

North Carolina Department of Public Health Adolescent Parenting Program



Goals

The North Carolina Division of Public Health (DPH) sponsors the Adolescent Parenting Program which strives to improve the well-being of adolescent parents and their children. DPH indicates that program goals are to (a) increase self-sufficiency (by delaying additional pregnancies and increasing high school graduation rates or achievement of the GED) and (b) improve child welfare and school readiness (by improving positive parenting and ensuring children have a medical home and safe home environment). (<http://www.teenpregnancy.ncdhhs.gov/app.htm>)

Similarly, the evaluation team at UNC-Greensboro led by Dr. Kenneth Gruber (2012)ⁱ, indicates there are four primary outcomes:

- (a) delaying a subsequent pregnancy until beyond adolescence;
- (b) graduating from high school or earning a GED;
- (c) successfully transitioning to adulthood through achievements such as enrolling in postsecondary education, receiving vocational training, being employed at a livable wage, and living in safe and stable housing environment; and
- (d) increasing the incidence of appropriate discipline, nurturing behavior, and assurance that the children are well cared for.

Program Features

The program provides support to first-time pregnant and parenting teens through a range of services that include home visitation, group education, parenting education, referrals, case management, and peer connections. Participants in the program receive monthly home visits using either the Partners for a Healthy Baby or Parents as Teachers home-visiting curriculum. Participants also receive minimum of 24 hours of annual peer group education.

Each program requires at least one full-time program coordinator to serve a caseload of 15-25 teens. Program coordinators may vary as to degree achievement (with most program coordinators having at least a four-year degree in social work or a related field). Sangalang (2006)ⁱⁱ noted that trained program coordinators provide services, with 18 hours of program-specific training required each year. Program coordinators must also be trained in the selected home visiting curriculum.

Target Audience

First-time teen parents, typically 12 to 19 years old.

NC DPH Adolescent Parenting Program Snapshot

- **EC Profile Indicator:** FS30 - Percent of children age 0-5 with an investigated report of child abuse/neglect
- **Clearinghouse Rating:** None
- **Research supports** use of the program with adolescent or teen-aged, first-time, mothers
- **Related Smart Start outcomes:**
 - Increase in positive parenting practices
 - Children on track for typical development
- **Purveyor training required:** Yes
- **Smart Start information or guidance:** No
- **Staff qualifications:** Four-year or higher degree in social work or a related field
- **Frequency:** Monthly
- **Minimal service threshold:** Prenatal period
- **Implementation Guidance:**
<http://www.teenpregnancy.ncdhhs.gov/app.htm>

Documented Outcomes

Type of Study		Birth Outcomes			Parent Outcomes			
		Improved Birth weight*	Longer Gestational age*	Higher Mother's Education	Delayed Second Pregnancy	More Stable Home Environment**	Increased Financial security	Increased Healthy behaviors
Gruber (2012)	Non-experimental with a retrospective comparison of program and non-program participants			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sangalang et al (2006)	Non-experimental with a retrospective comparison of program and non-program participants	✓	✓		✓			

This table contains outcomes found to be associated with the program or approach. Individual studies may contain additional outcomes that were tested and not found to be associated with the program or approach.

*Aligned with Smart Start outcome: *More children on track for typical and/or enhanced development*

**Aligned with Smart Start outcome: *Increase in positive parenting practices*

Research Evidence for NC DPH Adolescent Parenting Program

- The program is associated with positive parent and birth outcomes.
- The model studied is specific to programs operating through North Carolina’s Department of Public Health.
- A variety of parenting curricula may be used.

