

## (Health and Wellness) Teen pregnancy major concern for teens in Minnesota

Written by Brandi D. Phillips  
Monday, 19 October 2009 17:28

---

Teen pregnancy continues to be a major concern for teens in Minnesota. According to The Minnesota Organization of Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP) reports that in 2007, Hennepin County had 1,165 babies that were born to teen mothers 15-19. The second highest birth rate was in Ramsey County with 733 births, followed by Anoka County with 281 and Dakota County with 271. In total Minnesota had a total birth rate of 5,182 within this same age group.

I have to question, why it is that the counties in Minnesota that are the most populated overall, as well as more populated with higher percentages of ethnic minorities, have the highest birth rates to teen mothers. Is it because the young girls and boys are not educated regarding teen pregnancy? Do these teens, have access to appropriate health care and contraception? Do these teens even care?

I have continued to notice growing numbers of teen girls in Minneapolis, with protruding baby bumps. Some girls even seem to think it is cool. One 16-year-old young lady I know is pregnant. She told her father and uncle that all her friends have babies. Is being pregnant the thing to do?

When I was in high school, there were plenty of young girls who were either pregnant or who had more than one child. However, being pregnant was not considered the thing to do, unlike today. Actually, often the young mother was labeled as having done something she was not supposed to have or she was considered to be *fast in the pants*.

I encourage all parents, teachers, friends and family members to protect our young people from becoming mothers and fathers at such a young age. As adults, it is our job to educate children about all real-world events including sex. I do not think that talking about sex, abstinence, or contraception encourages our teens to have sex. An open, honest and sometimes frank conversation about sex can prepare them for protecting themselves and possibly preventing there early downfall.

Let me be clear, I do not think discussing the challenges of teen pregnancy and parenting serves as absolute prevention. However, I do believe that talking to teens about healthy sexuality will help prepare them for the world without letting them wear rose colored glasses.

Here are some ideas you could do to help educate your teen regarding pregnancy, prevention and parenting according to MOAPPP

- Answer all questions and listen carefully to what is being asked.
- Anticipate your child's questions and practice and prepare your answers ahead of time.
- Talk to other parents and professionals about how they talk to their children about sex.
- Acknowledge your discomfort, this allows you child to identify and accept their discomfort.
- Do your research so you can use specific and correct terminology.
- Initiate the conversation with your child.
- Be clear about your values.
- Talk about the joys of sexuality, not just the negative or scary things.
- Be concerned about telling too much too late, instead of too much too soon.

## **(Health and Wellness) Teen pregnancy major concern for teens in Minnesota**

Written by Brandi D. Phillips

Monday, 19 October 2009 17:28

---

- Establish an environment for a child that is safe to ask questions.
- Know what is taught about sexuality in your schools, churches, community centers and more.
- Be aware and listen for the questions behind the questions.

If you have questions regarding teen pregnancy and prevention, contact your local health care provider.

*Brandi Phillips is a life coach therapist, personal trainer and professional dancer, who is interested in cultivating healthy children and sustaining healthy seniors.*