



THE
NATIONAL
CAMPAIGN TO
PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY

Voices Heard:

Latino Adults and Teens Speak Up About Teen Pregnancy

A National Survey of Latinos
March 2007

By
Erika Johanna Vexler

www.teenpregnancy.org

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman
Thomas H. Kean
Chairman, The Robert Wood
Johnson Foundation
Former Governor of New Jersey

President
Isabel V. Sawhill, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow
The Brookings Institution

Director and Treasurer
Sarah S. Brown

**Robert Wm. Blum, M.D.,
M.P.H, Ph.D.**
William H. Gates Sr,
Professor and Chair
Department of Population
and Family Health Sciences
Johns Hopkins University

Susanne Daniels
President
Lifetime Entertainment
Services

Daisy Expósito-Ulla
Chairman and CEO
d expósito & partners

William Galston, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow
Governance Studies
The Brookings Institution

David R. Gergen
Editor-at-Large
U.S. News & World Report

Alexine Clement Jackson
Community Volunteer

**Sheila C. Johnson, Hon.
Ph.D.**
CEO, Salamander Farm

Judith E. Jones
Clinical Professor
Mailman School
of Public Health
Columbia University

Brent C. Miller, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research
Utah State University

Jody Greenstone Miller
Venture Partner
MAVERON, LLC

**Reverend Father Michael D.
Place, STD**
Vice President
Ministry Development
Resurrection Health Care

Bruce Rosenblum
President
Warner Bros. Television
Group

Stephen W. Sanger
Chairman and
Chief Executive Officer
General Mills, Inc.

Kurt L. Schmoke
Dean
Howard University
School of Law
Former Mayor of Baltimore

Roland C. Warren
President
National Fatherhood
Initiative

Vincent Weber
Partner
Clark & Weinstock
Former U.S. Congressman

Stephen A. Weiswasser
Partner
Covington & Burling

Gail R. Wilensky, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow
Project HOPE

**Kimberlydawn Wisdom,
M.D.**
Surgeon General
State of Michigan

Judy Woodruff
Journalist
Senior Correspondent
The News Hour
with Jim Lehrer

Trustees Emeriti

Charlotte Beers
Former Under Secretary
for Public Diplomacy
and Public Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Former Chairman and CEO
Ogilvy & Mather

Carol M. Cassell, Ph.D.
Senior Scientist
Allied Health Center
School of Medicine
Prevention Research Center
University of New Mexico

Linda Chavez
President
The Center for Equal
Opportunity

Annette P. Cumming
Executive Director and
Vice President
The Cumming Foundation

Frankie Sue Del Papa
Former Attorney General
State of Nevada

Whoopi Goldberg
Actress

Stephen Goldsmith
Daniel Paul Professor
of Government
John F. Kennedy School
of Government
Former Mayor of
Indianapolis

Katharine Graham
(1917-2001)
Washington Post Company

David A. Hamburg, M.D.
President Emeritus
Carnegie Corporation of
New York
Visiting Scholar,
Weill Medical College
Cornell University

Irving B. Harris
(1910 - 2004)
Chairman
The Harris Foundation

Barbara Huberman
Director of Training
Advocates for Youth

Leslie Kantor
Kantor Consulting

Nancy Kassebaum Baker
Former U.S. Senator

Douglas Kirby, Ph.D.
Senior Research Scientist
ETR Associates

C. Everett Koop, M.D.
Former U.S.
Surgeon General

John D. Macomber
Principal
JDM Investment Group

Sister Mary Rose McGeady
Former President and CEO
Covenant House

Judy McGrath
President
MTV

Kristin Moore, Ph.D.
Area Director
Emerging Issues
Child Trends, Inc.

John Pepper
CEO
National Underground
Railroad Freedom
Center

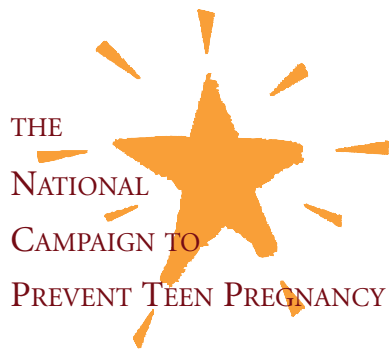
Hugh Price
Senior Fellow
Economic Studies
The Brookings Institution

Warren B. Rudman
Senior Counsel
Paul, Weiss, Rifkind,
Wharton & Garrison
Former U.S. Senator

Victoria P. Sant
President
The Summit Foundation

Isabel Stewart
Former Executive Director
Girls Inc.

Andrew Young
Chairman
GoodWorks International
Former Ambassador
to the U.N.



Voices Heard:

Latino Adults and Teens Speak Up About Teen Pregnancy

A National Survey of Latinos
March 2007

By
Erika Johanna Vexler

www.teenpregnancy.org

Acknowledgments

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy wishes to thank our Latino Initiative sponsors, in particular our lead sponsor, the Turner Foundation. Without their generous support, the National Campaign's efforts to help address teen pregnancy in the Latino community, including this publication, would not be possible. We also gratefully acknowledge our many additional funders and individual contributors, including the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Summit Foundation for generously supporting the full range of National Campaign activities.

About the author: Erika Vexler is the Latino Initiative Senior Manager at the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

Design: ampersand graphic design, Boulder, CO, www.ampersand-design.com

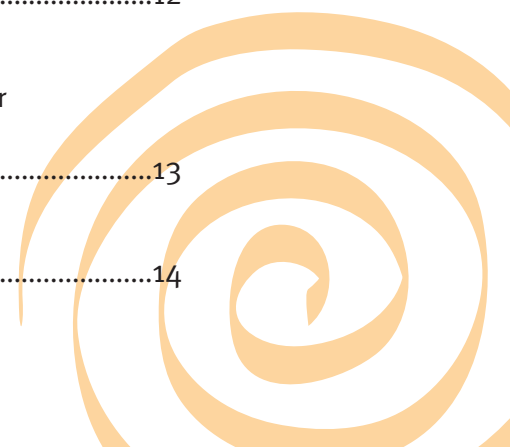
©Copyright 2007 by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. All rights reserved.

ISBN # 1-58671-067-2

Suggested Citation: Vexler, E. (2007). *Voices Heard: Latino Adults and Teens Speak Up About Teen Pregnancy*. Washington, DC: the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Highlights	3
Methodology	4
Parents	5
Question #1: When it comes to teens'/your decisions about sex, who is most influential?	5
Question #2: Do you share your children's/parents' values about sex?.....	7
Question #3: Have you had a helpful conversation with your children/ parents about delaying sex and avoiding teen pregnancy?	8
Question #4: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: When it comes to talking about sex, parents often don't know what to say, how to say it, or when to start.	9
Question #5: When it comes to talking about sex, do you think that parents send one message to their sons and a different message to their daughters?	10
Abstinence and Contraception	11
Question #6: How important do you think it is for teens to be given a strong message that they should not have sex until they are at least out of high school?	11
Question #7: Do you wish teens/you were getting more information about abstinence, more information about birth control or protection, or more information about both?	12
Question #8: Suppose a parent or other adult tells you/a teen the following: "Don't have sex, but if you do you should use birth control or protection." Do you think this is a message that encourages you/teens to have sex?	13
Question #9: What do you think is the main reason teens do not use birth control or protection when they have sex?	14



Question #10: Who usually decides whether or not birth control or protection is used? Is it girls, boys, or both equally?16

Regret, Virginity, and Older Partners17

Question #11: If you have had sexual intercourse, do you wish you had waited longer?17

Question #12: Do you think it is embarrassing for teens to admit that they are virgins?18

Question #13: Do you think it is okay for teens to be in a relationship with someone three or more years older?19

Gender Differences20

Question #14: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Teen boys often receive the message that they are expected to have sex.20

Question #15: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Teen girls often receive the message that attracting boys and looking sexy is one of the most important things they can do.21

Religion.....22

Question #16: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Religious leaders and groups should be doing more to help prevent teen pregnancy.....22

Social Norms and Beliefs23

Question #17: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Teen pregnancy and parenthood in my community is no big deal.23

Question #18: How do you think being a teen parent would affect you/teens?.....24

Question #19: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I have never really thought about what my life would be like if I got pregnant/got someone pregnant as a teen.25

Media26

Question #20: Do you wish the media showed more or talked more about the consequences of sex, including teen pregnancy?26

Question #21: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: When a TV show or character I like deals with teen pregnancy, it makes me think more about the consequences of sex.27

Introduction

Despite significant declines in recent years, the United States still has the highest rate of teen pregnancy among comparable nations. And while the rates of teen pregnancy remain high among all major ethnic groups, the problem of children having children is particularly acute among Latinas. The teen pregnancy rate for Latinas is almost two times higher than the national average. Currently, 51% of Latina teens in this country get pregnant before age 20. In other words, the problem of teen pregnancy is far from solved.

Given the still high rates of Latino teen pregnancy—and the comparatively slower decline in teen pregnancy in the Latino community when compared to other racial/ethnic groups—no attempt to reduce teen pregnancy is complete without a special, targeted focus on the Latino community. To better understand the attitudes and beliefs of Latino adults and teens, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy commissioned our first survey of Latinos—the findings are presented here in *Voices Heard: Latino Adults and Teens Speak Up About Teen Pregnancy*. This publication serves as a companion piece to *With One Voice 2007: America's Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy*, a survey of the American public in general. It is our hope that the findings from *Voices Heard* will help enhance the nation's understanding of the teen pregnancy problem in the Latino community and what to do about it.

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy has been conducting and releasing survey data since the organization's inception in 1996. These surveys provide valuable insights for parents, program leaders, funders, policymakers, the media, and others working with teens, about teen pregnancy and factors that influence teens' decisions about sex. The National Campaign has undertaken these nationally representative surveys for two primary reasons. First, we think it is important to regularly assess the content and direction of American opinion on teen pregnancy and share these findings widely. Second, we see these surveys of public *opinion* as a critical supplement to the *behavioral* data collected regularly by the federal government through such projects as the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) and the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBS).

It is our hope that those concerned with preventing teen pregnancy in the Latino community can use these data in various ways to advance their important work. For example, several communities have conducted their own local polling and compared their results with our national results, and many in the field have told us that survey data such as these are particularly useful when interacting with elected officials, business people, or others who are not already focused on teen pregnancy and who do not think that the issue is relevant to them.

Readers should note the following about this publication:

- ▶ The questions in this poll were developed by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.
 - ▶ The exact wording of the survey questions and respondents' answers are provided throughout.
 - ▶ Survey results are reported for teens aged 12-19 and adults aged 20 and over unless otherwise noted.
 - ▶ Comparison data for the general population are provided where differences and similarities appeared compelling. In some cases we also provide racial/ethnic breakdowns.
 - ▶ Some of the responses to various questions do not quite total 100 percent. This is due to our decision not to report—for the sake of clarity and simplicity—the percentages of respondents who refused to answer altogether.
- ▶ Some of the data presented here were previously released by the National Campaign in the March 2007 publication, *With One Voice: America's Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy*. Readers should note that the discussion sections of this publication sometimes compare findings from Latino adults and teens to these same groups in the general population. For reasons of space and clarity, these comparisons are not shown in the figures but only noted in the discussion sections. Detailed general population findings from adults and teens can be found in *With One Voice 2007* and are mentioned here for comparison purposes. To view this report, as well as all of the Campaign's previous polling, please visit: www.teenpregnancy.org/resources/data/polling.asp.

The following pages provide complete results of the survey, the exact wording of questions used, and additional analysis and commentary.

Highlights

1. There are many more similarities than differences between Latino teen boys and girls and the general teen population than some may believe.
2. Latina girls are in particular need of attention when it comes to issues related to teen pregnancy:
 - Almost three-quarters of Latina teens who have had sex regret doing it too soon.
 - Over half of Latina teens think it is okay to date someone three or more years older.
 - Latinas are less likely than other teen girls to talk to their parents about sex or share their parents' values about sex.
 - Compared to other teens, Latinas are more likely to say they are in need of information about both contraception and abstinence and are less likely to say that messages encouraging them to delay sex or to use contraception if they are sexually active encourages them to have sex.
 - Over half of Latinas say that they receive the message that attracting boys and looking sexy is one of the most important things they can do.
 - Over half of Latinas have never thought about what it would be like if they got pregnant as a teen and only 38% believe being a teen parent will prevent them from reaching their goals.
3. Latino boys also need guidance about sex and related issues:
 - Two-thirds of all Latino teens agree that teen boys often receive the message that they are expected to have sex.
 - Four in 10 Latino boys agree that teen pregnancy in their community is “no big deal.”
 - Latino boys are less likely than boys generally (50% vs. 57%) to have thought about the risk of getting someone pregnant.
 - Latino boys are also far more likely than their White peers to say they want more information about both abstinence and contraception.
4. Latino parents say they need help:
 - Although 80% of Latino parents say they have had a helpful conversation with their teen about delaying sex and avoiding pregnancy, only 69% of Latino boys and 63% of Latina girls agree.
 - Three-quarters of Latino adults and teens agree that Latino parents don't know what to say when it comes to talking about sex.
 - Three-quarters of the Latino adults and teens believe that parents are sending inconsistent messages to their sons and daughters.
5. The media plays an important role in the lives of Latino teens:
 - Compared to the general population, Latino teens and adults appear particularly interested in hearing more in the media about the consequences of sex.
6. Latino teens say that faith and religious beliefs play a role in teen pregnancy, but perhaps not the role many believe:
 - Few Latino teens suggest that religious beliefs are the reason why sexually active teens do not use contraception.
 - The overwhelming majority of Latino teens wish faith leaders and religious communities were doing more to help prevent teen pregnancy.

Methodology

Data presented in *Voices Heard* are drawn from two national surveys—one with teens and one with adults (some of whom are parents of teens, some whom are not). Both surveys were conducted by International Communications Research (ICR), an independent research company (visit www.icrsurvey.com for more information). Based in Media, Pennsylvania, ICR has conducted market research since 1983 and has designed thousands of custom marketing and opinion polling studies for a diverse group of clients, from non-profit and financial services firms to entertainment and media outlets.

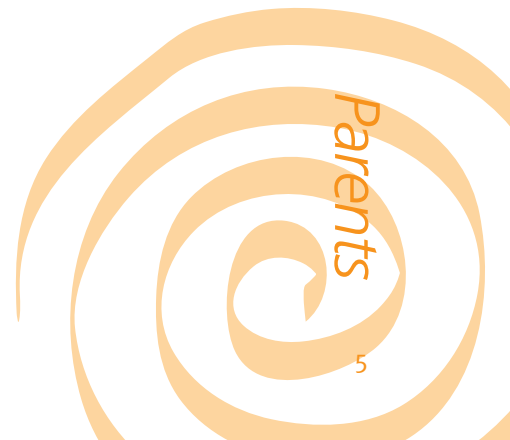
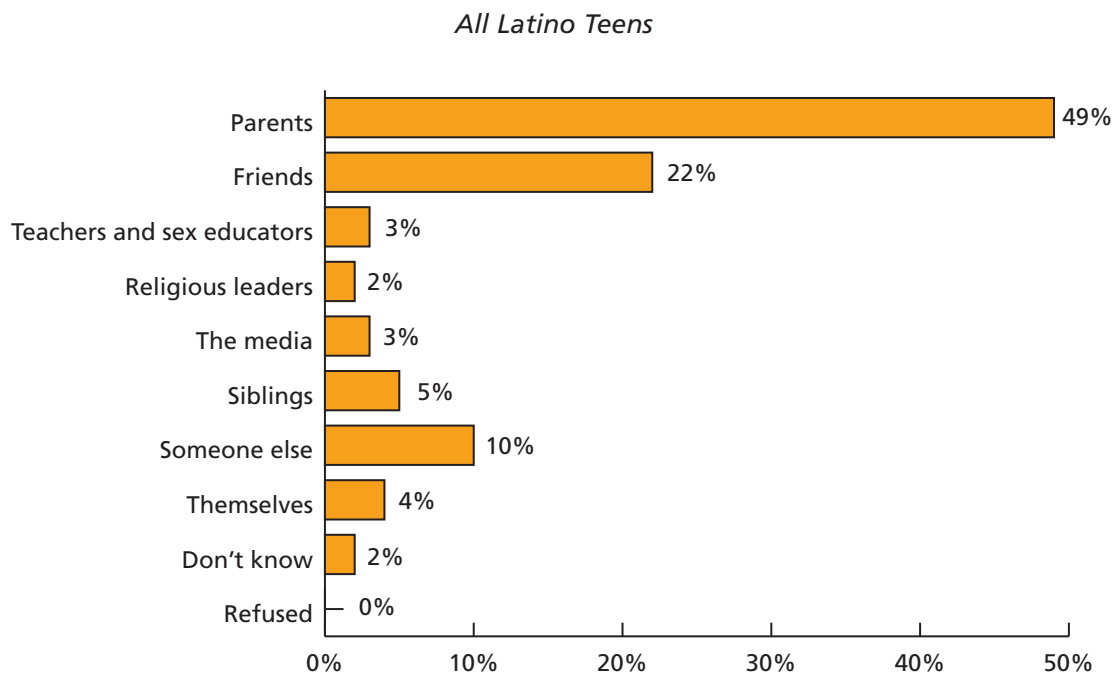
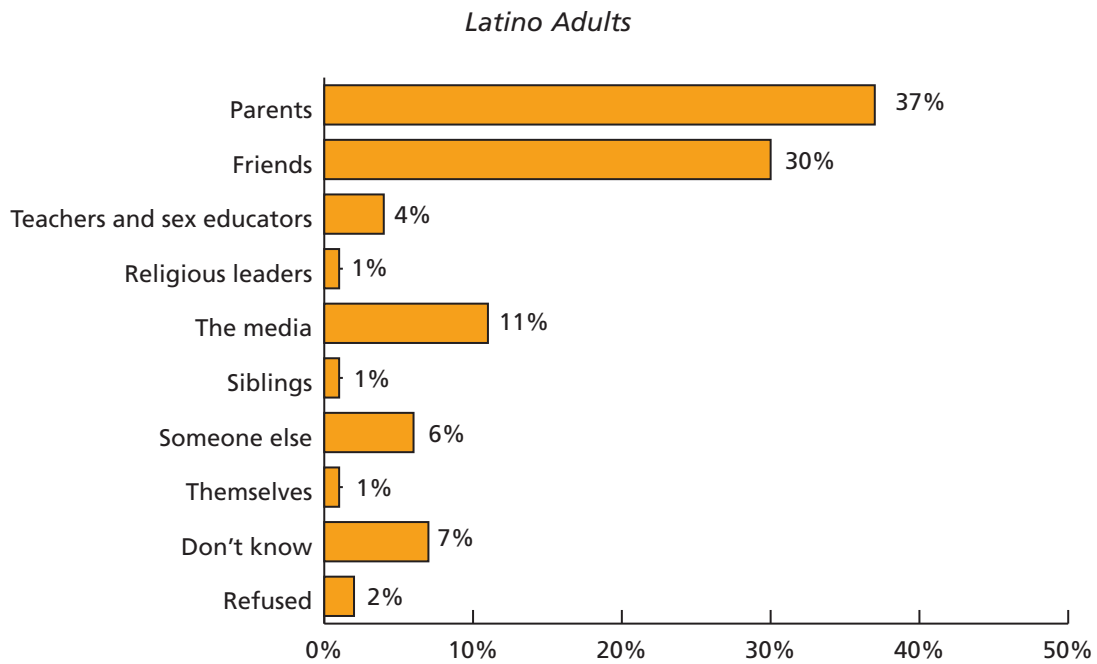
The adult survey was conducted via telephone by ICR and is weighted to provide a nationally representative estimate of the adult population, aged 20 and older. Field work for this survey was conducted between September 29 and October 6, 2006. Telephone interviews were conducted by ICR with 1,162 adults aged 20 and older. This survey included an over-sampling of Latino adults—**202 of the adults in the survey sample identified themselves as Latino/Hispanic**. This survey was done as part of a national, twice-weekly telephone omnibus survey using a fully-replicated, stratified, single-state random digit dialed

(RDD) sample of households with telephones. Sample telephone numbers are computer-generated. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 2.87%.

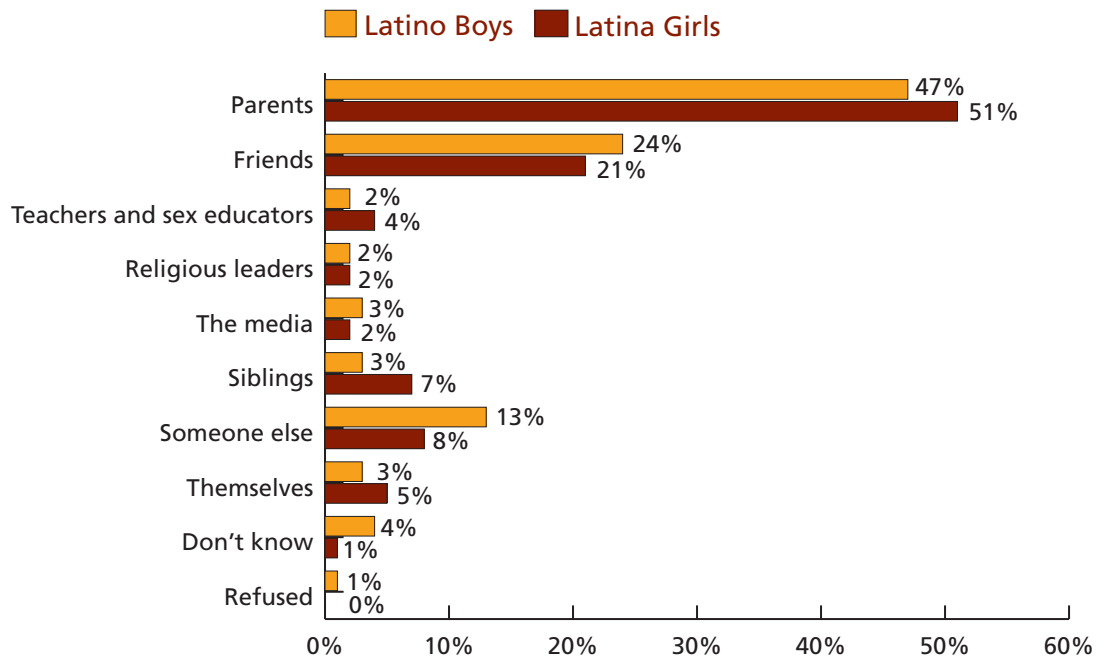
The teen survey was also conducted via telephone by ICR and is weighted to provide a nationally representative estimate of young people aged 12-19. Field work for this survey was conducted between September 29 and October 15, 2006. Telephone interviews were conducted by ICR with 1,037 young people aged 12-19;—**221 of whom identified themselves as Latino/Hispanic**. The sample for this survey was drawn using two different methods. The first sample source used RDD. As a second sample source, a database of households with teenagers 12-19 years old was tapped. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.04%.

All questions were conducted using the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. The CATI system ensures that all questions are rotated and that when answer options are presented, they are also rotated. This rotating eliminates “question position” bias. **Interviewees were given the opportunity to interview in English or Spanish.**

1. When it comes to teens'/your decisions about sex, who is most influential?



Latino Boys and Latina Girls

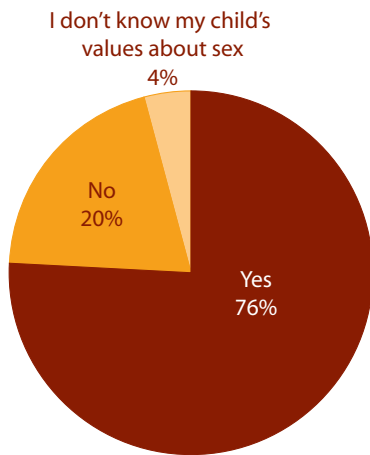


Parents: You're More Influential Than You Think

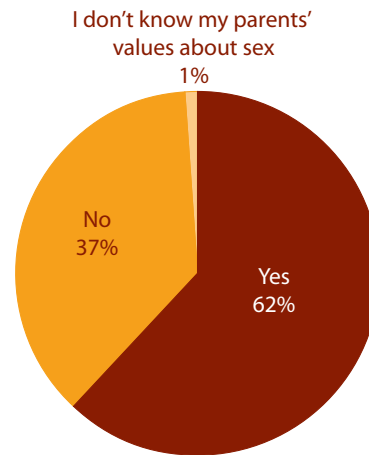
Over the years, the National Campaign has had the opportunity to discuss teen pregnancy and related issues with countless parents and teens. One recurring theme we have heard from many Latino parents is that they frequently feel that, when it comes to sex, they have lost their children to the influence of peers and American popular culture.

