

Defining the Issue

There are many challenges facing children, youth and families in underserved communities of the District of Columbia including limited access to quality and affordable health care and contraceptive services, homelessness, HIV and Aids, sexually transmitted infections and diseases, substance abuse and early initiation of sex amongst youth. In 2009, nearly 14 percent of D.C. high school students reported having sexual intercourse before age 13; and 40 percent reported having had sexual intercourse with one or more people in the last three months. Engaging in early age sexual activity and increased unsafe behaviors can have an impact on a teenager's academics, safety, social relationships and self-esteem.



Research has shown that being a teen with intellectual disabilities places the youth at greater risk for becoming a teen parent. Teens with intellectual disabilities are also at greater risks of low self-esteem, having an earlier age of initiation of sexual activity, and/or of being sexually abused before the age of 18. Families with mothers whose first birth was during their teen years are much more likely to be reported for child abuse or neglect than are families with non-teen mothers.

Addressing the Issue: C.A.R.E. Program at AJE

The Committed Adolescents Being Responsible and Empowered (C.A.R.E.) Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program is a district-wide program designed to ensure that early intervention strategies and best practices are employed in response to adolescent health and sexual behaviors that lead to early or unwanted pregnancy and HIV and sexually transmitted infections and diseases. This program provides sexuality education and access to health and contraceptive services for youth and young adults (ages 12 – 19) with special needs. AJE defines special needs as developmental, cognitive, physical, social, and psychological disabilities, and includes children and youth who have suspected disabilities, but have yet to be identified.

The C.A.R.E. Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program:

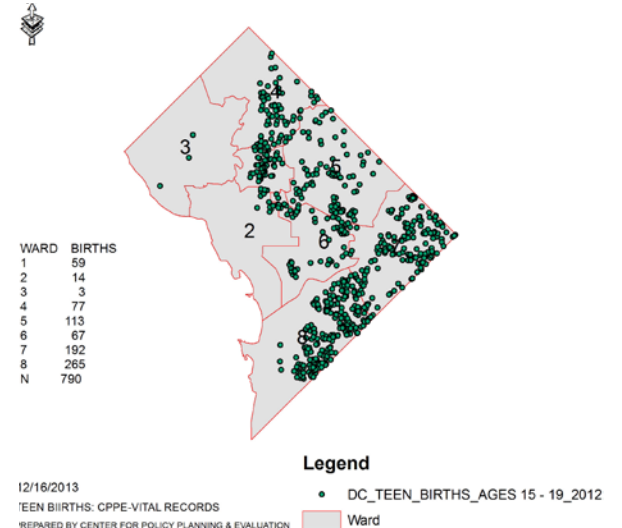
1. Provides Comprehensive Sexuality Education to youth with special needs so that youth can be empowered to make positive choices and decisions.
2. Provides a supportive network and a safe space for youth to problem-solve, gain leadership skills and receive consistent guidance to avoid unsafe sexual behaviors and pregnancy.
3. Increases community awareness of teen pregnancy prevention programs and resources through information dissemination and print and social media campaigns.
4. Increases access to clinical health services for youth by providing referrals to local health agencies to receive proper healthcare and contraceptive health services.
5. Trains parents/guardians and providers to promote effective communication and build trusting relationships with youth.



District of Columbia Facts

- An estimated 17 percent of teen girls will have a birth before the age twenty in the District of Columbia. This is higher than the estimated nationwide percentage which is 13 percent.
- Wards 7 and 8 each represent approximately 15 percent of the D.C. female teen population, but account for 24 and 32 percent of all D.C. births to females ages 15 and 19, respectively more than half of all teen births in D.C.
- Community characteristics are linked to high teen birth rates, including poverty, high unemployment, violent crime, and having a large percentage of high school dropouts.
- In 2009, 76 percent of children placed in foster care were born to teen parents.
- One in 100 youth in the District is HIV positive.

Teen Births by Ward, 2012 District of Columbia



12/16/2013

TEEN BIRTHS: CPPE-VITAL RECORDS

PREPARED BY CENTER FOR POLICY PLANNING & EVALUATION

Data Sources:

- District of Columbia, Department of Health, State Center for Health Statistics, Center for Policy, Planning and Evaluation
- Child Trends, www.childtrends.org
- CFSA 2009 Needs Assessment Report
- District of Columbia Department of Health, Community Health Statewide Needs Assessment (2014)

Our Mission:

The mission of Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc. (AJE) is to promote equality for children and youth with special needs in the areas of education and health. AJE offers free direct services including individual advocacy, training, resources, support and legal representation to ensure that children and youth with special needs have equal access to education and health services.

For more information, contact:
Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.
25 E Street, NW
4th Floor
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 678-8060
Fax: (202) 678-8062
Website: www.aje-dc.org
Email: information@aje-dc.org



C.A.R.E. Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program
Weadé J. Wallace
Executive Director

Lynn Truong
Project Director



Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.

**COMMITTED
ADOLESCENTS
BEING RESPONSIBLE
AND EMPOWERED
(C.A.R.E.)**
TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAM

