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# MTV's '16 And Pregnant' Credited For Decline In Teen Pregnancy Rates

## Eighty-two percent of teens say the hit series helps them understand the trials of parenthood, according to a new report.

By James Dinh

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**Chelsea on "16 and Pregnant"**  
Photo: MTV

From the chaotic family dynamics to the aftermath of childbirth, MTV's hit show "16 and Pregnant" has illustrated that teen parenthood is not always an easy journey. These candid glimpses inside the trials of young parents apparently are making a mark on youth across America, as the series is being credited with helping to spur a decrease in teen pregnancy.

According to a new government study, [U.S. teen birthrates plunged](#) dramatically in 2009 after a five percent increase from 2005 to 2007. And a report by National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy recognizes "16 and Pregnant," specifying that 82 percent of teenagers credit the hit show in helping them understand the challenges that come with unexpected parenthood.

Bill Albert, a spokesman for the National Campaign, believes that "16 and Pregnant" helps broaden insight into teen pregnancy. "Entertainment media is one of the nation's favorite punching bags, but we have to acknowledge that when we're talking about teen pregnancies media can be and often is a force for good, and that is particularly true when it comes to shows like '16 and Pregnant,'" he said.

While "16 and Pregnant" has received some media criticism for its apparent glamorization of its subject, Albert stands by the findings of the survey. "Some critics say these shows glamorize teen pregnancy, but our survey data shows that's not the case," he pointed out. "That not only do they not glamorize it, but teens who have seen it suggest it makes the realities of teen parenthood more real to them."

Teen pregnancy leveled off in 2008, but rates declined by six percent the following year — a record low, according to a study from Centers for Disease Prevention and Control released Tuesday. The decrease cut across all ethnicities and races, with Hispanic teen pregnancy percentages dropping by 10 percent.

Not only does Albert think "16 and Pregnant" is a useful showcase for teens, but the spokesperson also believes the program can aid parents in educating their children about the reality of unexpected pregnancy.

"What you see on TV, as a parent, isn't always exactly what you'd want your teen to know or say or see, but it does deflect the conversation from, 'What are you doing?' to more of an abstract, and that can be a good way to start conversations," he explained. "The fact is, this is not your parents' sex talk, not a one-time white-knuckle conversation, but this should be an 18-year conversation that you're having with your kids."

*Do you think "16 and Pregnant" has helped with the decline in teen pregnancy? Sound off below!*

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