

November 27, 2006

Ms. Erin Aremu
Coordinator of Young Parents Program
Young Parents Program
47 Upson St.
Bristol, CT 06010

Dear Ms. Aremu:

We are Trinity College students working on a project for our Child Development class. Our topic is teenage pregnancy, and more specifically programs that are implemented to help teenage mothers. Based on our research and conversations with experts, including you, we have developed a supplement to your Young Parents Program. The goal of the supplement is to provide a set of workshops that helps teenage mothers graduate from high school and obtain skills that can help them in the future.

When thinking of ways to address the issue of teen pregnancy, we came to the realization that there is great emphasis placed on preventing teen pregnancy but there are very few programs available to accommodate teens who are pregnant or are already teen mothers. A significant drawback of having a child as a teenager is that most of the girls are forced to drop out of school. Once these girls drop out of school it is extremely difficult to get the proper schooling and job training that they need to advance in the world. As a result of this these girls become under qualified for many jobs and, therefore, they are limited to obtaining the lowest paying jobs leading to a significantly reduced standard of living. Our goal is to address this problem at its core; providing these teens with the proper resources so they can obtain a High School diploma or equivalence. We think a program needs to be developed that allows girls to go back to school and learn how to care for their children.

As you are aware, the Young Parents Program is one of the few programs that actually helps pregnant girls get an education, obtain personal skills, and teaches them how to care for their children. This program provides a daycare for the teen mothers while they're attending the program, as well as when the girls transition back to High School. Even though the aspects of the current program are valuable, we think that the program would be more effective if a few modifications were made. First, we suggest that the length of the school day be increased. Secondly, we think the teachers should be certified. Lastly, the program should focus on job training skills and the expansion of the parenting skills section of the program. In order for girls to have a better chance of attaining competitive jobs in the workplace, it is imperative that they learn vocational skills in addition to a High School education. Although the Young Parents Program has some of these initiatives in place, we would like to propose that you expand certain aspects of this program.

We hope that you will look over our proposal and consider implementing some of the plans that we suggested into the Young Parents Program. You are welcome to contact either of us if you have any questions. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Carla Thompkins
Trinity College
300 Summit St.
Box 702221
Hartford, CT 06106

Kelly Howard
Trinity College
300 Summit St.
Box 701474
Hartford, Ct 06106

Proposal for Expanding the Young Parents Program

I. Increase School Day

Presently, the school day at the Young Parents Program is from 10:30 to 12:30, Monday thru Thursday and on Friday the program is from 10:30 to 1:30. We feel that this day is too short since it is only 1/3 the length of a regular school day. Since the day is so short only one subject is taught per day. We would like to suggest that the school day be extended from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. An example of a typical schedule and the benefits of this schedule are listed as follows:

8:00-9:00 am: English
9:10-10:10 am: Mathematics
10:20- 11:20 am: History
11:30-12:45pm: Lunch
12:55-1:55pm: Science

The school day would be more effective under this set-up because:

- The day would consist of six hours as opposed to the present 2 hour day. Having a longer day would be similar to a normal day of school, making the transition easier for the girls to go back to school.
- The teenage mothers would be able to learn more in longer class periods.
- If the teens could learn more material they would be at the right grade level when they return to High School.
- If a mother was absent for 1 day she would not fall too far behind in academics because she would only be missing the lesson plan for the day. In the present program each subject is taught on 1 specific day of the week once a week. Therefore if a mother misses one day she will have missed an entire week's lesson plan for that subject.
- Girls would have more of an incentive to go back to school if they felt the transition back would not be so difficult.

II. Hire Certified Teachers

In the Young Parents Program the current teachers are not certified. As a result of this the program is not considered an equivalent to High School. Listed below are some things that can be accomplished for the teen mothers if the teachers were certified.

- If the program was a High School equivalent the teens would not have to repeat the same grade they were in before Young Parents Program when they go back to school. They would be able to continue on to the next grade.

- The teen mothers who are seniors when they come into the program would be able to obtain a High School diploma when graduating from the Young Parents Program. As of now they would be forced to repeat the 12th grade.
- If one of the teens came into the proposed program as a senior and stayed for a year they would be able to graduate. Instead of having to repeat their senior year they would be able to receive a High School equivalency diploma.
- The required certification would ensure that the girls are receiving academic work that is equally as challenging as High School.

III. Job Training

We would like to implement a job training program in addition to the academic courses that are already in place. Since the majority of teenage mothers do not acquire the proper job preparation skills, they often occupy the lowest paying jobs and end up being in the lowest socio-economic class. We have designed a job training workshop that would ensure that the girls would obtain the skills that they need to advance in the world. This workshop would consist of two key components:

Computer Skills

Goal: To help girls acquire the necessary skills in Microsoft Office

- Microsoft Word- This will help the girls become proficient in word processing.
- Microsoft Excel- The girls will learn how to create, interpret graphs and create spreadsheets.
- Microsoft PowerPoint- The girls will learn how to create slide shows and give power point presentation.
- Typing- This will help the girls develop techniques that will help them become better typers and increase the amount of words they type per minute.

Job Preparation

Goal: To help teenage mothers prepare for the job process and help them acquire the proper interpersonal skills to interact with possible employers.

- Resumes- this program will teach them the correct format for writing a resume and the type of information that needs to be included.
- Interviews-through role playing with each other and staff the girls will conduct mock interview, which will help them prepare for the types of questions they will be asked and it will help them build interpersonal skills.

IV. Parenting Skills

Although the Young Parent's Program dedicates time to teaching teen mothers parenting skills, we would like to increase the amount of time spent learning these skills. In the Young Parent's Program as it is, there is no guarantee that the girls would learn new parenting techniques because the time allotted to teach parenting skills is split up with having guest speakers and discussion time among the girls. In

our plan, we suggest there be dedicated time each week to talk about specific parenting skills in addition to any guest speakers. We feel that it is necessary for the program to dedicate more time to this aspect because the mothers are so young and they may lack basic knowledge of children and child. Topics discussed in parenting skills sessions would include:

- A dietitian will show them how to prepare nutritionist meals for their children
- A dietitian will also show them what's healthy and what's not healthy for their child
- Mothers will have individual bonding time with their child.
- Teen mothers will learn how to create individual time with their child where they will read to, sing to, and feed their child.
- Guest speakers will come in to discuss different techniques of child rearing, such as the most effective ways to discipline children.
- Teen mothers will learn how to comfort their child and respond to the child's physical and emotional needs.