

Since 1985, the lives of thousands of young families have been impacted by the vital work of Teen Parent Connection. Serving the unmet needs of an at-risk population—teenage parents and their children—our comprehensive programs focus on the safety and healthy development of children born to teens, while empowering young parents to realize their own goals.

**OUR MISSION:** To educate the community on the realities and responsibilities of teenage pregnancy and to provide long-term assistance to adolescent parents to help them gain confidence, parenting skills and self-sufficiency.

### Teen Parent Connection Offers Comprehensive and Seamless Support

Teen Parent Connection provides a continuum of comprehensive services that connect young parents to needed resources, improve family support systems, and promote the healthy development of their children.

Evaluation and accountability are essential components of our programs and are incorporated as part of a continuous quality assistance plan. Through data collected, as well as feedback from our participants, Teen Parent Connection develops programming and provides specialized support that is intended to positively impact the lives of the young families we serve. Program objectives are chosen to reflect outcomes that promote a child's health and development and prevent child abuse and neglect. A selection of outcomes from the last fiscal year includes the following:



The **Community-Based Doula Program** offers pregnant teens and their support partners home-based prenatal education and services that encourage healthy prenatal practices, offer support during labor and delivery, and nurture bonds between babies and mothers and fathers.

**Participants served: 43**

- 97% of babies born to participants in the Doula program were born at a healthy birth weight.

**“My doula was extremely supportive and always there to listen.”**



The **Healthy Families Program** is a long-term, evidence-based home visiting program. As part of a primary prevention model, services begin either prenatally or at birth. Home visits are designed to support and strengthen parent-child relationships and promote positive growth and development in children. **Participants served: 123**

- After six months of participation in the Healthy families program, follow-up assessments of the Knowledge of Infant Development Inventory revealed significant improvements in parent's knowledge of their children's growth and developmental milestones. Results prepared by Julie L. Crouch, Ph.D., Center for the Study of Family Violence and Sexual Assault, Northern Illinois University.



**Young Parent Support Groups** are weekly group meetings that provide educational and social support opportunities to help reduce the isolation young parents often face.

**Participants served: 343**

- Parenting education assessment scores reflect significant gains in knowledge among group participants related to: family health, nurturing, managing stress, healthy relationships, and employment skills.

**“I’m able to be more loving and understanding towards my child.”**



Our **Peer Prevention Program** is a pregnancy prevention curriculum delivered to middle school and high school students that educates teens on the risks and responsibilities of adolescent pregnancy and parenthood. We also offer parents of students information and support empowering them to be their children's primary health educator. **Students served: 15,070**

- 96% of Peer students reported having the knowledge and information necessary to prevent teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.



**Childbirth Education Classes & Prenatal Support Groups** are doula-led and dedicated to educating expectant young parents on the importance of maintaining good overall health during pregnancy. This safe and supportive environment provides pregnant teens and their support partners an opportunity to learn more about pregnancy, labor, and delivery. **Participants served: 97 (includes fathers/support partners)**

- 100% of participants increased their knowledge of how to achieve a healthy pregnancy, were better prepared for labor and delivery and valued having a Doula support them at the birth.



The **Parents' Pantry** is an incentive-based program in which Teen Parent Connection participants can shop for baby and personal items, including diapers, wipes, and formula, using coupons earned by participating in our programs. **Participants served: 167 (860 visits)**

- 596 packs of diapers (approx. 35,000 diapers) were distributed.



**Individual, Couple, and Family Counseling** services are offered to all program participants. These services are designed to help families facing increased stressors that can result in depression, family violence, and risk for child abuse and neglect. Counseling sessions are provided in the Teen Parent Connection office or through home visits. **Participants served: 28**

- 100% of participants who accessed mental health services through Teen Parent Connection reported an increased ability to cope with their daily stress.

**“After listening to the Peer Prevention presentation at my high school, I plan to think much more carefully about my decisions if I’m in a relationship”**

## Comparative Indicators

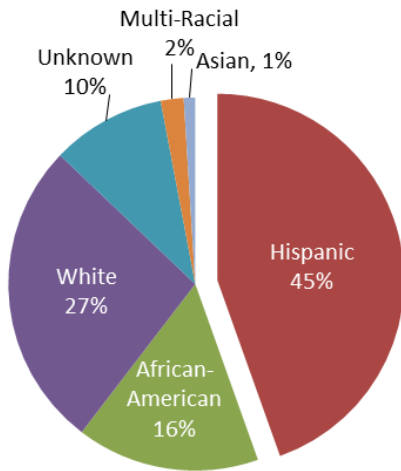
<p>✘ <b>Less than 1% of participants were indicated in a case of child abuse and/or neglect.</b></p>	<p>Children born to teenage mothers are more than twice as likely to be abused or neglected.</p>
<p>✘ <b>Zero teen parents attending young parent support groups experienced a subsequent birth.</b></p>	<p>Nationally, 24% of teenage mothers will give birth to a second child within 2 years.</p>
<p>✘ <b>90% of participants age 18 or older graduated high school, or remain enrolled in high school or a GED program.</b></p>	<p>Parenthood is the leading reason that teen girls drop out of school. Nationally, only 38% of teen mothers graduate high school.</p>
<p>✘ <b>96% of Doula participants, 91% of Group participants, and 99% of Healthy Families participants have a primary care physician.</b></p>	<p>According to the March of Dimes, pregnant teens are 50% less likely to access prenatal care than older mothers, putting their health and the health of their babies at risk. Children born to teens are more likely to have poor health outcomes and face chronic health issues.</p>

