

Teen Pregnancy and Prevention

When teens become parents too soon, it impacts all of us. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, only about **50% of teen mothers receive a high school diploma** by 22 years of age, versus approximately 90% of women who had not given birth during adolescence. Moreover, the children of teenage mothers are more likely to have lower school achievement, drop out of high school, have more health problems, be incarcerated at some time during adolescence, give birth as a teenager, and face unemployment as a young adult.

At Family Focus, our programs focus on the **parent - child relationship**, assisting both the teen parent and the child – so each can reach their full potential. For teen parents (ages 12-19), we offer support before and after the baby is born, with our goal being to **keep them in school**. At our Evanston center, we work with the local high school bringing **teachers and curriculum** into our center so teen parents can continue their studies. Once the baby is born, we provide **onsite childcare** until the baby is two months old and the mother returns to high school. Because the parents have continued their academic studies, they can **graduate on time** and support their child. At all centers, teens receive home visits to ensure that the mother is receiving proper **medical care** and that the baby is **developing** appropriately. Support groups for both teen mothers and fathers help new parents feel less isolated, understand how their babies develop, and learn about reproductive health to **prevent an untimely second pregnancy**.

For the babies, we promote **healthy parent-child bonding**, healthy growth and development, and school readiness through home visits. These personal visits are designed to involve parent and child in sharing and learning activities that foster **gross motor, language, fine-motor, social and emotional skills** so that the children are ready for school. Home visitors address developmental topics, including attachment, discipline, health, nutrition, safety, sleep, and more. Children also receive **developmental screening** to ensure that they are meeting milestones and receive referrals to health resources when necessary.

Due to this Family Focus support network, teen parents are more likely to **finish school** and have their children screened and **immunized** on time. They are less likely to have subsequent early pregnancies. Children are also healthier, more engaged with learning and literacy, and with their families.

Last year, Family Focus provided **765 teen parents** with resources and support – for themselves and their children. By supporting this program, you are helping to ensure that both the teen parents and their children are poised for a great start in life, school and career. Click [here](#) if you can help!