This survey, however, offers a different picture. Contrary to what many may assume, when it comes to teens' decisions about sex, Latino adults (37%) and teens (49%) both say parents are more influential than peers and other influences like TV, teachers, or siblings. This finding is consistent with the beliefs of teens more generally. (Fully 47% of teens in general say parents most influence their decisions about sex—see *With One Voice 2007*.) It is also the case that Latino adults tend to overestimate the influence of friends and underestimate their own influence. Clearly, it is important that Latino parents—like all parents—know that their kids are listening to them, even if they don't always act like it.

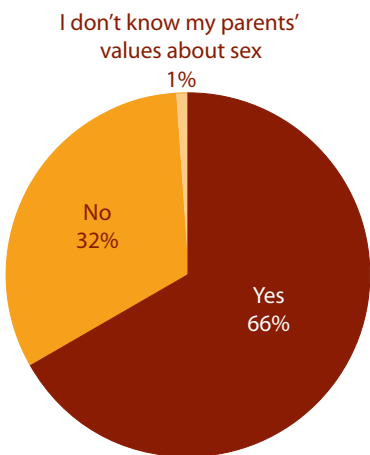
2. Do you share your children's/parents' values about sex?



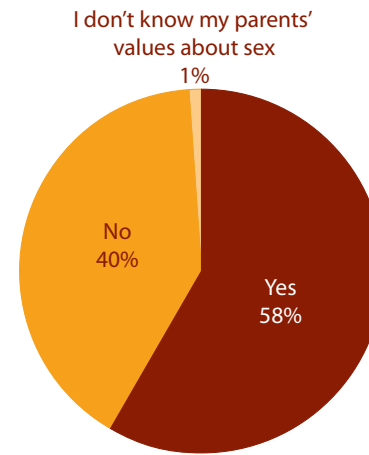
Latino Parents



All Latino Teens



Latino Boys

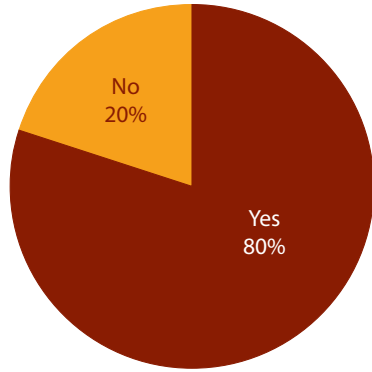


Latina Girls

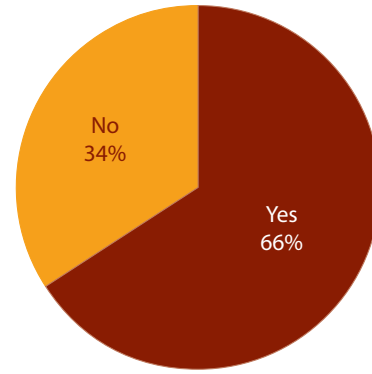
Latino Parents Need to Speak Up Louder and More Clearly About Sex

Consistent with the general population of parents, three-quarters of Latino parents think their values about sex are similar to their teen's values. Latino teen boys and girls (66% and 58%, respectively) are slightly less likely to say that they share their parents' values about sex. When we examined the gender differences among Latino boys and girls and compared their answers to the general population, interesting differences arose. The Latina girls in our survey were ten percentage points *less likely* to share their parents' values compared to all girls (68%), and the Latino boys were five percentage points *more likely* to share their parents' values than all boys (61%). It would appear from these data that Latino parents are having an easier time getting through to their sons than their daughters. If parents hope to have their teens share their values about sex, they need to realize that it's not enough for parents to state their values about sex. Parents need to have open, honest, and ongoing conversations with their children about sex, love, and relationships (and what the difference is). They need to explain to their children *why* they hold the values they do, and find out more about what their teens think about sex and why.

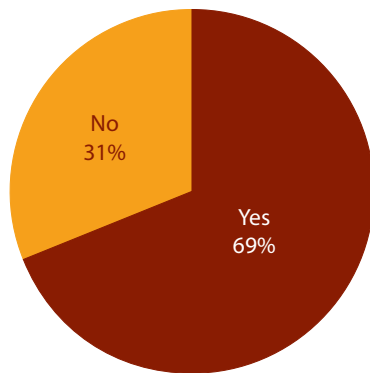
3. Have you had a helpful conversation with your children/parents about delaying sex and avoiding teen pregnancy?



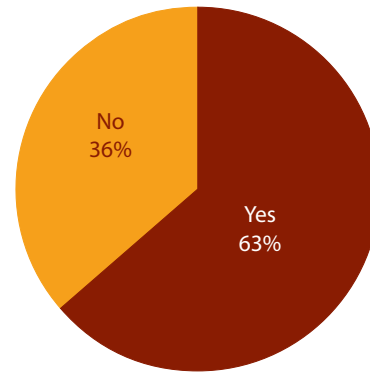
Latino Parents



All Latino Teens



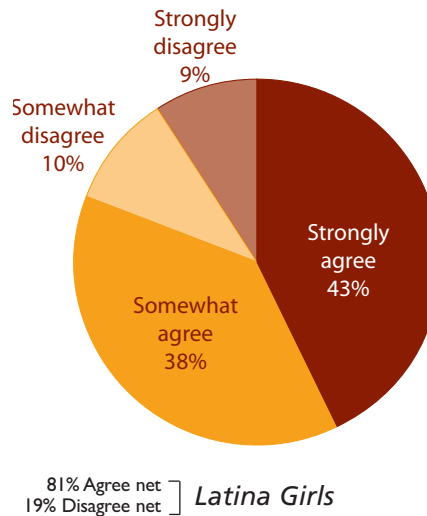
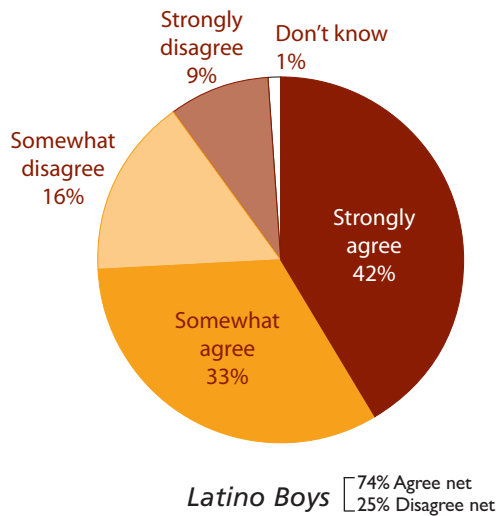
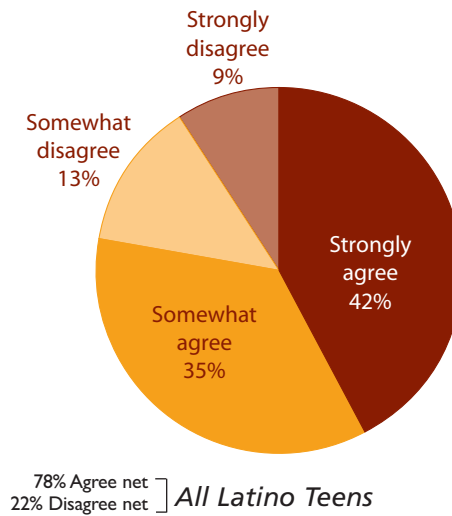
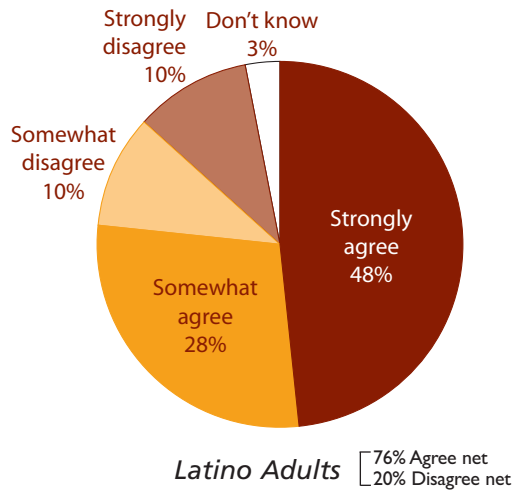
Latino Boys



Latina Girls

Latino Parents—Like Most Parents—are Overestimating the Effectiveness of “The Talk”

Although 80% of Latino parents say they have had a helpful conversation with their teen about delaying sex and avoiding pregnancy, only 69% of Latino boys and 63% of Latina girls report having had such a conversation. On the one hand, it is good news that two-thirds of Latino parents are having helpful conversations with their teens. On the other hand, one-third of Latino parents either aren’t talking or just aren’t getting through. It is also the case that Latina girls are less likely than teen girls in general to have had a useful conversation with their parents. It is worth noting that even though eight in ten Latino parents report that they have had a helpful conversation with their children about delaying sex and avoiding teen pregnancy, this is the lowest proportion of all three major racial/ethnic groups (89% of White parents and 100% of Black parents).



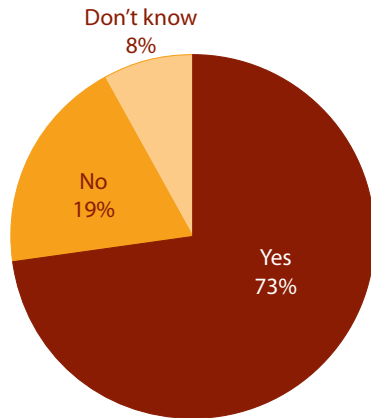
4. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: **When it comes to talking about sex, parents often don't know what to say, how to say it, or when to start.**

Latino Parents are at a Loss for Words

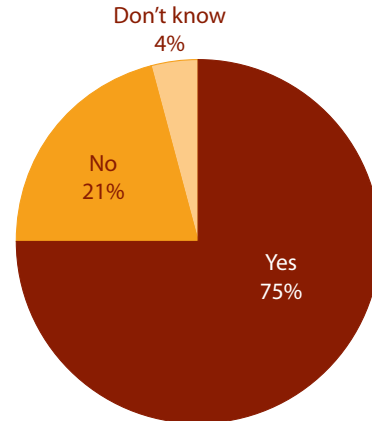
Latino teens and adults agree: Latino parents need help talking to their teens about sex. Fully three-quarters of Latino adults (76%) and Latino teens (78%) agree that when it comes to discussing sex, parents often don't know what to say, how to say it, or when to start. Latino teens (both boys and girls) are considerably more likely to agree that their parents don't know what to say than the general population (66%). Like all parents, Latino parents want the best for their children and often go to heroic lengths to help their children succeed. That said, on matters affecting sexual behavior, the gap between Latino parents and children can be profound and many Latino parents may feel powerless. Given the huge influence parents have on their teens and the important role family plays in the Latino community, it's important that we provide Latino parents with the positive support and reinforcement they need to start talking with their teens about sex and related topics. We need to remind parents that they are their children's first and most important teachers when it comes to this issue and we need to support them by providing them with the conversational tools and knowledge to help initiate and sustain these conversations with their teens.

(Download our recent publication *Bridging Two Worlds* at www.teenpregnancy.org for more information about what program leaders can do to help support Latino families in the prevention of teen pregnancy.)

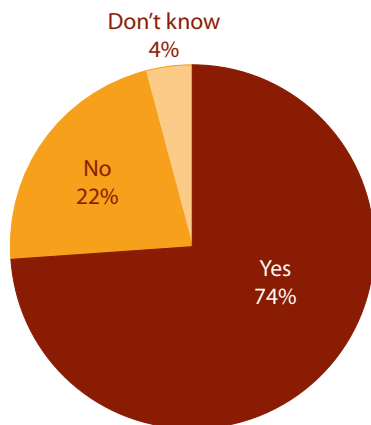
5. When it comes to talking about sex, do you think that parents send one message to their sons and a different message to their daughters?



