

Summary – Experiences & Challenges Faced by Adolescent Parents

Brown Bag Session - October 27, 2009

A panel of three adolescent parents provided information to increase service providers' awareness of issues and challenges that pregnant and or parenting adolescent parents face and what they need from systems and services providers in order achieve success.

In their own words, the panelists addressed the issues and challenges they faced as adolescent parents and the strategies they used to overcome them.

After introducing themselves and giving their life stories, the adolescent moms were asked a number of questions. Their responses are noted below.

1. What supports do you require?
 - need help finding housing and daycare
 - it is not impossible to get an education, however information is needed (ie. resources and information for subsidies and budgeting)
 - help for adolescents in unstable relationships

2. What do you want for your child/ren?
 - let them be themselves, test the waters and make their own decisions without stigma
 - teach them sex education
 - while they can't be protected from everything, hope they will see more of the good part than I have seen

3. How do you prefer to get information?
 - from other parents
 - TAPP – tight knit parent group
 - Information from child care workers
 - Parenting classes at Villa Rosa – beneficial
 - Videos are useful
 - Schools should have more information

4. How should service providers deal with parents who think everything will be perfect once they have a baby?
 - provide a realistic baby schedule, budget information
 - tell moms they will spend a lot of time alone
 - go to classes (Villa Rosa)

The panelists indicated they were offered home visits. These helped them to know what to expect and gave them knowledge about their child's development.

In conclusion, the panelists noted the importance of the following: having a non-judgmental worker; patience; understanding, and realizing it takes time to make decisions.

Thank you to the three adolescent moms who very capably and clearly provided beneficial information to all service providers in attendance.