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Teenage Parenting Intervention Programs: Implications for Female Secondary School Potential Drop Outs

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Teenage Parenting Intervention Programs:
Implications for Female Secondary School
Potential Drop Outs

Presented to the

Graduate Faculty
University of Nebraska
at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Education

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Patricia Ann Frampton

Spring 1990

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FIELD PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

Proposed to the Graduate Faculty, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Specialist in Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Supervisory Committee

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A myth, as defined by Webster's New World Dictionary (1975), is "a traditional story serving to explain some phenomenon, custom, or belief, any fictitious story developed to interpret circumstances which defy conventional logic." Dropping out of school succinctly fits as an occurrence which has deftly baffled educators of the most advanced and well supported school system in the world. Although drop out rates vary (five to twenty five percent) dropping out is not merely about numbers; this factor encompasses "values and philosophies about people, their problems, and what can be done about them" Hamby, (1981) Hahn, (1987) and Grossnickle, (1988). An incalculable loss of human potential is felt by a society which dismisses dropouts as failures (Hamby, 1989).

Initially, dropouts were visualized as losers; the students no one wanted or cared for. Prior to due process, students of this type were usually asked not to return to school: indefinitely. Many times dropouts are categorized as minorities, the poor, homeless, or those who would not or could not learn (Hahn, 1987). An unsettling statement by a newspaper journalist summarizes perceptions held toward today's dropouts:

Figures quoted by dropout prevention advocates are exaggerations. . . The anti-dropout campaign is driven by an opposition to higher standards. . . There are numerous causes of dropping out. Virtually all of them are personal and family causes.

Even the ones related to schooling, for instance, frustration with the work for having fallen behind, are not caused by the school or subject to meaningful change by more educational manipulation (Inman, 1987).

Three persistent myths permeate the socio-educational framework regarding dropouts. These following traditional and widely held views create barriers to effectively reducing the number of high school dropouts:

1. There is not a dropout problem.
2. Some children just do not belong in school.
3. Schools do not cause dropouts and can do nothing to keep children from dropping out
(Hamby, 1989).

Each of these myths have promoted a hostile and lackadaisical attitude toward dropouts. By placing blame on the student education has quietly abdicated its role as primary instructor for America's young.

Sociologists maintain that dropping out of school is the final act in an extensive series of economic, family, and social pressures.

The list of ten risk factors include:

1. Behind in grade level or older than class mates.
2. Poor academic performance.
3. Dislike of school.
4. Detention and suspension.
5. Pregnancy.
6. Welfare recipients and members of single parent households.
7. Attractiveness of work.
8. The attraction of military service.
9. Undiagnosed learning disabilities and emotional problems.
10. Language difficulties (Hahn, 1987).

Consequently, dropping out is not specifically a malady of minorities or academically deficient students (Hahn, 1987). Each risk factor presents a host of residual effects which presents constant problems for students and their primary social, mental, economic, and educational providers.

Withdrawal from school for any reason can set up a series of events to keep young people permanently outside the main stream of educational opportunity. Many of the risk factors are gender free in nature, yet

the area of teen pregnancy places an extra burden of responsibility on adolescent women.

School-age parenthood presents serious problems for babies, very young parents, grandparents, and, to a lesser degree, others not directly involved. It is not that these school-age girls and boys do not try, but their biological, educational, occupational, and social development is not yet advanced to the point that they can carry adult responsibilities with success. Most, possibly all, would agree that for one girl in ten to be a mother at age 17 or younger does constitute a problem for those involved and for American society (Nye, 1978).

Economic, educational, physical and emotional dilemmas plague adolescent parents. Economically, families headed by young mothers are six times more likely to be poor than the average family (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1984). Only eight percent of two parent families live below the poverty level in comparison to thirty-six percent of all female headed families (Pittman, 1985). Likewise, the comparison regarding high school completion varies for those young women over eighteen years of age (fifty-one percent) in comparison to fifteen to seventeen-year-olds (eleven percent) (Pittman, 1985). Consequently, teen parenting and high school can prove to be academically fatal.

Lack of physical maturity also places many adolescent mothers in a high risk health group. Early sexual activity predisposes the immature cervix to cervical cancer, a type of malignancy which is easily detected and cured if identified promptly (Whigham, 1986). Adolescence, finally, is a time of extreme physical and emotional expansion. Parenting, also a part of the adult development cycle, calls for intense self examination and giving of the self to another (Clarke, 1989). To attempt to combine these two distinct stages can be frustrating. Combining stages also promotes the cycles of abuse, neglect, and uneven parenting found in teen families (Hahn, 1987). Toward this end educators must assist all teens, those who have unintentionally taken on adult responsibilities and those who are questioning their roles as men and women in this society.

Diversification in teen parenting programs is the rule rather than the exception (Miller and Pittman, 1987). "Well designed community programs can play an integral part in meeting the academic, pre-vocational, physical, social, and emotional needs of ten to fifteen-year-olds in the afternoon, vacation and summer hours" (Miller and Pittman, 1987). Pregnancy prevention is only a small component in addressing the manifold needs of teenagers (Eldeman, 1988). The total person must be addressed; to fragment teens sends a

strong message regarding the importance of mind over body or body exclusiveness to the neglect of spirit (Bass and Davis, 1988). There are several examples of teen programs in different areas of the nation:

Will Power: Won't Power is a six-week course for 12- to 14-year-old girls. It teaches assertiveness techniques while reinforcing the concept that postponing sexual involvement is positive.

Growing together is a five-week course for 12- to 14-year-old girls and their mothers or caretakers. Classes focus on communication between mothers and daughters around issues of sexuality and the consequences of pregnancy.

Choices is a nine-week course for older adolescents, offering them guidance in thinking about their futures. It reinforces the idea that each girl has choices and helps her analyze the consequences of each choice. The curriculum - "A Teen Woman's Journal for Self Awareness and Personal Planning" - stresses responsibility and planning, including discussions of career options. Exercises challenge participants to confront adulthood realistically, and include tasks such as developing a family budget or reading the classifieds for a job.

The Health Bridge, implemented in the summer of 1986, is the most comprehensive of the pregnancy prevention programs. Based on the successful Maternal

and Infant Care Project in St. Paul, Minnesota, the current program adapts the school-based comprehensive clinic model for implementation within the structure of the Club. Under the direction of a nurse practitioner, weekly classes are offered on topics ranging from aerobic activity to reproductive physiology. Through a cooperative agreement with the West Dallas Children and Youth Clinics, girls can visit the clinics to obtain any health care they need, including contraceptives.

The Young Women's Company provides pre-employment skills training and actual entrepreneurial experience. During the academic year, the girls are involved in classes that teach job preparation and job-search skills. During the summer another Young Women's Company runs a business that gives the girls hands-on experience. They have the opportunity to manage the business and learn why it is important to be on time, carry their full share of the case load, and work as a team. This year, the Young Women's Company was selected to be the Sno-Cone vendor at the Summer Shakespeare Festival in Dallas Fair Park. In preparing for conducting their Sno-Cone business, the Club members have had to negotiate with the Fair Park regarding overhead, deal with the city of Dallas to meet requirements for a health permit, and negotiate with the Shakespeare Guild in order to be selected as vendor.

Job Shadowing pairs members during school vacations with professional women as mentors from local firms or organizations. Club members observe and help these women in their jobs for a minimum of four hours a day.

The Gathering provides club members with the opportunities to explore a variety of careers with professional women in an informal workshop setting. Guest speakers provide examples of career choices and the educational requirements necessary to achieve that choice (Miller and Pittman, 1987).

