



# **Fostering Hope: Preventing Teen Pregnancy Among Youth in Foster Care**

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# This Presentation Covers 4 Areas:

- ✦ Overview of the National Campaign
- ✦ Overview of Data
- ✦ Overview of Qualitative Research
- ✦ Now What?



# **Overview of the National Campaign**

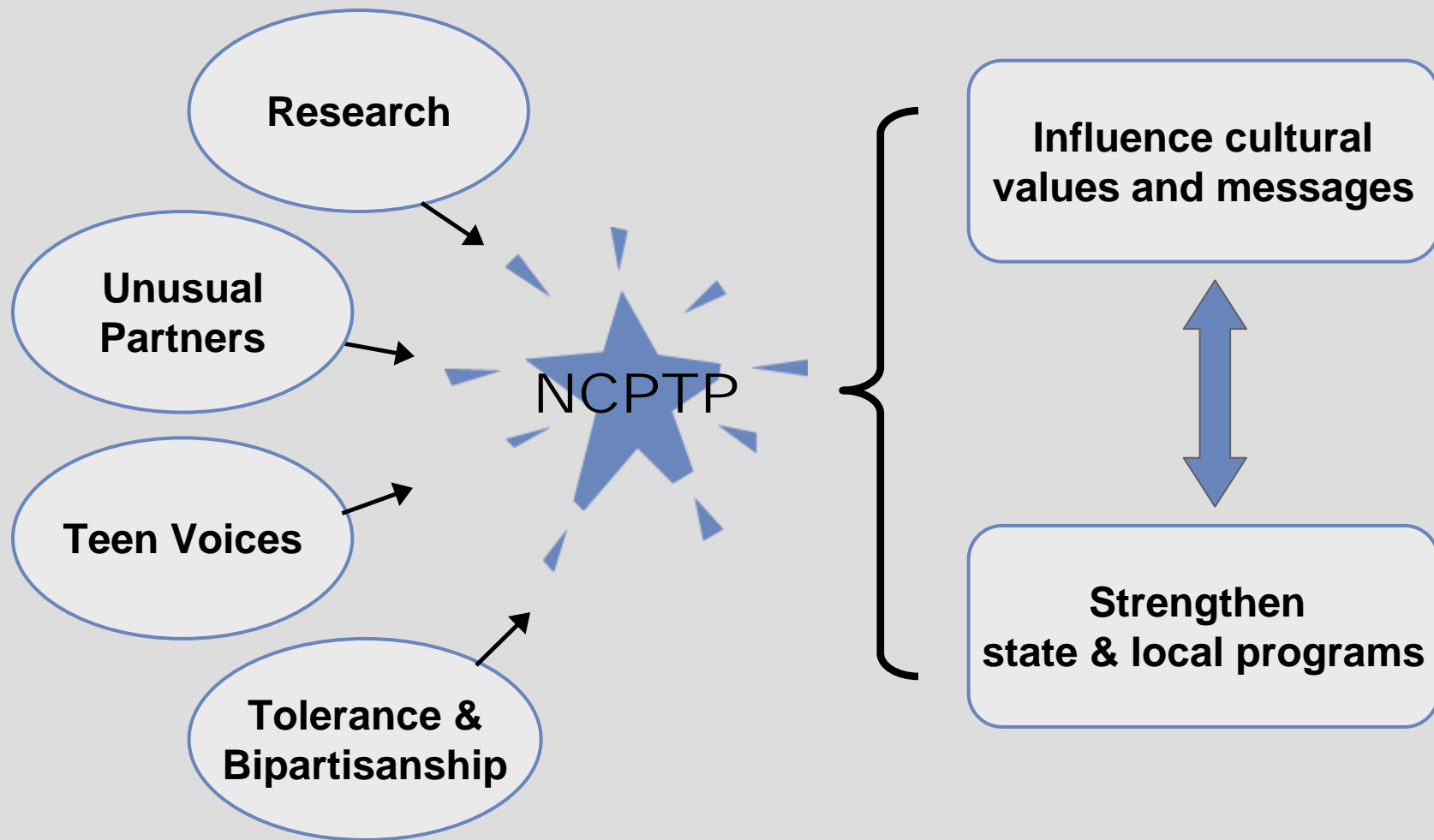
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# The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

- ✦ The Campaign's mission is to improve the well-being of children, youth, and families by preventing teen pregnancy.
- ✦ Our goal is to reduce the rate of teen pregnancy in the United States by one-third between 2006 and 2015.

✦ **2 in 10 by 2015!** ✦

# Our Strategy





# Overview of Data

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# Teen Pregnancy Data for Foster Youth

- ✦ The Midwest Evaluation from Chapin Hall Center for Children found that:
- Nearly one-third (32.9%) of girls in foster care became pregnant at least once by age 17; compared to 13.5% of teens in the general population (Add Health).
  - Nearly one-half (48.2%) of girls in foster care became pregnant at least once by age 19; compared to 20% of teens in the general population (Add Health).

