



Children's Home Society
OF AMERICA

PROMOTING HEALTHY CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Few Americans realize that ten percent of all women ages 15-19 become pregnant, or that 1 in 5 women age 15-19 who have sex become pregnant. Thirteen percent of all births in the United States are to teens.*

Teenage birth rates in this country have declined steadily since 1991. While this is good news, teen birth rates in the US remain high, exceeding those in most developed countries. High teen birth rates are an important concern because teen mothers and their babies face increased risks to their health, and their opportunities to build a future are diminished.**

Life often is difficult for a teenage mother and her child. Teen mothers are more likely to drop out of high school than girls who delay childbearing. A 1997 study showed that only 41 percent of teenagers who have children before age 18 go on to graduate from high school compared to 61 percent of teens from similar social and economic backgrounds who did not give birth until ages 20 or 21. With her education cut short, a teenage mother may lack job skills, making it hard for her to find and keep a job. A teenage mother may lack good parenting skills, and may not have the social support systems to help them deal with the stress of raising an infant.***

* Source: "Teen Sex and Pregnancy," *Facts in Brief*, AGI, 1999.

** Source: National Center for Health Statistics. *Births to Teenagers in the United States, 1940-2000*. National Vital Statistics Reports, 9/25/01.

*** Source: *The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, Not Just Another Single Issue: Teen Pregnancy's Link to Other Critical Social Issues*. Washington, D.C., 2002.

THE TEEN PARENT SCHOOL PROGRAM AT THE MAINE CHILDREN'S HOME FOR LITTLE WANDERERS

The mission of the Teen Parent School at The Maine Children's Home mainechildrenshome.org for Little Wanderers is to provide a supportive environment where pregnant and parenting teens can receive an education that includes instruction in positive parenting and healthy lifestyles. Our goal is to empower teen mothers to become nurturing parents, good role models to their children, and productive responsible citizens. Many of our students are at risk of not graduating high school due to a variety of barriers. Teen parents receive assistance in increasing supports and removing barriers that prevent teen mothers from attending school such as transportation, housing, emotional support, accessing quality childcare, etc.



TABBY'S STORY

"The Maine Children's Home for Little Wanderers Teen Parent School Program has been a savior to me and many other girls like me. My name is Tabby and I got pregnant at sixteen. My life was really falling apart before I got pregnant and began attending school at the Teen Parent School Program. I was fourteen when I moved out of my mother's home and in with my boyfriend. I started experimenting with many very dangerous drugs. My drug of choice was marijuana and my use eventually led to rehab to help with my problem. Soon after leaving rehab I began using marijuana again and began shoplifting in order to get money to support my habit. The second time I was caught shoplifting I had to go to a correctional facility. I actually had fun there and didn't change. When I was released I began robbing cars and continued to get into trouble. I eventually got pregnant and wanted to change my life for me and my baby. I started coming to the Teen Parent School Program and was treated well by all of the students and teachers, and they supported me to change my ways for my unborn baby. I gave up marijuana with the support of my friends and teachers at this school.

Before I started school at the Teen Parent School Program I skipped school a lot and was failing my classes. I am now on High Honors and have a goal to graduate with my high school diploma for me and my son. If this program were not here, I would drop out of school. Now my son, Scotty, is born; and thanks to all of the support from the Teen Parent School program, I am the mother that I always wanted to be. I am no longer worried about the future for Scotty and me. I am grateful every day for this school and the people that support me everyday. Having the daycare on campus also helps me to go to school because the school pays for my childcare and I can see my son Scotty throughout the day. The Teen Parent School Program has educated me in prenatal and parenting skills, which help me to be a better parent. The Teen Parent School Program has really saved my life and Scotty's life too. I wish that all young mothers had the opportunity to go to the Teen Parent School Program, but sadly we don't have the room to accept everyone." –Tabby

