



Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program A Best Beginnings Program of the Department of Public Health and Human Services

The Bi-Monthly Broadcast

Hello! It is the new year already and that means new beginnings to come in 2013! This issue of the newsletter is especially exciting and you'll notice the extra length! Wrapping up the calendar year, we take a look at the success of the Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program and all of the fabulous work of the past grant year. Also, we learn more about the work of the Blackfeet Manpower Coalition in the Contractor's Corner. Tips and reminders to share with your clients regarding winter safety from the American Academy of Pediatrics are included, along with a piece on learning how to connect with your local Best Beginnings community council. Wishing you all much joy and many blessings in 2013!

~ Kelly Hart, Healthy Montana Teen Parent Coordinator



The Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program A Success in Its 1st Year!



The Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program marked the end of its first year of contracts on August 31, 2012. During the 2011 – 2012 grant year, 14 contractors provided services to pregnant and parenting teens and their children. Much was accomplished across the state and all contractors saw success. It is impossible to summarize all of the great work; the Year One evaluation from KIDS Count provides more detail around those served and the services received. This serves as an overview of the grant year.

The following are the 2011-2012 *Services for Pregnant and Parenting Teens* grant recipients: Blackfeet Manpower, Chippewa Cree Tribal TANF, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Social Services Department, Flathead City-County Health Department, Florence Crittenton Home and Services, Fort Belknap Tribal Health Department, Gallatin City-County Health Department, Helena Indian Alliance, Indian Health Board of Billings, North American Indian Alliance, Northern Cheyenne Tribal Schools, Planned Parenthood of Montana, Women's Opportunity and Resource Development, and Young Parents' Education Center. Together, these organizations make up a network

of providers around the state supporting young families. In the first year alone, approximately 613 teens and their 267 children in Montana received services through one of the 14 organizations. The majority of the teens were young mothers.

Services provided to young families fell under the program's six core services addressing education, child care, case management, father involvement, parenting/life/nurturing skills, and prenatal care and reproductive health services. A snapshot of activities related to each core service are highlighted. This is just the tip of the iceberg of the activities taking place.

Education support has been provided in various ways. The Flathead City-County Health Department has developed partnerships with area schools. One of the schools allows pregnant and parenting students to participate in a weekly group where they discuss a variety of topics and receive school credit for attending. The Young Parents' Education Center offers similar programming. Planned Parenthood of Montana hosted a weekly group for young moms focused on goal setting and future planning, requiring participants to be enrolled in an educational program. At the end of the school year, a scholarship was available to graduating stu-

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dents.

Those addressing **child care** have also seen success. The Florence Crittenton Home and Services, which has a Child Enrichment Center onsite, hired an additional full-time staff person, providing child care to four more children. The Young Parents' Education Center also has child care onsite, and hired a part-time RN to provide basic preventive health care support. The RN spends time observing and communicating with parents and their babies. With the addition of the RN, the program has seen a reduction in absences.

Case management is offered by the majority of contractors. Home visiting services are provided by the Flathead City-County Health Department and the Gallatin City-County Health Department. The Gallatin City-County Health Department collaborates with local organizations on the Partnership Project to Strengthen Families. This project connects young families to a Public Health Nurse and a Social Worker, links participants to partners in mental health and child care, along with other community resources. At the Chippewa Cree Tribal TANF Program, participants receive wrap-around coordinated case management along with receiving guidance and education from the Peace Makers, a group of community Elders who share information on breastfeeding and parenting with a traditional perspective.

Many workshops and seminars were held over the year to provide **parenting, life, and nurturing skills education**. The Fort Belknap Tribal Health Department held a seminar to address father involvement. The Northern Cheyenne Tribal Schools also held a par-

enting workshop. The North American Indian Alliance collaborated with a local partner to provide adult and infant CPR to teens, in addition to parenting classes. At the end of the six-week series, participants received a car seat and other necessities. The Indian Health Board of Billings facilitated six five-hour educational sessions related to goal-setting, pregnancy, and parenting. *Circle of Security* classes are offered around the state by a number of contractors including Women's Opportunity and Resource Development (WORD), Gallatin City-County Health Department, and Florence Crittenton Home and Services. Other workshops and seminars have occurred, focusing on a variety of topics. In fact, 64 separate topics were identified in the quarterly reports. A sampling includes conflict resolution; parental stress; career options; budgeting and financial literacy; summer and holiday safety; child abuse and neglect; and communication skills. WORD hosted a Peer Education Panel for young parents to develop public speaking skills and to share their story with middle- and high-school students. This opportunity provides young parents a leadership opportunity; participants report gaining confidence and practical work experiences.