# Teen Pregnancy Data for Foster Youth (cont)

- ★ Compared to 19 year olds still in foster care, girls who aged out at 19 were:
  - More likely to have become pregnant at least once;
  - Less likely to receive family planning services; and
  - Less likely to use contraception.

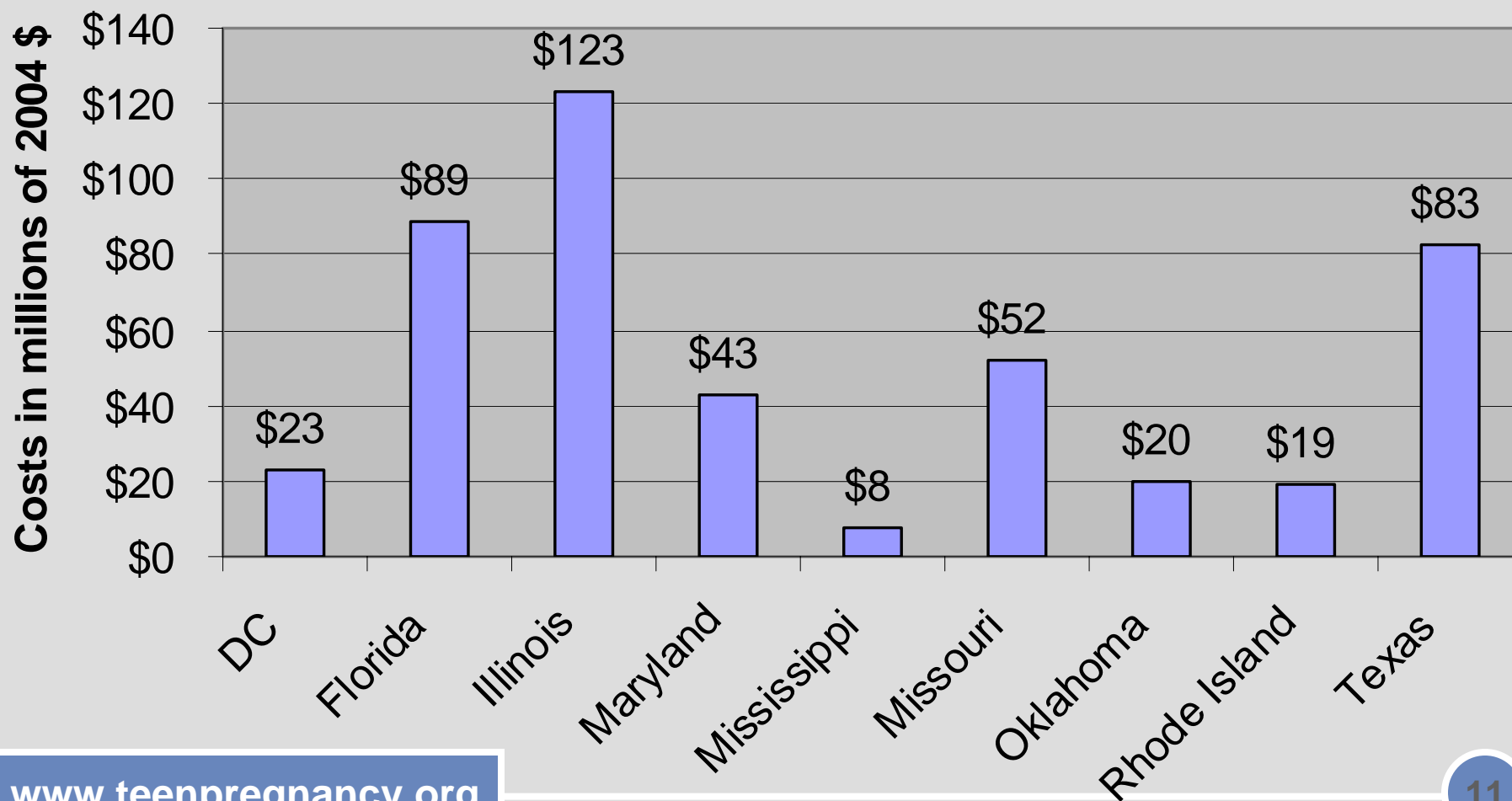
# Teen Childbearing Has Direct Costs and Consequences for Child Welfare

- ★ Teen childbearing cost the child welfare system \$2.3 billion nationally in 2004.
- ★ Most of the costs were associated with children born to young teen mothers (age 17 and younger).
- ★ Compared to mothers 20-21, young teen mothers (age 17 and younger) were:
  - 2.2 times more likely to have a child placed in foster care during the first 5 years after a birth.
  - Twice as likely to have a reported case of child abuse or neglect.

## Consequences (cont)

- ✦ Delaying age of birth from 17 or earlier to age 20-21 would reduce:
  - the overall foster care placement rate by 8% percent (or 45,000 children annually);
  - the incidence of abuse and neglect by almost 11% (or almost 600,000 incidents annually);
  - child welfare costs by \$1.8 billion annually (federal, state and local).

