

# Older Teens: The Forgotten Age

Teen pregnancy prevention among 18-19 year-olds



*“Adults should not assume that children are ‘out of the woods’ when they turn 18, particularly considering that the risk of pregnancy actually increases as teens get older.”*

Power To Decide (formerly National Campaign to Prevent Teen & Unplanned Pregnancy)



## Older teens, ages 18-19, are:

- Over 7 out of every 10 teen births in Oklahoma.
  - More likely to be having a subsequent birth.
    - Less likely, if males, to use protection consistently.
    - Most likely to have had sex if they are not working and are not in school.

## What do they need?

- **MEDICALLY ACCURATE INFORMATION** about reproductive health from well-trained and trusted health care providers who have an aptitude for relating well with young people – or from high quality online sources.
- **EASY-TO-ACCESS, CONFIDENTIAL, FREE OR LOW-COST REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES** that meet their needs and are provided in settings which are comfortable for both male and female teens.
- **MESSAGES AND INCENTIVES** in school, at work and in community settings that encourage them to take care of their reproductive health and plan for the future.
- **ENCOURAGEMENT AND ASSISTANCE** to complete their education, secure employment and prepare for parenthood *before* they start a family.

## For ideas and resources:

**Answer: Sex Ed, Honestly**  
[answer.rutgers.edu/page/](http://answer.rutgers.edu/page/)

**Power To Decide (National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy)**  
[powertodecide.org](http://powertodecide.org)  
[stayteen.org](http://stayteen.org)  
[bedsider.org](http://bedsider.org)

**Healthy Teen Network**  
[healthyteennetwork.org](http://healthyteennetwork.org)

**Healthy Teens OK!**  
[healthyteensok.org](http://healthyteensok.org)

**Take Control-Oklahoma**  
[takecontrolinitiative.org](http://takecontrolinitiative.org)

**Advocates for Youth**  
[advocatesforyouth.org](http://advocatesforyouth.org)

## What this means for teen pregnancy prevention:

**Parents and other adults** can still have a strong influence on older teens... and need to find ways to keep communicating and stay connected with the teens in their families and daily lives.

**Peer influences** remain strong for older teens, although their larger group of peers may be replaced by a few close friends and more serious relationships.

**Feeling connected to school** (college or other training settings) is important for older teens, as a sense of belonging and engagement has been associated with lower rates of substance abuse, sexual intercourse, violence, delinquency and suicide among teens.

For more information, check:

**Amplify Tulsa**  
[amplifytulsa.org](http://amplifytulsa.org)

**Healthy Teens OK!**  
[healthyteensok.org](http://healthyteensok.org)

**Thrive: Sexual Health Collective for Youth**  
[thriveokc.org](http://thriveokc.org)

## Youth Assets as Protective Factors

The Youth Asset Study (YAS), a CDC-funded research project conducted by the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, explored the relationship between 17 key youth assets and 8 risk behaviors. Over 1,100 pairs of youth and a parent in the Oklahoma City area participated in the survey.

Of the 286 older teens surveyed, **nearly 3 out of 4 (72%) of the said they had had sexual intercourse -- and almost half (46%) of those said they did not always use birth control.** Over one-third (35%) said they had been pregnant.

Of the 17 youth assets, those most strongly associated with **not having had sex** for 18-19 year-olds (female and male) were:

- **Parental Monitoring**
- **Positive Peer Role Models**
- **Relationship with Father**
- **Non-Parental Adult Role Models**
- **School Connectedness**

Assets for females associated with **not becoming pregnant** by ages 18-19 were:

- **Parental Monitoring**
- **School Connectedness**
- **Family Communication**
- **Non-Parental Adult Role Model**
- **Positive Peer Role Model**

## Positive Relationships Matter!

Compared to youth without these assets, youth with...

- Parental Monitoring were 10 times less likely to have had sex and, if female, were 6 times less likely to have been pregnant.
- Positive Peer Role Models were 4 times less likely to have had sex and, if female, were 2-1/2 times less likely to have been pregnant.
- A positive Relationship with Father were over 3 times less likely to have ever had sex.
- School Connectedness were 2-1/2 times less likely to have had sex and, if female, were 3-1/2 times less likely to have been pregnant.
- Adult Role Models were 2-1/2 times less likely to have had sex and, if female, were 2-1/2 times less likely to have been pregnant.