The multifaceted approach of the projects cited above permit a variety of techniques to be utilized in equipping non pregnant, pregnant, and parenting teens to achieve an integrated lifestyle. Through interaction with community health activists, education facilitators, and business leadership teens receive first hand knowledge on responsible living skills. Communities throughout the nation are tailor making their own projects, to suit the needs of pregnant and parenting women. An example of one program involves the Omaha Public Schools District in Omaha, Nebraska. During a series of Human Growth and Development Task Force meetings questions regarding the number of pregnant women in OPS junior high schools and senior high schools became a concern. The superintendent, realizing the seriousness of this issue, assigned the

supervisor of Home Economics to develop a program to address the issues of teen parenthood for the Omaha Public Schools.

Initially, the Single Parent Project of the Omaha Public Schools began in the basement of Pella Lutheran Church (1984-85) with fifteen students and one teacher. Seed money provided by the Carl Perkins Vocational Act provided twenty thousand dollars for salaries and supplies. Classes on parenting, nutrition, and how to care for infants were taught by the teacher and a Visiting Nurse's Association employee. After the first year the project acquired an advisory committee and a new residence, The Individualized Study Center on the Fort Omaha Campus of Metropolitan Technical Community College. In subsequent years the S.P.P. has joined forces with the Head Start Development Corporation, a federally funded day care system for low income families. By providing reliable, efficient day care, an essential academic component, and a social, medical, and emotional support system the S.P.P. is striving to reach a triad of goals:

1. To assist pregnant and parenting students to stay in school, deliver healthy babies, and become good parents.
2. To develop a partnership with Head Start Development Corporation as a means of strengthening program objectives with the

addition of child care and transportation component.

3. To aid the single parent in achieving a high school diploma (McGrath, 1989).

The objective/purpose of this study is to determine if the Single Parent Project sponsored by the Omaha Public School District is effectively meeting the goals of the program for adolescent women involved in the program.

Question

Is the Omaha Public School District's Single Parent Project effective in meeting the stated goals of its program?

1. To develop answers to this question a subset has been developed for research.
 - a. Does the SPP assist pregnant and parenting students stay in school?
 - b. Does the SPP educate students on beneficial prenatal care?
 - c. Does the SPP facilitate support on developing positive parenting behavior?
2. Is the SPP - Headstart Development partnership strengthening SPP program objectives with the addition of a child care transportation component?

3. Does the SPP aid the single parent in achieving a high school diploma, as measured by credits accomplished?

Methodology

In rephrasing the questions above, to assess objective number one the researcher will develop a questionnaire to evaluate the perceptions held by the personnel and participants toward the Single Parent Project sponsored by the Omaha Public School District.

To answer objective number two the researcher will interview the director of the Single Parent Project and the Executive Director of the Head Start Corporation to determine what the primary program objectives entail and to the extent the objectives have been met. In addition, a portion of the questionnaire will inquire of the student participants their appraisal of the day care and transportation facilities.

To measure objective number three the researcher will develop a display on each SPP participant to determine whether the indicators of progress toward graduation/promotion have been met.

To provide the study with a reality based foundation, the researcher will enter the daily life of a single adolescent parent. This type of interaction will permit the researcher to recognize first-hand the struggles and sacrifices made by adolescent women who chose to keep their children. Ethnographic study

encourages researchers to become involved on an intimate social level with particular groups of people. (Fjellman, 1974).

Limitations

This study will involve no fewer than twenty and no more than forty pregnant and/or parenting women who are students of the Omaha Public Schools Single Parent Project during the first and second semester of the 1989-1990 school year.

Assumptions

The participants will provide reasonable, accurate data as they respond to a survey instrument that will be utilized by the entire group.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study will help inform Omaha Public School and Single Parent Project personnel as to the perceived effectiveness of the program, and indicate possible direction for modification.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

Different cultures have utilized various means of transferring adult privileges and responsibilities to their young. Medieval European civilization initiated a series of rituals in aiding young noblemen to become knights. The indigenous Native American cultures included testing the bodies of their adolescents as a proving ground for acceptance into tribal relationships. A warrior's spirit had to be exemplified by young people in Africa (killing of an animal) to qualify as responsible adults. Motivation and acceptance into adulthood depended on a holistic approach to personhood (Johnson, 1974).

American society has redesigned the rite of passage. For many adolescents a drink or an initial sexual encounter provides a dubious road to adulthood. However, for over 2 million (2,419,698) young Americans (Johnson, 1989) high school graduation culminates thirteen years of educational and social experiences. Yet what becomes of students who do not wear the traditional cap and gown? "Bored, uninvolved students who lack goals and ambition. The type of students who can have an adverse effect on the learning environment as well as teacher and class mate morale" (Grossnickle,

1988). Descriptors for such students are: drop out, at-risk, student with special needs, and pushed out. During the 1985-86 school year, over six hundred thousand young people were pushed out of public education (Hamby, 1989). In dollars and cents that translates roughly into \$120 billion in lost productivity (Hamby, 1989). Hamby, (1989) states "We're talking about human lives, and one wasted life is too many." Usually waste of refuse is promptly disposed of. Yet the waste of human resources refuses to die. A steady stream of dropouts find their way into the rock houses, shooting galleries, and hotels for the homeless. Which factors create a drop out? Who is to blame for the six hundred thousand drop outs? More so, who helps in reclaiming them? Initially three myths on dropouts need to be dispelled:

1. There is not a drop out problem.

Although rates range from 5 percent to 25 percent "any drop out rate represents an incalculable loss of human potential."

2. Some children just do not belong in school.

In America free public school is a right and privilege. Every child deserves the chance to succeed educationally.

3. Schools do not cause drop outs and can do nothing to keep children from dropping out.

Educators must become responsible for stemming the rising tide of dropouts. To blame students, their families, or outside elements is an abdication of the role of education (Hamby, 1989).

The failure of society and the educational system to effectively meet the needs of non-traditional students cuts across cultural, racial, and economic lines.

A myriad of factors contribute to the loss of students. "Dropping out is a problem not confined to a handful of minority students who couldn't learn" (Hahn, 1987). These factors start early in a student's academic career and become progressively worse with each successive year. Social scientists have identified ten conditions as major risk factors indicating that a student might choose to drop out: (Hahn, 1987)

1. Behind in grade level and older than class mates.
2. Poor academic performance.
3. Dislike of school.
4. Detention and suspension.
5. Pregnancy
6. Welfare recipients and members of single parent households.
7. Attractiveness of work.
8. The attraction of military service.

9. Undiagnosed learning disabilities and emotional problems.

10. Language difficulties (other than English).

Any of these factors or a combination can terminate a high school education. However, for a young woman an unplanned, unwanted pregnancy places high school graduation almost permanently out of reach.

In 1984, the most recent year for which data is available, almost one hundred and seventy seven thousand girls became mothers before they were old enough to vote. In that year, every hour of every day, 20 girls, age 17 and younger, had babies. Only three in ten of those young mothers were married. The number who chose abortion was about the same. This means that at least 350 thousand high school age women and younger became pregnant in 1984. The figure implies that about the same number of young men became fathers, or could have become fathers had their partners not terminated the pregnancy. We have in the United States three quarters of a million kids who are or should be in high school or junior high and who are going through the complex processes surrounding pregnancy and childbirth. Why do they choose, or does it just happen? Because surveys indicate that the majority of such pregnancies

are unintended and unwanted, how can young people be helped to avoid them (Newcomer, 1987)?

Adolescence pregnancy, unlike the other nine risk factors poses a serious threat to the emotional, physical, financial, and spiritual health of a new generation of Americans. These "littlest" Americans are born into helplessness and hopelessness; a deadly combination. Children of teenage mothers are more likely to:

- o have low birth weight
- o die in the first month of life
- o die of SID (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)
- o have medical problems such as seizures, hypoglycemia (low blood pressure), fatal intestinal complications, and transient tachpnea (excessive rapidity of respiration)
- o receive less of the mothering behaviors (touching, holding, talking) than children of more mature mothers
- o lack environmental stimulation (resulting in cultural deprivation and possible retardation)
- o have poor grades in school
- o be the subject of abuse and/or neglect

(Powell and Tees, 1983)

Although the evidence clearly presents teen pregnancy as a totally self defeating behavior, the United States of America's teen pregnancy rate is twice that found in France, England, Wales, and Canada. It is three times the rate in Sweden and seven times the rate in the Netherlands (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1984).

