

CAMPAIGN

UPDATE

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About The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy: The National Campaign's goal is to improve the lives and future prospects of children and families and, in particular, to help ensure that children are born into stable, two-parent families who are committed to and ready for the demanding task of raising the next generation. Our specific strategy is to prevent teen pregnancy and unplanned pregnancy among single, young adults. We support a combination of responsible values and behavior by both men and women and responsible policies in both the public and private sectors.

If we are successful, child and family well-being will improve. There will be less poverty, more opportunities for young men and women to complete their education or achieve other life goals, fewer abortions, and a stronger nation.

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Media and the 18-Year Conversation

Sarah Brown—CEO, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy

(This op-ed appeared in the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, August 10.)

Last Sunday I spent five hours at a cramped, crazy, and chaotic NBC studio taping a show dedicated to discussing this summer's surprise hit reality show, *The Baby Borrowers*. Although not without its detractors, the show reveals in living color why teens are best advised to postpone parenthood and it does so without being preachy or annoying. I'm a big fan.

Of course, anyone with a pulse realizes that *The Baby Borrowers* is only one of many cultural comets that have recently streaked into the nation's consciousness and reminded us all about teen pregnancy. From the Gloucester teen pregnancy "pact" (probably not true) to Jamie Lynn Spears' pregnancy, pregnant teens have been front and center.

This enormous attention has led to an avalanche of finger pointing and recrimination. Not surprisingly, Hollywood and the media have been cited as the major cause of all this. A link was easy to make—Hollywood baby bumps no doubt seem glamorous to many teen girls and perhaps lead some to mimic their favorite starlets.



SIMPLY BLAMING HOLLYWOOD, THE MEDIA AND CELEBRITY CULTURE FOR OUR NATION'S HIGH RATE OF TEEN PREGNANCY—THE "JUNO EFFECT," IN SHORTHAND— IS, WELL, TOO SIMPLE.

Consider this: if you believe that media has become raunchier over the past 15 years, and that our crude pop culture is the root cause of teen pregnancy, then why did teen sexual behavior improve so dramatically over that same time period? In recent years, teen sex has decreased, teen contraceptive use has increased, and teen pregnancies have plummeted (although there was some bad news last year – the birth rate among teens went up a bit). Mind you, all of this good news occurred during the Spears/Lohan administration.

Figuring out a more balanced, reasonable explanation than Hollywood is entirely the cause is critical because even with all the progress over the last 15 years, it is still the case that 3 in 10 teen girls gets pregnant at least once before her 20th birthday. And by the way, teens are not the only ones to worry about—7 in 10 pregnancies among single women in their 20s are unplanned!

(Continued on page 2)

The National Campaign Fund

The National Campaign is pleased to report that the first grants have been made through the newly-launched National Campaign Fund (www.TheNationalCampaign.org/fund). The National Campaign Fund provides a limited number of grants to support activities that advance the mission of The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.

The National Campaign Fund has three areas of emphasis:

- **Research:** Building the knowledge base for action in many areas—public policy, media, community programs, clinical services, and more;
- **Innovation:** Encouraging the development of new ideas and better ways to reduce both teen pregnancy and

unplanned pregnancy, especially among single young adults; and

- **Action:** Supporting policies and partnerships with powerful sectors (including states) that can advance our mission in clear and deliberate ways.

To date, the Fund has provided grants for qualitative and quantitative research on contraceptive knowledge, attitudes, and behavior, preventing unplanned pregnancy in community colleges, and for new state and local efforts to prevent teen pregnancy.

All proposals, both past and current, are available to read on The National Campaign Fund homepage. Check the website frequently for the most current requests for proposal. ★★

(Continued from page 1)

A more sensible view is that while media is clearly not the only cause of teen pregnancy, it does influence overall social standards and values. Popular culture and media suggest what is normal, acceptable and, of course, cool. Over the course of a year, teenagers spend more time with media than they do in school, so it makes sense that what they see online, in movies, and on television has an impact—but it's not the sole influence on teen sexual behavior.

