



School of Social Work
Center for Social Work Research
 Challenging Minds, Leading Change,
 Transforming Lives

Policy & Practice Brief

Issue SEVEN

About The Authors



Angelique Day,
 PhD, MSW
 Assistant Professor
 School of social work
 Wayne State University
 ew6080@wayne.edu

Lea Yazigi,
 M.Ed, PhD Candidate in
 Educational Psychology
 Graduate Research Assistant
 School of Social Work
 Wayne State University
 eh2382@wayne.edu

About The Brief

The Policy and Practice brief disseminates information of interest to researchers and practitioners, and highlights faculty expertise in the School of Social Work at Wayne State University. For more information, visit the Center website:
www.research.socialwork.wayne.edu

The Center for

Social Work Research
 Advancing research is the principal goal of the Center. The Center works to find external funding, potential research sites and ways to publicize faculty scholarship. The Center engages with the community in research partnerships. In addition the Center facilitates expertise to meet the needs of local agencies for program evaluation, research and organizational development.

Wayne State University
School of Social Work
Center for Research
 Joanne L. Sobeck, Ph.D.
 Associate Dean for Research
 Director | Center for Social Work Research
 School of Social Work
 Wayne State University
 4756 Cass Avenue | Detroit, MI 48202
 313-577-4439 | office

www.Research.Socialwork.wayne.edu

Maximizing the Education Well-being of Pregnant and Parenting Foster Youth

Angelique Day, PhD, MSW & Lea Yazigi, M.Ed, PhD Candidate

ABSTRACT This policy brief provides an examination of the problem of pregnancy and early parenting among a sample of female Michigan foster care, and the implications it has on their education well-being. Implications for policy and practice on how to bolster high school completion and college-going among this subpopulation of foster youth are offered.

The issue: According to the USDHHS, there were 24.2 births for every 1,000 teenage females between the ages 15 and 19 in 2014. However, teenage girls in foster care experience much higher rates of pregnancy. Findings from the largest longitudinal study on adult functioning of former foster youth conducted by Courtney, Dworsky, Lee, and Raap (2009), 75% of female foster youth had been pregnant since leaving foster care. Boonstra (2011) explains that female adolescents in foster care are 2 to 3 times more likely to become pregnant by the age 19 in comparison to their non-fostered peers, and Monticue (2013) adds that 40% of these youth have a second child during their teen years. In 2009, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy identified this problem as a national crisis; there is a strong negative correlation between teen pregnancy and education completion. This study reported that only 40% of adolescent mothers finished high school and only 2% finished college by age 30.

Given that teenage girls in foster care have higher rates of pregnancy and deliveries, there is a need for government sponsored financial supports in the form of rent, food and high quality child care for these youth who are enrolled in secondary and post-secondary institutions.

Summary of Key Findings³

- A total of 4,721 females between the ages of 14 and 20 years old were placed in Michigan's foster care system between 2009 and 2012.
- When these young girls' child welfare data was matched with their Medicaid claims data and analyzed, it was found that over 38% (746 females) had a pregnancy-related charge billed to Medicaid.
- For these 746 teen females, it was found that Medicaid was billed for a total of 942 births during the observation period.
- The rate of delivery /birth increased with age and number of living arrangements. For females less than 14 years at the start of the study period, 4.6% delivered a baby, compared to 18.8% among those 14-15 years and 31.4% of those 16 years of age or older.
- Also, black females (20.3%) and those living in Wayne County (18.3%) had a higher percent who delivered a baby than other race/ethnicities (12.3% for whites and 9.6% for other) and other counties (14.6%), respectively.

- Of those 746; 80% had 1 delivery, 15.7% had 2 deliveries, 3.5% had 3 deliveries, and 1.2% had 4 deliveries during the study period.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice Reform

- Many of these young parents have an increased sense of responsibility and great motivation for educational success; they just need access to resources to support the care of their infants so they can prioritize their own education well-being, and therefore, the future of their own offspring. This is critical as it has been well established in the literature that children born to adolescent mothers have lower educational attainment, increased behavioral problems, and increased involvement with the criminal justice system¹⁰.
- Expand the level of TANF child care dollars available to parenting foster youth enrolled in high school and college. There is only one early child care provider located in the midtown area of Detroit near the campus of Wayne State University that services parents of children between the ages of 0 and 2.5 years of age. As of 6/28/2015, the base rate in Michigan for child care centers for children from 0 to 2.5 years old is \$3.75.⁶ The cost of enrollment is \$75 a week over the maximum child care subsidy offered by the state.
- Incentive institutions of higher education to develop and implement quality early child care programming on college campuses. Many two and four year colleges offer early childhood majors. These students could be trained on best practices and tapped to provide high quality, child care services in exchange for course credit at a fraction of the cost of private childcare institutions.
- Offer parenting classes for high school and/or college credit for pregnant and parenting foster youth.
- Incentivize college campuses to build family resource centers that can provide sick child care, and other student support service programs. These program directors of these college programs can proactively identify and reach out to student parents on their college campuses utilizing data from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. One exemplary program model is the Family Resource Center at Michigan State University. (https://www.frc.msu.edu/Child_Care/index.htm)
- Balancing multiple responsibilities such as parenting and academic coursework can be very stressful and could lead to inadvertent engagement in dysfunctional practices that may lead to child maltreatment.⁸ Colleges should offer targeted campus support programs for foster care youth that are trauma-informed to ensure that parenting foster care youth have access to appropriate case management and counseling services available on campuses to prevent and break the cycle of intergenerational child abuse and neglect.

References

1. Boonstra H.D., (2011) Teen Pregnancy Among Young Women In Foster Care: A Primer. *Guttmacher Policy Review*, 14(2), 8-19
2. Courtney, M., Dworsky, A., Lee, J., & Raap, M. (2009) *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 23 and 24*. Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago
3. Day, A., Curtis, A. & Paul, R. (unpublished manuscript). A preliminary examination of pregnancy and prenatal care among Michigan's foster youth: A review of Medicaid claims data.
4. Dworsky, A., & Courtney, M. E. (2010). The risk of teenage pregnancy among transitioning foster youth: Implications for extending state care beyond age 18. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32(10), 1351-1356.
5. Hoffman, S.D. & Maynard, R.A. (2008). *Kids having kids: Economic Costs and social consequences of teen pregnancy*. Washington D.C.: Urban Institute Press
6. Michigan Department of Education, (2016). *State Of Michigan Child Development and Care (CDC) Handbook*. Retrieved from http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/CDC_Handbook_7-2013_428431_7.pdf
7. Monticue C., (2013). USC study intersects teen births with foster care in LA county. USCNews. Retrieved from <http://news.usc.edu/57275/usc-intersects-teen-births-foster-care-in-la-county/>
8. Stevens-Simon, C., Nelligan, D., & Kelly, L. (2001). Adolescents at risk for mistreating their children. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 25(6), 737-751.
9. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy (2010). *Policy Brief: Preventing Teen Pregnancy*. Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. https://thenationalcampaign.org/sites/default/files/resource-primary-download/briefly_policybrief_school_completion.pdf
10. Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (2008). *Teen births: Outcomes for young parents and their children*. Albany: NY. Author.