



Florida State University's Young Parents Project



Teen Parents and their Children – Parenting with Safety, Support and Dignity

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FL MIECHV Webinar Series
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Our Time Together

- Dual developmental needs of teen and baby
- Complex trauma and resilience
- Reproductive justice
- Strategies to support parenting capacity and promote positive outcomes

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Our Work With Court-Involved Teen Parents and their Children



- Miami-Dade and Broward Counties
- Leon and surrounding counties

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Florida State University Young Parents Project

Based on a reflective practice model from Yale University - *Minding the Baby*® - An Evidence Based Model

- o Arietta Slade, Ph.D
- o Lois Sadler, PhD, APRN-BC, PNP





FSU Young Parents Program

Selection of treatment model -

- **Combination of Child-Parent Psychotherapy and Nurse-Family Partnership**
 - o Focus on mother-child relationship
 - o Based on theories of attachment
 - o Includes physical and mental health
 - o Population: Young families in urban, low-income environments
 - o Service provided through home visiting, with extensive outreach for each young family

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***Minding the Baby*®**

Employs primarily Master's Level Professionals for high need families to include weekly home visits

- *Infant Mental Health Specialist*
- *Nurse Practitioner or Registered Nurse*

In the Florida project, a *Social Worker* has been added to the team to work with the court and support concrete needs.

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"Being held in the mind of another"
 Jeree Pawl



****Think Development****



- Physical
- Cognitive
- Language
- Social Emotional

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The Adolescent Brain

- The human brain is not fully developed into an “adult brain” until age 25.
- The prefrontal cortex is the last part of the brain to mature.
- It controls the “executive functions” of the brain.



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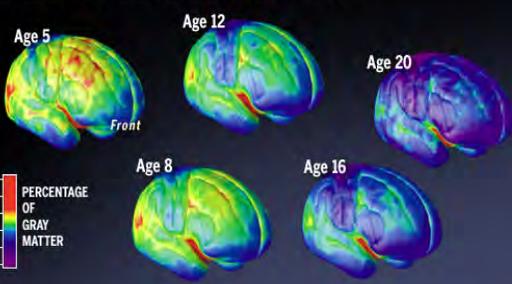
Executive Functions Include...



- Planning
- Setting priorities
- Organizing thoughts
- Suppressing impulses
- Weighing the consequences of one’s actions

Time-Lapse Brain

■ Gray matter wanes as the brain matures. Here 15 years of brain development are compressed into five images, showing a shift from red (least mature) to blue.



Age 5 Age 12 Age 20

Age 8 Age 16

50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

PERCENTAGE OF GRAY MATTER

Front

<< PREVIOUS NEXT: Launch Flash Movie >>

Understanding Adolescent Development

“Adolescents think and act differently than adults!”



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Think Development



- Physical
- Cognitive
- Language
- Social Emotional

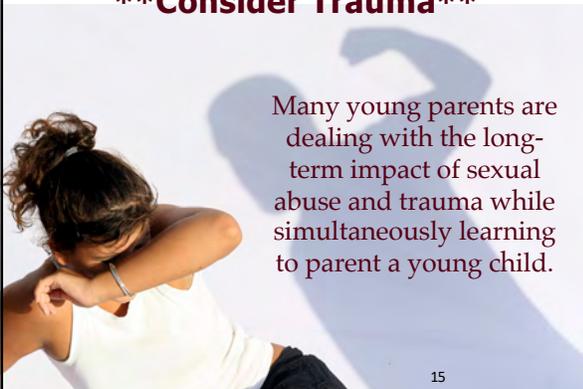
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Focus on the Relationship

- Your observations over time
- Who supports the teen in her parenting role?
- Importance of reading and floor time play to promote interaction

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Consider Trauma

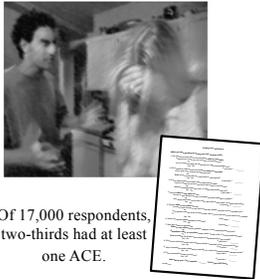


Many young parents are dealing with the long-term impact of sexual abuse and trauma while simultaneously learning to parent a young child.