***“All of the information I received has helped me understand my baby every time she grows.”***

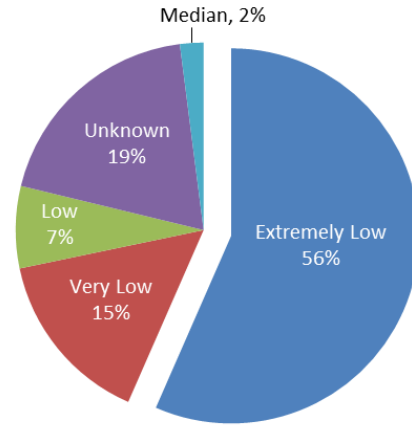
## Year In Review

- ✘ In order to ensure that fathers become involved in their child's life as early as possible, developing strong bonds and becoming engaged parents, the **Strong Dads – Strong Families** facilitates stronger support systems for fathers, increases their parenting knowledge and commitment to the role they play in their child's healthy development, and promotes positive co-parenting relationships. Teen Parent Connection has increased services to fathers significantly – serving 176 fathers compared to 108 last year. An additional Dad's Group was opened in West Chicago, and we now offer services to meet the needs of high-risk adolescent males at DuPage Interventions of Woodridge, a substance abuse treatment program. Young fathers now make up 31% of our parent group services population (10% growth over last fiscal year).
- ✘ Teen Parent Connection launched a new **Postpartum Support Group** in March 2015. This group was developed based on feedback from expecting parents attending Childbirth Education Classes who shared that they would like to continue to meet after the birth of their babies. This group is now offered twice annually (March and September) in four-week sessions and covers topics including processing their birth experience, parent/child bonding, postpartum depression, and breastfeeding.
- ✘ **Expedited Accreditation for Healthy Families Program:** The Healthy Families America (HFA) model is based upon twelve research-based critical elements. Sites that implement HFA commit to provide high-quality home visiting services and demonstrate model fidelity through the Quality Assurance and Accreditation process. Teen Parent Connection successfully completed the Quality Assurance and Accreditation process this year, and *did so well during the first two phases that the program received an expedited four-year accreditation status.*