# Child Welfare Costs of a First Birth to a Teen Mother Compared to a First Birth at Age 20-21





# **Overview of Qualitative Research**

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# Overview of Research

- ✦ Conducted focus groups with Chicago-area foster care youth and foster parents.
- ✦ Conducted an online survey with Chicago-area child welfare service providers.
- ✦ Conducted roundtable meetings in Washington, DC and Chicago with child welfare and teen pregnancy prevention professionals.

# Focus Groups with Foster Youth and Foster Parents

- ✦ The National Campaign and UCAN conducted focus groups with nearly 150 foster care youth and foster parents in Chicago. Two main findings include:
  - Youth in foster care lack some important relationships.
  - In spite of hardships, foster youth see many benefits to having a baby.

# Youth in foster care lack some important relationships

- ✦ Many foster youth report poor relationships with their foster parents.
- ✦ Both foster parents and youth stress the importance of overall family involvement, combined with good communication overall.
- ✦ Foster care youth want to have conversations about sex with their foster parents.

# Youth see benefits to having a baby

- ✦ Provides stability and a sustainable relationship.
- ✦ Creates a family and a source of unconditional love.
- ✦ Motivates them to become more responsible.
- ✦ Brings them closer to their birth family.

# Pressure, Information, Perceptions

- ✦ Some youth are already sexually active (or teen parents) before they received any information about pregnancy prevention.
- ✦ Youth want to hear from people with personal experience.
- ✦ Youth respect abstinence as a concept, but many indicate that it is not the right decision for them.

# Main Objectives of Provider Survey

- ★ UCAN surveyed nearly 400 child welfare providers from 12 agencies in Chicago.
- ★ What strategies do service providers perceive to be effective in reducing teen pregnancy among foster youth?
  - ★ What strategies have providers used that they believe to be effective?
  - ★ What strategies are perceived to be ineffective?
  - ★ What are the barriers to implementing effective strategies?
  - ★ What are the training needs of service providers?

# Key Observations

- ✦ The majority (59%) of respondents report their programs are inadequately prepared to address pregnancy prevention.
- ✦ While only 33% feel adequately trained to work with teens on issues of pregnancy prevention, staff recognize pregnancy prevention as an important need and address the issue with teens:



**Now What?**

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# State and Community Activities

- ✦ UCAN will pilot an intervention that reaches foster teens, foster parents, and caseworkers.
- ✦ The South Carolina Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy will conduct a roundtable to bring together child welfare and teen pregnancy professionals. They also started training foster parents; and are providing assistance to two group homes that are implementing a teen pregnancy prevention curriculum.

## State and Community Activities (cont)

- ✦ Sasha Bruce Youthwork in Washington, DC conducts annual and specialized trainings for all staff on teen reproductive health.
- ✦ The Georgia Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting piloted a training curriculum for case managers focusing on teen pregnancy prevention and effective strategies on working with youth.
- ✦ Organizations in Alabama, Colorado, Idaho, and have conducted trainings for foster parents.

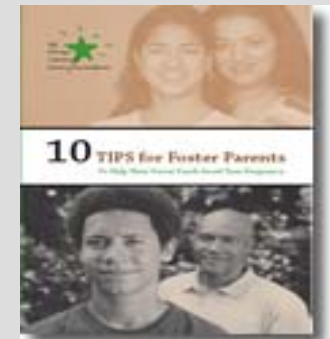
## State and Community Activities (cont)

- ✦ Utah Department of Human Services includes pregnancy prevention in their life skills curriculum for youth in the independent living program.
- ✦ Training 3, Family Planning Council is working with the Virginia Department of Health, the Virginia Department of Social Services, and Richmond Department of Health to develop an effective model for reducing teen pregnancy among foster youth, 16 and older, in Richmond, VA.

# National Campaign Products on Foster Care and Teen Pregnancy Prevention

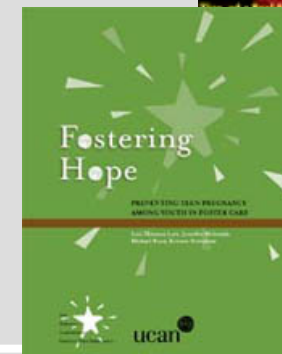
## ★ Research and Reports

- Fostering Hope: Preventing Teen Pregnancy Among Youth in Foster Care
- Science Says: Foster Care
- Why It Matters: Teen Pregnancy and Child Welfare



## ★ Brochures

- Ten Tips for Foster Parents to Help Their Foster Youth Avoid Teen Pregnancy
- Our Story, Our Words: Youth Speak Out Sex, Love, and Teen Pregnancy



# What You Can Do

- ✦ Promote collaboration between child welfare and teen pregnancy prevention fields.
- ✦ Collect teen pregnancy data for youth in foster care and child welfare system in your state.
- ✦ Provide effective teen pregnancy programs to foster care youth and evaluate them.
- ✦ Train and support foster parents.
- ✦ Train and support caseworkers.

# Thank You!

Visit our website at  
[www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org)  
and our foster care page at  
[www.teenpregnancy.org/fostercare](http://www.teenpregnancy.org/fostercare).