

Achieving Results with Pregnant and Parenting Teens: Success of a School-Based Program

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eliminating racism
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BACKGROUND

Teen pregnancy is well documented to result in short and long term social, economic and health disadvantages for both the mother and infant.

An upstate New York urban community experiences high rates of teen birth - among ~3100 births to inner city women, >13% were to teens.

Other community characteristics

- 78% of children live below the poverty line
 - 9th highest in childhood poverty
- 27% of the adult population has < high school education
- Significant unemployment and violence

Among women giving birth

- 50% are African American; 19% are Hispanic
- 54% have unintended pregnancies
- nearly 70% have Medicaid-funded deliveries,

DESIGN / METHODS

The YWCA has a long standing, community funded, school-based program working with inner city pregnant and parenting teens. **The program's overall purpose is to increase their ability to become healthy self-sufficient adults.**

Program services

- On site case management at six high schools and a Young Mothers alternative program (during pregnancy)
- Individual and group counseling and home visits
 - Annual participation averages 10 hours of individual contact and 7 hours of group
 - Assist young mothers with health care, child care, income, housing, and mental health issues.
- Broad eligibility criteria
- Links to other programs e.g. Out of School program (for drop outs and graduates); young fathers services
- Enrollment occurs throughout school year
- Caseload 20-25

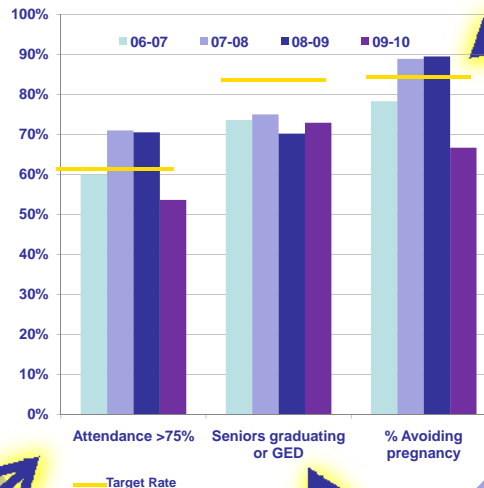
PARTICIPANTS

	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
# Enrolled	203	205	187	196
Remained Active	%	%	%	%
Enrolled Prior Yr	9	23	40	35
Dropped out ¹	18	13	10	6
Closed ²	0	12	12	22
Living on Own	DNA	13	36	21
Non Senior ³	54	53	39	44

¹Dropped out of high school
²Closed = no contact for 60 days, no longer interested in program, moved out of the district, refused)
³Excludes those in special education

Among participants nearly 75% are African Americans, in grades 7 to 12 (median=10) and range in age from 14 to 21 (median=17).

OUTCOMES



OBJECTIVE THREE

Avoid Subsequent Pregnancy

Among participants with at least 18 months of program participation, 85% will have avoided a repeat pregnancy.

Results
 In two of the four years this objective was met

- This outcome was assessed through information provided by participants
- Only assessed for girls who were in the program for at least 18 months (2 school terms) or more.
 - Nationally 66% avoid second birth for 24 months [Alan Guttmacher Institute]
- Staff provided information on healthy relationships and the consequences of repeat pregnancies through groups and presentation. One on one conversations were undertaken with participant pertaining to birth control methods being used, abstinence and date of last check-up. All staff has attended a variety of trainings on adolescent sexual behavior.

CONCLUSIONS

- This replicable school-based program combining individual and group work achieved noteworthy results among retained pregnant and parenting teens living in poverty.
- Obtaining and utilizing primary outcome data is critical to assessing progress and early identification of problems.
- Evaluation using quasi experimental design would add to generalizability of results

OBJECTIVE ONE

Improve School Attendance

At the end of the school year, 65% of participants enrolled in services for six months or longer will achieve a school attendance rate of 75% or higher.

Results
 For two of the four years, the objective was achieved.

- Data abstracted from absent days as reported on participants' report cards; report cards unavailable for several students each year
- Rates calculated only on individuals who had participated in the program for at least 6 months.
- Most attendance issues trace back to lack of support at home; especially with older students who live alone.
- Students arriving after 2nd period are not counted in the daily attendance. Also students go to school but do not always show up for class.

OBJECTIVE TWO

Increase Graduation Rates

Among program participants who are seniors in September, 86% will graduate or complete GED by the following August.

Results
 In no years was this objective met but rates exceeded both state targets and local school district overall rates

- New York State target is 55%; district graduation rates are consistently below state target
- Data obtained from report cards each reporting period
- The program continues to work with seniors who did not graduate to re-enroll them in school (e.g. as of September 2009 among the 17 that did not graduate by August, 10 had already re-enrolled in school).

STRENGTHS & LIMITATIONS

Strengths

- Consistent implementation across multiple schools
- Detailed program data on participant exposure
- Close working relationship with schools provided access to participants and key evaluation data
- Program provided for home visits and other individualized follow-up
- Integrated program that includes an out of school program for both graduates (to get work or additional training) or for drop outs to re-engage in school
- School data were obtained from documentation rather than self report

Limitations

- Retention of some participants proved challenging
- Not all schools were amenable to providing data each year
- Unable to adequately evaluate program outcomes due to lack of a comparison group