

Adolescent Pregnancy

Last Reviewed March 2005

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Definition: Although adolescent pregnancy rates in Maine are low compared with other states in the US, a significant number of adolescents do experience pregnancy.

Early pregnancy and childbearing can have a significant impact on the lives of adolescence, their children, families and communities. Early childbearing decreases the chances that students will complete high school, enroll in post-secondary education, and, consequently, these women and their children are more likely to live in poverty.

Schools play an important role in pregnancy prevention and in assisting pregnant and parenting students to succeed in school.

Role of the School Nurse:

Prevention:

- Provide health education to individual students regarding their responsibility in preventing pregnancy. Encourage communication with parents.
- Consult with health education teachers regarding family life curriculum.
- Identify students at risk of pregnancy and work to increase their connection with school and family.
- Identify sexually active adolescents and provide information about preventive services including abstinence, referrals, and confidential services as appropriate.
- It is not the role of the school nurse to provide transportation to health care providers.

Services to pregnant student:

- The school nurse must respect the student's confidentiality. The student should be encouraged to communicate with her family, father of child to be, and health care provider. The school nurse may assist the student in this communication.
- The school nurse's involvement with pregnant students will be dependent on the student's consent to these services.
- The school nurse may be delegated the team leader for students who are pregnant.
- The school nurse may act as case manager and advocate for the student.
- The school nurse may encourage the student to seek health care including, but not limited to, confirmation of pregnancy.
- The school nurse can conduct an assessment of the student's physical, social and emotional health and assess areas of concern such as medication use, substance use, and other risk factors.

- If the student has not decided whether or not to keep the pregnancy, the school nurse may assist the student with developing a method of decision making, providing unbiased information on all options and referrals as appropriate.
- If the student has decided to bring the pregnancy to term, the school nurse may refer the student to appropriate services.
 - Prenatal care,
 - Social supports (adolescent pregnancy programs, WIC, TANF, PHN),
 - Health insurance (MaineCare) as appropriate.
- The school nurse may discuss issues of paternity acknowledgement.
- The school nurse may provide nutritional information during prenatal period.
- The school nurse may develop a plan of care that includes methods to allow for students to complete class work.
- The school nurse may support and assist student to remain in school during the pregnancy and after the child is born.

Resources:

Advocates for Youth – Teen pregnancy prevention clearinghouse
<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/iag/compnent.htm>

Marykay B. Haas, Editor, The School Nurse’s Source Book of IHP’s Vol I. , Sunshine River Press, 1993.

Morning Glory Press – Catalog of educational material for pregnancy and parenting students. <http://www.morningglorypress.com/>

National Association of School Nurses – Quality Nursing Interventions in the School Setting and issue briefs ‘**Adolescent Parents, The Role of the School Nurse in Supporting**’
<http://www.nasn.org>

National Organization of Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention, Inc. (NOAPPP) - Provides leadership on adolescent pregnancy and parenting issues.
<http://www.noapppp.org/>

Teen and Young Adult Health Program, Bureau of Health – Provides information about adolescent pregnancy prevention in Maine. <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/bohdcfh/tya/>

Services:

Children and Family Programs, Bureau of Health. Home visiting for pregnant and parenting adolescence. <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs>

Family Planning Association of Maine – Provides confidential family planning services.
<http://www.mainefamilyplanning.org/>

Public Health Nursing – Call regional DHHS office for local PHN services.
<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/DHSaddresses.htm> for list of DHHS offices.

TANF - <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/bfi/Office%20Locations.htm> for local Family Independence Offices.

WIC <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/wic/> to find WIC services local area.

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