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## Best Practices in Teen Pregnancy Prevention Practitioner Handbook

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## Best Practices in Teen Pregnancy Prevention Practitioner Handbook

### Abstract

The *Best Practices in Teen Pregnancy Prevention Practitioner Handbook* presents 10 best practices from the literature, as well as findings from surveys and visits made to local teen pregnancy prevention programs in schools, community-based agencies, and health care agencies. Each of the best practices in this handbook includes key research findings, program recommendations, and tips for the field. The handbook has been widely used in California and across the nation to enhance the content and delivery of teen pregnancy prevention programs.

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### Introduction

The *Best Practices in Teen Pregnancy Prevention Practitioner Handbook* presents 10 best practices that the authors synthesized from the literature and from the field. Specifically, in developing the 10 "best practices" the authors:

1. Conducted an exhaustive review of the research literature on effective teen pregnancy prevention,
2. Surveyed 35 practitioners to assess their view of "best practices," and

3. Visited 12 local teen pregnancy prevention programs in the San Francisco Bay Area, including schools, community-based agencies, and health care agencies to identify their effective teen pregnancy prevention strategies.

The handbook was developed for community practitioners in an effort to enhance program content and delivery. The authors acknowledge that no single practice or intervention will work for all teens. Holistic, comprehensive, and flexible approaches are needed. The handbook is easy to read, and each best practice includes:

- Key Research Findings,
- Program Recommendations, and
- Tips from the Field.

The appendix contains information on developmental assets, cognitive and social development of adolescents, and a referenced list of promising teen pregnancy prevention programs in the U.S.

## The 10 Best Practices

1. **Youth Development** focuses on providing young people with skills that will help them succeed as adults. One of the most promising approaches to reducing teenage pregnancy is to improve educational and career opportunities for teens and to instill a belief in a successful future.
2. **Involvement of Family and Other Caring Adults** matters when it comes to affecting a teenager's sexual behavior and the risk of early pregnancy. Family involvement maximizes the effectiveness of pregnancy prevention programs.
3. **Male Involvement** acknowledges the critical role males play in unintended and early pregnancies among teenagers, and involves them in pregnancy prevention efforts.
4. **Cultural Relevant** interventions will increase the effectiveness of efforts to reduce teenage pregnancy because culture plays a major role in influencing values and attitudes about sex, child bearing, and parenting.
5. **Community-Wide Campaigns** to discourage adolescent pregnancy and childbearing are needed because practitioners work with complex social issues such as teenage pregnancy, violence, alcohol, and substance abuse. Single solutions are inadequate.
6. **Service Learning** connects meaningful community service with academic learning, civic responsibility, and personal growth. It enables young people to study community issues in-depth, plan and initiate community action, and make a difference in their community.
7. Increasing **Employment Opportunities** for adolescents is necessary to assure economic self-sufficiency, generate self-esteem, and create the motivation to delay early childbearing.
8. **Sexuality and AIDS Education** plays an important role in providing youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy decisions about their intimate relationships.
9. **Outreach in Teen Pregnancy Prevention** Programs that focuses on sexual health is critical. The risks of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections are high in the early months of sexual activity, and teens have the tendency to not seek help before a crisis occurs.
10. **Access to Reproductive Health Services** is important for sexually active teenagers since they need support and encouragement to use contraception effectively and consistently.

## Distribution and Use

The authors distributed this handbook to schools, community-based and health agencies in their counties and with statewide partners. Authors have distributed this handbook through countywide teen pregnancy coalitions and national conferences such as BAPPS and CYFAR. Evidence of the usefulness of the handbook includes its use by San Mateo County Pregnancy Prevention network in developing criteria to award local grants.

The authors used this handbook to partner with and educate six local teen pregnancy prevention programs, to strengthen their capacity to deliver improved programs by incorporating the "best practices" identified in this handbook.

The authors provided technical assistance in the adoption and implementation of at least one "best practice" and in program evaluation. In this way, we renewed our historic role as providers of science-based information in response to a contemporary need in our communities.

To order, send a check for \$7.50 per copy payable to U.C. Regents to the address below:

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