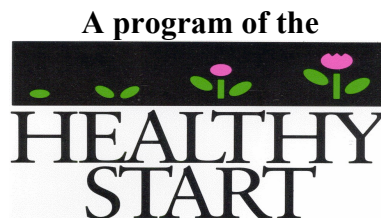


Polk County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Alliance

Program Summary and Analysis 2010-2015

(May 2010)

Developed by the Polk County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Alliance, a volunteer group of concerned citizens and community leaders, in response to the high rate of teen pregnancy in Polk County.



*Healthy Start Coalition of
Hardee, Highlands & Polk Counties, Inc.*

Statement of Purpose

Teen pregnancy and teen parenthood are complex issues that affect the teen parents, the child, the adolescent's family and our community as a whole. Teen parents and their children face profound educational, health, social, economic and employment barriers. The many negative consequences pose a challenge to educational, governmental and community entities.

The complex nature of teen pregnancy touches all Polk County communities and residents, either directly or indirectly. It is the community's responsibility and in its best interest to provide the opportunity for all Polk County children to succeed and achieve maximum self-sufficiency.

Generally, teen parents do not fare as well as their peers, making it difficult for them to reach their full potential. Frequently, these adolescents drop out of school, live in poverty, and require public assistance. Their babies are at greater risk for health problems, having difficulties in school, being abused or neglected, growing up in poverty, and becoming teen parents themselves or being incarcerated.

According to the 2008 Department of Health, Polk is 23rd highest out of the 67 Florida counties in birth to teens 10-14, and 21st highest for births to teens 15-19. During 2008, 336 babies were born to teen's ages 10-17. The rate for young women age 15-19 is 58, or approximately 21 births per week. This is higher than the state rate of 40.7. For girl's ages 10-14 years, every 3 weeks a teen gives birth in Polk County, with a rate of 0.8 and a state rate of 0.6.

While it is recognized that parents bear the primary responsibility for their children, solutions will depend on the concerted effort of all affected parties and on creative public policies accompanied by community-level practices that support children and families. It will require the wise investment of public and private resources along with the commitment of time and attention from all sectors of the community.

The goal of this plan is to identify ways in which the Polk County community can work together to reduce the Polk County birth rate. The initial goal was set at a 33% decrease in births to girls under age 18 over a five year period, beginning with year 2000 data. In late 2006, the 2005 data indicated a 23% decline in births to young women under age 18. An analysis of the 2005 data revealed a 30% increase in teen births in May and June of 2005 when compared to May and June of 2004. This 30% increase in teen births in summer 2005 may be related to the impact of 3 hurricanes crossing Polk County over a period of six weeks in August and September 2004. Many areas of the state had an increase in births after the 2004 hurricane season. After review of the decrease in the teen birth rate over the initial 5 year period, TPPA established a subsequent goal of continuing to reduce births to teens under the age of 18 by 15% over a 3 year period, starting with year 2005 data. Polk County met that goal and with 16.5% decrease.

The TPPA Steering Committee reviewed the 10 year data to establish a new goal from 2008-2013; a decrease births to girls under the age of 18 by 10%. The Polk County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Alliance (TPPA) believes that with continued implementation of this plan, the occurrence of teen births in Polk County will continue to be reduced.

Introduction

Vision Statement

Polk County is committed to creating an environment that supports parents and empowers youth to maximize their potential without the limitations imposed by pregnancy, childbearing, and parenting.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Polk County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Alliance is to reduce teen pregnancies in Polk County. This will be accomplished by developing and implementing a countywide plan that helps our communities and families build assets, reduce risks, and support adolescents in their passage to adulthood by delaying pregnancy while helping all youth accept their responsibility to become productive citizens.

History of Polk TPPA

The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Alliance (TPPA) formed as a small group of women interested in preventing teen pregnancy in Polk County. The group expanded and focused their efforts and strategies on program implementation and evaluation. TPPA was formally established in 1994 as an action group of the Healthy Start Coalition of Hardee, Highlands, and Polk Counties. TPPA is comprised of members from sectors of the community including but not limited to: private business, public health, social services, law enforcement, schools and the faith community.

In March 1999, Daniel Haight, MD, Director of the Polk County Health Department, the Executive Director of the Healthy Start Coalition of Hardee, Highlands, and Polk Counties, provided the Polk County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) with a presentation on the Polk County teen pregnancy crisis. The BOCC was alarmed by the statistics presented. From this presentation, County Commissioners and TPPA organized a countywide summit held in August 1999. This summit helped inform the community about teen pregnancy, identify what programs and resources was available and provided motivation to seek recommendations for possible solutions.

