

ANNUAL RETROSPECTIVE STUDY 2008

Summary: Pregnancy rates, attitudes and behaviour changes among graduates of Teens & Toddlers



Teens and Toddlers

Teens and Toddlers is a national teenage pregnancy prevention, sexual health and experiential youth development initiative which targets young people considered to be 'at-risk' of experiencing an early pregnancy.

Research Aims

The aim of the current study was to continue the organisation's annual retrospective tracking. The focus was to assess pregnancy rates within the 'at-risk' sample with a focus on the under-18 age groups, and to analyse graduates' attitudes and opinions about teenage pregnancy.

Sample

Participants had participated in the Teens and Toddlers programmes in London Boroughs of Islington, Brent, Greenwich, Camden, Southwark, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Tower Hamlets, Northamptonshire and North-East Lincolnshire between 2001 and 2007. In order to qualify for inclusion in the questionnaire sample, participants needed to have completed the Teens and Toddlers programme at least 12 months prior to the survey and be under the age of 20 at the time of sampling. Therefore, participants from more recent programmes were not included.

Results

Pregnancy incidents

96.85% of the respondents did not report a pregnancy incident. There were a total of 8 pregnancy incidents reported overall, or 3.15% of the sample. In the under-16 age group one termination was reported. In the under-18 age group there were two births, two terminations, and three pending pregnancies. There were no pregnancy incidents in the under-20 age group. It is clear that this is a very low pregnancy rate, particularly considering that the national rate is 4.17% and also given the high risk young people that Teens and Toddlers targets.

Attitudinal findings

The current study demonstrates results that position the Teens and Toddlers programme as extending beyond its original remit of a teenage pregnancy prevention programme to also incorporating strong elements of a youth development approach. In fact, the findings demonstrate that participants receive broad benefits from the programme. Therefore it is perhaps best considered to be a youth development programme with a focus on sexual behaviour and sexual health, rather than being thought of as only a teenage pregnancy prevention programme.

A brief summary of the major attitudinal findings:

Response to questions	% positive
'During the T&T project I learned that having a good education can give you more choices in life.'	92.1%
'How much do you feel the T&T project influenced the age at which you would like to have children?'	82.3%
'20 or above' would be the right age to become a parent'	87.5%
'How much do you feel the T&T project influenced the age at which you would like to have a baby?'	82.3%
'How much do you feel that doing T&T made you more determined to achieve your goals?'	88.2%
'How much do you feel that doing T&T helped you understand the need to have financial security and a stable relationship before having a child?'	91.4%
'How much do you feel that doing T&T helped you feel more confident in yourself?'	82.2%
'During the T&T project I learned about sexual health – issues such as STIs, pregnancy, and deciding when to have sex.'	81.9%

Attitudinal differences

The full report of this study also includes a full analysis of differences across variables such as gender, NEET status, location and pregnancy status. The report also includes some quotes from young people who had a pregnancy incident, and compares them to quotes from those who have not experienced a pregnancy. The attitudes reported towards the Teens and Toddlers programme were extremely positive. It is clear that young people see Teens and Toddlers as very useful and worthwhile, and the results show that it has affected their attitudes regarding a number of important issues.

Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)

In this study young people were asked to rate the Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) that they received at school. Interestingly, the subject of 'Relationships' was the one which young people scored the lowest. This is in line with other research. Conversely, the Teens and Toddlers curriculum aims to talk about relationships with young people and help them to make well-informed decisions. The aspects of the SRE they received at school that they liked were 'balanced teaching', 'fun and informal teaching', and 'visitors in/visits out'. They disliked the fact that it was 'too short/general lack of it/not enough information', 'big groups', 'disorganised', 'an embarrassed teacher' and the 'class not taking it seriously'. In summary, the young people's views about the SRE they received at school seem to point to the value of Teens and Toddlers as an approach. This suggestion could warrant further research.

Conclusions

The findings of this retrospective study suggest that the Teens and Toddlers programme is a youth development programme that includes a robust teenage pregnancy prevention intervention that can be used effectively with at-risk populations. The lower than expected pregnancy rates achieved within the sample, coupled with consistent changes in important attitudes and behaviours, are strong evidence for the programme's efficacy. Further evidence is required through the gradual development of a larger sample size and regular tracking of graduates. In conclusion the findings of this study, in conjunction with previous tracking surveys, suggest that the Teens and Toddlers approach is very effective both in influencing young people's attitudes and actually preventing teenage pregnancy.

A brief summary of key learnings:

What respondents said they learnt from Teens and Toddlers

- Child development & the importance of working positively with young children
- Personal development and confidence-building
- Sexual health
- Waiting for sex / planning for a baby
- Interpersonal skills
- Parenthood, and how difficult having kids can be
- Importance of school, education, a job and financial security
- Relationships (having the right friends and partners)

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