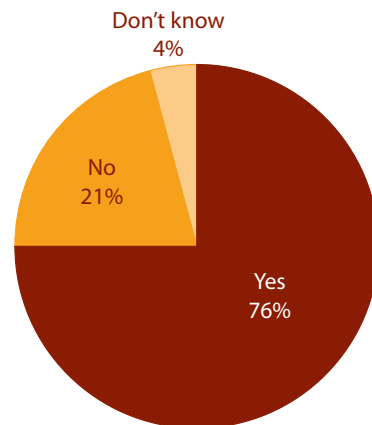
Latino Adults



All Latino Teens



Latino Boys

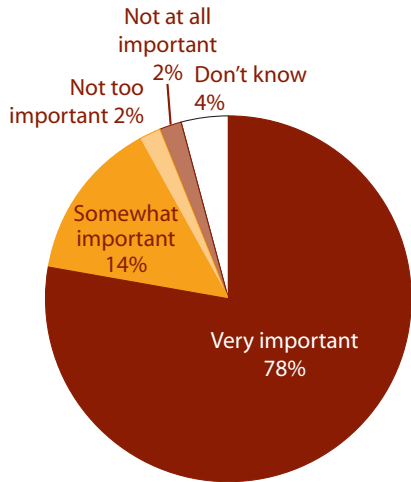


Latina Girls

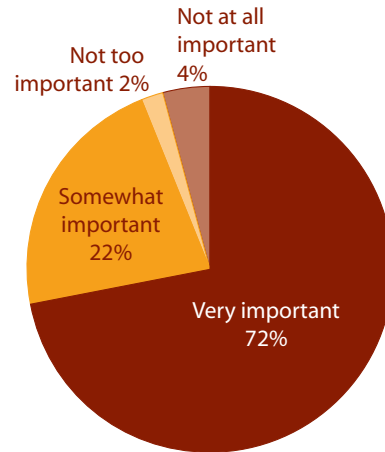
Parents aren't Sending a Consistent Message to their Sons and Daughters

About three-quarters of the Latino adults and teens (73% and 75%, respectively) believe that when it comes to talking about sex, parents send one message to their sons and a different message to their daughters—this is nearly 10% higher than the general population. Black and Latino adults (77% and 73%, respectively) are more likely than White adults (56%) to think that parents send one message to their sons and a different message to their daughters. Similarly, Black and Latino teens (72% and 75%, respectively) are more likely to think that parents send one message to their sons and a different message to their daughters than White teens (60%). Clearly, we need to learn more about what these messages are and the impact they have on teen behavior and attitudes. Prior behavioral research has shown that Latino boys initiate sex earlier than Latina girls (Abma, 2004, CDC, 2006). These polling data provide one possible explanation: Latino boys might be interpreting this mixed message as approval or encouragement to initiate sex early.

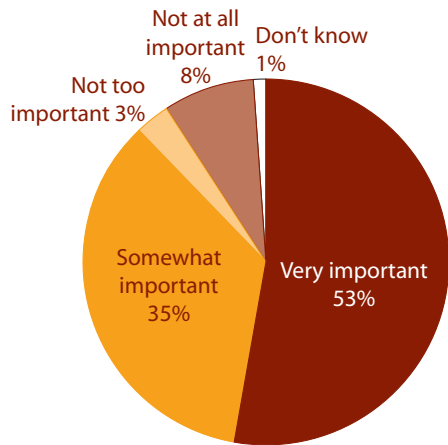
6. How important do you think it is for teens to be given a strong message that they should not have sex until they are at least out of high school?



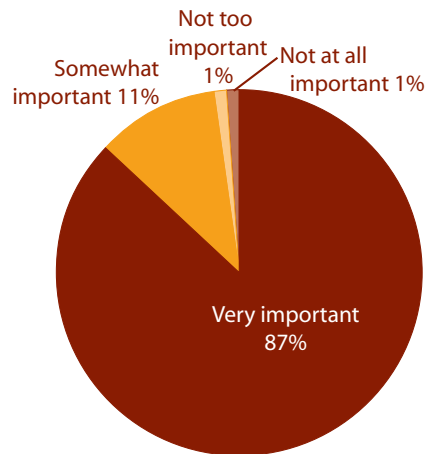
Latino Adults [92% Important net
4% Not important net]



All Latino Teens [94% Important net
6% Not important net]



Latino Boys [88% Important net
11% Not important net]

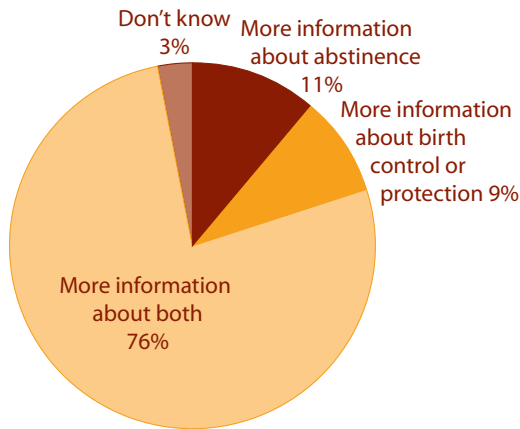


Latina Girls [98% Important net
2% Not important net]

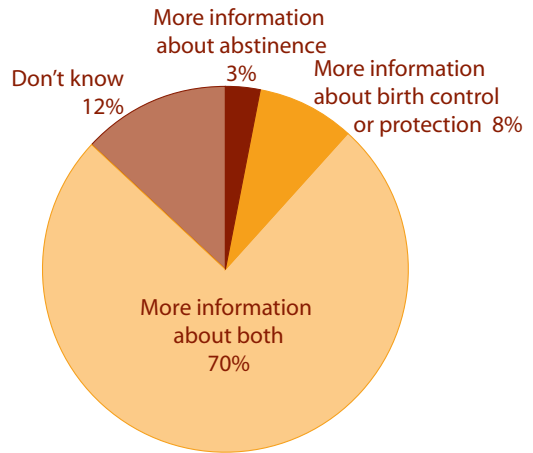
Abstinence is a Message that Resonates with Latino Teens & Adults

Consistent with adults and teens generally, support among Latino adults and teens for providing a strong abstinence message is overwhelmingly positive. As these charts illustrate, Latino adults and teens (92% and 94% respectively) think it is important that teens be given a strong message that they should not have sex until they are at least out of high school. Latina girls (98%) are more likely than Latino boys (88%) to describe abstinence as an important message. The overwhelmingly positive response to messages about abstinence from Latino boys and girls begs the question: If Latino teens believe it is important to be encouraged to delay sex until they are out of high school, why are so many having difficulty saying no?

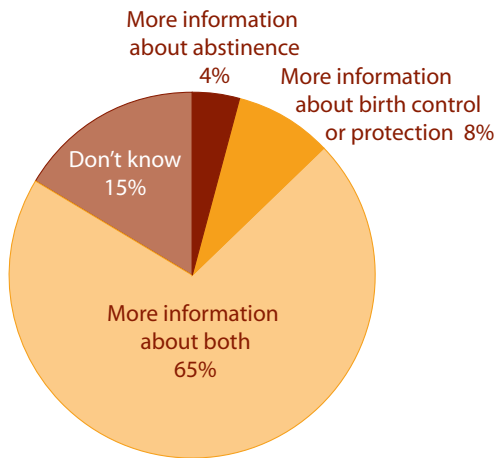
7. Do you wish teens/you were getting more information about abstinence, more information about birth control or protection, or more information about both?



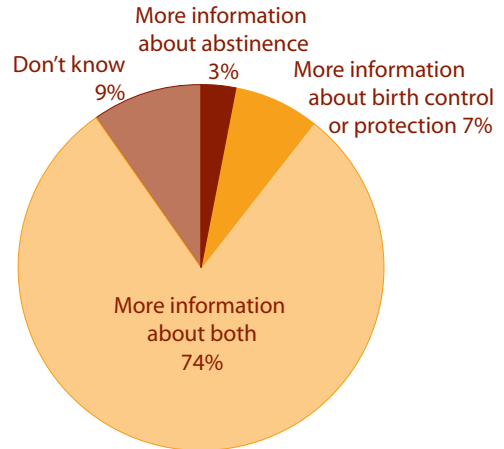
Latino Adults



All Latino Teens



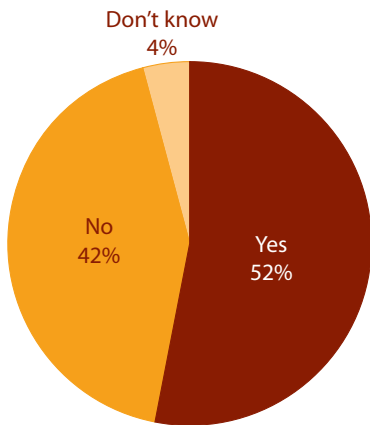
Latino Boys



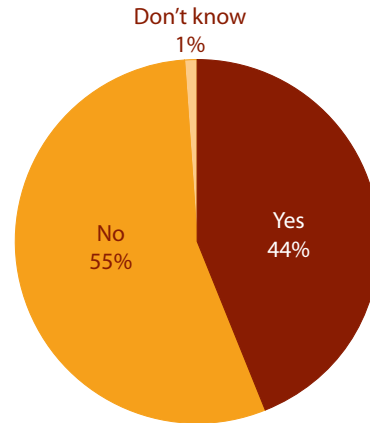
Latina Girls

Abstinence and Contraception: Latinos Want More of Both

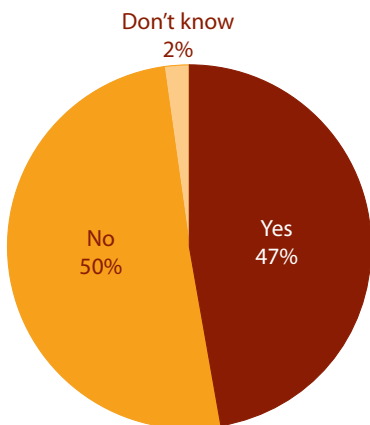
Despite the overwhelming support for encouraging young people to delay sex noted in the previous figure, support for a strong abstinence message is coupled with strong support for providing teens with information about contraception. As these results indicate, the clear majority of Latino teens and adults surveyed believe that young people need more information about *both* abstinence and contraception rather than either/or. Latina teen girls, in particular, seem to want information about both (74%), compared to the Latino teen boys (65%) and teen girls in general (60%). Black (69%) and Latino (70%) teens are far more likely than White teens (49%) to say they want more information about abstinence *and* contraception. It is also the case that most Latino adults (76%) wish teens were getting more information about abstinence and contraception.



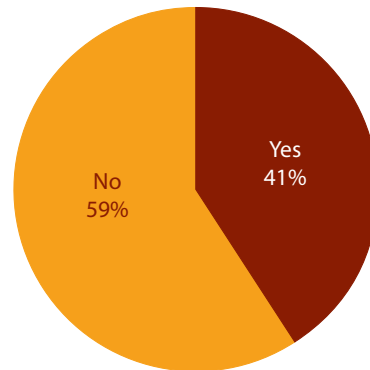
Latino Adults



All Latino Teens



Latino Boys



Latina Girls

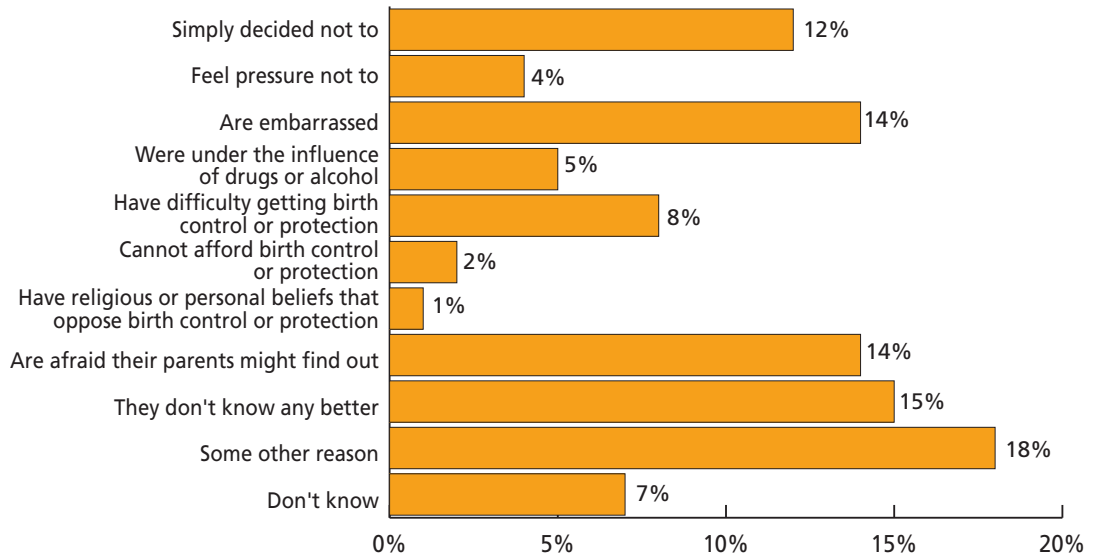
8. Suppose a parent or other adult tells you/ a teen the following: “Don’t have sex, but if you do you should use birth control or protection.” Do you think this is a message that encourages you/ teens to have sex?

