An Assessment of Parent Involvement Strategies in Programs Serving Adolescents

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1. Why Parents Matter

- Primary source of socialization and influence on adolescent behavior through
- Parent-child communication
- Parental monitoring and awareness
- Other parenting behaviors
- Parent involvement has been shown to
  - Delay adolescent sexual initiation
  - Decrease rates of premarital sexual activity, STDs, and pregnancy
  - Reduce the number of adolescent sexual partners
  - Increase condom and other contraceptive use
- Parents provide pregnant and parenting adolescents
  - Social support
  - Economic support
  - Child care
  - Housing

2. Purposes of the Project

- Review literature about effectiveness of prevention programs with parent involvement strategies
- Examine outreach and intervention strategies used by Title X family planning and Title XX prevention and care programs to involve parents and families
- Identify best practices for possible implementation in additional program settings

3. Methods

- Literature review of evidence-based prevention programs with a parent involvement component
- Review of grant applications, annual reports, and other information from 58 programs
- Qualitative data collection from 15 programs
- Program directors, staff, and regional program consultants from 5 family planning, 5 abstinence education, and 5 pregnant and parenting adolescent programs

4. Results

- 26 studies of parent involvement programs
  - 14 randomized controlled trials
  - 9 measured adolescent behavioral outcomes
  - 5 measured mediators of adolescent behavior
  - 12 nonrandomized studies
  - Examples of successful strategies included youth development programs, parent workshops, and homework assignments for parents and adolescents to complete together
  - Where programs were found to be ineffective, some evaluators noted limited parent participation in or completion of the program

4. Results (cont’d)

Exhibit 1. Qualitative Data Collection

Preparation
- Select sites
- Send lead letters to OPA for distribution

Recruiting
- Contact regional program consultant to schedule phone interview
- Contact program director
- Program director identifies other staff to interview
- Schedule phone interviews or site visit and request documents

Data Collection
- Conduct site visit or telephone interviews and collect or request documents

Follow-Up, Analysis, Reporting
- E-mail each interviewee a copy of the interview summary for review
- Analyze data
- Write report

5. Conclusions

- Mixed evidence for effectiveness of parent involvement programs
- Low parent participation noted in studies and by programs we interviewed
- Title X and Title XX programs employ a variety of creative strategies

6. Implications for Future Research

- Qualitative studies with parents
- Rigorous evaluation of parent involvement strategies
- Participation and recruitment strategies
- Examine links between
- Program activities and parent participation
- Parent participation in parent involvement
- Parent involvement and adolescent or child outcomes

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