In fact, the media can actually help. Seventy-six percent of all teens say they wish the media showed more about the consequences of sex. In many of their favorite shows, there is a lot of talking about sex, wanting to have sex, and actually having sex, but the consequences of sex, including the stress and impact of an unwanted pregnancy, are rarely shown. This is a major missed opportunity because three-quarters of all teens say that when a character in a show they like faces a pregnancy that has serious consequences, it makes them think more about their own behavior and its risks.

Beyond media and the obvious need for good sex education and health services, we suggest an additional strategy that is rarely raised: encouraging parents to be more parental. Parents are the closest thing we have to a magic bullet in our battle to prevent too-early pregnancy and parenthood. Moreover, teens themselves repeatedly say that it is their own parents—more than the media—who most influence their decisions about sex.

So what's a parent to do? As a first step, parents should help young people understand and interpret the media culture they are consuming, and parents must also face the fact that “turn that crap off” is not an effective parenting method. Media is a great way to start helpful conversations and parents should use it to their advantage. Here's an idea: this Tuesday sit down and watch ABC Family's *Secret Life of the American Teen* with your child. Discuss. Repeat the following Tuesday.

In addition: be clear about your own sexual values and attitudes. Encourage your children to delay sex and stress that if they are sexually active, they must use contraception carefully, every time. Talk openly and honestly with your sons as well as your daughters. Explain that babies need adult parents who are committed to each other and to years of devoted parenting. Emphasize that especially in this tough economy, education comes before babies.

And finally, never underestimate the great need that children at all ages feel for a close relationship with their parents and for their parents' guidance, approval, and support. It's never too late.

So, before blaming television, the movies, and the celebrity culture for teen pregnancy, we all need to make sure that we are having many conversations with our kids—an 18-year conversation in fact—about sex, love, values, relationships, pregnancy, childbearing and, yes, media influence.

Start at home. Tonight. ★★

Pregnant Pause

Have you become a regular reader and contributor to the National Campaign's new blog, *Pregnant Pause*? If not, what are you waiting for? We want to hear from you.

The blog features topical entries from The National Campaign staff and guest writers as well as contributions from people like you—practitioners, policymakers, and others concerned about teen and unplanned pregnancy and related issues.

Getting involved is easy—just click and contribute.

Visit us at blogTheNationalCampaign.org or simply visit us at TheNationalCampaign.org and click on the box labeled **Blog**. Let us know what you think, early and often. ★★



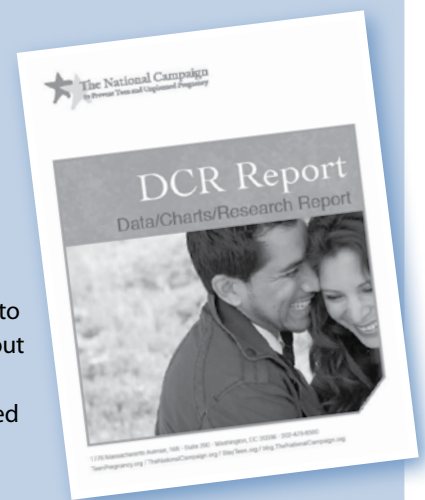
The DCR Report

The new *DCR Report* (Data, Charts, Research) provides in depth answers to some critical questions about unplanned pregnancy. At present, the report is divided into three sections,

- unplanned pregnancy among all women,
- unplanned pregnancy among unmarried 20-somethings, and
- resolution of unplanned pregnancy.

The *DCR Report* is only available on The National Campaign's website and is divided into easy-to-navigate sections. For ease of use, each page contains three elements: bulleted highlights, a figure, and a chart.