Mixed Message?

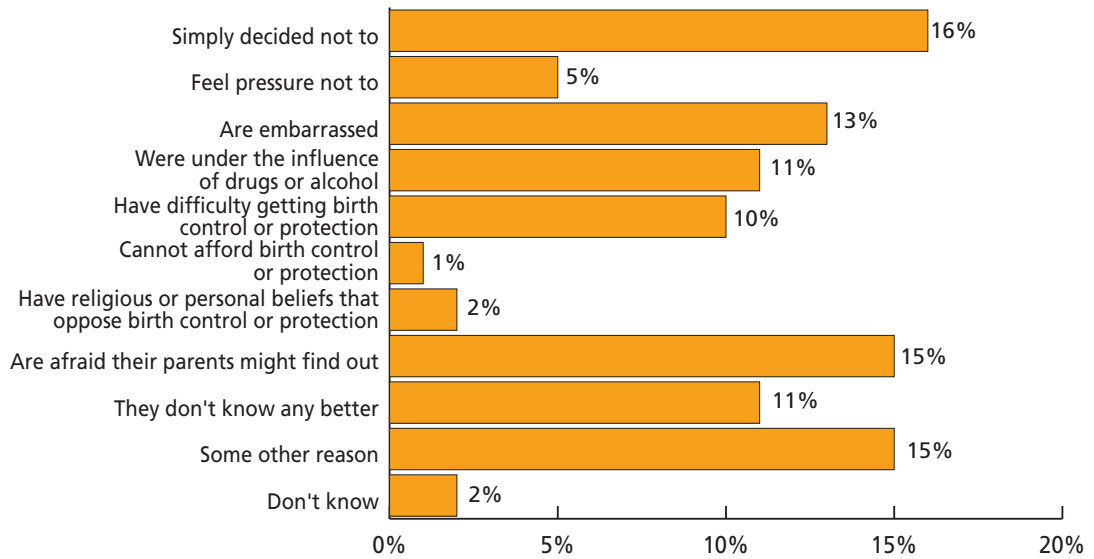
Despite a growing body of rigorous social science research indicating that sex education programs that discuss both abstinence and contraception *do not* hasten the onset of sex, increase the frequency of sex, nor increase the number of sexual partners, over half of Latino adults (52%) think that when a parent or other adult tells a teen, “Don’t have sex but if you do you should always use birth control or protection,” they are encouraging the teen to have sex. This is just slightly higher than White (47%) and Black (44%) adults. Among teens, Latina girls (41%) were less likely than Latino boys (47%) and teen girls in general (46%) to say that such a message encourages teens to have sex.

9. What do you think is the main reason teens do not use birth control or protection when they have sex?

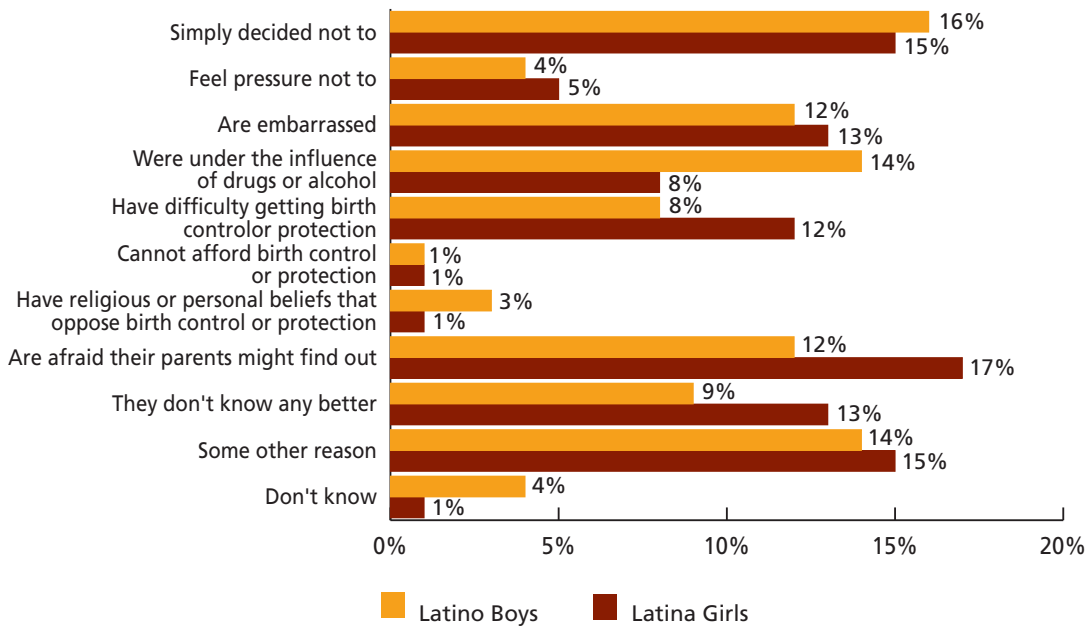
Latino Adults



All Latino Teens



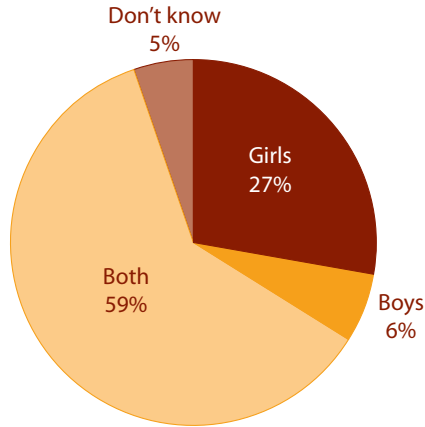
Latino Boys, Latina Girls



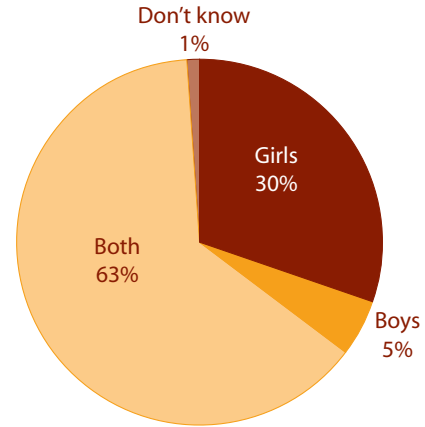
No Single Reason

A sexually active teen who does not use contraception has an 85 percent chance of pregnancy within one year. Unfortunately, despite the fact that Latino teens are equally likely as their peers to have sex, they are the least likely to use protection. As the chart above indicates, Latino teens and adults believe there are many reasons why teens do not use contraception, from being embarrassed, to being afraid their parents might find out, to simply making a decision not to. Results from this survey and others suggest that there is no single answer to this important question. Although many Latinos share a deep religious faith that may discourage contraceptive use, it is interesting to note that very few Latino adults and teens see religious/personal beliefs as a main reason that teens would not use birth control or protection when they have sex. Teen respondents here are also *less* likely than is perhaps commonly believed to cite difficulty getting contraception or affordability as reasons young people do not use contraception.

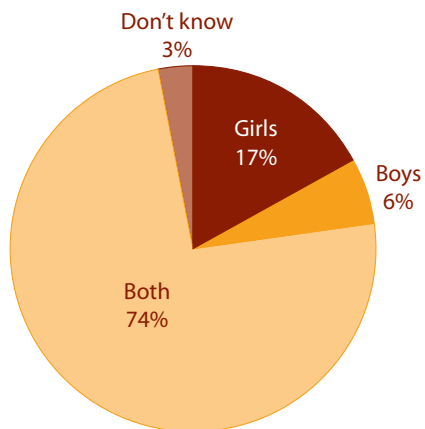
10. Who usually decides whether or not birth control or protection is used? Is it girls, boys, or both equally?



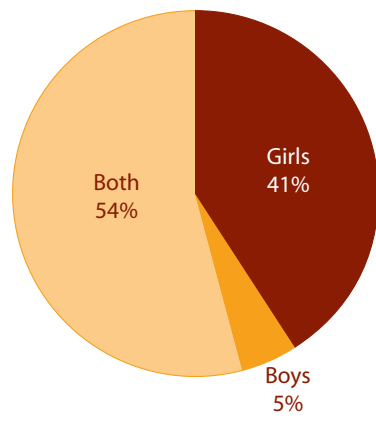
Latino Adults



All Latino Teens



Latino Boys

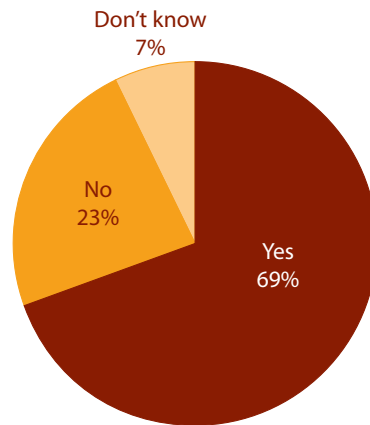


Latina Girls

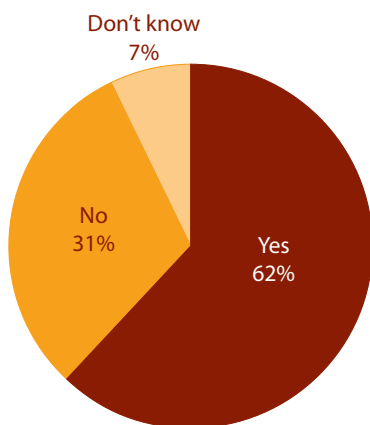
Teen Boys Are Not Making Decisions About Contraceptive Use

Similar to all teens, Latino teen boys and girls do not fully agree on who makes the decisions about using contraception. While most teens agree that it is a responsibility shared equally between partners, many Latino teens—four in ten girls and two in ten boys—say that girls usually decide whether contraception is used. Very few teens actually believe that boys usually decide whether contraception is used. According to behavioral survey data from the NSFG, Latina teens are less likely than teen girls from other racial/ethnic groups to report using contraception the last time they had sex (Abma, J.C., 2004). Given what these polling data reveal, sexually active Latina teen girls may be having a harder time insisting on using contraception than other teens, or it could be that conversations between partners about contraception are lacking.

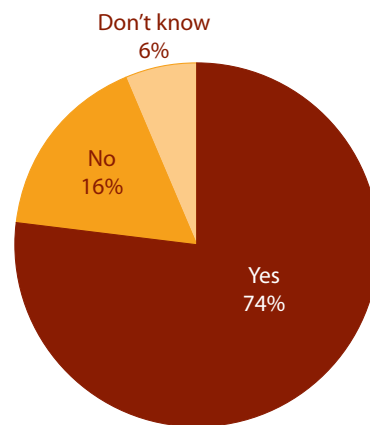
11. If you have had sexual intercourse, do you wish you had waited longer?



All Latino Teens



Latino Boys



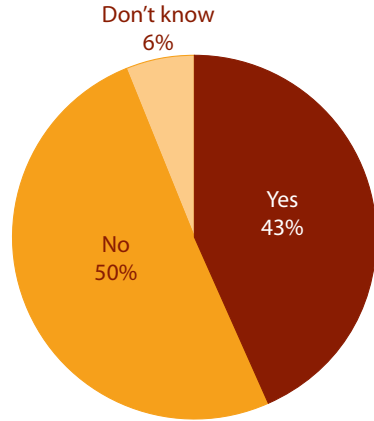
Latina Girls

Most Sexually Experienced Teens Regret Having Sex Too Soon

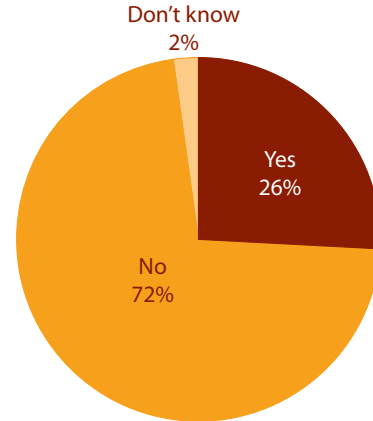
Like all teens, a clear majority of sexually experienced Latino teen boys and girls regret having sex when they did. Latina teens express more regret than most teens: three out of four sexually experienced Latina girls in our survey wish they had waited longer, compared to 62% of Latino boys and 69% of teen girls in general. We need to remind teens that in the end, they are the only one who can decide when they are really ready to have sex. The decision is up to them. We also need to let young people know that even if they have said “yes” before, they can always say “no” now.

