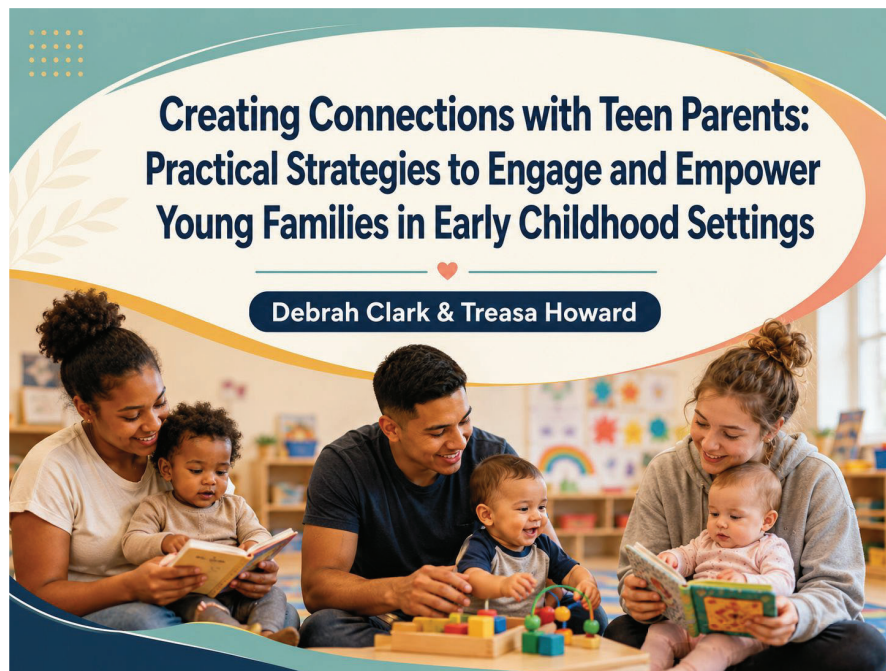




WELCOME!

TODAY'S OBJECTIVES:

- IDENTIFY KEY DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEEN AND ADULT PARENTS, AND ANALYZE HOW PARENTAL DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES MAY INFLUENCE CHILD DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES.
- EXAMINE COMMON STEREOTYPES ABOUT TEEN PARENTS AND EVALUATE HOW THESE PERCEPTIONS IMPACT PARENTING CONFIDENCE, ENGAGEMENT, AND CLASSROOM OUTCOMES.
- IDENTIFY EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES AND DETERMINE PRACTICAL WAYS TO REPLICATE THEM ACROSS PROGRAMS.

2

Poll #1

Which assumption about teen parents have you encountered most often?

- A. They chose to become pregnant and/or parent.
- B. They are irresponsible or don't care about parenting.
- C. They don't know how to care for their child.
- D. They won't finish school or become successful.
- E. They don't want support or won't engage with programs.
- F. They made the right life choices and all will work out fine.

What you “think” matters!

(and what teen parents think, matters more.)



What is your opinion of young parents and their decisions and behaviors?



“How you are is as important as what you do”

—pawl & St. John, 1998

“Rather than focusing on individualistic solutions that further stigmatize teen mothers, we need to hone our professional skills and advocate for the resources that validate their strengths, recognize their struggles, and affirm their efforts to become the good mothers they want to be.”

—Lee SmithBattle, R.N., D.N.Sc.

The Prevention Researcher, Volume 10, Number 3, 2003

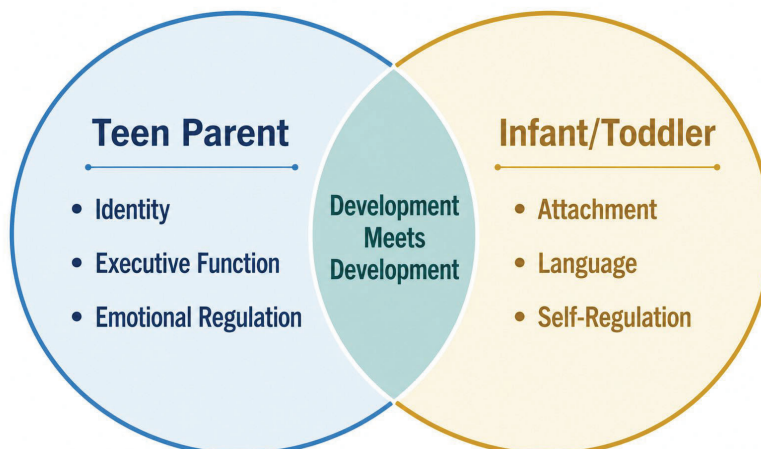
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The Classroom Lens

What This Looks Like in Real Time

Adolescent Brain Meets Infant Brain

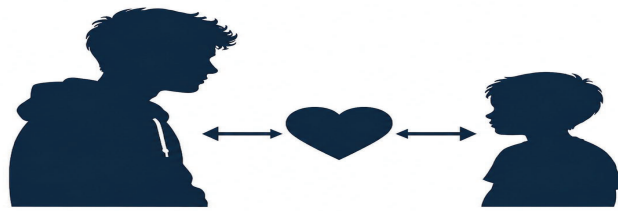


Two Learners in the Room

The child is learning.