New sections will be added to the *DCR Report* from time to time and readers are encouraged to check back often on this ever-evolving set of data. ★



New Materials Also Available On Latino Teens, YRBS, and Fathers

The National Campaign has several new publications and fact sheets available on our website, including:

Science Says #35 examines in detail the relationship between Latino teens' sexual behavior and such measures as generational status, language, and country of origin. Some of the key findings from the new research include:

- More than one-third of Latino teens in this survey report having had sex before age 16 and two-thirds had sex before age 18.
- In general, third generation Latino teens are more likely to use contraception the first time they have sex and are more likely to use it consistently than first or second generation Latino teens.

Science Says #36 provides a detailed examination of the most recent Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System report. Key points include:

- In 2007, nearly half (48%) of all high school students reported ever having had sexual intercourse.
- The proportion of students who have ever had sex increases with grade level. One-third of 9th grade students report that they have ever had sex compared to 44% of 10th grade students, 56% of 11th grade students, and nearly two-thirds (65%) of 12th grade students. Put another way, by 12th grade two out of three students report having ever had sex.

Men in the United States: Unplanned Pregnancy, Sexual Activity, and Contraceptive Use examines unplanned pregnancy and sexual behavior among men by age, race/ethnicity, living arrangement, father's relationship status at the time of the birth of his first child, condom use, and other measures. Primary findings include:

- Most births fathered by teen and young adult men are unplanned (69% to those under age 18, 60% to those aged 18-19, and 52% to those aged 20-24). ★

State Efforts to Prevent Unplanned Pregnancy

Rates of unplanned pregnancy among single, young adults have remained essentially stable over the past decade. At the same time, a growing body of research shows that unplanned pregnancy among adults often results in a number of negative outcomes for children and families, including late entry into prenatal care, abuse and neglect, behavioral and cognitive deficits, economic hardship, and relationship and family turmoil.

In response to these two imperatives, a growing number of states are doing important work to prevent unplanned pregnancy through state and local family planning and human service programs, community health clinics, and other approaches to promoting pregnancy planning among women and men.

Recently The National Campaign was delighted to host a conference call on state efforts to reduce unplanned pregnancy. More than 150 people from 36 states, DC, and Puerto Rico participated in the call.

The call was led by:

- **Claire Brindis**, Dr. P.H., Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies, University of California, San Francisco
- **Laurie Weaver**, M.D., Chief, Office of Family Planning, California Department of Public Health
- **Deborah Harris**, Women's Health Coordinator, Division of Women's and Infants' Health, Virginia Department of Health
- **Larry Humbert**, Executive Director, Indiana Perinatal Network
- **Christie Vilsack**, Executive Director, Iowa Initiative, and Former First Lady of Iowa
- **Kimberlydawn Wisdom**, MD, MS, Surgeon General, Michigan and member of the National Campaign's Board of Directors

Visit www.thenationalcampaign.org/sla to learn more about the exciting and innovative state efforts underway. ★★

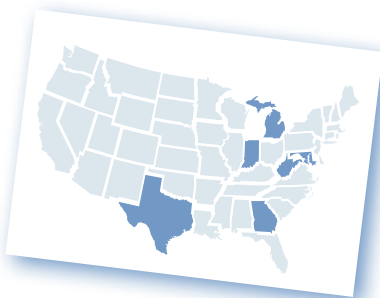
What We Learned On Our Tour...

In 2007, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy embarked on a Learning Tour—a series of meetings with national, state, and community leaders across the

country—to ask these experts how they saw the problem of unplanned pregnancy among single, young adults. The cities visited were: Atlanta, GA; Charleston, WV; Detroit, MI; Indianapolis, IN; Montgomery County, MD; and San Antonio, TX.

On the tour a diverse cross-section of leaders, professionals, providers, policy-makers, and advocates were generous with their time and offered many thoughtful insights about how best to address the challenge of unplanned pregnancy in the United States. The findings from this Learning Tour are helping to inform the work of The National Campaign. We also believe that these insights will be helpful to colleagues who are working on this critical social problem across the country.