Summit discussions proved the need for a Polk County teen pregnancy prevention coordinator to organize countywide prevention activities.

Goals of Polk TPPA

Currently, the Healthy Start Coalition of Hardee, Highlands and Polk Counties, Inc. operate TPPA in partnership with Heartland for Children, the Polk Board of County Commissioners, the Polk County Health Department and the Polk Health Care Plan.

In order to reach its goal, TPPA has developed the following objectives.

- Review data and stay current with research based programs and program outcome.
- Increase the level of knowledge about Polk County's teen pregnancy/teen birth crisis among the community at-large through activity survey results.
- Increase the number of faith based organizations that sponsor teen pregnancy

- prevention activities and pledge support through Faith Leaders Commitment
- Increase the role of Polk County youth in planning and participating in TPPA activities as evidenced by membership documentation and records.
- Ensure program stability and growth through yearly evaluation of program components and increase in funding sources.

TPPA Structure

TPPA is divided into five committees: Steering; Effective Programs & Research, Community Awareness; Religion and Public Values and Youth Committee.

The **Steering** committee determines TPPA's mission statement, goals and objectives. The Steering committee also works to identify effective programs and interventions, as well as conducting and supporting fundraising activities to support the implementation of the TPPA Action Plan.

The **Community Awareness** committee operates to raise the awareness of the general public regarding the impact of teen pregnancy on the community. The community awareness committee works closely with all TPPA committees to promote their activities and events.

The **Religion and Public Values** committee seeks the support of religious and faith leaders as it pertains to prevention of teen pregnancy and encourages these leaders to take actions to increase preventive efforts. The committee offers assistance to churches and synagogues regarding various methods to address teen pregnancy prevention within their congregations.

The **Youth** committee provides outreach and education to teens through school and community based events. Collaborating with school personnel and community leaders, the goal of these events is to educate teens and encourage them to make healthy goals. Addressing self-esteem issues and making appropriate and responsible choices accomplish this. This committee works closely with our Youth Leadership Team.

The **Effective Programs & Research** Committee studies effective programs for implementation in Polk County, as well as encouraging the use of evaluation of existing programs. Current research on adolescent health behaviors is reviewed and assessments of local adolescents are considered. The Committee will develop surveys and activity data and will analyze results.

Defining the Issue

Causes and Consequences of Teen Pregnancy

The roots of teen pregnancy are varied and complex. There have been over 100 risk factors identified for early teen sexual activity. These include community and economic disadvantages, family issues, peer, family and teen characteristics, detachment from school, other risk taking behaviors, and emotional distress.

While some teens might be at higher risk, all teens from all socio-economic

backgrounds, religious upbringings, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds are at risk for teen pregnancy and parenting. Therefore, any effort to prevent teen pregnancy should be comprehensive and focus on sexual, social, psychological, familial, and emotional risk factors for teen pregnancy.

Teen pregnancy has long-term consequences for the teen parents (mother and father), the parents of the teens, the child of the teen parents, and for our community as a whole. The Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy along with the National Campaign to prevent teen pregnancy found the following adverse consequences associated with teen pregnancy:

Long-term consequences for the teen mother:

- ◆ Parenthood is the leading reason why teen girls drop out of high school.
- ◆ 70 percent more likely to never finish high school or obtain high school equivalency.
- ◆ 50 percent more likely to require public assistance.
- ◆ 25% of teenage mothers have another child within 24 months of the first baby.
- ◆ 57 percent more likely to be a single parent.
- ◆ 50% of teens have never considered how a pregnancy would affect their lives
- ◆ The daughters of teen mothers are three times more likely to become teen mothers themselves.

Long-term consequences for the teen father:

- ◆ Complete fewer years of school.
- ◆ Earn \$5,000 less annually.
- ◆ Sons of teen mothers are twice as likely to end up in prison
- ◆ 8 out of 10 fathers never marry the mother
- ◆ Pay less than \$800 in child support per year

Long-term consequences for the child:

- ◆ 50 percent more likely to be born at low birthweight.
- ◆ 50 percent more likely to repeat a grade and less likely to graduate from high school
- ◆ Two times more likely to suffer abuse & neglect
- ◆ Children who live apart from their fathers are also 5 times more likely to be poor than children with both parents at home
- ◆ Children of teen mothers do worse in school than those born to older parents

Costs of Teen Pregnancy in Polk County

According to *Florida's Children: Their future is in our hands*, teen mothers earn about half the lifetime income and are more likely to live in poverty than women who delay childbearing. Nearly 60 percent of all pregnant or parenting teens require some form of public assistance. According to the Nation Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, the 1085 births to teen girls in 2008 cost nearly \$23 million.