Prenatal care and reproductive health services have also been provided. The Blackfeet Manpower program sent a coalition member to receive training to become a Lactation Consultant. As a Lactation Consultant, the coalition member can provide reservation-wide breastfeeding support to young moms. The Northern Cheyenne Tribal Schools has also assisted with prenatal care and education, by taking young couples to attend Lamaze classes.

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Social Services Department has worked to collaborate with local agencies to address **father involvement** through the *Positive Indian Parenting* curriculum and the local Fatherhood Passages program. Other programs like the Flathead City-County Health Department and the Young Parents' Education Center have worked to identify male staff and volunteers to support efforts to encourage more young fathers to participate in services and activities.

In addition to these activities, tribal programs including the Helena Indian Alliance and the Chippewa Cree Tribal TANF Program offered cultural activities and events to connect their participants to traditional parenting, pregnancy, and breastfeeding.

The Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program is working towards three Performance Measures:

- ◆ *Increase the rate of breastfeeding initiation from the national average of 50-90% to 75% for program participants and increase the longevity of practice from 6 weeks to 6 months for program participants.*

Programs reported a range of 20-100% of participants initiating breastfeeding.

- ◆ *Increase the percentage of participants who are working towards the successful completion of a high school diploma or attainment of a GED or job to 25%.*

Programs reported a range of 30 – 100% of participants enrolled in high school or a GED program.

- ◆ *Increase father involvement in families where appropriate by 10%, and enhance relationship*

skill-building for young parents that are not together by providing at least two co-parenting strategies.

Programs reported an average of 2 to 34 young fathers involved in services.

Over the year, hundreds of referrals were provided to mental health services, education programs, child care services, parenting education, substance abuse programs, adoption services, employment and job training programs, health services, mentors, pregnancy support centers, housing assistance services, family support services, human and community services, child abuse prevention programs, behavioral health programs, tribal enrollment assistance, legal services, foster transition services, domestic violence services, financial assistance and economic counseling, and law enforcement.

Finally, from the participants themselves, your work is needed, appreciated, and makes a difference:

**After attending a parenting workshop, one provider reports, “[Name of young father] became quite emotional at the final class, saying, ‘If only my

father had gone to this class, I would have had a very different life.’”

**A teen parent receiving home visiting services said, “*You have changed everything for us. We would have had to move out of town and back to a situation that wasn’t good for us or our daughter. Thanks to you we were able to find a place to live, get jobs and make a life for ourselves here. We are so thankful.*”

**A young single mom, who was homeless, unemployed, and without child care or support stated, “*Thank you for answering all my silly questions and being available when I need someone, with your help I was able to move forward.*” With support from the program, she now has stable housing, a job, transportation, child care, and counseling.

**Another young mom commented: “*I have been able to see two worlds in my lifetime: that of utter chaos and that of peace. I’ve lived two worlds but I HAVE broken the cycle. As a child and teenager, I was physically and emotionally abused on a daily basis. My parents were not alcoholics*

or drug addicts; they were, in fact, parenting me as they were parented. I have memories of being left alone for hours- hungry, dirty, terrified and confused.”

**Another participant summed up her experience: “*I like who I am now. And I didn’t when I first got here.*”

Here’s to another successful year! Thank you for your continued support, efforts, time, energy, service, and commitment to young families.



Connect with Your Local Community Council



Montana has 23 local Best Beginnings councils whose focus is a coordinated comprehensive early childhood system. These councils have been working hard in identifying their community’s needs through a needs assessment which involved a tool box of guidance, a community collaboration assessment tool, and the Zero to Three Home Visiting Planning tool.

The Best Beginnings council’s work is based on four principle objectives: 1). Children have access to high quality Early Childhood Programs; 2). Families with young children are supported in their community; 3). Children have access to a medical home and health insurance; and 4). Social, emotional and mental health needs of young children and families are supported. The council makes crucial decisions about the network of services and resources available for the children and families of each community. Each community council has adopted a collaborative approach to identify priorities and systems changes in order to make those hard crucial decisions in order to move forward. All communities want to provide their children the “Best Beginning” that last a lifetime.

The following counties and Reservations have Best Beginnings councils: Big Horn, Butte-Silver Bow, Cascade, CSKT, Custer, Dawson, Flathead, Fort Peck, Gallatin, Hill, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Lincoln, Mineral, Missoula, Northern Cheyenne, Park, Ravalli, Richland, Rocky Boy’s, Roosevelt, Rosebud, and Yellowstone.