There are a number of variables which influence adolescent premarital sexual patterns: age of onset of menarche, dating patterns starting at an earlier age, safe, legal abortions not optional due to lack of money or teen mothers fear/ignorance regarding birth control methods, and lack of spontaneity (Johnson & Glasser, 1989). Cultural reasons also contribute to adolescent coitus. Throughout our society a philosophy of sexual pleasure is inherent. Sexuality or lust is flaunted through television, movies, and tapes. Pleasure NOW is the byword for many adults. By mimicking adult behavior teens are socialized to follow the urges of the hormones instead the rationality of the brain. Avoidance of unwanted pregnancy is dependent upon two issues: The capacity to delay pregnancy by having factual, sexual information in conjunction with adult support and the desire to delay pregnancy - realizing that delay of early pregnancy is in the best interests of teens and future children (Edelman, 1988). Sadly, the work of educating young people on sexuality is

rarely done in the home. Many teens are completely ignorant of bodily functions or the emotional turmoil associated with adolescence. Consequently, the major socialization agent, public education, has become the proponent of information to young people on family life and sexuality. Being a major proponent does not come without risk. External and internal pressures keep school officials walking a fine line regarding family life issues. Spillane, (1988) chides education for overselling its ability to cure society's myriad of ills. "The schools cannot guarantee a better life for all mankind, more sensitivity to the needs of others, and world peace, laudable as these goals might be." He (Spillane) promotes the business of education is to teach children and young adults to read, write, compute and critically think. Education by fragmenting itself into diversity has failed in its true purpose.

Educators differ in opinion regarding education's primary responsibilities. Dickson, (1978) agrees that limited resources and lack of interest keep school districts from facing teen parenting issues. However, the devastation inflicted by this particular risk factor's residual effects demands the attention of educators. Though teen pregnancy does not cause withdrawal from school "the stress of a pregnancy may add to her (teen mother) other life crises" (McAfee & Geesey, 1984).

Pregnant teens do not live in a vacuum. Adjustment to the oncoming physical changes, labor, delivery, and parenthood interconnect with her own developmental process as an adolescent. School, then becomes another factor to "deal with" during the months of pregnancy. After delivery "Who will care for the infant?" raises serious concerns. Infants and toddlers are totally indifferent to school time schedules, homework, or oral presentations. Mature adults tire of the seemingly endless needs of infants. How much more would an infant disrupt the life of a young woman?

In addition, the issue of poverty becoming increasingly female must be addressed.

Teenage pregnancy and parenting are major reasons why girls drop out of school. This early parenting frequently contributes to the feminization of poverty, one of the most important and difficult issues in efforts to achieve sexual equity.

Over 75% of all Americans living in poverty are women and children.

Families headed by young mothers are over six times more likely to be poor than the average family.

The younger the mother was when she had her first child, the lower her annual income (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1984).

Female concerns, until of lately, have received little to no attention by male dominated school districts. Heightened awareness in conjunction with legislation (i.e. Title IX) are constant reminders that all human resources in this country have the right to be nurtured into productive citizens.

During the sixties, seventies, and eighties a variety of U.S. cities developed teen parenting programs. Phoenix (1965), Santa Maria (1975), Seattle (1979), New York City (1984), Fort Worth (1983), and Omaha (1984) just to name a few. Although each of these services are administered through an educational district, (West and Anderson, 1978) identify three other comprehensive models that are used:

1. Health-based model, attached to a medical facility or health department.
2. Social service model, sponsored through a welfare or counseling agency.
3. Non-profit corporation model which attempts to draw together all of the first three models.

A proliferation of these models exist throughout the country. For example, the Family Life/Sex Education course at George Mason High School in Falls Church, Virginia consists of semester long elective course work in anatomy and physiology, reproduction, contraception, abortion, homosexuality, and the aging

process from eighth through twelfth grades. Life-planning is another approach that may interest educators. This theory suggests "that teenagers who are highly motivated to achieve certain goals in life will recognize that premature parenthood can disrupt those plans." Goal setting, values clarification, and responsible parenting skills are taught within this setting. The "Teen-Outreach Program" is a collaboration between the schools and the Junior League. Weekly, volunteer after-school sessions discuss self-esteem enhancements, career planning, and sexuality. This program also places teens in community agencies as volunteers to "help them see themselves as contributing members of the community." Other types of sexual training include teen theater, peer counselors, school based clinics, and alternative educational programming.

Which factors contribute to a well planned teen parenting program? The following recommendations from the Fort Worth, Texas Independent School District outline in detail a grassroots developmental program.

1. ADVISORY COMMITTEE A permanent Adolescent Pregnancy Advisory Committee, APAC, should be established by the FWISD Board of Education and the Tarrant County Hospital District Board of Managers (John Peter Smith) to implement the

recommendations of this report through the planning and development of specific programs.

Responsibility APAC would develop and monitor programs, advise the coordinator of adolescent pregnancy services, implement and monitor a collaboration of services throughout the community, secure funds, and account to FWISD, JPS, and the community for services rendered and funds expended.

Composition APAC should include representatives of appropriate community agencies, school officials, parents, and leaders from a cross-section of the community. The number of members should not exceed thirty.

2. COORDINATOR A dynamic coordinator of adolescent pregnancy services should be hired and funded through FWISD.

Responsibility The coordinator would work with APAC, FWISD, New Lives administration, and JPS for the planning, development, and implementation of programs directed at:

- a) services to pregnant teenagers and teen parents,
- b) coordination of existing community services, and;
- c) education prevention programs.

3. FUNDING APAC and the coordinator of services should develop multiple funding sources from within the community. While the school education program and position of coordinator should be funded primarily through FWISD, other funding sources should support the remaining programs.
4. GOALS/OBJECTIVES APAC and the coordinator of services should develop measurable goals with the following objectives:
 - a) COMMUNITY OUTREACH Initiate a media campaign to inform the community of the problem and gain public support for subsequent programs.
 1. The APAC should develop a media campaign to inform the community of the magnitude of the problem and of existing services to deal with this problem.
 2. Public support and input from the community should be sought for the overall program through work with PTA's, churches, social agencies, and other community organizations. An approach such as "Let's Talk" (Atlanta) could be used to obtain input for our future education programs.
 - b) DAY CARE Develop a system providing day

care for infants of teen parents attending school. Pilot initial efforts at Polytechnical High School through a program now being developed by the Tarrant County Youth Collaboration Services.

1. Provide in-school day care for infants through age four with parents participation (allowing parents time with their own children).
2. Ensure infant stimulation.
3. Utilize day care services as a resource for secondary child development courses, skills training for the day care job market and parenting skills training.
4. Explore home care alternatives as well as institutional day care.

c) EDUCATIONAL PREVENTION PROGRAM Develop a quality comprehensive educational program for grades K-12 to be managed by well trained personnel and to begin with a pilot program in middle schools.

Parents hold the primary responsibility for the sexuality education of their children. The following suggestions are intended to provide a choice for parents, to assist and support them in carrying out their responsibilities.

1. Include input and participation of parents in all facets of program development and implementation.
2. Develop a family life program which could include:
 - a. a component directed at expanding teenagers' understanding/knowledge of the human body;
 - b. peer counseling by teenage parents;
 - c. a special program for teenage boys to emphasize responsibility in dealing with teenage pregnancy;
 - d. parenting skills training, and
 - e. a component emphasizing planning for family life, development of self-esteem and rational decision making with respect to social interactions.
3. Consider developing a program which would utilize aspects of the Atlanta program "Postponing Sexual Involvement."
4. Extend counseling services in schools through coordination and collaboration with community agencies and training of appropriate school personnel to work in this area. Counseling should include the explanation of adoption procedures.

