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# Parents Speak Up Workshop

Presented by:

[name]

*Hispanic Outreach Center*

More information:

[Phone number]

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The workshop can start with a song or an activity as an icebreaker.

The speaker should:

- Introduce himself and ask parents to sign the attendance sheet;
- Give an overview of what the workshop will cover and how long it will last; and
- Make clear that all opinions are welcome, but that we should all respect what others have to say.



## Parents Speak Up National Campaign

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- **What:** National public education campaign sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- **Objective:** Encourage parents to talk to their child early and often about waiting to have sex in order to help ensure their future success and happiness.
- **Target Audience:** Parents of children aged 10-13.
- **Campaign includes:**
  - TV, radio, print, outdoor and internet
  - Community Outreach
- **Website:** [www.4parents.gov](http://www.4parents.gov)

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Let's talk about why we're here. This workshop is part of the Parents Speak Up National Campaign.



## Hispanic Outreach Center

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- Purpose
  - To share the message of "Parents Speak Up" with Hispanic families and communities.
  - To be a resource for you.
  - To empower parents.
- Confederation of Spanish American Families
  - [community name] Hispanic Abstinence Coalition led by [lead agency name]
- What we do:
  - Community events: The Party, Man to Man, and The Picnic
  - Parent Workshops

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We're here to support you in the conversation with your kids about sex and waiting. Introduce yourself as part of the Hispanic Abstinence Coalition and then talk about the events we have for them: Parrillada (The Picnic), Pachanga (The Party), De Hombre a Hombre (Man to Man), Workshops, etc.

In these parent workshops parents will share their experiences and support each other. Stress the importance of confidentiality.



## The Hispanic Family

The Hispanic Family is generally known for being, or striving to be, a united family.

A united family:

- Is the foundation for raising healthy children.
- Provides the tools that will help kids make wise choices that will enable them to accomplish their goals and dreams.
- Helps our kids develop skills that will allow them to avoid things that may harm them.



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Now that you know what brings us here and who we are...let's talk about what we're here to discuss – the family. Specifically, your family. Your kids. And how you can raise them to be the healthiest and most successful they can be.



## The Hispanic Family

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The Hispanic Family is also distinguished for maintaining its cultural traditions and family values.

### Discuss:

- What values and traditions are we talking about?
- How do we share these values with our kids?
- What about the value of waiting to have sex?

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Most Hispanic families have very strong family values and maintain their traditions. But what happens when it comes to talking about sex and waiting with our kids? Do we communicate? Do we share our expectations?

Sometimes we tend to think that our kids will automatically share our values. It's important that we hold open and honest conversations with our kids about sex, love and relationships. We need to explain to them why we hold our values and listen to what they think and why so we may provide guidance.

Some values that might be discussed:

Unity, Respect, Love and affection, Understanding, Communication, Team work, Desire to excel, Sharing, Protection, Responsibility, Hard work.



## The Parents Speak Up National Campaign

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- *Showing of ad "Muffinhead"*

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Show them the ad and then discuss what they think about it.



This should also be handled as an activity.

Have parents identify who's talking to their kids about sex and what information is being provided. This will give parents the chance to share what they think kids face and let other parents know that they're dealing with the same external challenges.

Suggested questions:

Who is your child spending time with?

What influence do you think he/she/it has on your children?

What kind of information do you think they're providing to your children?

Who do you think your child would like to get information about sex from?



## Why do you need to talk to your kids?

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- Delaying sexual activity is linked to a child's future success in their career, education and overall happiness.
- Teen sex can deflate self-esteem, erode optimism and spoil the quality of intimate relationships.
- 66% of sexually active teens wish they had waited.
- Teens themselves say that abstaining from sexual activity would help them be more successful.



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If our kids delay sexual activity they are more likely to attain their goals and dreams by staying focused on what they'd like to pursue:

Some discussion questions may include:

- What do your kids want to do when they grow up?
- How can they reach their goals and dreams?
- How can we help them attain those goals and dreams?



## Why do you need to talk to your kids?

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### **The Hispanic community has unique challenges:**

- The second highest teen pregnancy rate:
  - 131 per 1,000 compared to 75 for the national average.
- The highest teen birth rate.
  - 83 per 1,000, more than double the national rate.
- 51% of Hispanics/Latinas in the U.S. become pregnant at least once before age 20.
- In 2005, nearly 80% of Hispanic teen births were to unmarried mothers.