Review of Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Studies

None

Review of Meta-Analyses

None

Review of Descriptive and Non-Experimental Studies

Citation	Gruber, K. J. (2012). A comparative assessment of early adult life status of graduates of the North Carolina Adolescent Parenting Program. <i>Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing</i> , 25, pp. 75–83.
Population and Sample	The study, which focused on Greensboro’s program operated through the YWCA, involved 15 program graduates and 20 comparison individuals who did not participate in the program. To be eligible, participants had to meet several criteria, which included: (a) Blue Medicaid eligibility, (b) be enrolled in high school or in a GED program within 90 days, (c) have a one child under 3 years of age (if parenting), and (d) consent to voluntary participation.
Methodology	Non-experimental with a retrospective comparison of program and non-program participants
Purpose	The study examined the current status of program participants, with comparisons to individuals (i.e., teen parents) who did not participate in the program.
Measures & Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys/ Young Female Parent Life Status Assessment Form • Parenting Sense of Competence Scale • Parenting Opinions Questionnaire (modified)
Study Implementation	Survey-based interviews were conducted with program graduates as well as individuals who were of comparable age, and were “friends of acquaintances” of the study participants. Both program and comparison individuals were teen mothers. The program sample consisted of teen mothers who graduated from the Greensboro YWCA Adolescent Parenting Program between 2004 and 2008; 27 women comprised the recruitment population. The comparison sample consisted of teen mothers who were “friends or acquaintances” of the program graduates; comparison mothers were over 18 and had children of about the same age as the program graduate.
Implementation Fidelity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data were collected by “experienced staff members” from the YWCA; the staff members did not have prior contact with any study participants. • Survey-based interviews were conducted with participants which lasted 1 to 1.5 hours • Study participants were given a \$25 gift card for participating in the study
Staff Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff qualifications for providing the program were not addressed.
Key Findings	<p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the time of data collection, 100% (15 of 15) program graduates had completed high school. Forty percent of comparison parents had not completed high school. • At the time of data collection, 60% of program graduates were either enrolled in a community college or in a four-year college. Additionally, 20% of program graduates reported that they were planning to take college courses. In comparison, 30% of comparison parents were enrolled in a community college or a four-year college while an additional 10% reported that they were planned to take courses. <p>Number of Children</p>

- In comparison to program graduates, more than twice as many comparison mothers reported having more than one child and two reported having a second child while still a teen.

Relationship or Family Status

- The majority (87%) of program graduates reported that they either lived on their own and with a husband or boyfriend. In comparison, 55% of comparison mothers reported that they either lived on their own and with a husband or boyfriend.
- Twenty-seven percent of program graduates reported that they lived with a family member. In comparison, 60% of comparison mothers reported that they lived with a family member in the past 12 months.
- Program graduates and comparison mothers reported similar levels of satisfaction with living arrangements.
- Program graduates and comparison mothers reported similar levels of mobility in the prior 12 months and were similar in the plans to move residences in the next six months.

Financial Security

- Seventy-three percent of program graduates reported that they paid for their housing, compared to 25% of comparison mothers.
- Sixty-seven percent of program graduates reported that they paid for their utilities, compared to 20% of comparison mothers.
- Sixty-seven percent of program graduates reported being employed, compared to 30% of comparison mothers.
- Eighty percent of program graduates reported that they had employment “at least some of the time in the past 12 months,” compared to 67% of comparison mothers.
- Of the participants who were not employed, three of five program graduates reported that they were “actively looking for employment,” compared to nine of 14 comparison mothers.
- Program graduates and comparison mothers reported similar “primary sources of financial support,” which included “self” and “significant others and/or family.”
- Ninety-three percent of program graduates reported use of food stamps, compared to 65% of comparison mothers.
- Thirty-three percent of program graduates reported use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/Work First, compared to 15% of comparison mothers
- Twenty-seven percent of program graduates reported involvement with the Family Life Council, compared to 5% of comparison mothers
- Forty percent of program graduates reported participating in YWCA parenting programs, compared to 5% of comparison mothers

Healthy Behaviors

- Thirteen percent of program graduates reported smoking, compared to 45% of comparison mothers
- Thirteen percent of program graduates reported drinking alcohol, compared to 55% of comparison mothers
- Thirty-three percent of program graduates reported “having friends with police arrest records,” compared to 55% of comparison mothers

Spirituality

- Forty-seven percent of program graduates reported “attending weekly religious services” compared to 85% of comparison mothers

Parenting

- Program graduates and comparison mothers had similar means on parenting measures. Further, there were low scores on the Support of/Affection to Parents subscale.

