



Press Release

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**Is Media Glamorizing Teen Pregnancy?
New Research of Teens Suggests the Answer is No**

(Washington, DC) — Teen pregnancy has garnered significant attention in the entertainment media over the past two years—from MTV’s popular shows *16 and Pregnant* and *Teen Mom* to recent cover stories in major magazines. Some have criticized these efforts for glamorizing teen pregnancy. New research with teens suggests that teens do not share that view.

According to a new public opinion poll of young people (ages 12-19) commissioned by [The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy](http://www.thenc.org), most teens (79% of girls and 67% of boys) agree that when a TV show or character they like deals with teen pregnancy, it makes them think more about their own risk of getting pregnant or causing a pregnancy and how to avoid it.

Other findings from the nationally-representative telephone poll of 1,008 young people conducted by Social Science Research Solutions (www.ssrs.com) include:

- Among those young people who have watched MTV’s *16 and Pregnant*, 82% think the show helps teens better understand the challenges of teen pregnancy and parenthood and how to avoid it.
- 76% of young people say that what they see in the media about sex, love, and relationships can be a good way to start conversations with adults.
- About half (48%) say they have discussed these topics with their parents because of something they have seen in the media.

The National Campaign also commissioned a separate evaluation study designed to learn more about how watching and discussing episodes of the documentary-style reality show *16 and Pregnant* influences teens’ perceptions of getting pregnant and becoming a parent at a young age. In partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, 18 clubs in one southern state participated in the study. A total of 162 young people ages 10-19 participated and completed both the pre- and post-test questionnaires. Teens in the treatment groups viewed three episodes of *16 and Pregnant* and participated in group

discussions about the show. Young people in the control group did not view or discuss the programs afterwards but both groups completed pre- and post-test questionnaires. The study was conducted by the research firm innovation, Research, and Training, Inc. (iRT). Study findings include:

- *16 and Pregnant* got young people talking and thinking about teen pregnancy—40% of those in the treatment group said they talked about the show with a parent, 63% discussed with a friend, and 37% discussed with a sibling.
- 93% of those who watched the episode agreed (53% strongly agreed) with the statement: “I learned that teen parenthood is harder than I imagined from these episodes.”
- 83% said they learned new things from the discussion of the episodes.

The National Campaign has been collaborating with MTV on *16 and Pregnant* by producing discussion guides for all *16 and Pregnant* episodes and distributing thousands of *16 and Pregnant* DVDs and discussion guides to educators and youth-serving programs nationwide. MTV today announced it will air nine new, one-hour episodes of the breakout docu-series *16 and Pregnant* beginning on Tuesday, October 26 at 10pm ET/PT. With statistics showing that three in ten girls in the U.S. will get pregnant before the age of 20, each episode will take an intimate look inside the challenges of being a pregnant teenager. For more information on the show, please visit: http://www.mtv.com/shows/16_and_pregnant/season_2/series.jhtml.

About The National Campaign: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy seeks to improve the lives and future prospects of children and families. 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.

Please visit www.TheNationalCampaign.org for more information.