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The ACE Study

The Life Long Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences



- Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse
- Emotional or physical neglect
- Household mental illness, alcoholism or substance abuse
- Family violence
- Incarcerated family member
- Parental separation or divorce

Of 17,000 respondents, two-thirds had at least one ACE.

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ACEs Connection to Teen Pregnancy

- The relationship between ACEs and adolescent pregnancy is strong. As the ACE score increased, the likelihood of a teen pregnancy increased.

- Pediatrics, Feb. 2004

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ACEs Connection to Sexual Trafficking

- Youth charged with trafficking have the highest rates of adverse experiences. Flaherty et al., 2013
- This finding has important implication for services provided to maltreated youth and juvenile offenders. Narramore et al., 2015

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Sexual Trafficking

- Florida, particularly South Florida, serves as a major hub for sex trafficking
- High incidence among court-involved youth
- Unique service needs for young women who are pregnant or parenting

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Levels of Involvement

Unresolved childhood sexual abuse Parent did not acknowledge abuse or seek trauma treatment

↓

Parents used children for their own gain, ages 10 – 12 To support needs for drugs/alcohol/resources

↓

Teen moves into "The Life", ages 13 – 15 Unsupported, moves onto the streets into the world of trafficking

↓

Teen enters the court system, age 15 Law violation or dependency needs. Court learns teen is pregnant or parenting

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Interpersonal violence

A common and dangerous reality for teen parents

- Teens and young adults are especially vulnerable, with violence intensifying when the teens found out they were pregnant.
- Time of greatest risk for homicide is during pregnancy

(Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2010)



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Interpersonal violence

- Impacts health outcomes
 - delay in prenatal care
 - substance abuse
 - depression
 - birth control use
 - accessing health care
- Impacts the developing relationship with their child

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Parent ACE Connection to their Child's Development

- Parental ACE exposures can negatively impact child development in multiple domains
- Three of more maternal ACEs was associated with significantly increased risk for a suspected developmental delay
- A similar trend was observed for paternal ACEs

- Folger, 2018

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Response to Trauma

- Fight
- Flight, or
- Freeze

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Address Trauma

- Take time to learn their story, as little or as much as they want to share
- Recognize the impact of trauma on the parenting relationship
- Link to specialized clinical services with highly qualified professionals when needed
- Recognize that each stage of development, trauma may need to be re-addressed

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Tasks of Parenting

- Engage with your baby
- Delight in everyday moments
- Allow your child to explore and learn about their world
- Support your child in beginning to regulate emotions
- Promote safety and security

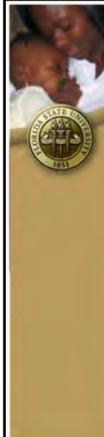
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Strengths of Young Parents

What are your experiences?

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Reproductive Justice

Parenting with safety, support and dignity.



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Relationship-based Intervention

A teenage parent's new relationship with a supportive home visitor...



can bring what they may have missed earlier in their lives.

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Both teens and babies need...

- Dependability & Availability
- Predictability & Consistency
- Repeated experiences that leave them feeling worthy, loveable, capable, & competent



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Utilize a Reflective Practice Model

- Consider the challenges for staff in serving this population
- Provide ongoing support through on-call assistance and regular reflective supervision
- Recognize this is the hardest work... and, perhaps, the most rewarding!

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Multidisciplinary Teaming

1. Bring everyone to the table
2. Consider needs of parent and child
3. Respect role of teen parent and the challenges of adolescence
4. Remember the importance of the period of infancy



Transitions Challenges & Opportunities

Resistance	Engagement
Disconnected	Social Supports/ community resources
Identity as a Teenager	Identity as a Young Parent

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Thanks to Our Partners!



2nd Judicial Circuit
for Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon,
Liberty, and Wakulla Counties

Minding the Baby®
Early, evidence program

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