Regret, Virginity, and Older Partners

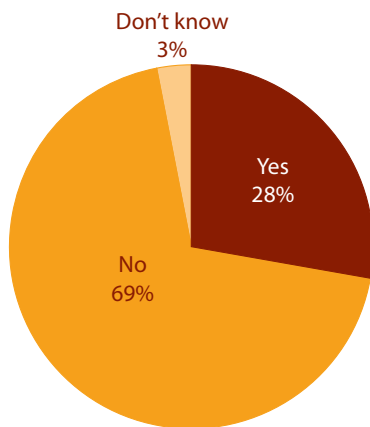
12. Do you think it is embarrassing for teens to admit that they are virgins?



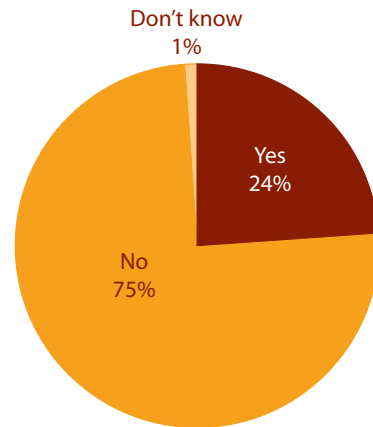
Latino Adults



All Latino Teens



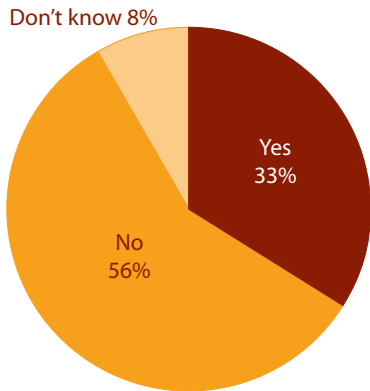
Latino Boys



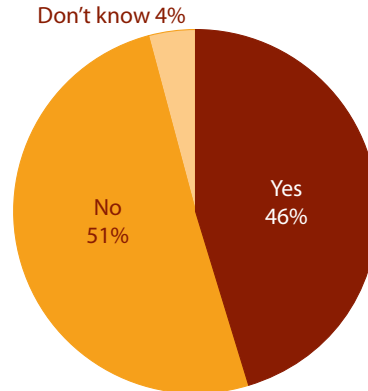
Latina Girls

Being a Virgin isn't Embarrassing

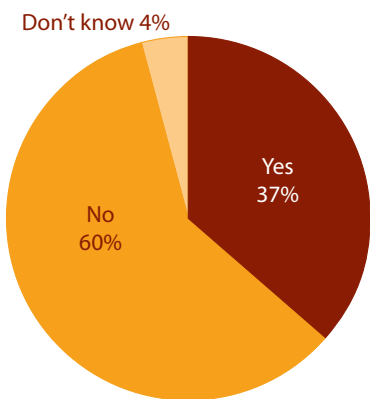
The vast majority of Latino teens—including 75% of Latina girls and 69% of Latino boys—do *not* think it is embarrassing for teens to admit they are virgins. The fact that seven in ten Latino teen boys do not find virginity embarrassing is contrary to many stereotypes about young Latino men. Interestingly, Latino adults are almost *twice* as likely as young people themselves to believe that it is embarrassing for teens to admit their virginity.



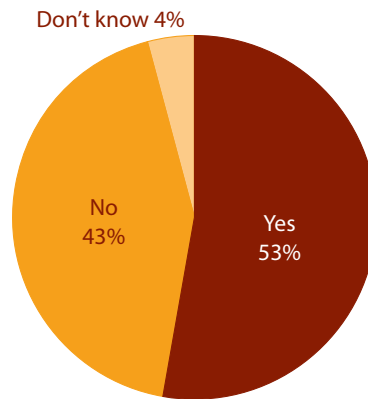
Latino Adults



All Latino Teens



Latino Boys



Latina Girls

13. Do you think it is okay for teens to be in a relationship with someone three or more years older?

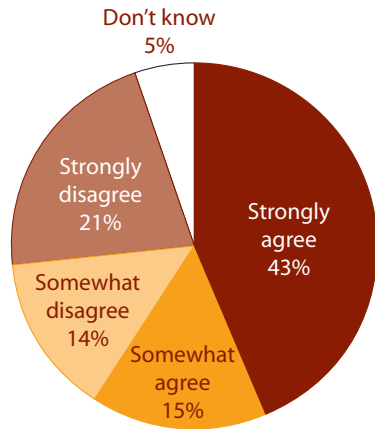
Dating Danger

Research shows that large age differences between teens and their partners increase the chances that teens will have sex and, further, that they will regret having sex when they did. These types of relationships also decrease the chances that teens will use contraception when they have sex. Given this, it is not surprising that teens who date someone three or more years older greatly increase their chances of early pregnancy and parenthood. For example, 13% of same-age relationships among those aged 12-14 include sexual intercourse, but if the partner is two years older, 26% of the relationships include sex, and if the partner is three or more years older, 33% of the relationships include sex (see *14 and Younger* at www.teenpregnancy.org).

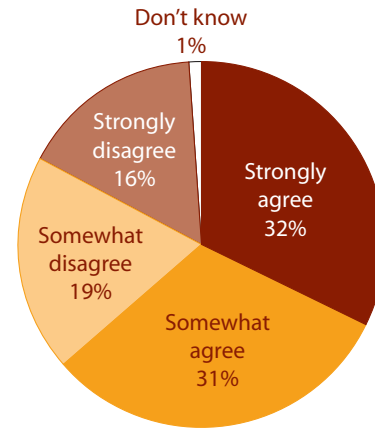
This survey shows that over half (53%) of Latina teen girls think it's okay for teens to be in a relationship with someone three or more years older, a significantly higher rate than that of the Latino teen boys (37%). Perhaps even more distressing is that fully one-third of Latino parents surveyed think that it is okay for teens to be in a relationship with someone three or more years older. This relaxed attitude regarding large dating age differences isn't unique to Latino teens or adults: About half of teens overall and one-third of parents overall believe it is okay to be in a relationship with someone three or more years older. Although Latina teen opinions from this poll are not unique, their behavior does set them apart. According to behavioral survey data, over one-third of Latina teens reported that their first male partner was four or more years older, compared to about one in five White or Black teen girls (Abma, J.C., 2004). Clearly, more work needs to be done to help Latino teens *and* parents understand the potential risks of teens dating significantly older partners.

Regret, Virginity, and Older Partners

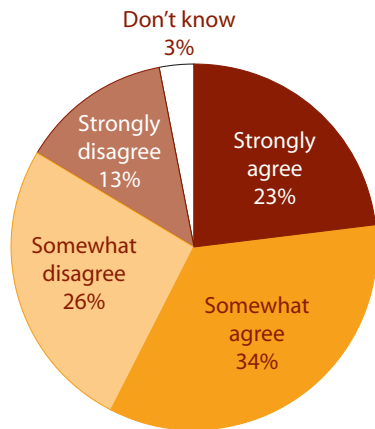
14. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Teen boys often receive the message that they are expected to have sex.



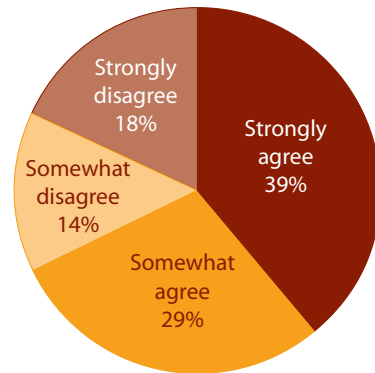
Latino Adults [58% Agree net
35% Disagree net]



All Latino Teens [63% Agree net
35% Disagree net]



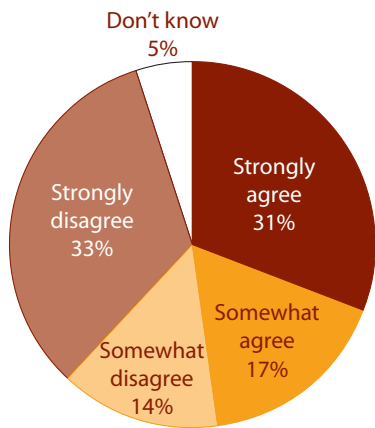
Latino Boys [58% Agree net
39% Disagree net]



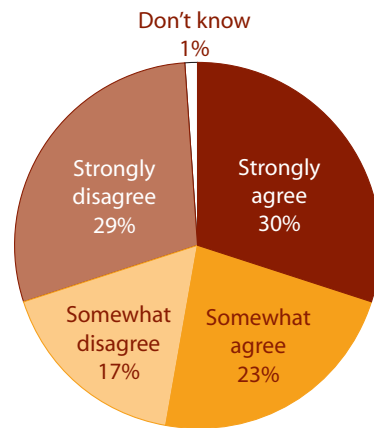
Latina Girls [68% Agree net
32% Disagree net]

Boys Are Expected to Have Sex...

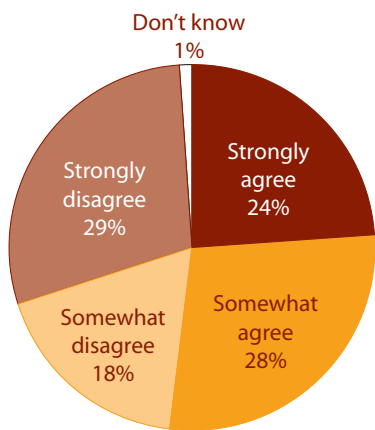
These findings show that a “double standard”—one encouraging teen girls to abstain from sex while offering teen boys a wink and a nod—may be alive and well. Over half of Latino adults and two-thirds of all Latino teens agree (including 57% of boys and 68% of girls) that teen boys often receive the message that they are expected to have sex. Latino adults were *much less likely* than the White or Black adults to think that teen boys often receive the message that they are expected to have sex (58% of Latino, 79% of White, and 80% of Black adults agreed). The responses to this question paint an interesting paradox when compared to the responses to question twelve on virginity. On the one hand, an overwhelming majority of Latino boys say being a virgin is not embarrassing. Latino adults, however, *overestimate* how embarrassing it is for teens to admit their virginity. On the other hand, as the responses to this question indicate, Latino boys do feel pressure to have sex and Latino adults are *underestimating* those pressures. Latino adults may need to increase their efforts to confront this double standard and remind boys and young men that having sex doesn’t make men out of them despite what they may see or hear.



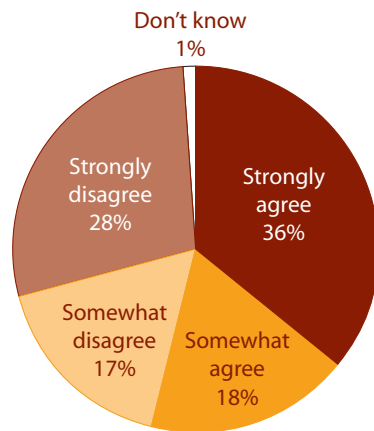
Latino Adults [48% Agree net
47% Disagree net]



All Latino Teens [53% Agree net
46% Disagree net]



Latino Boys [52% Agree net
47% Disagree net]



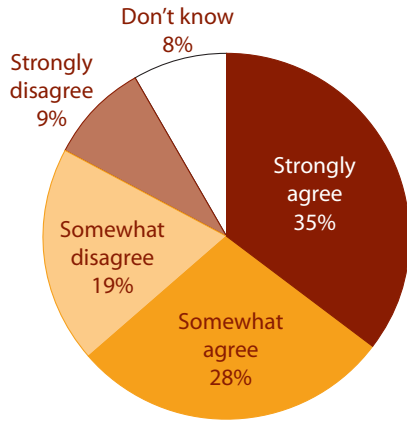
Latina Girls [54% Agree net
45% Disagree net]

15. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Teen girls often receive the message that attracting boys and looking sexy is one of the most important things they can do.

