

Free research paper on what impact does teen pregnancy have on the family

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



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Introduction

Though teenage pregnancy seems to be on the decline statistics wise with 11% drop in teen pregnancy for women aged between 15-17 years and 7% for women aged between 18-19 years, the US nevertheless continues to be highest in the rate of underage pregnancy in the developed world (CDC). Teen pregnancy affects everyone in the immediate family of the teenage mothers, but its effect does not remain limited only within the family. It also puts a financial burden on the entire nation. Since teen pregnancy hampers the education of teen mothers with about one third of them dropping out of high school, it has been estimated that " a single high school dropout costs the nation approximately \$260, 000 in lost earnings, taxes, and productivity" (Culp-Ressler, 2012). In my research on the effects of teen pregnancy upon the family, I have made use of documents that furnish pertinent information on the topic and I have found how teenage pregnancy contributes to an

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array of unexpected problems. In my essay I have first discussed how teen pregnancy places financial strain in the family, causes a feeling of disappointment and disillusionment on parents who struggle with the acceptance of their new role of grandparents prematurely and leaves the younger siblings disoriented and confused who try to follow in the footsteps of their pregnant or parenting teenage older sister. Then I have discussed the limitations of my research and how the information provided in the documents give partial view from women's side only without touching upon any real life example.

Financial Impact

Teen pregnancy puts a huge financial burden on the family. The financial strain unless handled effectively might throw the whole family unit in a state of disorder. After the baby is born, it becomes increasingly difficult for the teen mother to end her education and search for job to meet the demands of the newborn. Given the situation, looking for a job might seem the only solution but often it doesn't end well as the teen mother's education suffers badly. In most of the cases a teen mother who has her baby before the age of seventeen doesn't complete high school diploma and graduation and this lack of qualification puts them into a lifelong poor economic state (Hayes, 1987). As a result they turn to their parents asking for financial help thereby putting a huge financial burden on them to maintain an extended family. Most of the time the earnings made by the teen mothers are lower than average which they spend mostly on their children. If in case the teen mother decides to return to school to complete education then the family

income decreases and she seeks help from her own parents. If her own parents take up the responsibility of providing her with financial help, then it leads to the parents being unable to sufficiently provide for the demands of their other children. Moreover, rearing up a child involves a host of expenses including medical bills, prenatal care, insurance bills, bills for the hospitalization, daycare fees, car restraints, neonatal care, infant formula, diapers, bills for visits to doctors and medicines. The medical costs for teen pregnancy are most often borne by the insurance policy of the teen mother's parents which directly affects the other children dependent on them. Due to meet the extra demands for healthcare bill for the newborn child, teen mother's parents are to pay more for healthcare insurance as a result they need to cut cost down on other expenses which affect the interests of their other children. If in case the family of the teen mother doesn't have medical insurance or adequate medical insurance in place, then the grandparents of the newborn child are to bear the additional cost of every prenatal checkup, diagnostic tests and other related general visits.

Impact on Parents

Teen pregnancy throws the parents into a state of disillusionment. Parents of a teen mother feel betrayed and disappointed for the irresponsible act of their daughter. Teen pregnancy forces the father to bear the additional responsibility not only of his own family but also of the family of her daughter. The father becomes grandfather prematurely and in order to maintain his new role of a grandfather, his responsibility towards his other children suffers a great deal. It not only puts financial strain on the father, it

also puts emotional strain on him and he begins to think what went wrong in his upbringing of his children that he has to suffer the consequence of such an act of irresponsibility. He may increase control on the younger daughter of the family fearing that she might too step into the shoes of her elder sister and become pregnant in teenage. The long lasting effect of such a situation leads to a rift between the relationship of father and daughter as the father feels difficulty in trusting his daughters. Mother of a teenage mother also finds it difficult to tune herself into the role of a grandmother prematurely. From maternal perspective she too feels dismayed and disillusioned and questions herself where she lacked in teaching family values to her daughter. If the mother comes from a conservative background where teenage sexuality is looked upon as a taboo and pregnancy before marriage is considered sinful then it becomes more difficult for her to accept the fact of her daughter becoming a mother unwed. The mother then may try to avoid any social interaction with family and friends to hide the shame of teen pregnancy of her daughter. If a family has the history of teen pregnancy, then it is more than likely that the event would be repeated again in the family. Children of teen parents are more likely to become sexually active before they reach age 14 and are at higher risk of becoming teen parents themselves (Healthy Teen Network). The long lasting effect of teen pregnancy of a daughter on her mother is that she has to balance multifaceted roles of a mother, a wife, grandmother, babysitter, cook, mediator, cleaner and peacekeeper. Their role of a mother doesn't only end with raising their own kids; they are also to perform the new responsibility of a grandmother making compromises with their own lives.

Impact on Siblings

The relationship shared with siblings is the closest and the most long lasting relationship of all. There are plenty of research suggesting that the " closest sibling relationship are between sisters, followed by brother-sister relationships, and finally between brothers" (Leder, 1991). Naturally, the teen pregnancy leaves a huge impact on the mindsets of younger siblings of the teen mother. A study makes a comparison between 309 younger siblings of pregnant and never pregnant teenagers and comes up the finding that brothers of teen mothers are more accepting of adolescent sexuality than brothers of never pregnant teenage older sister. The younger brothers of teen moms also show more acceptance towards teen childbearing and report of more school problems than the brother of never pregnant teenage sisters (East, 1996, p 151). They are also more likely to become sexually active at an early age. The study result also finds out that younger sisters of teen mothers are more likely to become sexually active and become teen mothers. They are also more accepting towards teenage childbearing and adolescent sexuality. They are also more likely to involve in problematic behaviors such as suspension in school, stealing, fighting, vandalizing property and getting arrested by the law enforcement officers. Both brother and sister of teenage mothers look upon career and schooling as inconsequential. Especially the younger sisters are more at the risk of copying their elder sister's behavior as same sex siblings serve as 'stronger role models' than opposite sex siblings (East, 1996, p 148).

Limitations

The documents that I have made use of for writing this essay mainly throw light on the impact of teen pregnancy on the immediate family of the teen mothers and how teen mothers themselves and the children associated are the likely sufferers of this unexpected event, but these documents don't show any light on the impact teen pregnancy leaves on teen fathers. Most of the documents available on the topic have discussed the effect from the teen mother's side of view but didn't shed light on how men who beget children at teenage suffer due to the event. Further, these documents also lack real life examples of teen mothers whose lives changed due to the untimely pregnancy.

Conclusion

Teen pregnancy affects everyone in the immediate family of teenage mothers but its effect far reaches into causing a huge financial loss to the entire nation too. My research on the topic has come up with the extensive impact teenage pregnancy leaves on the immediate family of the teenage mothers. Their parents are the worst sufferers who are to feel the pinch of additional financial pressure due to the new responsibility, simultaneously coping up with their own feelings of distrust and disillusionment. Their siblings become more liberal towards teenage sexuality and are more likely to imitate the action of their older sister. However, in my research on the topic I have encountered few limitations such as the information furnished in the documents only touch upon the problems faced by the immediate family of teen mothers without throwing any light on the impact teen pregnancy

leaves in the life of teen fathers and their family. Further, the documents also fail to showcase any real life example of the problem.

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