Citation	Sangalang, B. B., Barth, R. P., & Painter, J. S. (2006). First-birth outcomes and timing of second births: A statewide case management program for adolescent mothers. <i>Health & Social Work, 31(1)</i>, pp. 54-63.
Population and Sample	The study involved 1,260 participants in the NC APP program, who also were first-time adolescent/teen parents. Program mothers were compared to 1,260 adolescent/teen parents who also were first-time parents but who were not participating in the APP program.
Methodology	Non-experimental with a retrospective comparison of program and non-program participants
Purpose	The study examined whether or not program participants exhibited better outcomes, when compared to adolescent or teen-aged first-time, mothers who were not program participants. Outcomes of

	interest included (a) use of prenatal care; (b) birth weight; (c) gestational age; and (d) delay of second birth.
Measures & Assessments	Adequacy of Prenatal Care Utilization (APNCU) Index
Study Implementation	Program records were used to generate information on adolescent/teen mothers who participated in the program from 1991 to 1998. The comparison group of adolescent/teen mothers was a random selection from birth records, matched to program participants on (a) county of residence and (b) mother's age at first birth. The study only examined singleton births.
Staff Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study indicated that program coordinators could have undergraduate degrees in fields that included social work, psychology, or sociology. • All program coordinators had to complete 18 hours of "in-service" training, annually. • Some program coordinators had graduate degrees in social work (or a related field).
Key Findings	<p>Prenatal Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program participants and comparison mothers were similar on measures of prenatal care, with no significant differences found in each group's use of prenatal care. • The authors reported that approximately half of each group received "adequate" prenatal care. <p>Birth Weight and Gestational Age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A relatively high percentage (90.6%) program participants gave birth to babies with "normal" birth weight, compared to 86.1% of comparison mothers. • A relatively high percentage (84.4%) program participants gave birth to babies born at full-term, compared to 77.4% of comparison mothers. <p>Program Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study conducted analyses that controlled for maternal characteristics. Findings from logistical regression analyses that included controls did not indicate a significant association between program participation and use of prenatal care. However, factors such as maternal age, race, and marital status were significantly associated with use of prenatal care. • Program participation was significantly associated with baby birth weight, even after controlling for maternal characteristics. More specifically, "the odds of an APP participant giving birth to a normal weight baby were 1.67 times that of a non-APP participant." Further, two maternal characteristics (age and smoking) were significantly associated with birth weight. • Program participation was significantly associated with baby gestational age, even after controlling for maternal characteristics. More specifically, "APP participants were 1.69 times more likely than non-APP participants to give birth to a full-term baby." Further, the maternal characteristics (a) age, (b) marital status, and (c) smoking were significantly associated with baby gestational age. • Program participants and comparison mothers were similar in the percent of each group that only had one birth (during the period of time examined by the study). • Program participants and comparison mothers were similar in the percent of mothers (62%) who did not have a second birth during the period of time examined by the study. • Program participants (ages 12 to 16; 69.4%) had longer times between births than comparison mothers (67.1%) in the same age group. • Program participants (ages 12 to 16; 88%) had not had a second birth two years after their first birth, compared to 85% of comparison mothers in the same age group. • Program participants (ages 12 to 16; 66%) had not had a second birth four years after their first birth, compared to 60% of comparison mothers in the same age group. • Program participants and comparison mothers who were in the 17 to 19 age group when they had their first child, were similar on a measure of delayed second birth. • Cox regression estimates suggested that program participants (in the 12 to 16 age group) were 20 percent less likely to have a second birth than comparison mothers, which was a significant difference between program participants and comparison mothers. • Race was significantly associated with "time until the second birth."

End Notes

ⁱ Gruber, K. J. (2012). A comparative assessment of early adult life status of graduates of the North Carolina Adolescent Parenting Program. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 25, pp. 75-83.

ⁱⁱ Sangalang, B. B., Barth, R. P., & Painter, J. S. (2006). First-birth outcomes and timing of second births: A statewide case management program for adolescent mothers. *Health & Social Work*, 31(1), pp. 54-63.

Note: Research summaries could include verbiage directly reproduced from the research literature. Quotes and italics may be used to show a direct quote but not always.

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