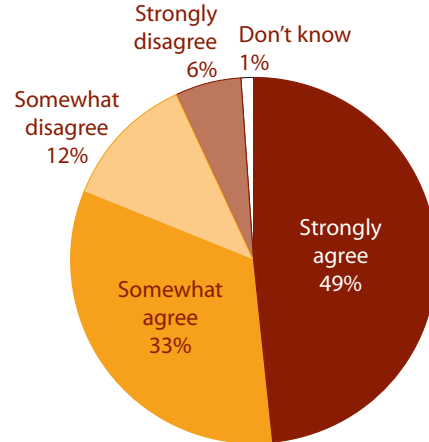
...Girls Are Expected to Look Sexy

Over half of Latina girls surveyed (54%) say that they often get the message that attracting boys and looking sexy is one of the most important things they can do. Latino boys (52%) and Latino adults (48%) agree. Even so, both Latino teens and adults are less likely than their peers more generally to believe that girls often get messages about the importance of looking sexy and attracting boys. Latino adults (48%) were far less likely than White adults (79%) or Black adults (77%) to agree with the statement noted above. The same applies to young people—Latino teens were less likely to agree with this statement than either Black teens (65%) or White teens (60%). Even so, the data presented here paint a grim picture. If half of Latina teens agree that looking sexy and attracting boys is one of the most important things they can do, clearly we need to do a better job helping girls feel valued for things that are more important than how they look. We need to remind them they are smart and capable and encourage young people to set goals and promote educational achievement. You can't give a girl self-esteem, but you can give her the opportunity to develop it—in addition to setting high educational goals, encourage her involvement in sports, volunteering, or other activities that make her feel talented and confident. By giving a girl something positive to say “yes” to, you are helping her say “no, not yet” to sex and pregnancy.

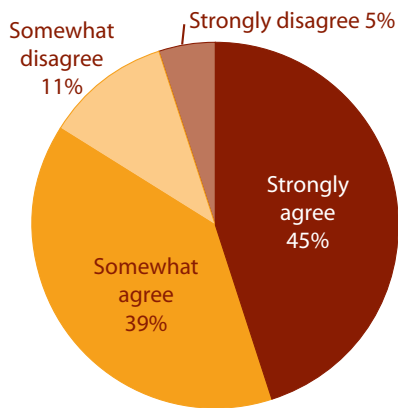
16. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Religious leaders and groups should be doing more to help prevent teen pregnancy.



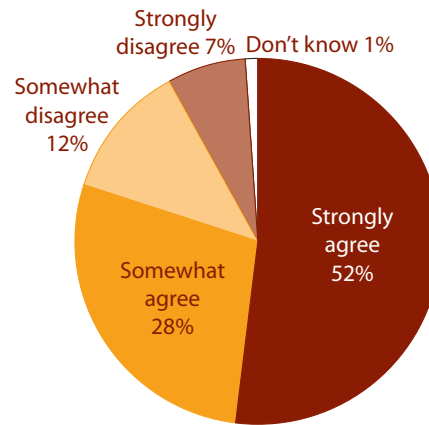
Latino Adults [62% Agree net
28% Disagree net]



All Latino Teens [82% Agree net
17% Disagree net]



Latino Boys [84% Agree net
16% Disagree net]

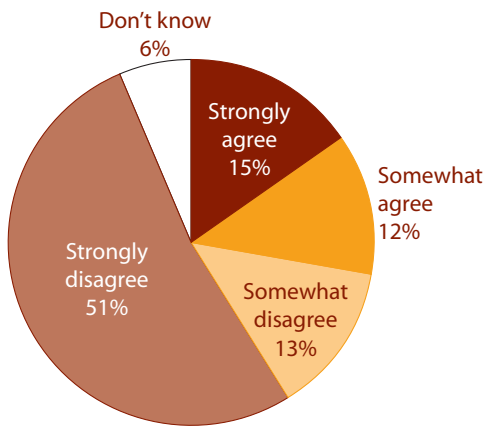


Latina Girls [80% Agree net
19% Disagree net]

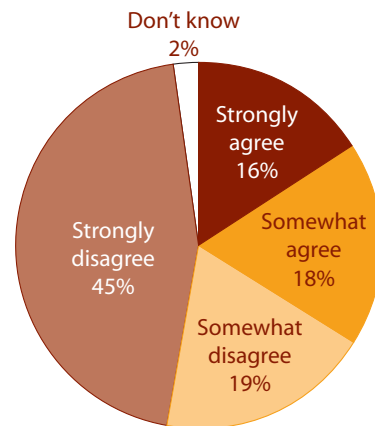
Message to Faith Leaders: Latino Teens are Looking to You for Help

The results presented here suggest that faith leaders, churches, and other religious organizations are in a unique and powerful position to help prevent teen pregnancy among Latinos. More than eight in ten (82%) Latino teens agree that religious leaders and groups should be doing more to prevent teen pregnancy. This is a considerably higher rate when compared to White teens (74%) and slightly higher than Black teens (78%). At the same time, six in ten Latino adults agree that faith communities should be doing more to help prevent teen pregnancy. The overwhelmingly positive response from Latino teens—and to a lesser extent Latino adults—regarding the role of religious leaders and groups in the prevention of teen pregnancy should be a source of motivation for faith leaders.

(Download our recent publication *Faith, Hope and Love* at www.teenpregnancy.org for more information about what faith leaders can do to help prevent teen pregnancy in Latino communities.)

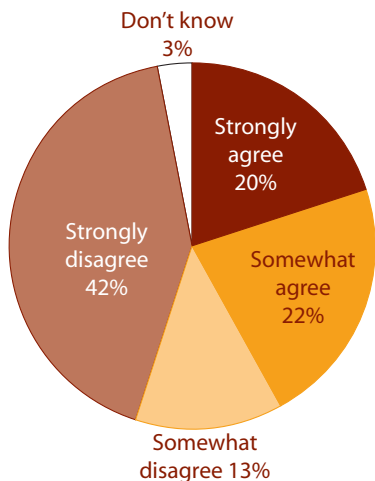


Latino Adults [28% Agree net
65% Disagree net]

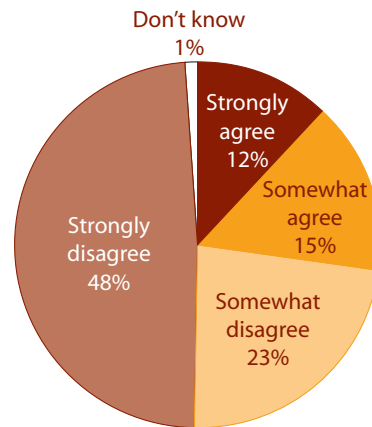


All Latino Teens [34% Agree net
64% Disagree net]

17. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Teen pregnancy and parenthood in my community is no big deal.



Latino Boys [42% Agree net
55% Disagree net]

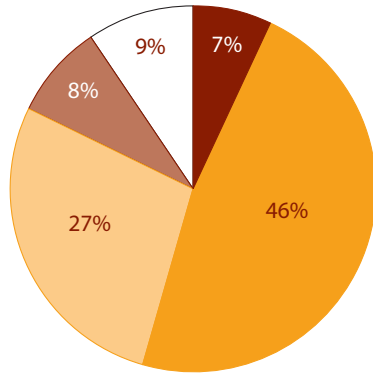


Latina Girls [28% Agree net
71% Disagree net]

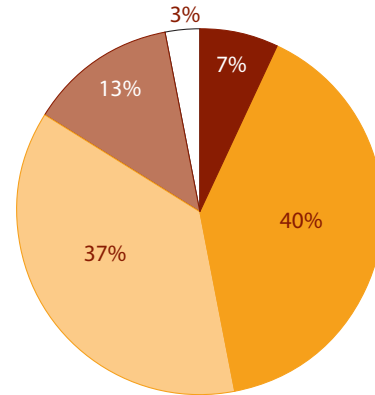
Too Many Teens Think Pregnancy isn't a Big Deal

One interpretation of the data presented here is that teen pregnancy is considered normal and accepted in many Latino communities. As these charts show, a considerable portion of all Latino teens see teen pregnancy and parenthood in their community as no big deal. In focus groups conducted by the Campaign, comments like “my parents will help out like they did with my sister,” or “my friend has a baby and she is a good mom,” shed light on the acceptance of teen pregnancy by some Latino teens. Latino boys seem to take a more relaxed attitude about teen pregnancy—four in 10 agree that teen pregnancy is “no big deal” compared to three in 10 Latina girls. Whereas Latina girls appear to track closely on this issue with the views of teen girls in general, Latino boys are more likely to view teen pregnancy and parenthood as no big deal than teen boys generally (42% and 32% respectively). These data show a real need for more straightforward conversations with young people about postponing pregnancy until they are older. In essence, the challenge is to support childbearing and family formation generally—strongly held values in Latino culture—while simultaneously explaining the social, economic, and health benefits to adults and children of postponing family formation until after the teen years. In other words, the issue is timing.

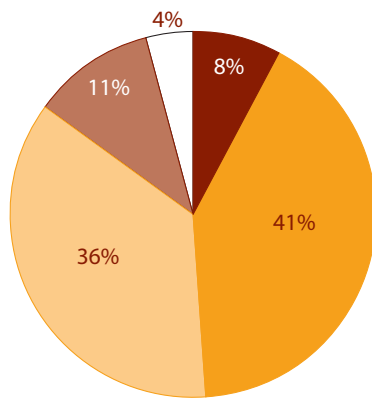
18. Do you think that being a teen parent would...



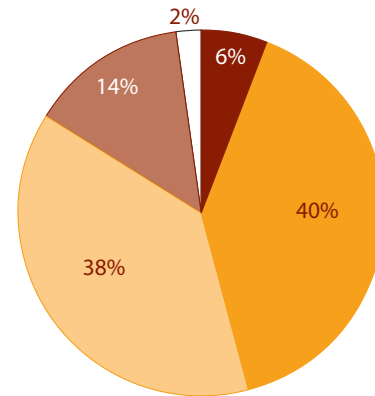
Latino Adults



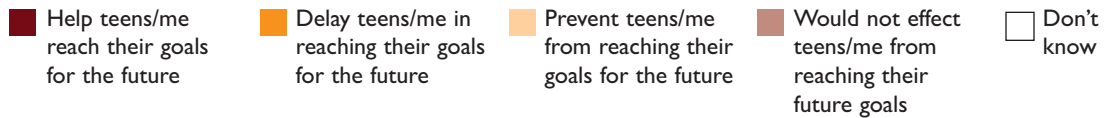
All Latino Teens



Latino Boys



Latina Girls

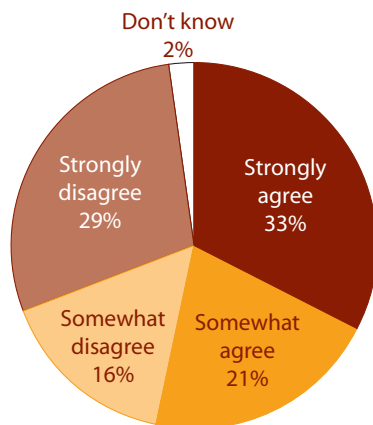


Much More than a Delay

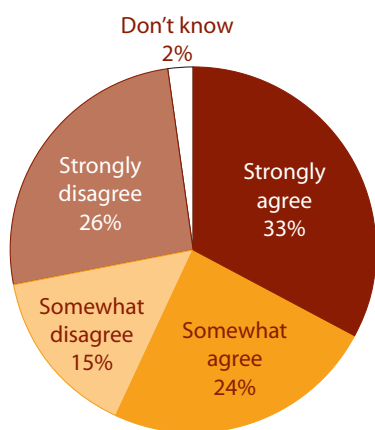
No matter what your ethnic background is, teen pregnancy is one of the best ways to stay poor and uneducated. Two out of three teen mothers never finish high school, half of all single mothers on welfare were teenagers when they had their first child, and children of teen mothers are more likely to face a number of disadvantages. In other words, teen parenthood doesn't just *delay* teens from reaching their goals, it *prevents* them. Despite these sobering statistics, only 27% of Latino adults and 37% of Latino teens in our survey thought that being a teen parent *prevents* teens from reaching their goals. By contrast, almost half of White adults (46%) view being a teen parent as an obstacle that would *prevent* teens from reaching their goals for the future. The majority of Latino (46%) and Black (46%) adults believe being a teen parent only *delays* young people from reaching their goals. Most striking, however, is that significant proportions of Latino teens and adults (20% and 15% respectively) believe that being a teen parent would actually *help* teens reach their goals for the future or would not affect young people one way or another.

According to behavioral research, Latina teens are almost twice as likely as the general teen girl population to report that they would be either a little pleased or very pleased if they got pregnant (25% vs. 13%) (Abma, J.C., 2004). Latino teen boys are also almost twice as likely as teen boys more generally to report that they would be either a little pleased or very pleased if they got a partner pregnant now (27% vs. 15%) (Abma, J.C., 2004). Although many teens and many communities in America need some convincing about why avoiding pregnancy and parenthood in adolescence is wise, these data suggest that Latino teens—and adults—may need extra discussion and explanation.

