

Toward a Common Future

Latino Teens and Adults Speak Out About Teen Pregnancy

Commissioned and released by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy in partnership with the National Council of La Raza, *Toward a Common Future* presents findings from a new public opinion survey of Latino parents and teens on teen pregnancy, childbearing, and related topics. This document provides key results from the survey. The most striking overall finding is the great uniformity of Latino teens' and parents' beliefs—regardless of their country of origin or level of acculturation—about teen pregnancy, the influence of parents, and the goals and aspirations of Latino youth.

Please visit www.TheNationalCampaign.org for the full results of the survey, for additional information about teen and unplanned pregnancy, and for materials for the Latino community.

Goals and Aspirations

- More than eight in ten Latino teens (84%) and nine in ten Latino parents (91%) surveyed believe that graduating from a college or university or having a promising career is the most important goal for a teen's future. Only 3% of Latino teens and 2% of Latino parents said starting a family was the most important goal for the future.
- About one-third (34%) of Latino teens believe that being a teen parent would prevent them from accomplishing their goals. However, nearly half (47%) believe that having a child as a teen would simply delay them from reaching their goals. Some 17% believe that being a teen parent would either not effect or help them reach their goals.
- More than three-quarters of Latino teens (77%) agree that planning for their future is important and within their control.

Parents and Other Influences

- Almost half of Latino teens (49%) say parents most influence their decisions about sex—more than friends (14%), other family members (6%), religious leaders (3%), the media (2%), and other sources.
- The overwhelming majority of Latino teens report that they have had a conversation with their parents about sex (79%) and relationships (73%). However, only about half (49%) of Latino teens say that their parents have talked to them about contraception.
- Latino parents and teens agree that parents could use help addressing these topics more effectively. Fully 77% of Latino parents and 64% of Latino teens agree that when it comes to talking about sex, parents often don't know what to say, how to say it, or when to start.
- Three-quarters of Latino teens (74%) believe that parents send one message about sex to their sons and a different message altogether to their daughters.

Sex, Contraception, and Relationships

- More than seven in ten (72%) sexually experienced Latino teens say they wish they had waited longer to have sex.
- The majority (76%) of Latino teens in this survey said that they think it is important for a person to be married before starting a family.
- Latino teens (21%) report that the most common reason why teens do not use contraception is because they are afraid their parents might find out. The second most common reason cited by Latino teens (15%) is lack of knowledge or education about contraception.