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Our community, as with any, faces unique challenges when it comes to teens and sexuality. Here are some facts to help us understand that. But our personal experience can tell us a lot too.

Suggested discussion questions:

- How else have you seen this issue affect our community?
- Other communities?

Sources:

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. October 2006.

National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 56, No. 6, pp. 55, 57 (December 5, 2007).



## More Health Concerns

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- Each year 9 million cases of STDs occur in the US, nearly half of them are among young people aged 15-24; highest STD rate in the US.
- Teens, especially girls, who have sexual intercourse may be at greater risk for depression.
- Boys and girls with symptoms of depression are more likely to get involved in very risky sexual behaviors.

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Source 1: *American Social Health Association.*

Source 2: "Which Comes First in Adolescents - Sex and Drugs or Depression?" *American Journal of Preventive Medicine.* 29, 3 (2005)

Source 3: "Depressive Symptoms as a Longitudinal Predictor of Sexual Risk Behaviors Among U.S. Middle and High School Students." *Pediatrics* 118.1 (2006)



## Facing the Barriers

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- Sex is considered a “taboo” topic
- Language barriers
- Generational differences
- Gender-based roles

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Discuss each reason.

**Sex is a taboo topic** – Today sex is still a taboo and we just don’t like to talk about it.

**Tip:** Get information and be prepared to talk to your kids about sex and any other topic.

**Language barriers** – Most kids speak English while many parents only speak Spanish. Don’t let this stop you from talking with your kids – there’s information available in Spanish.

**Tip:** Learn their lingo. This may also be a great opportunity to learn English! Seek information and be confident when you talk to them about sex. Your kids will listen to you.

**Generational differences** – There are many cultural differences between 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Hispanics in the US. For example: Many Hispanic parents think that raising a child in the US is the same as raising a child in their native country.

**Tip:** Keep it real. Yes, it is very important to keep your traditions and instill your values but also be open to understand and embrace positive things from the culture that you and your kids are already part of.

**Gender-based roles** – Family roles and stereotypes can be a huge barrier to healthy dialogue about waiting to have sex. Sometimes, moms, more so than dads, take the lead in talking about sex with the kids. Sometimes it’s the other way around. Either way, it’s not healthy. It gives kids the idea that the other parent does not care or that they can’t talk to him or her about sex.

**Tip:** Mom and dad, you both should talk to your kids about sex and any other topic! Whatever tasks a mom and dad take on in a family, your kids need to hear from both of you about sex. The issue is too important to leave to one parent. Each parent has a unique way of communicating your family’s values to your children. There may be some topics that are best left to just mom or just to dad, but you both should have a say in your son’s and daughter’s decisions about sex.



## Facing the Barriers

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- Parental absence
- Conflicting social interests
- Extended family interference
- Lack of education about sex

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**Parental absence** due to work, single parenting, and different immigration status.

**Tip:** Get involved and be part of your kids' lives in all ways possible! Parental involvement is crucial to being aware of and understanding what's going on in the life of your kids. Being involved ensures you are available to provide guidance and support when your kids need it. This also pertains to caregivers.

**Conflicting social interests** – Many parents and kids engage in their own activities during spare time instead of spending family time together. Examples: Watching TV shows/novelas (Soap Operas), playing sports, going out with friends, talking on the phone, etc.

**Tip:** Your kids are more important than anything or anyone else! Spend quality time with them – this will help enrich your relationship.

**Extended family interference** – In many cases, the extended family members: aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc all want to have a say in the upbringing of the kids.

**Tip:** You are the parent – be firm about it! As much as family members want to contribute their piece of advice, be the main provider of information for your children. This will avoid contradictory messages. And it will help keep your own relationships with these family members strong and healthy.

**Lack of education** – Many of us didn't receive this education from anyone when we were kids. Maybe our parents didn't talk about it or it wasn't covered at school. We may think that the information is not available, but it is. It's important to learn about this subject and any other for our own and our kids' sake. This will also help improve our communication with our kids.



## Mixed Messages

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In our community two different messages are sent:

- Girls are expected to wait until marriage to have sex.
- Boys are unintentionally pressured to start sexual activity to prove their manhood.