The collected summary reports of the six cities visited during 2007 as well as an over-arching Learning Tour summary are now available online at www.thenationalcampaign.org/slal/learningtour_2007.aspx. ★★



Iowa Initiative to Reduce Unintended Pregnancies

In January 2008, former Iowa first lady Christie Vilsack launched the Iowa Initiative to Reduce Unintended Pregnancies. The Iowa Initiative seeks to reduce the high level of unintended pregnancies by educating young women about contraception and making it easier for them to obtain family planning counsel and services. By partnering with established family planning service providers around the state, the Iowa Initiative is creating awareness while exploring and putting in place the best ways to reach men and women based on the results of research conducted by the University of Northern Iowa. These findings will help create a framework designed to increase knowledge, improve attitudes toward consistent contraceptive use, and increase the use of family planning services.

Visit the www.iowainitiative.org for more information about this exciting effort. ★★

What's Your Relationship Reality?

Congratulations to Kevin Scott Page, 19, of Sardis, TN, and Kelly Burgess, 17, of Midlothian, IL, the grand prize winners in the Stay Teen "What's Your Relationship Reality?" Video Mash-Up Contest! The contest, co-sponsored by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and The Dibble Institute for Marriage Education challenged young people to create their own video mash-up focused on the concept of what a healthy relationship means to them. The mash-up feature and the winning videos are housed on StayTeen.org, The National Campaign's teen-focused web site.

The submissions were shot on webcams, cell phones, and video cameras by teens and then uploaded to StayTeen.org for consideration by National Campaign judges.

Kevin's video includes a montage of images focusing on different types of healthy relationships intermingled with words like respect, responsibility, rely, recognize—all words playing off of the word "relationship." Kelly's video shows her and her boyfriend encouraging each other while they both shave their heads in support of the St. Baldrick's Foundation, a charity dedicated to raising awareness and funds for children's cancer research.

We invite you to visit StayTeen.org to view these and all the other wonderful videos created for the "What's Your Relationship Reality?" video mash-up contest. All videos—both those created for the contest and those uploaded purely in the spirit of self-expression—are available in an online gallery: <http://stayteen.org/staytv/view-all.aspx>.

Funding for this project was provided in part by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant Number: 90-FE-0024. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. For more information on The Dibble Institute, please visit their webpage: <http://www.dibbleinstitute.org>. ★



Kelly's Postcard
(Just the Way I Am)



Kevin's Postcard
(What's Your Relationship Reality)



The Kelly/Kevin Combo Postcard

Postcards will be available on The National Campaign.org in the coming weeks.

Disparities

Teen pregnancy rates in the United States have declined substantially since the early 1990s among all racial and ethnic groups. Even so, there have been real disparities in that progress. Moreover, recent data suggest that the significant progress the nation has made in reducing teen sexual activity, improving contraceptive use among sexually active teens, and reducing the teen birth rate has stagnated and/or reversed—for minorities in particular.

All of which suggests that our nation cannot afford to become complacent in its efforts to reduce the high level of teen pregnancy. We must concentrate additional efforts to support various racial and ethnic communities that are disproportionately affected by early pregnancy and parenthood. By preventing teen pregnancy, we can make progress on other troubling social issues that also disproportionately affect many minority youth including academic failure and poverty.

Recently, the National Campaign hosted a briefing on Capitol Hill on racial and ethnic disparities in teen pregnancy. The briefing was held in conjunction with

- the CBC Health Braintrust,
- the CAPAC Health Task Force,
- the CHC Task Force on Health and Environment,
- the Congressional Hispanic Conference, and
- the Congressional Native American Caucus.