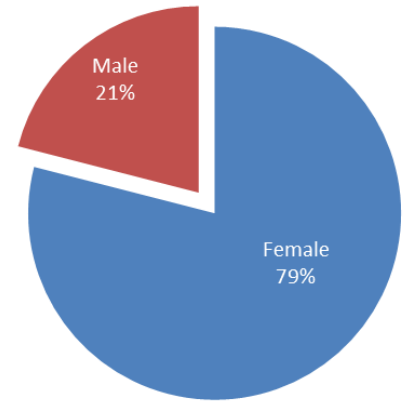
## Demographics



Race/Ethnicity



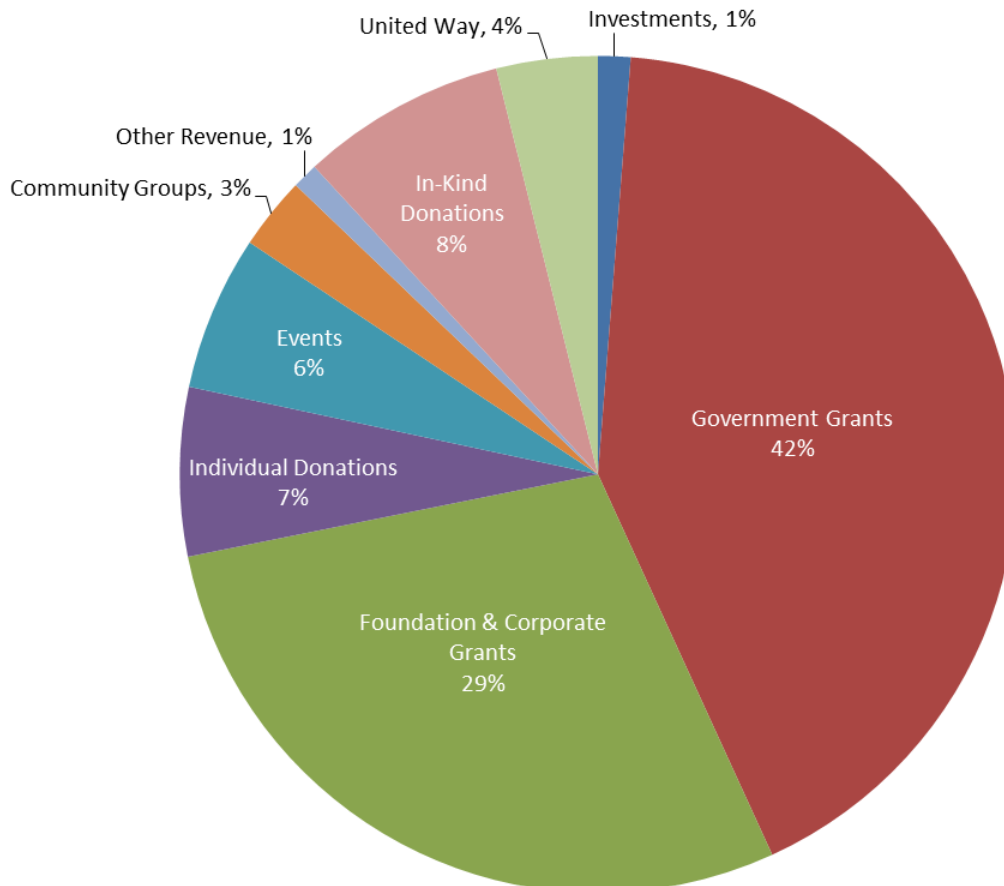
Income Level



Gender

*"I'm a lot less stressed out and a lot more informed than I used to be."*

## Teen Parent Connection Financials in 2014 - 2015



## OUR LEGACY | OUR FUTURE

*Becky and Giselle – Two young women touched by teen pregnancy. Two young mothers navigating exceptional challenges in their lives but dedicated to ensuring that their children are healthy and safe while continuing to realize their own potential.*

Sixteen years ago—at the age of 16 and a sophomore in high school—Becky discovered she was pregnant. Initially hesitant to tell anyone for fear of being judged or treated like an outcast, she eventually shared her secret with a school nurse, who referred her to Teen Parent Connection (known as Greater DuPage MYM at that time). She began attending the weekly mom's group and, later, the Young Families Group. The support she received from other young mothers—who were experiencing the same emotions, asking the same questions, encountering the same issues—empowered her to stay informed, utilize available resources, and be a strong, responsible young parent as she made important choices for her family.

Becky became the first person at her high school to continue attending classes throughout her pregnancy. She eventually graduated from high school, went on to college, and earned two master's degrees. She is now the proud parent of a teenage daughter, Madison, and works as a high school special education teacher. This career, influenced by her work with Teen Parent Connection's Peer Prevention Program, gives her the opportunity to share the wisdom of her experiences with young men and women.

For Becky and her daughter, Teen Parent Connection will always be a part of their story. "It's part of who you are," says Becky, "No matter how far you travel, it's a place you can always go back to."

***"You have helped me so much and I thank you."***

Giselle didn't know what to expect when she became pregnant at age 17. Within a few short months, her world of soccer and dance would be replaced by a world of diaper changes, sleepless nights, and adult responsibilities. Fortunately, Giselle was able to prepare for these changes by attending Teen Parent Connection's Prenatal Support Group and Childbirth Education Classes, where she met other pregnant teens and learned about prenatal health, labor, and delivery. She could also count on her doula, Christine, to give her the information and emotional support she needed, even during labor.

After giving birth to Isabella, Giselle was introduced to Chris, her home visitor. Chris helped her adapt to motherhood and support her baby's development. "She was there cheering us on as Isabella stacked rings for the first time," says Giselle. With Chris's encouragement, Giselle realized that she needed to take care of herself in order to take care of Isabella. During an especially stressful time in her life, Giselle sought help from one of Teen Parent Connection's trained counselors, who listened compassionately to her struggles and offered helpful advice.

Giselle is currently pursuing a degree in criminal justice while working full-time and taking care of Isabella. Despite her busy schedule, she still finds time to meet with Chris. She reflects that "Teen Parent Connection has given me a light of hope in myself, my future, and my daughter's future."

**On behalf of the families and communities we serve,  
we thank you for continuing to invest in the work and mission  
of Teen Parent Connection.**

**We are grateful for the generosity that empowers our young families to lead lives free  
of abuse and full of promise.**



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Visit our website: [www.teenparentconnection.org](http://www.teenparentconnection.org)



CELEBRATING **30** YEARS  
EMPOWERING *young families* OUR LEGACY. OUR FUTURE.