### **We need to send them both the consistent message:**

“If you’ll wait to have sex, you have a better chance for success and happiness.”

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Today “machismo” still plays a major role in many Hispanic homes, especially when it comes to sex. Unfortunately in our community, more than in others, two different messages are sent to our sons and daughters.

Hispanic boys might be interpreting this mixed message as approval or encouragement to initiate sex early.

It’s time to break the cycle! Let’s make sure we give them both the consistent message to wait to have sex.

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



## Parents Can Make a Difference



- Research shows that parents have the greatest influence on their teens' sexual decisions – more than their peers or the media.
- 9 out of 10 teens say that it would be easier to wait to have sex if they could talk with their parents about it.
- Parents who talk to their kids early and often about the importance of waiting are more likely to have children who wait.

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It's important to realize that parents can have an impact. We tend to think that teens ignore our advice or what we have to say. But they'll listen if we speak up.

Suggested discussion questions:

- Do you agree with these numbers?
- Why or why not?



## Benefits of Waiting

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Telling your kids to wait can help them:

- Avoid unwanted pregnancies
- Prevent sexually transmitted infections
- Help them have a high self-esteem
- Help them focus on personal and educational goals
- Succeed in life
- Avoid feelings of guilt and/or regret

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Most parents hope their kids will wait as long as possible before having sex. But we don't often know why we feel that way. Sure, our values influence our views on this. But there are definite benefits to waiting.



## Talking to your kids: What do we say?

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- What do we tell our kids?

**“Talk with your kids early and often. Tell them you want them to wait to have sex. And they’ll have a better chance at success.”**

- Key messages:
  - Communication
  - Values
  - Goals
- Talking with your kids about waiting to have sex is linked to their success.

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Communication – Let’s be prepared to talk about the subject openly.

Values – Let’s express our values and explain why we have these values.

Goals – Talk about their goals and dreams and support them to stay focused to achieve them.



## Are you Connected with Your Child?

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### **HOMEWORK:**

- Talk to your kids about their goals and dreams. (academic, professional, personal, etc)
- How do you feel about those goals and dreams?
- What are your expectations for your kids?
- Share your values and expectations with your child.

**It's time to re-connect!**

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In many cases, there is a disconnect between parents and their kids. If there is no connection or communication between them about daily life events or each other's interests, it is unlikely there will be communication about waiting to have sex. Parents need to re-connect with their children so they can feel comfortable talking about sex and waiting.

Homework assignment for the 2nd session of the Parents Speak Up workshop:

Talk to your kids about their goals and dreams. (Academic, professional, personal, etc)

How do you feel about those goals and dreams?

What are your expectations for your kids?

Take this opportunity to share your values and expectations with your child.

You may start to talk to them about waiting to have sex.

We will discuss and share the experience during session 2.



## Next session

**Save the Date!** (Date of session 2)

Discussion points:

- **When** and **how** to talk to your kids about waiting to have sex
- **Tips** to make the conversation easier
- You will be able to **share** your experience with other parents

***Bring your friends!***

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END OF SESSION 1 of 2

Have parents write down the date for session 2 and ask them to bring at least 1 friend to the 2nd session,



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## Parents Speak Up Workshop session 2

Presented by:

[name]

*Hispanic Outreach Center*

More information:

[Phone number]

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The workshop can start with a song or an activity as an icebreaker.

The speaker should:

- Ask if there are new parents. If so, introduce him/herself and ask parents to sign the attendance sheet;
- Give an overview of what the workshop will cover and how long it will last; and
- Make clear that all opinions are welcome, but that we should all respect what others have to say.



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Let's talk about why we're here. Remind them that this workshop is part of the Parents Speak Up National Campaign.



## Quick review

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- Parents have the greatest influence on their teens' sexual decisions
- Health risks of sexual activity
- Barriers to starting the conversation about waiting to have sex

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This is a re-cap of the first session. Go over the points and invite parents to share what they learned during session 1.



## Activity: Roundtable

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Break up into small groups

- **Discuss:**
  - What was your child's reaction?
  - What are your child's goals and dreams?
  - How did you feel?
  - Was it difficult?
  - What did you learn?
- **Share** your findings with the whole group

Now that you've made a connection, **talk** to your child about waiting to have sex

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Divide the parents into teams of 5-6 parents.