National Campaign Board Member Maria Echaveste moderated the panel discussion that included National Campaign Latino Initiative Advisory Group Member Alvarro Simmons, Chief Operating Officer at the Mary's Center. The panel also featured three National Campaign Youth Leadership Team members—Taylor McCleod, Bridget Rekow, and Staphany Suarez—who shared their unique perspectives on why they became involved in teen pregnancy prevention in their respective communities and possible solutions to the problem. ★★

- **53 PERCENT OF LATINA TEENS AND 51 PERCENT OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN TEEN GIRLS WILL BECOME PREGNANT AT LEAST ONCE BEFORE THEY TURN 20.** In comparison, only 19 percent of non-Hispanic white teen girls under the age of 20 become pregnant.
- **THE OVERALL TEEN BIRTH RATE INCREASED 3 PERCENT BETWEEN 2005 AND 2006, THE FIRST INCREASE IN 15 YEARS.** The overall rate includes increases among most minority groups. For example, between 2005 and 2006 the teen birth rate increased 5 percent for African-Americans, 4 percent for Native Americans and 2 percent for Latinas.
- The most recent national teen pregnancy data available are from 2004. **THE TEEN PREGNANCY RATE DECREASED FOR TEENS OVERALL AND FOR MOST RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS BETWEEN 2003 AND 2004. HOWEVER, THE TEEN PREGNANCY RATE INCREASED SLIGHTLY FOR LATINA TEENS.** For the first time, Latina teens now have the highest rates of both teen pregnancies and births.

Visit us online

TheNationalCampaign.org

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What Policymakers Can Do

There are many different solutions to the widespread problems of teen and unplanned pregnancy, at the individual and societal level, and public policy certainly plays a key role. The following public policy actions would help ensure that teens and young adults have the necessary tools to make wise choices regarding pregnancy and childbearing:

- **Include pregnancy prevention as an essential element in health care reform.** While chronic disease prevention has become a key element in the discussion of health care reform, more attention should also be paid to pregnancy prevention, which has both health and fiscal implications for consumers and tax payers alike.
- **Help change social norms by using various media.** Teens and young adults are voracious media consumers—for entertainment, information, and communicating with peers. Lawmakers have harnessed the power of the media for other important public health goals by funding various public service and communication campaigns.
- **Invest in preventing teen pregnancy among vulnerable populations.** Despite substantial progress in reducing teen pregnancy in all states and among all ethnic and racial groups, there are disparities in that progress. For example, 53 percent of Latina teens become pregnant at least once before age 20. Additionally, by age 19, nearly half of all teen girls in foster care have been pregnant at least once.
- **Support parents and other caring adults in communicating their values to the teens in their lives.** Teens consistently say that parents most influence their decisions about sex. However, the vast majority of parents (82%) agree that when it comes to talking about sex, they often don't know what to say, how to say it, or when to start the conversation.
- **Increase the focus on the responsibilities of men in preventing teen and unplanned pregnancy.** More than

half of pregnancies reported by unmarried men in their 20s are unplanned. More must be done to involve men in a meaningful way to prevent unplanned pregnancy—both primary prevention and prevention of subsequent pregnancies by men who already have a least one child.

- **Ensure greater access to affordable services and information that help prevent unplanned pregnancy, including subsequent pregnancies, for the uninsured and underinsured.** Medicaid, Title X, and SCHIP all play a vital role in providing family planning to lower-income families, but are not able to meet the need. In 2002, 16.8 million women were in need of publicly subsidized family planning services, yet public funding was able to serve only 6.7 million women. Also, investing in evidence-based programs that help reduce

INCREASE THE FOCUS ON THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEN IN PREVENTING TEEN AND UNPLANNED PREGNANCY.

subsequent unplanned pregnancies—which make up 72 percent of all unplanned pregnancies among unmarried 20-somethings—could improve maternal and child health and well-being.

- **Eliminate barriers to affordable family planning.** A key element of preventing unplanned pregnancy is ensuring that sexually active individuals have access to affordable family planning, whether through private insurance or safety-net clinics including college health centers. Provide states and communities with the flexibility and funding to put in place medically-accurate interventions to educate young people about responsible sexual behavior. Most American parents and teens agree that young people benefit from both a strong message of abstinence and information that will help them avoid pregnancy and STDs if and when they become sexually active. There is evidence that a growing number of programs that include abstinence messages and also give

complete and accurate information about contraception can delay sexual activity, improve contraceptive use, and/or prevent teen pregnancy. States and communities would benefit from funding for such programs, along with flexibility to select teen pregnancy approaches that they believe are best suited to local values and cultures. It is also important to invest in developing, refining, and assessing the effectiveness of a full range of programs to reduce teen pregnancy.

