
FUTURE VOICES II: TEEN PARENTS & THEIR CHILDREN IN NEW MEXICO

SUMMARY PROGRESS REPORT on the **New Mexico Teen Parent Programs** 1997-2000



P.O. Box 35997, Albuquerque, NM 87176-5997 • (505) 254-8737 • Fax (505) 254-8741
E-mail: nmtpc@flash.net • Visit our Website: www.flash.net/~nmtpc

The Teen Parent Program Data Collection Project was collaboratively funded by the:
New Mexico Department of Health/Public Health Division, Family Planning Program • New Mexico Department of Education/Vocational,
Technical, and Adult Education Division • New Mexico Health Resources

A Three-year Data Collection Project
SUMMARY REPORT
on
New Mexico's Teen Parent Programs
Adapted from the full report compiled by
Philliber Research Associates

Like many other states in the nation, New Mexico has a tenacious and substantial rate of births to teenagers. In 1998, there were 4,964 births to teens under the age of 20 in New Mexico. Approximately 2,000 of these births were to girls under 18 years of age. The national birth rate in 1998 shows 51.1 births per 1,000 for teens age 15 - 19, as compared to the New Mexico birth rate of 69.0 births per 1,000, or 13 teen births per day. New Mexico has the 5th highest teen birth rate in the nation.

To address the needs of teen parents and their children, New Mexico communities responded by establishing teen parent programs. Prior to 1996, there was only sporadic and program-specific data on the outcomes and the services provided.

HISTORY OF PROJECT

In 1997, the New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition (NMTPC) began a three-year comprehensive, statewide data collection project to include all programs for pregnant and parenting teens. The goal was to determine what types of programs existed for this population and to examine the subsequent outcomes for both teen parents and their babies. NMTPC created a common data base to track the services of these programs as well as client characteristics and outcomes. The data are then analyzed to determine if the programs made a difference in:

- **Increasing educational levels and graduation rates** ▪ **Reducing low birth weight babies**
 - **Reducing repeat pregnancy rates** ▪ **Increasing employment**

During the past three years, New Mexico has had from 40 to 48 programs serving pregnant and parenting teens each year (53 different programs overall). Over the three-year period the data base of 5,093 teen parents includes 32 GRADS (Graduation, Reality And Dual-role Skills) Programs, 8 Teen Parent Residences, and 8 other teen parent programs located in various schools and communities throughout the state, including 3 UNM sponsored School-based Health Centers.

These Teen Parent Programs are funded from a variety of state, national and local sources generated by the sites. Funding sources include, but are not limited to the New Mexico Departments of: Education; Children, Youth and Families; Human Services; and Health.

SERVICES DELIVERED

- These programs offer a wide variety of services to young parents with an average of 12 services each including: life skills, prenatal education, counseling, tutoring, home visits and child care for the infants and children of teen parents.
- Teen parents spent an average of 8.8 months in these programs.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CLIENTS

- The average age of these teen parents is 16.7 years. They represent a variety of ethnic groups: 66% are Latino/Hispanic, 13% Native American, 15% white, and 5% other.
- Males comprise 9% of the client base in these programs.
- 6% of the parents have more than one child.
- 44% have some ties with the other parent of the child, 27% live together, 6% are married, and 23% have no ties with the other parent.
- 71% began prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy, a rate that is vastly better than NM rates.
- At program exit, 80% received WIC and 72% Medicaid.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

PROGRAM OUTCOMES INDICATE THAT NM TEEN PARENT PROGRAMS *Make A Difference!*

From 1997 to 2000, 5,093 teen parents from 23 counties were included in the New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition's database.

TEEN PARENTS STAY IN SCHOOL AND GRADUATE in spite of the many challenges.

- ☆ **84%** of those who had left school before being recruited to these programs returned to school.
- ☆ **77%** increased their education or stayed in school in the same grade during the period of program enrollment, a rate well above those reported by other national programs.

EMPLOYED

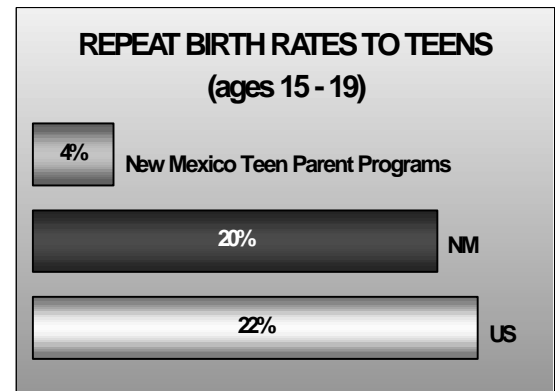
- ☆ **26%** of these young parents maintained or obtained a job during the program year. In similar national programs, 14% were employed after 18 months.

HEALTHIER BABIES

- ☆ **ONLY 5%** of the young mothers had low birth weight babies, a rate that is lower than both the state and national rates. Younger teens and/or teens with no prenatal care are most likely to have low birth weight babies. (Low birthweight = less than 5½ pounds).

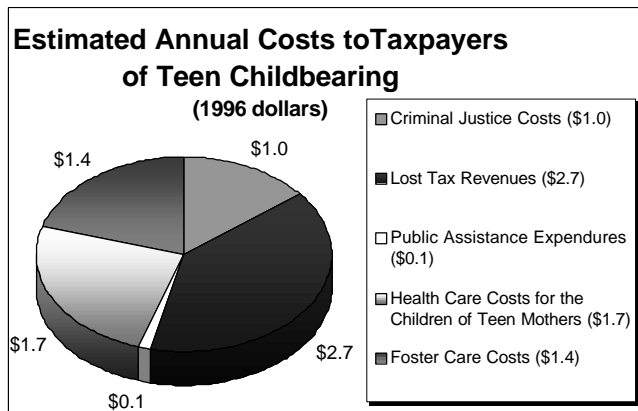
FEWER REPEAT PREGNANCIES

- ☆ **4%** of the young women became pregnant after enrollment and **2%** of those enrolled in the program for 12 months or more had a repeat pregnancy, a rate that is vastly lower than other comparable national programs, and substantially lower than the national rate.



