



The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy

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Latino Teens Say Parents Most Influence Their Decisions About Sex *New National Survey of Latino Teens and Parents Released*

(Washington, DC) — Latino teens cite their parents more than any other source when asked who *most* influences their decisions about sex. These and other findings are in a new survey commissioned by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and the National Council of La Raza (NCLR).

The overall teen birth rate in the United States is on the increase after 14 straight years of decline and, at present, Latino teens have the highest rate of teen pregnancy and births among all racial/ethnic groups. The National Campaign estimates that fully 53% of Latinas become pregnant as teens.

Other findings from the survey of Latino teens and adults include:

- 49% of Latino teens say parents most influence their decisions about sex compared to, for example, 14% who cited friends, 6% other family members, 3% religious leaders, 2% teachers, and 2% the media.
- Although three-quarters of Latino teens say their parents have talked to them about sex and relationships, only half (49%) say their parents have talked to them about contraception.
- 74% of Latino teens believe that parents send one message about sex to their sons and a different message altogether to their daughters.
- Latino teens in this survey report that the most common reason why teens do not use contraception is because they are afraid their parents might find out.
- 72% of sexually experienced teens say they wish they had waited longer.
- 34% of Latino teens believe that being a teen parent would *prevent* them from reaching their goals; 47% say being a teen parent would simply *delay* them from reaching their goals.
- 76% of Latino teens say it is important for a couple to be married before starting a family or having a child.

“While Latino teen pregnancy has gained national attention in recent years, little work has been done to understand subgroup differences and similarities within the Latino community,” said Ruthie Flores, Senior Manager, of The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy’s Latino Initiative. “We hope this survey shines much-needed light on the beliefs and attitudes of Latino teens and parents and helps inform teen pregnancy prevention efforts and messages nationwide.”

“Scant attention has been paid to what motivates the behavior of Latino teens with regard to relationships,” said Maria Rosa, DrPH, PhD, National Council of La Raza, Vice President,

Institute for Hispanic Health. “The poll’s findings are a catalyst for an important and much needed conversation about how to reverse the rising rates of teen pregnancy in the Latino community.”

Findings from the survey were released at a Latino Leaders Network Issue Hour on teen pregnancy in the Latino community that took place on Capitol Hill on **Tuesday, May 19, 2009**. The survey examines the beliefs and attitudes within the Latino community about teen pregnancy and related issues. The event was hosted by the Latino Leaders Network in partnership with The National Campaign. At the event, a prominent panel of Latino experts discussed the survey’s findings and efforts to prevent teen pregnancy in the Latino community.

The discussion was moderated by Mickey Ibarra, founder of the Latino Leaders Network and included the following speakers:

- The Honorable Ben Luján, U.S. Congressman, New Mexico's 3rd District
- The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard, U.S. Congresswoman, California’s 34th District
- The Honorable Nydia M. Velázquez, U.S. Congresswoman, New York’s 12th District
- The Honorable Ana Sol Gutierrez, State Delegate, Maryland’s 18th District
- Ruthie Flores, Senior Manager, Latino Initiative, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy
- Maria Rosa, DrPH, PhD, National Council of La Raza (NCLR), Institute for Hispanic Health
- Alma Morales Riojas, President/CEO, MANA, A National Latina Organization

About the Survey: The survey was conducted by International Communications Research (ICR), an independent research company with extensive polling experience. Telephone surveys of 759 Latino teens and 915 Latino adults with children in the household under age 18 took place in July and August of 2008.

For more information about The National Campaign, the National Council of La Raza, and the Latino Leaders Network, please visit the following websites: TheNationalCampaign.org, NCLR.org, and LatinoLeadersNetwork.org.

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