Implementation of all phases of this program should include medical professionals as well as clergy and parents.

d) SERVICES FOR PREGNANT TEENS Reassess, expand, and enhance services now provided by New Lives.

1. Reassess curriculum in order to insure that the needs of the new mothers are being met with respect to:

- a. personal health;
- b. child care (parenting skills training);
- c. future jobs: vocational counseling and training;
- d. academic achievement;
- e. re-entry into the mainstream of school and social living, and
- f. the GED option.

2. Reassess facilities and services including:

- a. consideration of possible relocation of New Lives facility, and
- b. consideration of the adequacy of social services (including

direct services, follow-up, and expansion of service to teenage fathers).

3. Provide students with the alternative of staying in the New Lives school from pregnancy through graduation on a needs and space-available basis.
 4. Ensure that the adoption alternative is explained to participants.
 5. Extend New Lives support services (medical, referral, and counseling) for girls who choose to stay in their own schools. This alternative should be encouraged by the Board and by school personnel.
 6. Provide on-site day care for children of New Lives students.
5. LONG RANGE PLANNING The committee and coordinator should continually reassess long range planning and evaluation in order to deal with the continuing problem of teenage pregnancy in this community (Tees, 1983).

Teen pregnancy is usually seen by the majority culture as a concern of poor, minority women (Pittman, 1985). Too often, the media presents a ghetto filled landscape of pregnant minority girls ill educated and living well below the poverty line as the only

recipients of adolescent pregnancy. Research, however, reveals a significant number of majority women delivering and keeping their infants (Pittman, 1987). A problem thought to be contained in the barrios and ghettos of large urban inner cities is spreading with the rapidity of an epidemic into suburban and rural areas of America (Pittman, 1987). As a nation, our history regarding sexual health issues is poor (Gilfond, 1970). From the early days of Margeret Sanger's fight to bring birth control information to America's women (Gilfond, 1970) to Dr. C. Everett Koop's battle with the Reagan administration to openly discuss AIDS (Levin, 1989), Americans have shunned their responsibility to openly acknowledge sexual realities. A see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil, attitude has produced 12 million sexually active teens (Theriot and Bruce, 1988). Prevention, not remediation must be the new watch word regarding teen pregnancy. Why prevention? Ten factors summarize the searing necessity to alert teens, parents, and society to the manifold cost of not utilizing preventative measures:

1. Teen pregnancy affects everybody's family, community, neighborhood, and region.
2. Teen pregnancy is a significant factor in the high numbers of low-birthweight babies which increase the likelihood of birth defects.
3. Teen pregnancy contributes to shamefully high

American infant mortality rates.

4. Early sexual activity is related to other serious health risks, including sexually transmitted diseases.
5. Teen pregnancy contributes to large numbers of abortions. The abortion issue divides the nation and frequently paralyzes thoughtful action on other needed preventive remedies to help disadvantaged youths.
6. Teen pregnancy and parenthood are the major cause of school dropout by girls and a major cause of school dropout among males, as well.
7. Teen pregnancy and parenthood contribute to long-term welfare dependency.
8. Teen pregnancy and parenthood add \$1.3 billion to American taxpayer costs annually.
9. The negative consequences of teen pregnancy and parenthood are more severe in modern America than in the past.
10. Teen pregnancy threatens the well-being of the babies born to teens (Pittman, 1987).

Is America ready to respond responsibly to the plight of pregnant and parenting teens? Can the pilot programs mentioned aid in preventing adolescents from becoming parents before they are physically, socially, or financially ready? Finally, will adolescents listen to adults who have promoted the mixed messages of sex

and pleasure in contrast to abstinence and rational thinking?

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The purpose of the study was to determine if the Single Parent Project sponsored by the Omaha Public Schools is effectively meeting its goals for pregnant and parenting adolescent women. The goals as stated in Topic II of Single Parent Project, A Move Toward Self-Sufficiency.

1. To assist pregnant and parenting students to stay in school, deliver healthy babies, and become good parents.
2. To develop a partnership with the Head Start Development Corporation as a means of strengthening program objectives with the addition of a child care component and a transportation component.
3. To aid the single parent in achieving a high school diploma.

The study dealt with twenty-two pregnant and parenting adolescent women who are currently participants in the Omaha Public School Districts Single Parent Project. One public agency and two alternative learning centers were utilized by the researcher on January 11, 1990. A federally funded

project known originally as the Head Start Development Corporation housed the majority of the survey participants. During the course of the research, the federal government officially changed the name of this child care project to The Child and Family Development Corporation. (For the remainder of this paper it will be addressed by the revised name). In conjunction with The Child and Family Development Center two alternative learning centers were utilized by the researcher; the Individualized Study Center number one (at the former Castelar School), and the Individualized Study Center number two at Fort Omaha.

Participants

The population consisted of twenty-two pregnant and parenting adolescent women who were in attendance at the Child and Family Development Corporation, ISC #1, and ISC #2 on January 11, 1990. In addition, professionals from the Omaha Public Schools and the Child and Family Development Center assisted the researcher as resource persons in data preparation, defining program objectives and implications, and laying the groundwork with the student participants.

Questionnaire participation was voluntary. All participants were oriented prior to the administration of the questionnaire by the Single Parent Project's resource teacher. This was done to ensure that all participants would be cognizant of the date, time, and

type of procedure to be administered on January 11, 1990.

The Instrument

The 18 item questionnaire completed by the participants was developed to gather demographic information:

1. Age of participants
2. Ethnic origin of participants
3. Grade level of participants
4. Anticipated graduation year
5. Day school regularly attended
6. Current pregnancy of participants

and to assess attitudes toward the various aspects of the Single Parent Project. The five categories of pertinent data that were addressed included:

1. Faculty student relations
2. Parenting classes/rap sessions
3. Transportation
4. Course offerings
5. Student's future plans

The instrument was adapted from the Phoenix Union High School District's Cysis Program's year end evaluation data. The questionnaire involved in this study fits the sample survey type of research design methodology. By definition a sample survey draws conclusions regarding an "entire population based on a specifically drawn sample" (Encyclopedia of Sociology,

1974). Questionnaires are part of the concrete component inherent in research design. The design of the instrument, collection of data, and data analysis aid in creating a regulated, scientific process. (See Appendix A.)

Procedures

Procedural information was divided into three sections to correspond with the three goals stated by the Single Parent Project. The procedures which follow are listed by the goal.

1. After a self introduction, the presentator asked the young women to complete the questionnaire. Participants were reminded that all of the questionnaire's results would be strictly confidential and anonymous. They were told the data would be utilized for research purposes only. The participants were also instructed not to identify themselves by name on the questionnaire. The administration of the questionnaire did not follow a uniform procedure. At The Child and Family Development Center the researcher waded through a maze of baby bottles, diapers, formula, and other accoutrements of infancy to administer the questionnaire. Fresh insights came to the researcher as she became cognizant of the daily life of adolescent mothers. From arrival to departure the young women maintained an aura of new motherhood. The interaction

among the babies and mothers fascinated the researcher. Each baby was cuddled, nurtured, and loved. Mundane duties as changing soiled diapers or feeding farina to a distant one year old were seen as special. In addition, the researcher observed a communal spirit among the mothers. The babies received attention from all the mothers. Differences in race or color were set aside in favor of kissing tears from the eyes of an upset two-year-old. Not the casual reading of ERIC documents nor intermittent viewing of media documentaries prepared the researcher for her day with the mothers and babies.