WHEN A TEENAGER GETS PREGNANT, WE ALL CARRY HER CHILD

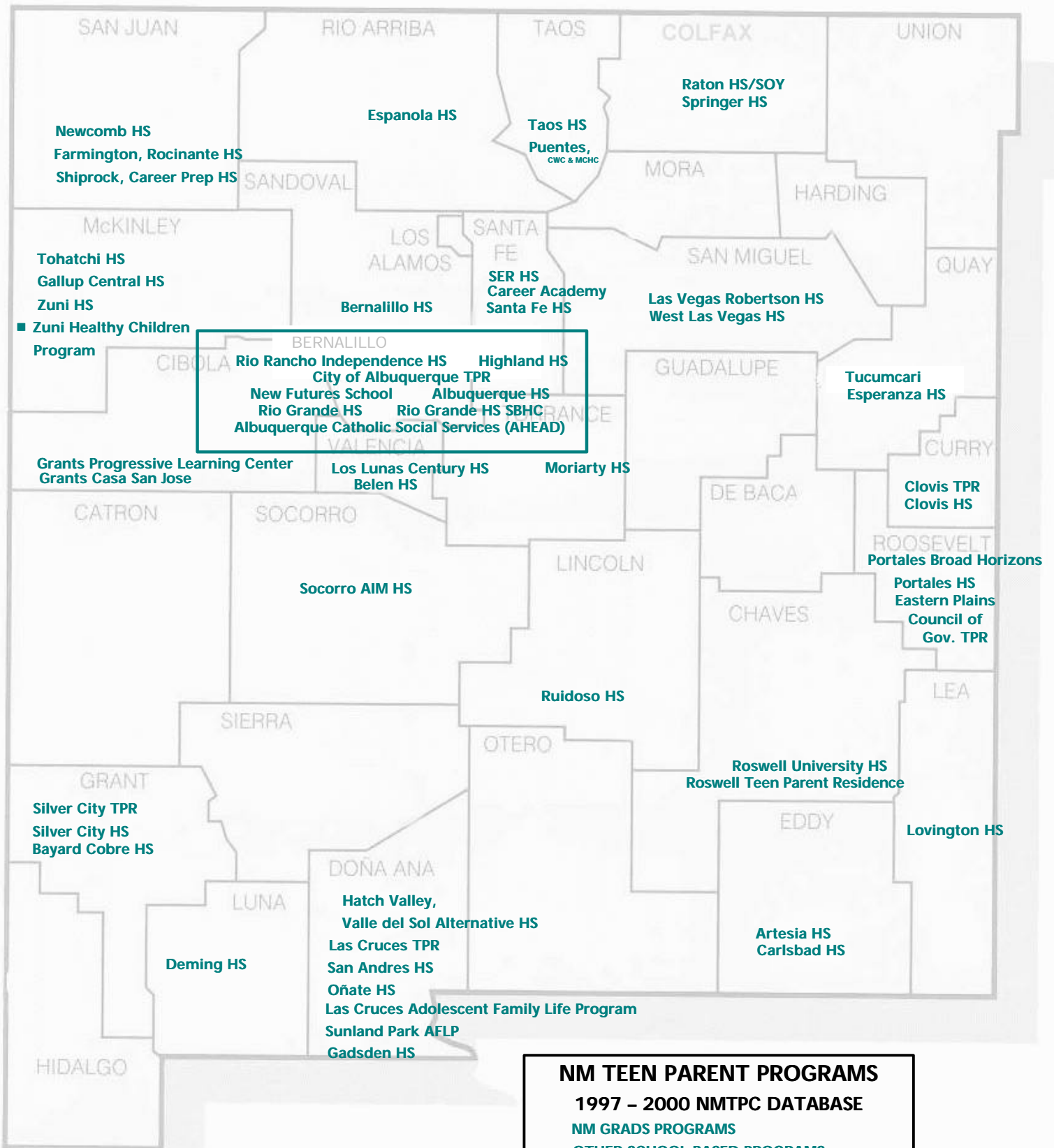
U.S. Taxpayers Incur Annual Societal Cost for Teen Childbearing



- Teens, who stay in school full time in New Mexico, generate at least \$2,632.32 each for their school district.
- Incarcerated teen parents cost the state approximately \$4.5 million a year.
- In New Mexico, the cost of teen childbearing is approximately \$88 million.

- In 1999, \$625,000 of TANF funding was allocated to support New Mexico Teen Parent Programs.
- The cost for each low birthweight baby requiring increased hospital and provider resources ranges from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per day.
- Nationally, children of adolescent mothers have more developmental and other health problems. This leads to higher health costs for taxpayers of at least \$1.5 billion.
- It is estimated that NM taxpayers would save at least \$35 million per year if every teen birth were delayed until the mother was in her early 20's.
- Health care, education, and child care for the 3.5 to 4 million infants and children from birth to 15 years born low birthweight cost between \$5.5 and \$6 billion more than they would have if those children had been born at a normal birthweight.

New Mexico Teen Parent Programs 2000



NM TEEN PARENT PROGRAMS
 1997 – 2000 NMTPC DATABASE
 NM GRADS PROGRAMS
 OTHER SCHOOL BASED PROGRAMS
 TEEN PARENT RESIDENCES (TPR)
 NEW SITES NOT INCLUDED IN DATABASE