth. Young teen mothers are even less likely to graduate from high school. Fewer than four in ten (38%) mothers who have a child before they turn 18 have a high school diploma.¹
- Parenthood is a leading cause of school drop out among teen girls—30% of teen girls cited pregnancy or parenthood as a reason for dropping out of high school.²
- Other data find that less than two percent of young teen mothers (those who have a baby before age 18) attain a college degree by age 30.³
- Children of teen mothers are more likely than mothers who gave birth at age 20-21 to drop out of high school. In fact, only about two-thirds of children born to teen mothers earned a high school diploma compared to 81 percent of children of later childbearers.³
- Children of teen mothers also do not perform as well as children of older mothers on measures of child development and school readiness such as cognition, language and communication, and interpersonal skills.⁴

They are also less likely to read simple books independently and to demonstrate early writing ability compared to the children of mothers aged 20-21.⁴

- Children of teen mothers do worse in school than those born to older parents. They are 50 percent more likely to repeat a grade, are less likely to complete high school than the children of older mothers, and have lower performance on standardized tests.^{3,5}

Parenthood is a leading cause of school drop out among teen girls.

The relationship between education and teen pregnancy works both ways. That is, teen pregnancy often has a negative impact on education, as noted above. It is also the case that school achievement, attendance, and involvement helps reduce the risk of teen pregnancy. Put another way, staying in school and getting an education helps prevent teen pregnancy.

- Teens who have dropped out of school are more likely to become pregnant and have a child than their peers who stay in school.⁶
- Teens who are more involved in their school are less likely than their peers who are not as closely connected to their school to get pregnant. Important aspects of school engagement include grades, test scores, class participation, homework completion, and a perception of support and connectedness with teachers and administrators. Planning to attend college after high school is also associated with a lower risk of teen pregnancy.⁶

SOURCES

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