Each team will discuss their experience about the conversation with their kids about their goals and dreams, and about waiting to have sex (those who did). Once the whole group is brought together again, then they can share findings and what they learned.

### Discussion questions:

What was your child's reaction? How did they respond to you being interested in their interests?

What are your child's goals and dreams? Do they match your expectations?

How did you feel? Was it hard to talk about them? Were they open to sharing their aspirations with you?

What did you learn? Do you feel confident enough to talk to them about waiting to have sex?



## Why Do Parents Find Talking So Hard?

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- Many say that their parents didn't talk to them so they feel uncomfortable and unprepared to talk to their children.
- Many feel a sense of loss as they see their child transition into adolescence in a culture that's different from their own.
  - Loss of close bond with their child
  - Loss of influence over their child's decisions

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Review some of the barriers discussed in the first session and any new ideas the parents have.

Barriers discussed in session 1:

- Sex is considered a “taboo” topic
- Language barriers
- Generational differences
- Gender-based roles
- Parental absence
- Conflicting social interests
- Extended family interference
- Lack of education about sex

After listing the barriers and discussing them, then write a second list of what parents say would help them overcome those barriers or make the conversation easier.



## Talking Benefits Both the Parent and Child

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- **Children will:**

- Receive strong values that can help them deal with the sexual pressures they'll face as a teen.
- Feel supported in achieving their long-term goals.



- **Parents will:**

- Maintain a close relationship with their child and continue to be an important part of their life as they grow into adulthood.
- Continue to be a primary influence in their child's decisions.

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Emphasize the positive impact their involvement will have in their children's lives and in their own.



## When and How to Talk

- Where to start
  - **Talk early** – when your child is beginning the transition into adolescence.
  - **Talk often** to reinforce your values and maintain an open communication with your child.
  - **Share your expectations and values** about sex and the importance of waiting to both boys and girls.
  - **Tell them to wait** to have sex for a better chance of success and happiness.



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We often feel afraid of giving too much information at an early age. Age 10 is an appropriate age to start the conversation, remember they are exposed to other sources that may misinform them. However, you could start earlier with age-appropriate information. This could help ease the transition to adolescence and keep the lines of communication open.

Instill your values and support their goals and dreams.



## They Want To Hear It From You

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What should you know?

- **Educate yourself** on the subject and give them the facts about sex.
- **It's okay to not know**. If you don't have an answer, find it together.
- **Listen attentively** to your child's concerns about sex, help them find information to address those concerns.
- **Share appropriate personal experiences** that can help ease the conversation.

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We often think that as parents we are expected to know all the answers. It's okay to accept that you don't have the information; you can take this opportunity to share a learning experience with your child. Your honesty will help them trust you whenever they have any doubts or concerns.



## It's Easier Than You Think

### How to approach the topic:

- Use movies, TV and everyday occurrences as conversation starters.
- Offer small pieces of information – build up the information over time.
- Have conversations during everyday, enjoyable activities (driving, playing soccer, cooking etc.)
- Avoid confrontation that may cause discomfort.
- Ask questions to get your child to talk about their beliefs.
- Keep it light and casual.



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Everyday activities with your children can be an invitation to start the conversation about sex and waiting. Parents may share their experience with their children.



## Activity: Role Play

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### Scenarios:

- 10 year-old asks both parents: "What's sex?"
- Parent and child driving and a suggestive song plays on the radio.
- You're having dinner and your child brings up the fact that a student is pregnant in school.
- You're at the park and you see a teen couple engaging in inappropriate behavior.

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### Role play:

For best practice purposes, the FACILITATOR will play the teen/child role and have parents play the parent role. Give them different scenarios to act in front of the class.

With your guidance, invite parents to provide feedback and/or share how they would have handled the situation. This helps empower parents since they're receiving guidance from you as well as from other parents who are going through similar experiences.



## A Plan for Success

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Help your kids develop a plan for success:

- Set goals
- Create a “success map” together
- Provide support
- Help them stay focused
- Be and stay involved in their life

**“Talk with your kids early and often. Tell them you want them to wait to have sex. And they’ll have a better chance at success.”**

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Stress the importance for parental involvement in helping their kids set goals and develop a plan to achieve their goals.

Parents need to help their children understand the negative impact sexual activity can have on their future.