Prevention of teen pregnancy is crucial for sustaining the progress that has been made. Investments in prevention pay high dividends; preventing teen pregnancy will improve the well-

being of children, families and communities and reduce the burden on taxpayers. Nationally, every public dollar spent on family planning services saves \$3 in Medicaid cost. Teen Childbearing in the US cost taxpayers at least \$9.1 billion on lost tax revenue, public assistance, child welfare and incarceration of sons to teen mothers.

According to kids having kids, economic costs & social consequences of teen pregnancy, the government spends over 60.4 billion to support teen moms thru aid to families with dependent children, Medicaid and food stamps. A third of the welfare total could have been saved if teenage mothers waited until they were 20 to have a baby.

Teen Pregnancy in Polk County

Determining the age that Polk's teens are giving birth can assist TPPA in creating age appropriate interventions. Data is provided for mothers aged 10-19. Rates and percentages are compared to the state of Florida as a whole.

Teen Birth Rates

Table 1 indicates the birth rates for teen's ages 10-14, 15-19, under 18 years of age and repeat births ages 15-19 years old per 1,000 births in the specified age group and the actual number of births is given in parentheses. For births to girls under 18, Polk County 2008 rates have declined from 2005. These figures also point to the age range with the highest birth rates: teens age 15-19.

Table 1. Teen Birth Rates per 1,000 Teens and the Number of Births to Teens for Polk County and Florida, 2005-2008.

Rate per 1,000 (Total #)	Polk County				Florida			
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2005	2006	2007	2008
10 – 14 y/o	1.31 (23)	0.9 (17)	0.9 (17)	0.8 (15)	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.6
15 - 19 y/o	65.4 (1,140)	66.6 (1,208)	64.6 (1200)	58 (1070)	41.9	43.5	43.2	40.7
15 – 19 y/o (Repeat)	18.8 (254)	18.5 (253)	17.5 (250)	19.5 (209)	16.1	16.5	16.2	18.3
Under 18 y/o	13.3 (377)	14.5 (430)	13.2 (401)	11.1 (336)	14.3	9.2	9.1	8.2

Source: Florida Department of Health, Florida Charts

Conclusion

Teen pregnancy is a serious problem in Polk County. Based on recent data, Polk County is the 21st highest county for births to teens under 18 and 23rd highest for births to teens 10-14 in the State of Florida. In 2008, 1,085 teens aged 10-19 gave birth in Polk County¹.

Children of teen parents are at risk as well. These children are 50 percent more likely to be born at low birthweight. They are more likely to repeat a grade in school and less likely to graduate from high school. If the child is a girl, she is more than 80 percent more likely to become a teen mom herself. If the child is a boy, he is almost three times more likely to be incarcerated.

Teen pregnancy affects every citizen, parent, senior citizen, pastor, child, teacher, and leader in Polk County. The costs of society are about twice the costs to taxpayers-an estimated \$15 billion a year due to early childbearing itself, and up to \$30 billion a year if all the risk factors amenable to policy influence were successfully eliminated.

Teen childbearing has a significant adverse consequence for the children and that these consequences are costing taxpayers and society enough to merit close policy attention.

Plan of Action

TPPA's Goal

The goal of the Polk County TPPA is to: Reduce births to teens under the age of 18 in Polk County by 10% over a five year period, beginning with 2008 data. This will be accomplished by targeting youth under 18, parents of youth under 18 and the community-at-large.

TPPA's Objectives

In order to reach its goal, TPPA has developed the following objectives.

- Review data, and stay current with research based programs.
- Increase the level of knowledge about Polk County's teen pregnancy/teen birth crisis among the community at-large as evidenced through survey results.
- Increase the number of faith based organizations that sponsor teen pregnancy prevention activities and pledge support through Faith Leaders commitment document.
- Increase the role of Polk County youth in planning and participating in TPPA activities as evidenced by membership documents and records.
- Ensure program stability and growth through yearly evaluation, sustainability and increased program capacity.

TPPA's Activities 2010-2015

During January and February 2010, TPPA committee members & Steering Committee Members met and developed the 2010-2015 Action Plan. This plan outlines the initiatives and events planned to meet objectives and ultimately the goal of reducing teen births. This Action Plan is described on the following pages and will be updated annually.