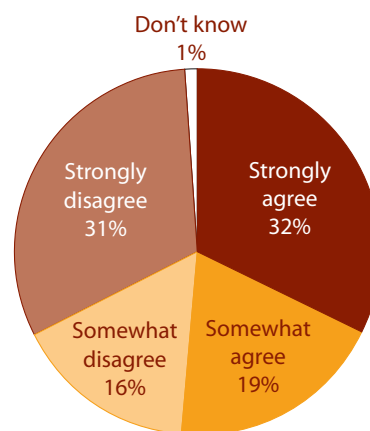
19. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I have never really thought about what my life would be like if I got pregnant/got someone pregnant as a teen.



All Latino Teens [54% Agree net
45% Disagree net]



Latino Boys [57% Agree net
40% Disagree net]

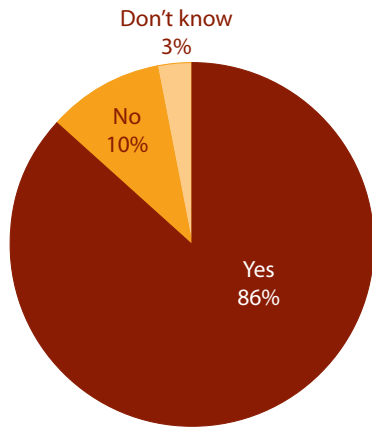


Latina Girls [51% Agree net
48% Disagree net]

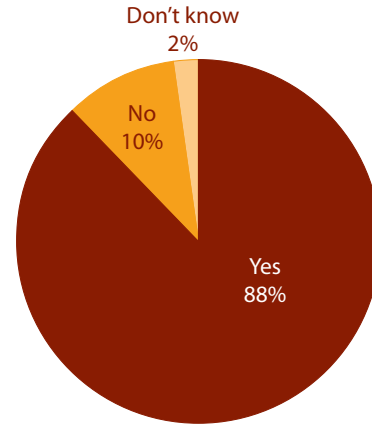
Motivation Matters

The bottom line is there are only two ways to avoid pregnancy: either don't have sex at all, or use contraception very carefully, every single time. Both are hard and both require motivation. If teens aren't thinking about their risk of pregnancy, chances are slim that they will actively make plans to avoid pregnancy. As these charts show, over half of Latino boys and girls haven't thought about what their life would be like if they got pregnant or got someone pregnant as a teen. Latino boys are less likely than boys generally (50% vs. 57%) to have thought about the risk of getting someone pregnant. Latina girls, on the other hand, are more likely to think about it than teen girls in general (51% vs. 45%). Given that 51% of Latina teens get pregnant at least once by the age of 20, no matter how you look at these data it is clear that we as a nation need to do a better job of getting teens to think about their risky behavior and act accordingly. Boys need to know that teen pregnancy happens to them, too. We need to talk with boys—not just girls—about consequences, responsibility, sex, love, and values.

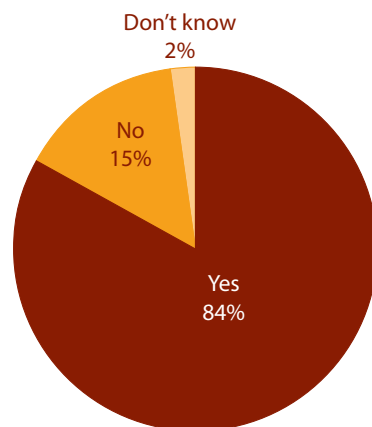
20. Do you wish the media showed more or talked more about the consequences of sex, including teen pregnancy?



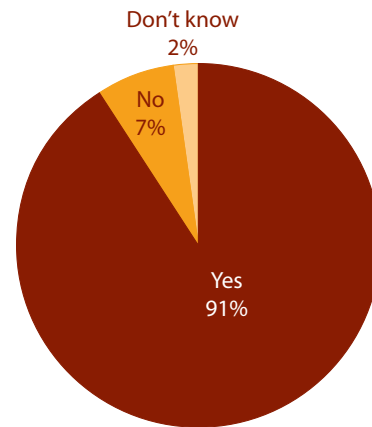
Latino Adults



All Latino Teens



Latino Boys

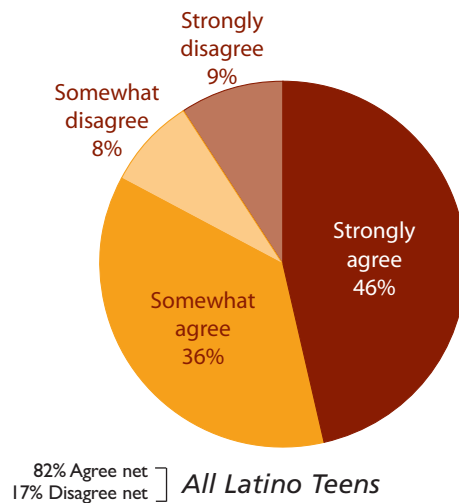
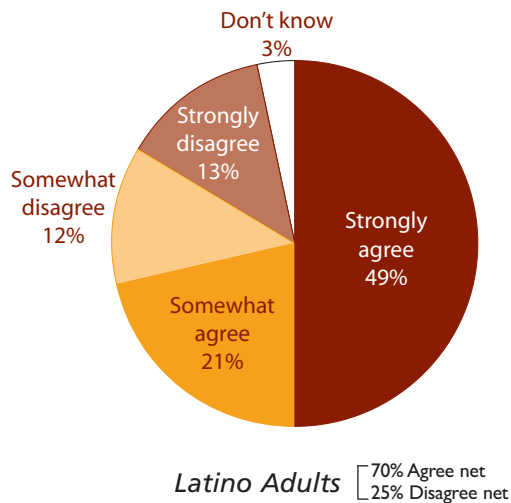


Latina Girls

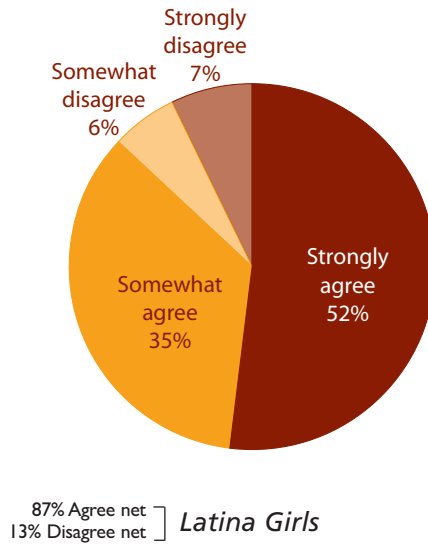
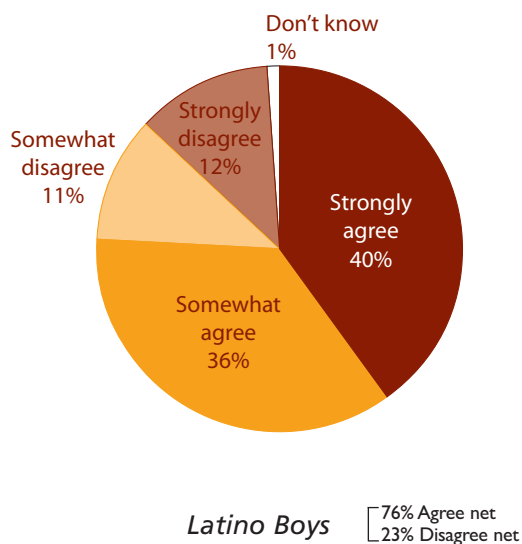
Media Executives: Teens Want to See the Consequences of Sex

Latino teens and adults appear particularly interested in hearing more in the media about the consequences of sex. Latino boys and girls (88%) were considerably more interested than White (73%) or Black (76%) teens in the media showing more or talking more about the consequences of sex. Similarly, Latino adults responded the most favorably to this question (86%) when compared to White (69%) and Black (73%) adults.

We know that teens and adults today lead media saturated lives, but the fact that Latino adults and teens in particular want the media to show more sexual consequences provides media leaders, parents, and teens with several things to ponder: 1) Media popular with Latinos (Spanish or English-language) often doesn't show the consequences of sex, 2) Latino youth may be more sensitive to media influence, in particular teens who are trying to assimilate to U.S. culture, or 3) Sexual content in the media provides Latino adults and teens with an opportunity to discuss the appropriateness of the media they have viewed, read, or listened to.

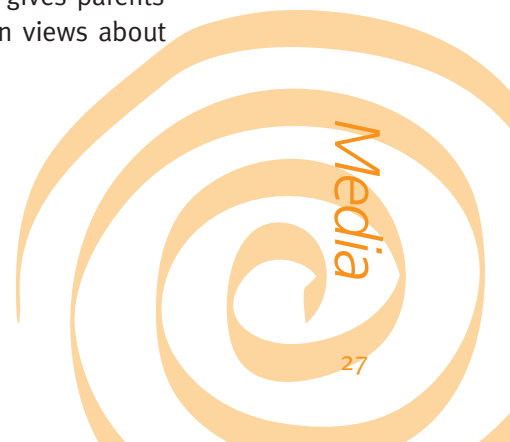


21. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: When a TV show or character I like deals with teen pregnancy, it makes me think more about the consequences of sex.



Media Makes an Impact

Similar to the previous question, Latino teens (82%) are more likely than White teens (72%) and Black teens (79%) to think about the consequences of sex when a TV show or character they like deals with teen pregnancy. When Latino teens—and all teens for that matter—see a TV show or character deal with teen pregnancy, the consequences of sex become more real to them. Seeing characters they love go through some of the challenging experiences associated with early sexual activity, pregnancy, and parenthood, gets teens to stop, talk, and think about what they would do in the same situation. It also gives parents the perfect opportunity to start conversations with their teens about their own views about sexual behavior, values, relationships, and related issues.



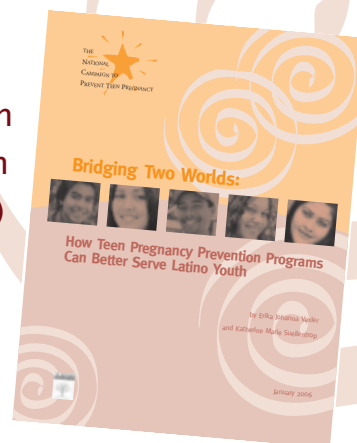
Sources

Abma, J.C., Martinez, G.M., Mosher, W.D., & Dawson, B.S. (2004). Teenagers in the United States: Sexual activity, contraceptive use, and childbearing, 2002. *Vital Health Statistics*, 23(24).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (2006). Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2005. *Surveillance Summaries, MMWR*.

Other Materials of Interest from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Available at www.teenpregnancy.org

Bridging Two Worlds: How Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs Can Better Serve Latino Youth
(available in English and Spanish)



Consejos a los padres para prevenir el embarazo en la adolescencia (Tips for parents to help their children avoid teen pregnancy)



Faith, Hope, and Love: How Latino Faith Communities Can Help Prevent Teen Pregnancy
(available in English and Spanish)

It All Starts At Home: Hispanic Parents Speak Out on Teen Pregnancy



Two Spanish language postcards:

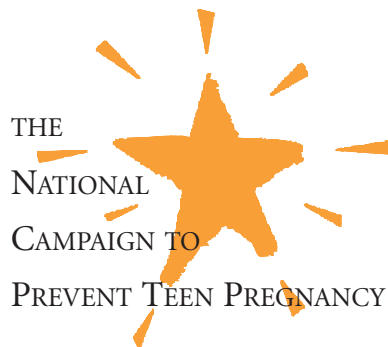


Si nos cerramos, esto puede abrirse.
(If this stays closed, this might open.)

Tu silencio puede cambiar la vida de una quinceañera. (Your silence can change the life of a teenager.)



www.teenpregnancy.org



The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization supported largely by private donations. The National Campaign's mission is to improve the well-being of children, youth, and families by reducing teen pregnancy. Our goal is to reduce the teen pregnancy rate by one-third between 2006 and 2015.

1776 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, NW
SUITE 200
WASHINGTON, DC 20036
(202) 478-8500

CAMPAIGN@TEENPREGNANCY.ORG

WWW.TEENPREGNANCY.ORG

TURNER
FOUNDATION



TURNER FOUNDATION, INC.
133 LUCKIE STREET NW
2ND FLOOR
ATLANTA, GA 30303
WWW.TURNERFOUNDATION.ORG