- **Emphasize the connection between prevention of teen and unplanned pregnancy and healthy relationships and marriage.** There has been a significant policy focus on and investment in promoting healthy relationships and marriage in order to advance child well-being. Unplanned pregnancy has a negative impact on relationship stability and child well-

being. Seven in ten pregnancies among unmarried women are unplanned. Programs addressing relationships and marriage should also educate women and men about the benefits of pregnancy planning both on their relationships and on outcomes for their children.

- **Strengthen data collection and knowledge on pregnancy and childbearing.** Although birth data is generally accessible, comparable data on sexual activity, contraceptive use, pregnancy, and abortion are more difficult to obtain, are collected episodically, and tend to become available years after they are collected. Additionally, only 38 states and New York City collect data about unplanned pregnancy in their state or community, making it challenging to determine progress and needs at the state level.

Download a copy of this policy brief at www.TheNationalCampaign.org/policymakers. ★★

National Day 2008 Success

Thanks to the work of individuals in communities, coalitions, and programs across the country, and more than 200 national organizations and media outlets who served as official National Day partners, hundred of thousands of teens participated in the seventh annual National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. The following details some of the key highlights from this year's event.

- **National Day Quiz Takers.** In 2008, **approximately 300,000 individuals took the National Day Quiz.** Participants were able to take the quiz online or download a print version from the National Campaign's web site. In addition to the National Day Quiz, thousands of teens used an *online application* that allowed them to add the National Day Quiz to their profiles on websites like MySpace and Facebook.
- **National Partnerships.** A total of **210 national organizations** partnered with The National Campaign to promote the National Day. Partners included a diverse group of media outlets, health sector leaders, education leaders, businesses, youth-serving groups, groups representing elected officials, fatherhood and male involvement groups, faith-based groups, and other prominent national organizations. Many of these groups promoted the National Day to their members, affiliates, customers, audiences, and contacts in ways the National Campaign could never have afforded or accomplished on its own. For a complete list of 2008 National Day Partners, visit our *National Day Partners* page.
- **State and Local Partnerships.** The National Campaign again developed and distributed a variety of teen-friendly materials—such as National Day wristbands, earphone cord charms, and pens—to help raise awareness of the National Day among teens and adult professionals who work with teens. This year, **60,000**



promotional materials were distributed nationwide. For a state-by-state breakdown of National Day activities, please visit our *Who Did What in 2008?* section.

- **Media Partnerships.** More than 60 website partners supported the National Day, including some of the top websites for teens (e.g. *CWtv.com*, *Seventeen.com*, *ThinkMTV.com*, *YourProm.com*, *Opendiary.com*, and *SexEtc.org*) and popular websites that reach teen boys such as *GameSpot.com* and *GameFAQs.com*. In addition to our online efforts, the National Campaign worked with broadcast media partners to promote the National Day, including FOX, ABC, NBC, and The N.

Thank you for all that you have done to make the seventh annual National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy an event to remember. Without the dedication and creativity of organizations and individuals such as yourself, we could never have accomplished such an amazing event. We look forward to working with you throughout the year and on the 2009 National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, May 6, 2009. ★★

More than 1,000 teens who took the National Day Quiz took part in a post-quiz evaluation survey.

Among the findings:

73%

said the Quiz

MADE THEM THINK

about what they might do in such situations.

55%

said they'd

TALK TO THEIR FRIENDS

about the situations described in the Quiz.

54%

said the Quiz made the

RISKS OF SEX AND TEEN

PREGNANCY

SEEM MORE REAL

to them.

51%

said the Quiz

MADE THEM THINK

about things they hadn't thought about before.

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The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization supported largely by private donations. To contribute to our efforts, visit TheNationalCampaign.org.

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