The parent is learning.

Both deserve support.



Teen Parent ↔ Child
Learning • Growing • Developing

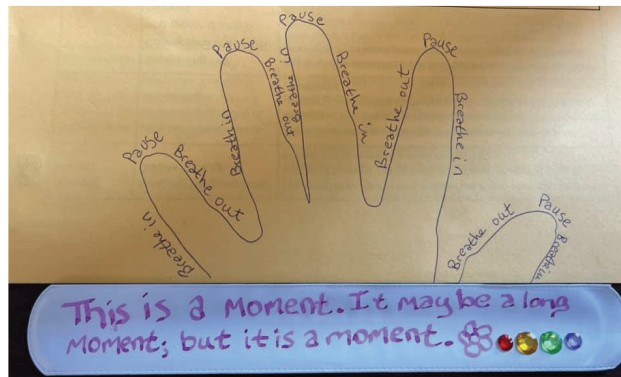
Understanding both changes how we respond.

7

Identity

Adolescents must figure out who they are and who they will be.

The behaviors they engage in to accomplish this are sometimes what cause the adults around them to wonder.



8

Everybody wants to hold the baby, but who holds the mom and dad?

PROTECTIVE FACTORS AND RESILIENCE

"The single most important factor in a child's development is the presence of a stable, loving adult."
Dr. Bruce Perry

Teacher Truth: Every seat holds a story.

COMPASSION IS AN ACTION WORD WITH NO BOUNDARIES.
-PRINCE

Every missed opportunity in childhood shows up later: in schools, in health, in justice.
-Zero to Three

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Assumption	Reality
 Teen parents are irresponsible.	 Many are balancing school, work, transportation, and parenting.
 Teen parents don't know how to parent.	 Many have cared for younger siblings and family members for years.
 Teen parents won't succeed.	 I've watched them become teachers, nurse practitioners, school employees, entrepreneurs, and college graduates.

Challenge is not the same thing as inability.

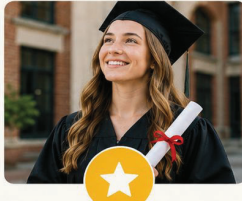
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What I Actually See









Potential is often hidden behind people's assumptions.

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Poll #2

What do you think is the biggest barrier to building trust with teen parents?

- A. Fear of being judged
- B. Past negative experiences with professionals
- C. Life stressors (school, transportation, housing, work)
- D. All of the above

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The teenager as a parent:

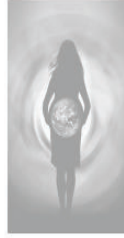
What are the roles of parents?
Teens usually believe the family way is the right way
even if experience and research prove otherwise.

(Sometimes we all do...)



When the world sees any parents, they see them as being:

- Financial providers
- Emotional guides
- Spiritual/religious leaders
- Disciplinarians
- Role models
- Moral educators
- Counselors
- Medical practitioners
- Tutors
- Advocates
- Protectors
- Responsible for all the child does.
- Etc.



When teenagers see themselves as parents, they see themselves as:

- Adults/more responsibilities
- Disciplinarians
- Being loved
- Having a purpose/having hope for the future
- "Strong but isolated": Adults against teen parents
- "A good parent"
- "TIRED"
- "Unsupported"

As practitioners, how do we see ourselves in the role supporter of the educational/life success of teen parents?

13

Trust Before Intervention

Relationship

Intervention



Trust makes difficult conversations possible.

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The Moment the Light Turns On



Respect changes relationships.

Trauma Truth

To be trauma-informed is to meet all human behavior with curiosity and respect. That's not soft or weak.

That is a profound act of strength.

BethTyson.com

Beth Tyson
TRAUMA COACHES

Relationship-based and Trauma-informed Care

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Small Moments Build Big Trust







Greeting

Listening

Conversation

Encouragement

Celebration

Trust is built one interaction at a time.

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! Instead of...

- "Why didn't you..."
- "You should..."
- "You need to..."



♥ Try...

- "Tell me more."
- "What are you noticing?"
- "Let's figure this out together."
- "I'll observe too."



Phrases that build partnership

18

Parent-Child Bonding Matters

Messy Art

Reading

Birth Stories

Name Origins

Special Moments

Connection builds confidence.

Teen Fathers Matter Too

Every father deserves the opportunity to build a relationship with his child.

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FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

YOUR FAMILY LIFE
WILL OUT LIVE YOU
AND LIVE INSIDE YOUR CHILD (REN)
FOREVER.

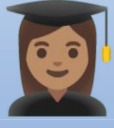
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Meet Jasmine



17 years old. High school senior. Mother of a 14-month-old son

What is your first impression?

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A Few Things You Notice.....

Late several mornings

Missed her teacher/parent conference

Brief responses

Forgot diapers

"She just doesn't seem invested or that she cares at all."