## Help Teens Develop Refusal Skills

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They can say “No” by being “**NICE**”

- **N** – Say “No.”
- **I** – Follow with an “I” statement.
- **C** – If pressure continues, change subject or location.
- **E** – If these strategies don’t help, your teen needs an “exit” plan.

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Here’s an easy way to give your kids a strategy for waiting.

Examples of “I” statements:

- I plan to wait until I’m married before I have sex.
- I plan to wait until I’m out of high school to have sex.

Talk to your children about ways to deal with sexual pressures and how to get out of the situation if necessary. Once again, instill your values and encourage respect for themselves and others.



## Start the Conversation

Believe in your kids and in yourself:

- Be confident when you express your values and expectations.
- Believe in their ability to wait to have sex and express it to them often.
- Praise your children to help them build a high self-esteem.
- Encourage self-respect and respect for others.
- Set an example for your children with your own lifestyle.



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Your children need to perceive security, maturity and confidence in your explanation of sexuality and your values. Prepare yourself beforehand. Also, remember that your children will learn the concept of love, commitment, and sex through your actions and lifestyle.

Stress to parents that they may still tell their kids to wait even if they didn't wait. This is a tough issue because a lot of parents may be dealing with it. Remind parents that our past choices do not change what's best for our kids today. There is wisdom in the saying, "If you tell your teen not to do what you are doing, you are a hypocrite. But if you tell them not to do what you did, you are a teacher." Explain how waiting can help kids prevent the negative consequences of sexual activity. You should also emphasize that waiting allows them to focus on more positive, constructive activities - like school work, friendships, goals, athletics, and other activities.

Give parents the committed parent card and have them read it out loud and sign it.

Play the song "No Basta" by Franco de Vita.



## We're Here to Help

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Get help and support at: [www.4parents.gov](http://www.4parents.gov)

What you'll find there:

- Facts
- Tips to start the conversation
- Downloadable tools

Other tools:

- "Parents Speak Up" brochure
- "Teen Chat"

*Materials are also available in Spanish!*

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Have them fill out the evaluation forms.

In some occasions parents may ask for specific support in other areas. If this is the case, refer them to the lead agency which will refer them to a place where they may be able to get additional support.



## We're Here to Help

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*Additional Parent Groups in English/Spanish:  
(List events and information on lead agency)*

*Bring your friends!*

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- Provide information about the upcoming community event, workshop, etc. Hand out available Pachanga (The Party), Parrillada (The Picnic) or De Hombre a Hombre (Man to Man) flyers.

- Also give parents the PSUNC collateral materials available along with the *10 Tips to Help You Talk With Your Child About Sex and Waiting*.



## Statistics and More Information

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**The statistics used in this presentation can be found in the following places:**

- Maynard, R.A., "The Costs of Adolescent Childbearing," in R.A. Maynard (ed.), *Kids Having Kids: Economic Costs and Social Consequences of Teen Pregnancy*, Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press, 1997, pp. 285-338.
- Singh, S., & Darroch, J.E., "Adolescent Pregnancy and Childbearing: Levels and Trends in Developed Countries," *Family Planning Perspectives*, 32(1), Jan./Feb. 1999, pp. 14-23.
- Resnick, M.D.; Bearman, R.S.; Blum, R.W.; Bauman, K.E.; Harris, K.M.; Jones, J.; Tabor, J.; Beuhring, T.; Sieving, R.E.; Shew, M.; Ireland, M.; Bearinger, L.H.; and Udry, J.R. "Protecting Adolescents From Harm. Findings From the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health." *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997, 278:823-832.

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## Statistics and More Information

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- Albert, Bill. "With One Voice 2007: America's Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy." National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. February 2007.
- The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. "Teen Sexual Activity, Pregnancy and Childbearing Among Latinos in the United States." October 2006. Available online at: [http://www.teenpregnancy.org/resources/reading/fact\\_sheets/default.asp](http://www.teenpregnancy.org/resources/reading/fact_sheets/default.asp).
- American Social Health Association. "STD Fact Sheets: Hispanics and Sexually Transmitted Diseases." Available online at: <http://www.ashastd.org/news/hisp.cfm>.

[www.4parents.gov](http://www.4parents.gov) is a useful resource for finding these and other facts and figures.

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