To be placed in the middle of teen-age parental reality dispelled the nameless, faceless climate of research. Many times surveys are mailed and returned to researchers with little to no contact with the subjects of the survey. Yet, in this instance the researcher received the best benefit of ethnographic research, which involves indepth descriptions of certain societies or cultures; i.e., the privilege of experiencing first hand a few hours at a daycare center. A definite spirit of camaraderie, fun, and electric expectation filled the room. Consequently, the researcher repeated the instructions twenty-two times. Babies, bottles, and toys are usually not part of practical research. However, the repetition of instructions permitted the researcher to personalize

each discourse with the young mothers. In addition the questionnaire took on meaning and importance to the subjects; it (the instrument) became more than just a piece of paper. The continual movement of location caused the researcher considerable anxiety; this was relative to the researcher's previously fixed expectation of how a questionnaire should be administered and not the fault of the participants. The researcher became extremely appreciative of the daily struggles encountered by teen mothers. Her day was educational in the truest sense of the word.

2. Another aspect of this research involved expert opinions. The researcher interviewed the Omaha Public Schools Director of Home Economics and the Child and Family Development's Executive Director. This was to ascertain their perceptions of the partnership of public education with governmental project as a means of providing a socio-educational safety net (i.e. safe, reliable daycare and daily transportation) for pregnant and parenting adolescent women. Three questions were posed to each director on the variables which impact on this collaboration:

1. Why is a daycare, transportation component necessary for pregnant/parenting adolescent women?

2. Has the daycare, transportation component aided or hindered your particular program?
3. Discuss the future implications of each project in regard to single adolescent mothers.

3. The researcher, in conjunction with the Omaha Public Schools' Director of Research and the Educational Data Center, developed an academic achievement chart. This chart utilized the Single Parent Project participants student numbers in lieu of names and listed the classes required for graduation or promotion (seventh to eighth grade or eighth to ninth grade) and displayed the course and grade achieved for each participant. This was done to provide anonymity for each of the respondents.

A letter of release was also sent to the parents of the adolescent women who attended ISC #1 and ISC #2 only. The study center students grades are not listed on the Student Grade Record File (1205) and the Director of the Study Centers requested a parental release to protect the young women's privacy. (See Appendix B.)

The information from the returned questionnaires was compiled by the researcher and Metro Technical Community College work study assistant during the week of January 15, 1990. The Omaha Public Schools Research Department translated the raw data into percentages for

the researcher to ensure accurate, valid conclusions. The Omaha Public Schools Educational Data Center permitted the researcher to access the Student Grade Record File (1205) to retrieve grades reviewed during the second marking period. The compilation of responses to the questionnaire, the perceptions of each director, and the chart of academic achievement are included for presentation in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to determine if the Single Parent Project sponsored by the Omaha Public Schools is effectively meeting its goals for pregnant and parenting adolescent women. The goals as stated in Topic II of Single Parent Project, A Move Toward Self-Sufficiency are:

1. To assist pregnant and parenting students to stay in school, deliver healthy babies, and become good parents.
2. To develop a partnership with the Head Start Development Corporation as a means of strengthening program objectives with the addition of a child care and transportation component.
3. To aid the single parent in achieving a high school diploma (McGrath, 1989).

The data gathering instrument consisted of information organized in two general areas.

Demographic information included:

1. Age of student.
2. Race of student.
3. Grade level of student.
4. Anticipated graduation year.
5. Day school attended.

6. Current pregnancy.

Secondly, eighteen items targeted toward specific responses regarding the Single Parent Project were asked on:

1. Faculty - student relations
2. Parenting classes
3. Transportation
4. Course offerings
5. Future student plans

For this study, twenty-two pregnant and parenting adolescent women, who are participants in the Single Parent Project, were administered an eighteen item questionnaire on January 11, 1990.

Table 1

Demographic Information

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
8	3	13.0
9	7	30.4
10	1	4.3
11	8	34.8
12	4	17.4

(Continued)

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
13	1	4.8
14	1	4.8
15	5	23.8
16	8	38.1
17	2	9.5
18	2	9.5
19	2	9.5

<u>Race</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Black	15	65.2
White	7	30.4
Asian	0	0
Hispanic	1	4.3
Other	0	0

<u>School of Attendance</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
ISC #1	8	40.0
North High	6	30.0
CCOE #3	1	5.0
ISC #2	3	15.0
Norris J.H.S.	1	5.0
Ralston H.S.	1	5.0

(Continued)

<u>Anticipated Grd. Yr.</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
90	4	18.2
91	8	36.4
92	3	13.6
93	5	22.7
94	1	4.5
95	1	4.5

Are you now pregnant?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
5	22.7	17	77.3

Table 1

Demographic Information

One of the major responsibilities of the researcher comprised compiling demographic information on each adolescent woman in the Single Parent Project. Part of ethnographic research demands explicit descriptions of significant cultures and their members. Of the twenty-two participants reporting on a grade level in school, the majority, (15), (70%) were in the ninth (30.4%) and eleventh (24.8%) grade respectively. Fifteen and sixteen year olds comprised the foundation of the SPP. On either end of the continuum, only one thirteen year old (4.8%) and two nineteen year olds (9.5%) are represented in the SPP. Demographics, by

race, indicated an overabundance of minorities (65.2%) while the other ethnic minorities were not represented (Asian and other), or were under represented with only one participant indicating Hispanic as her national origin (4.3%). White females make up the remainder of the population (30.4%). Mandatory attendance is expected of each client within the SPP. North High (30.0%) and ISC #1 (40.0%) have the highest number of attendants within the program. ISC #2 (15.0%), C.C.O.E. #3 (5.0%), Norris J.H.S. (5.0%), and Ralston High School (5.0%) follow in order respectively. An overwhelming majority of the adolescent females anticipate graduation by 1993. (90.9% totals from combination of years 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1993). In the past (prior to 1988) fewer than 2% of the SPP participants graduated. (Due to lack of participation, attrition, no seniors in program.) If the eight females graduate in 1991, this will give credibility to this alternative schooling plan.

As a sidelight, the researcher asked the adolescent females if they were pregnant at the time of the completion of the questionnaire. Surprisingly, five adolescents (22.7%) responded in the affirmative. However, the remaining seventeen (77.3%) unequivocally said no.

Table 2

Responses to question regarding Information on Single Parent Project.

<u>Source</u>	<u>Responses (% ages)</u>				
	<u>Coun</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Friend</u>	<u>Clinic</u>	<u>Newspaper</u>
	85.0	0	15.0	0	0

Obviously the Single Parent Project staff has utilized their time wisely in the promotion of the program; 85.0% of the adolescent women received information on the SPP from a school counselor. The other 15% were directed by a friend. Once again this reaffirms that schools are the primary transmitters of effective information to their primary clientele students.

Table 3

Student Perceptions of Parenting and Parenting Classes.

		<u>Responses (% ages)</u>				
<u>Questions</u>		<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>
2.	The parenting class has helped me understand the options I have in the future:	9.1	59.1	22.7	4.5	4.5
3.	The parenting class has helped me develop a better understanding of pregnancy and parenting:	27.3	54.5	13.6	0	4.5

Questions two and three queried the young females as to their perceptions of the SPP's parenting classes and their self-rating or parenting skills. Over 21% of the participants had no opinion regarding how the parenting classes aid students in deciding future options. Yet 54.5% agreed that the parenting classes "developed a better understanding of pregnancy and parenting."

Note: SA = Strongly Agree
 A = Agree
 NO = No Opinion
 D = Disagree
 SD = Strong Disagree

Table 4
Student Perceptions of Parental Child Nurturance.

		Responses (% ages)				
		Very	Good	OK	Somewhat	Very
<u>Question</u>		<u>Succ</u>	<u>Job</u>	<u>Inadequate</u>	<u>Inadequate</u>	<u>Inadequate</u>
15.	In caring for my child I feel:	55	30	5	0	0

Fifty-five percent felt "very successful" as a teen parent. No doubt future options seemingly are remote if not endlessly distant for teens. Pregnancy and parenting are concepts which are concrete, therefore relatable for a teen parent.