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Before We Respond

Instead of asking, "What's wrong with Jasmine?" ask:

What circumstances might we not be able to see

What might she be carrying?

What strengths do we see?

And how could we begin a conversation that builds trust rather than creates distance?

25

What Else Might Be True?

Possible realities

Curiosity creates connection.

- Transportation changed
- Family responsibilities
- Working after school
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Fear of judgment
- Housing instability

We didn't lower our expectations. We changed where we started.

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Poll #3

After today's webinar, what's one change you'll commit to making in your interactions with teen parents?

- A. Replace assumptions with curiosity.
- B. Build trust before offering advice.
- C. Use more relationship-centered language.
- D. Be more intentional about including teen fathers.
- E. Recognize and respond to each family's unique strengths and needs.

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The Biggest Lesson Teen Parents Taught Me

parenthood may change the path...
...but it does not determine the
destination.



Thank You

We hope you'll leave today with one reminder:

**Challenge is not the same thing as inability.
Potential grows where trust is planted.**

*When we choose curiosity over judgment, trust
before intervention, and relationships over
assumptions, we create connections that
strengthen children, empower parents, and
transform families.*

"Advocacy is a love language."

-Mia Carella, Writer

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Want to continue
the conversation?

So do we!

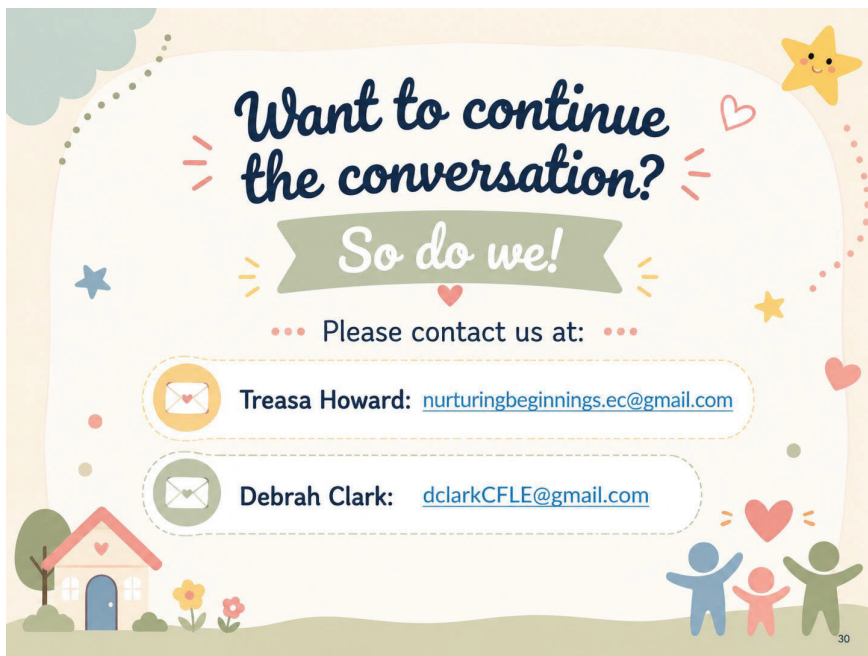
... Please contact us at: ...



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Debrah Clark: dclarkCFLE@gmail.com



Resources & References

News Feature

[Program Helps Illinois Teen Moms Earn High School Degree](#)
[WGN-TV](#)

Books

*When Children Want Children: The Urban Crisis of Teenage
Childbearing*
by Leon Dash

The Youngest Parents
by Robert Coles M.D. (Author), Jocelyn Lee (Photographer),
John Moses (Photographer)

*You Look Too Young to be a Mom: Teen Mothers on Love,
Learning, and Success*
by Deborah Davis (Editor)

Graphic Memoir

The Amazing True Story of a Teenage Single Mom
by Katherine Arnoldi

The Connection Toolkit

- ✓ Assume positive intent.
- ✓ Listen before solving.
- ✓ Build trust before intervention.
- ✓ Celebrate strengths.
- ✓ Include every parent.
- ✓ Remember: **Behind every behavior is a story.**

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Resources for Continued Learning

Adolescent Development & Teen Parents

Harvard Center on the Developing Child • Child Trends • ZERO TO THREE
Brain development, executive function, resilience, teen parenting, infant/toddler development, attachment, responsive caregiving
[Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University](#)

Trauma-Informed & Relationship-Based Practice

National Child Traumatic Stress Network • CSEFEL • National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations
Trauma-informed care, emotional support, responsive interactions, family partnerships, social-emotional development
[The National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)

Family Engagement

NAFSCE • Head Start PFCE Framework
Family-school partnerships, relationship-based engagement, parent leadership, community connections
[National Association for Family, School and Community Engagement](#)

Teen Fathers

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse / Fatherhood.gov
Father engagement, co-parenting, supporting fathers, professional development
[Homepage | Fatherhood.gov](#)

Recommended Books

The Whole-Brain Child • How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk • The Power of Showing Up

Reflection Questions

What assumptions do I bring? • How can I build trust first? • What language communicates partnership? • How am I including fathers? • What small interaction can I change tomorrow?

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Q&A



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