

# A Role for Mentoring in Racine, Wisconsin: Serving Pregnant and Parenting Teens

January 17, 2008

# Introduction

## Research Goal

Explore whether a mentoring component should be added to the Partners Educating Parent Students (PEPS) Program

# Introduction

## PEPS Defined

PEPS is a one semester transitional program offered by the Racine Unified School District (RUSD) to help pregnant and parenting students complete school and prepare for life after school.



# Introduction

## PEPS Program Delivery Partners

- RUSD
- The Racine Workforce Development Center
- Gateway Technical College
- Professional Services Group
- Racine County Human Services Department

# Introduction

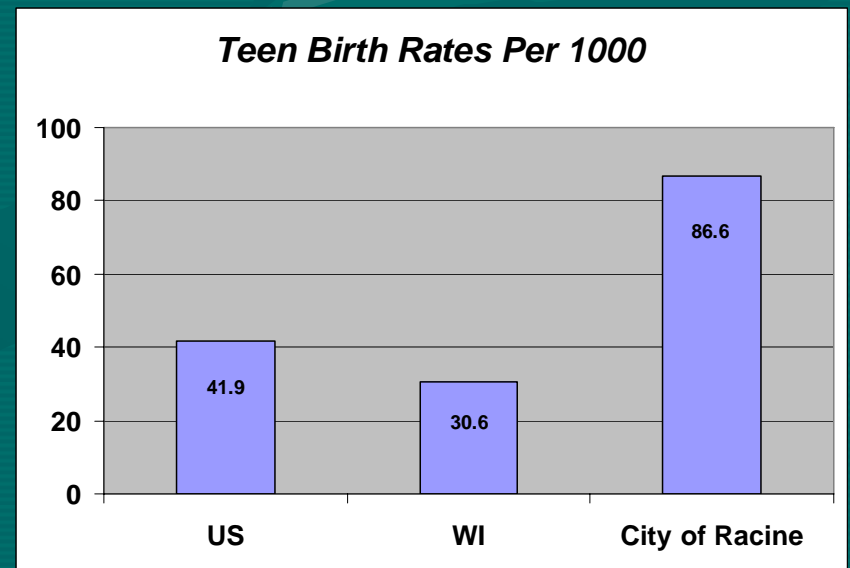
## Methodology

Interviews were conducted with PEPS participants, PEPS staff members, former teen mothers, and existing teen mentor program providers. A literature review was also completed.

# Introduction

## Scope of the Issue

- 2006 U.S. Teen Birth Rate: 41.9 births per 1000 female teens (first increase in 15 years)
- 2006 Wisconsin teen birth rate: 30.6
- 2006 City of Racine teen birth rate: 86.6 (highest in the state)



# Introduction



## Scope of the Issue

- In the Racine Unified School District there are over 200 pregnant or parenting teens
- In Fall, 2007 PEPS enrolled 16 teens at the most risk of dropping out

# Key Findings

## Pregnant and Parenting Teens Challenges:

Overwhelming responsibilities

Attending to newborn's needs

Balancing school and home

Being independent

Finances

Being judged and disrespected

Feelings of guilt

Social Inadequacy

Ostracism



# Key Findings

## Experience in Having A Formal Mentor

- *PEPS Participants: 14%*
- *Former Teen Moms: 0%*



# Key Findings

- 86%: PEPS Participants Wanting a Mentor
- 63%: Former Teen Moms Who Wanted A Mentor
- 100%: Former Teen Moms Who Would Recommend Mentors for Peers
- 100%: PEPS Staff Who Would Like to Add a Mentoring Component

# Key Findings

## Roles a Mentor Could Provide:

Friend

Continuity of service

Support from outside the system

Positive role model

Life skills training

Long term support

Resource referrals

Job skills development

Opportunity for fun

# Key Findings

## Preferred Mentor Characteristics:

- Trustworthy
- Positive
- Consistent
- Sweet but firm
- Not condescending
- Understanding
- Available
- Good listener
- Loving heart
- Experienced mom
- Patient



# Key Findings

Mentoring helps young people

- Face challenges
- Improve attitudes
- Stay in school
- Explore careers
- Stay away from drugs
- Keep out of fights



***Youth-at-risk are most likely to benefit from mentoring.***

# Key Findings

Mentoring helps pregnant and parenting teens

- Feel less depressed and socially isolated
- Breast feed children longer
- Connect with resources
- Have babies with higher birth weights
- Take more time before having a second baby

# Conclusion

Adding a mentoring component to PEPS would be an extremely valuable service to the program participants.

# Recommendations

- Create a clear mentoring program structure, including volunteer recruitment, screening, orientation, training, matching, and ongoing mentor support and supervision.
- Be cognizant that the first three months of the mentoring relationship is pivotal. Help the mentor to persevere.

# Recommendations

- Make sure the mentoring component is complimentary to the efforts of the rest of the PEPS programming.
- While focusing on building trusting relationships, help the mentors learn how to set boundaries and parameters for the relationship.

# Recommendations

- Give the teens input into how the program is set up and what needs are addressed. Listen to and heed their opinions.
- Set clear mentoring programming goals and build in evaluation into the program design.

# Recommendations

- Do not start the mentoring component at the beginning of the PEPS program semester. Consider how the mentoring program can act as a bridge for the teen as they move on from their PEPS programming.