Table 5

Students Perceptions of Number of Courses at ISC

<u>Question</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>Most</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>None</u>
4. Courses offered attending ISC: The ISC offers:	12.5	25	18.8	43.8	0

During the Single Parent Project Self Study (1988-89 School Year), the adolescent women questioned the validity of the ISC as a complete educational facility. Consequently the finding of this study concur with the teen mothers concerns. Only 12.5% felt

the ISC had "all of the courses I want." A majority (43.8%) selected the response "The ISC offers some of the course I want." If students are dissatisfied with the ISC program courses, considerations need to be made in regard to keeping the SPP at the Individualized Study Centers.

Table 6

Student Observations on Curriculum and Faculty Student Relations.

	<u>Questions</u>	<u>Responses (% ages)</u>				
		<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>
5.	The courses I have taken through the SOO have been worthwhile and interesting.	14.3	54.2	28.6	4.8	0
6.	The staff at the ISC's or North High School has been concerned about me as a student and an individual.	22.7	63.6	9.1	0	4.5

Overall 52.4% of the students agreed on the "worthwhileness" of courses taken at either North High School or the ISC's. A fair amount of responses 28.6% chose no opinion as their answer regarding course work. Once again, administrators may need to invest time in a needs assessment to garner more data on lack of fulfilment in course work.

Students strongly agreed (22.7%) and agreed (63.6%) that the staff at both facilities modeled concerned, nurturing behaviors. Pregnancy is noted as being a

time of extreme emotional and physical upheaval; the nurturing by staff members, no doubt, aids the young women.

Table 7

Student Perceptions of Child and Family Development Corporation (Head Start).

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Responses (% ages)</u>				
	<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>
7. The HSDC is valuable as an infant care learning center.	15.0	55.0	25.0	0	5.0
8. The HSCD is valuable as a nursery.	15.0	45.0	35.0	42.1	5.0
13. I would recommend HSDC to my friends/ relatives	26.3	26.3	42.1	0	5.3

Note: SA = Strongly Agree
 A = Agree
 NO = No Opinion
 D = Disagree
 SD = Strong Disagree

Over 100% of the respondents had no opinion on the three questions relative to the Child and Family Development Center. The greatest number of agreements (55%) occurred in question seven. After careful consideration, the researcher feels unsure regarding the wording of question seven and question eight. Question eight received a 45% agreement rate. Did this occur relative to the questions wording? Did the respondents know the difference between an infant care center and a nursery? Satisfaction, regarding the child and Family Development Center, was evenly divided between Strongly Agree (26.3%) and Agreement (26.3%). However, 42.1% had no comment regarding pleasure or displeasure with this service. Only one student, (5.3%), perceived the service as a totally dissatisfying experience.

Table 8

Student Utilization of Daily Transportation Component.

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Responses (% ages)</u>				
	<u>Every Day</u>	<u>Most Days</u>	<u>Some Days</u>	<u>1 or 2 Days</u>	<u>Never</u>
11. I utilize provided by HSDC	72.2	11.1	0	0	16.7

The transportation component of the Single Parent Project was used reliably by most study participants. Thirteen respondents reported everyday usage of transportation, (72.2%), as a means of guaranteeing daycare and daily school attendance.

Table 9

Student Assessment of Daily Transportation Component.

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Responses (% ages)</u>				
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>OK</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Very Poor</u>
12. Transportation provided by HSDC is:	43.8	25.0	25.0	0	6.2

HSDC is:

Although the transportation was rated excellent, (43.8%, or good, (25%), by most participants; over one-third rated the service as OK or very poor.

Table 10

Student Perceptions of Daily Support Group Meetings.

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Responses (% ages)</u>				
	<u>Exceedingly Helpful</u>		<u>Not Helpful</u>		
	<u>Helpful</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Helpful</u>
9. The support (RAP) sessions with Mrs. Welch are:	23.5	52.9	11.8	0	11.8

In regards to nutritional counseling over, (47.4%), had "no opinion" on the recipes provided by the Douglas County Extension service. Average recipes, (31.6%), received the highest percentage of response from the young women.

Table 11

Student Perceptions of Weekly Nutritionist Seminars

	Good	Average	No	Poor	Very
<u>Question</u>	<u>Recipes</u>	<u>Recipes</u>	<u>Opinion</u>	<u>Recipes</u>	<u>Poor</u>
10. The weekly seminars with the nutritionist provide me with:	21.1	31.6	47.4	0	0

Table 12

Student Answers Regarding Consideration of Second Pregnancy.

	<u>Responses (% ages)</u>				
<u>Questions</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>Still</u>	<u>Sounds</u>	<u>Definitely</u>
	<u>Way</u>	<u>_____</u>	<u>Thinking</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>_____</u>
					<u>Yes</u>
14. Are you considering a second pregnancy?	57.1	23.8	4.8	0	14.3

Lastly a quartet of questions were asked to elicit answers regarding future student plans and student satisfaction with the Single Parent Project in general. An overwhelming, (57%), majority of the young women remarked, "no way" to plans for a second pregnancy. However, a disturbing trend followed this response. In the categories "maybe," "still thinking," and "definitely yes," the percentages were (23.8%), (4.8%), and (14.3%) respectively. Consequently, a combined total of (62.9%) of the respondents were considering a second pregnancy or are already pregnant. This contrasts sharply with questions sixteen and seventeen on educational planning.

Table 13

Student's Academic Plans After Termination from SPP

Question	Responses (% ages)				
	Graduate	Return to Home School & Graduate	Return to School	Work P.T. School	Quit or Stay Home
16. When I leave the SSP I plan to:	52.2	17.4	21.7	21.7	0

Table 14

Student's Future Plans

		<u>Responses (% ages)</u>				
		<u>Go to</u>	<u>Attend</u>	<u>Work F.T.</u>	<u>Get</u>	<u>Cont.</u>
		<u>College</u>	<u>Trade</u>	<u>& Go to</u>	<u>Marri</u>	<u>Parent.</u>
17.	When I graduate I plan to	54.2	8.3	12.5	20.8	4.5

The participants rated high school graduation, (52.2%), and college attendance, (54.2%), high on their list of future accomplishments. However with (62.9%) considering a second pregnancy, these statistics may be the musings of teens out of touch with reality.

Table 15

Student's Overall Opinion of SPP

		<u>Responses (% ages)</u>				
<u>Question</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>V.Poor</u>	
18.	My overall opinion of the SPP is:	27.3	45.5	22.7	4.5	0

Overall, the adolescent mothers felt the Single Parent Project is valid and would refer other mothers to the program. Satisfaction levels ranged from

"excellent," 27.3%, "good," 45.5%, "fair," 22.7% and "poor," 4.5%.

2. Another aspect of this research involved expert opinions. The researcher interviewed the Omaha Public Schools Director of Home Economics and the Child and Family Developments Executive Director. This was to ascertain their perceptions of the partnership of public education with governmental projects as a means of providing a social-educational safety net for pregnant and parenting adolescent women. Three questions were posed to each director on the variables which have an impact on this collaboration:

1. Why is a daycare, transportation component necessary for pregnant and parenting adolescent women?
2. Has the daycare transportation component aided or hindered your particular program?
3. Discuss the future implications of each project in regard to single adolescent mothers.

The following dialogue answers the questions posed by the researcher:

1. Why is a daycare, transportation component necessary for pregnant and parenting adolescent women?

OPS: "If we wanted to attract and maintain the adolescent mothers, it became imperative to establish a daycare, transportation component.

In addition, the Single Parent Project received a twenty-five thousand dollar grant to formulate a plan to address the dual needs of pregnant adolescent women. This mutual collaboration has provided safe, reliable daycare and daily free transportation. These two issues are vital to the longevity of any program supportive of teen moms."

CFDC: "Over 70% of all teen moms live below the poverty line. Usually there is a definite lack of private transportation, (family car), and extremely limited public transportation for these mothers. Daycare is critical for infants and children of poor parents. Welfare (ADFC) will not reimburse a parent enough money to handle daycare and transportation costs. Without this partnership, the majority of adolescent mothers would be denied an education, which is their right."

2. Has the daycare, transportation component aided or hindered your particular program?

CFDC: "We at the Child and Family Development Corporation consider the maintenance of enrollment the most beneficial part of our partnership. We must maintain an 86% overall average monthly attendance rate. The inclusion

of the Single Parent Project has helped us improve our average attendance."

OPS: "We feel the partnership has met more than the stated goals. We are permitting mothers to continue their education, learn positive parenting behaviors, and contribute to the learning environment of a new generation of children nurtured in the Child and Family Development Center. Yet, we still face a myriad of problems. Problems which plague most teen mothers. Poor attendance, frequent victimization, lack of communication services (telephone), and poor family relations keep teen moms from connecting with our program. Our continual lack of enough staff keeps us fragmented and doing too many functions."

CDFC: "Our major obstacle concerns trying to design a schedule to serve all the areas in which the mothers and babies reside. This is a large geographical region within the metropolitan area. Consequently, we are continually redeveloping plans to deliver prompt, reliable service to our clientele."

3. Discuss the future implications of each project in regard to single adolescent mothers.

OPS: "The Single Parent Project must find several funding sources. Initially a grant from the

Carl Perkins Vocational Act made the project a reality. Yet, we need to find internal, (OPS), sources to keep the project visible and viable. In addition, more staff members are needed as advocates for single parents. These staff members acting as liaisons can aid single parents in making life enhancing decisions for their new families. Lastly, we need support from the principals. Their assistance is vital in reassuring students, staff, and parents that adolescent parents are not pariahs, but young women who deserve an education."

CDFC: "We will need more funding to support those infants and children in the zero to three age group. Newborns through toddlers are not part of the federal agenda. Monies are usually allotted for early childhood programs (3-5 yr olds). Policy makers must begin to realize the impact poverty and single parenthood has on mothers and babies. Daycare services have the potential to lay an educational, social, emotional, and spiritual foundation which will aid these children throughout their lives."

Table 15

Chart Display of Academic Progress (Toward
Promotion/Graduation)

For Participants in Single Parent Project First
Semester 1989-90 Academic Year

Student Number	Grade Level	Eng	Hist			Bus	P.E.	Mus	Art	H.E.	Ind		Teen Ptng	Learning	
		LA	S.S.	Hth	Sci						Arts	Co		FL	Strategies
211102	10	4	4	4	3		3			3			2		
218608	11	3	2	3	2					3			1		
213438	12	3	3			3				3				3	
211287	12	2/3	3	4		1	3/4			2					
215915	11	3	4	5				3		3					
215311	9														
905735	11			1					1	2					
185686	12	2	2	2	2										
905710	12									1					P

Prior to the formulation of this display, the researcher became misdirected in her efforts to obtain the grades of the twenty-two adolescent women. Initially, the Director of Research for Omaha Public Schools, informed the researcher that all grades were stored on the Student Record File (1205). These conclusions were valid for those students who attended a conventional junior high or high school each day. However, after a lengthy discussion with the Director of the Individualized Study Centers, the researcher was enlightened on procedures regarding the alternative

centers. Individualized Study Centers are not part of the Student Record File (1205). In addition, parental approval must be obtained before any grades can be released to the researcher. Consequently, a parent approval letter was generated (See Appendix B) and disseminated to the study population (ISC's and CCOE's only).

Sixteen parental approval forms were distributed by the Single Parent Project's resources teacher on February 9, 1990. Three were returned to the researcher on February 28, 1990. Only those adolescent women who live independently returned their parental approval forms.

It might be speculated that the remainder of the survey participants and their parents chooses not to cooperate for a variety of reasons.

1. Shame.
2. Approval form not given to parents.
3. Fear of grades being viewed by personnel other than OPS or U.N.O. Staff.
4. Weary of questionnaires, surveys, etc.
5. Lost or forgot to return approval form.

Any or all of the previous factors may have contributed to the low respondent participation. It is a regrettable aspect of this type of research. Studies of this nature, many times, are the basis for federal grants or private foundation funding. Low response by

participants stymies access to the very funds needed to alleviate the difficulties faced by said population.

The grades displayed in Table 9 were generated from two conventional high schools and two alternative learning centers within the Omaha Public School District. For this study, junior high participation was unavailable. Omaha Public Schools utilize the numerical grading concept; a grade of one being considered as academic excellence, while a five is considered academic failure. On initial examination of the chart, only one failure is evident. The remainder of the grades fall within the one to four range on the grading scale. The first five students attend one of the seven traditional high schools in the Omaha Public School District. Consequently, more grades are recorded for the first semester. Those attending an alternative learning center are unable to secure elective classes except Art or Home Economics, therefore, reported grades are usually in required areas of study. One failure provides proof that students and teachers within the Single Parent Project are committed to maintaining academic standards.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Restatement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine if the Single Parent Project sponsored by the Omaha Public School District is effectively meeting its goals for pregnant and parenting adolescent women. The goals as stated in Topic II of the Single Parent Project; A Move toward Self Sufficiency are:

1. To assist pregnant and parenting students to stay in school, deliver healthy babies, and become good parents.

2. To develop a partnership with the Head Start Development Corporation as a means of strengthening program objectives with the addition of a child care and transportation component.

3. To aid the single parent in achieving a high school diploma.

(McGrath, 1989)

Description of the Procedures Used

An 18 item questionnaire completed by the participants was developed to gather demographic information:

1. Age of participants
2. Ethnic origin of participants
3. Grade level of participants
4. Anticipated graduation year

5. Day school regularly attended

6. Current pregnancy of participants

and to assess attitudes toward the various aspects of the Single Parent Project. The five categories of pertinent data that were addressed included:

1. Faculty student relations

2. Parenting classes/rap sessions

3. Transportation

4. Course offerings

5. Student's future plans

The instrument was adapted from the Phoenix Union High School District Cyesis Program's year end evaluation data.

The population consisted of twenty-two pregnant and parenting adolescent women who were in attendance at the Child and Family Development Corporation, ISC #1, and ISC #2 on January 11, 1990. In addition, professionals from the Omaha Public Schools and the Child and Family Development Center assisted the researcher as resource persons in data preparation, defining program objectives and implications, and laying the groundwork with the student participants.

Questionnaire participation was voluntary. All participants were oriented prior to the administration of the questionnaire by the Single Parent Project's resource teacher. This was done to ensure that all participants would be cognizant of the date, time, and

type of procedures to be administered on January 11, 1990. Questionnaires are part of the concrete component inherent in research design. The design of the instrument, collection of data, and data analysis aid in creating a regulated, scientific process.

Summary and Principal Findings

Further discussion of the principal findings and summary will follow the goals as stated at the beginning of the chapter.

1. Analysis of the data revealed a very positive response to the Single Parent Project within the senior high schools. Over eighty-five percent of the participants received their initial information on the project from a school official. Often single adolescent mothers receive little to no attention by educational administrators. The Omaha Public School District is to be commended for their concern for this disadvantaged population.

In addition, participants voiced both concern and admiration regarding educational achievement through the project. Participants attend one of the three alternative learning (ISC #1, ISC #2, or CCOE) or the traditional secondary school, North High. Response at all the locations was favorable toward the staff. The academic settings not only provide courses of study, but also the support of caring individuals. Participants voiced concern regarding the alternative

learning centers insufficient number of classes. Many recognized their responsibility in either transferring to a more traditional setting or utilizing summer school for further academic support. Several young women wanted an extended day at the alternative centers as means of having the best of both worlds.

Overall parenting skills rated high with the majority of pregnant and parenting women. Most identified themselves as above average parents. This directly correlate to the collaboration between the Child and Family Development Center and the Single Parent Project. Both organizations list instructing their children on positive parenting skills as essential in building durable families. Adolescent parents, in conjunction with the general parenting population, are not known for their exceptional parenting behaviors. However, the dual reinforcement from both organizations virtually guarantees adolescent women will possess at least average knowledge on prenatal concerns, childhood development stages, and parenting roles.

2. Each director was specific regarding the collaboration between public education and federal facility. The needs of adolescent women and their offspring increase if certain systems (i.e. transportation; safe reliable daycare) are not in place. Both directors maintain that these partnerships

benefit all concerned. The Single Parent Project recognized that without a transportation and daycare components the project was doomed to failure. Likewise, the Child and Family Development Corporation recognized their lack of number, (average monthly attendance) plus the extreme poverty experienced by adolescent mothers and their offspring as a definite rationale for joining forces with the Single Parent Project.

Funding continues to be the key factor which impact any program concerned with pregnant and parenting adolescent women. The director of the Child and Family Development Corporation voiced wariness on the trustworthiness of politicians to keep prenatal and infant concerns on the national agenda. He envisions a developmental sequence of projects which address the child from pre-infancy to school readiness. With the restructuring of public education funds may or may not be available to aid this at-risk population. OPS's Director of Home Economics maintains that private funding sources possess the capacity to bolster scarce public funds and provide the private sector with a rare opportunity. Both directors firmly believe the future of these "littlest Americans" is too costly to leave to chance.

3. Of the eight student's grades displayed on the academic achievement chart, only one failure is

recorded. This testifies strongly to adolescent women's desire for an education. As stated previously in chapter one, this population is usually viewed as intellectually incompetent at their best; social misfits at their worst. The Single Parent Project aids in dispelling this social mythology by requiring the young women to attend school on a regular basis. The project also provides the systems which encourage daily attendance in conjunction with academic success. In addition, alternative learning centers deserve a long overdue accolade from the public. Formulation of "substitute schools" grant those outside the mainstream student population to receive an education. Likewise, the traditional high school principals who have permitted the Single Parent Project in their buildings are visionaries in their own right. Flexibility, tolerance, and academic instructing are taught to teachers and students. Educators must realize that change is inevitable and be willingly to embrace the change as vital and available within their facilities.

What directions lie ahead for the Single Parent Project? Which improvement will maximize single parent's lives? Does the Single Parent Project need to be restructured internally for greater efficiency? Will the public accept the realities of adolescent single parenthood as part of new family systems in the twenty-first century?

The strategies utilized by the Single Parent Project sponsored by the Omaha Public Schools District to reach the most severely at risk population, pregnant and parenting women, is working. From its inception in 1984 to the present SPP has cherished its commitment to families on the grassroots level. This commitment has lead its director, advisory board, and staff to become visionaries; futurists in creating, maintaining, and improving the lives of single parent families.

Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that teenage parenting intervention programs do significantly impact those pregnant and parenting adolescent women who are participants. Association with intervention programs provides a safety net for pregnant and parenting adolescent women. Without this socio-educational safety net, an overwhelming majority of adolescent women's lives become meaningless before they reach adulthood. Consequently, the general public pays on the installment plan to maintain potential dysfunctional families. Teen parenting intervention programs provide techniques which enable adolescents to be productive parents and cultivate a new generation of children.

Recommendations

1. The Single Parent Project needs to be housed in its own building. Although the alternative learning centers have proved beneficial, the project has proved its worthwhileness and deserves a facility. Critics could possibly misconstrue this grouping as tracking. However, a permanent facility for the project would present authenticity and credibility. All facets of the project need to be together. Saving of time, money, and space is essential in public education programs. In addition, the Omaha Public Schools District has begun a massive renovation and building plan. Surely, the Single Parent Project is worthy of considerations.

2. The Omaha Public Schools District must decide how important the Single Parent Project is. Two generations of young people are depending on funding to provide them with the same opportunities as their non-pregnant counterparts. A clear message of equity for all students is inherent in yearly funding for the Single Parent Project.

3. The Single Parent Project must have an increased staff allocation. One resource teacher at four facilities stretches the boundaries of professionalism. A full time staff of administrators, counselors, instructors, nurse, and paraprofessionals will benefit all concerned. By enlisting additional

staff the problems and perplexities if adolescent motherhood could be addressed regularly.

4. The Single Parent Project needs a specific, concrete curriculum. Needs of pregnant and parenting adolescent women differ from the general population. By pinpointing their concerns through course offerings, seminars, group and individual counseling, second pregnancy could be avoided.

5. Lastly, the Single Parent Project need to widen their public visibility. Few patrons of the Omaha Public Schools realize this program exists. A yearly mention on the Cox Cable school access channel hardly qualifies as a media blitz. Community agencies must be alerted to the Single Parent Project's success at maintaining and retaining pregnant adolescent women in school. More positive publicity will dispel myths regarding pregnant adolescents and replace it with real persons living in tangible, concrete manners.

APPENDIX

Appendix A

SINGLE PARENT PROJECT
QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire is part of a proposal which I am completing at the University of Nebraska. Please answer the following questions on your personal opinion of the single parent project sponsored by the Omaha Public Schools District. Answer each question to the best of your knowledge.

SINGLE PARENT PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire is a part of a proposal which I am completing at the University of Nebraska and is sponsored by the Omaha Public Schools District. The results of this questionnaire will only be used by the researcher and the personnel of the Single Parent Project. Confidentiality is assured. Give your personal opinion and answer each question to the best of your knowledge.

Please circle one:

Grade: 8 9 10 11 12
 Age: 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
 Race: Black American White American Asian
 American Hispanic American Other
 School regularly attended: ISC #1 North High School
 Anticipated Graduation Year: 90 91 92 93 94 95
 Are you now pregnant? Yes No

On the questions below please circle your response to the question.

Example: I enjoy L.L. Cool J's Music

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion
 Disagree Strongly Disagree

1. I heard about the SPP from:

School Counselor	Parents	Friend
Clinic		Newspaper or TV

2. The parenting class has helped me understand the options I have in the future:

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion
Disagree		Strongly Disagree

3. The parenting class has helped me develop a better understanding of pregnancy and parenting:

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion
Disagree		Strongly Disagree

4. Answer only if attending ISC: The ISC offers:

All The	Most Of the	No
Courses I Want	Courses I Want	Opinion
Some of the		None of the
Courses I Want		Courses I Want

5. The courses I have taken through the SPP have been interesting and worthwhile:

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion
Disagree		Strongly Disagree

6. The staff at ISC or North High has been concerned about me as a student and individual:

Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion
Disagree		Strongly Disagree

15. In caring for my child I feel:

Very Successful Doing a Good Job

Doing OK

Wish I Somewhat Very

Knew More Inadequate Inadequate

16. When I leave the SPP I plan to:

Graduate, Return to Return

Get Further Home School To

Education & Graduate School

Return to Quit School

School and To work

Work Part Time Or Stay Home

17. When I graduate I plan to:

Go to College Attend a Work Fulltime

Trade School Go to School

Part Time

Get Married & Continue

Continue Parenting Parenting

18. My overall opinion of the SPP is:

Excellent, I Good, I Fair

Would Refer Would Refer

Others Others

Poor, I Would Very Poor

Not Refers I Would Not

Others Refer Others

APPENDIX B

FEBRUARY 1990

DEAR PARENT,

AS PART OF MY RESEARCH PROJECT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA, I WILL BE DESIGNING A CHART OF GRADES COMPLETED BY THE FEMALE PARTICIPANTS OF THE SINGLE PARENT PROJECT.

STUDENT NAMES WILL NOT BE UTILIZED IN THIS PROJECT.

PLEASE SIGN THE FORM BELOW AS A RELEASE FOR THE ISC ADMINISTRATION.

THANK YOU,

PATRICIA A. FRAMPTON

 YES, MY DAUGHTER'S GRADES MAY BE RELEASED FOR THE UNO PROJECT.

 NO, MY DAUGHTER'S GRADES MAY NOT BE RELEASED FOR THE UNO PROJECT.

PARENTS SIGNATURE

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