Connecting to these councils is very important to all communities. Please take some time and contact your local community council coordinator and make your Best Beginning connection. For more information, please contact Debbie Hansen at (406) 444-1400 or Deborahansen@mt.gov.

Contractor's Corner: Blackfeet Manpower Teen Pregnancy/Parenting Coalition

From: Carol Williamson

The Coalition was formed in March of this year through the Blackfeet One Stop Manpower office on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. We currently have 30 coalition members including, Blackfeet Community Hospital, W.I.C., Blackfeet Wellness Program, Manpower, the office of juvenile services at the Tribal Court, Community Health Representative Program, Child Care Development Program, Browning Public Schools, and Heart Butte School District. We continue to build the coalition with the members all holding professional jobs.



Blackfeet Manpower Teen Pregnancy/Parenting Coalition (not all members available for the picture).

The first year was spent meeting weekly in order to develop a referral system, form the coalition, and decide the role of each member and the services they had to offer. We also had flyers and pamphlets developed to bring awareness to the community about the new Coalition. These were distributed to all coalition members who in turn shared them with their community partners. Beginning in September, 2012 we focused our attention on doing more outreach within the community to teens who are pregnant or parents. We

have worked to be mindful of the youth who have dropped out of school.

One of the goals of our Coalition is that each coalition member will take responsibility to mentor our population. This begins by filling out an electronic intake form developed by Coalition members and following-through with the services chosen by the teen.

We currently serve about 15 clients who are in the first stages of receiving our services. The Blackfeet Community Hospital Women's Clinic is currently working with 20 teens.

We would like to send out congratulations to Ms. Margaret Anne Yellow Kidney, R.N. who is now a certified Lactation Counselor and a member of the Coalition.



Lactation Counselors: Dorothy Champine and Margaret Ann Yellow Kidney

For more information about the Blackfeet Manpower Teen Pregnancy/Parenting Coalition, contact Carol Williamson at carolwlmson@yahoo.com or (406) 338-3821 x206.

Did You Know?

The Montana Early Childhood Project hosts a website which includes information about trainings offered around the state of Montana. See their Statewide Training Calendar at www.mtecp.org today!

Winter Safety Tips



The American Academy of Pediatrics has the following winter safety tips to share with your teens and their children:

Fun in the Winter Sun

“It’s true that many safety concerns are the same regardless of season. For example, parents still need to remember sunscreen. Even though it might seem odd, you can get sunburn in the winter. The sunlight reflects off snow and ice.

- * Choose a sunscreen made for children with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. (Check the label.) Apply the protection 15 to 30 minutes before going out. They need to be reapplied every one and a half to two hours, particularly if your child spends a lot of time outside. Consult the instructions on the bottle.*
- * You should also wear protective eyewear and an SPF lip balm.*

Safety in Layers

When thinking about outside activity, think about clothing, too. Layering is a good idea; so are moisture-wicking fabrics and clothing that’s geared to the sport. Keep in mind that regulating body temperature is more difficult in young children (just as is it during warm weather), so hypothermia can occur more easily. For example, kids can sweat when they’re warm and, as they remove layers, that sweat can chill them quickly when it gets exposed to the cold air.

Parents have to be really proactive and responsible about dressing children appropriately in layers, covering their heads and necks.

Watch out for fashion trends that could land you in the ER:

- * Long scarves and cords can get caught in sled blades.*
- * Hoods can block peripheral vision.*

Stay Alert

Injuries can happen anywhere, anytime. Be aware and use caution.

- * Children should always wear helmets while sledding, skiing, snowboarding, and playing ice hockey.*
- * Parents should also make sure that the hill your children*

are sledding down doesn’t empty onto a pond that might not be frozen solid.

- * Don’t load up the sled with multiple riders; take turns. ‘Reckless play,’ or actively trying to crash into each other or knock people off, is obviously a setup for injury.*

Equipment Check

If you’re planning a skiing or snowboarding trip:

- * Have the equipment fitted by a professional.*
- * A child in too-large boots can trip and fall.*
- * A child in skis that aren’t the right size can fall, too.*
- * Wrist fractures, commonplace in snowboarding, can be prevented by simply using wrist guards.*

Safety is key in ice hockey or sports involving equipment. No one wants to buy new skates every year, but it may be necessary as your child grows.

Used equipment is fine, but check it out before you buy it:

- * Look at the laces.*
- * Look for broken blades.*
- * Make sure the leather on hockey and ice skates isn’t too broken down around the ankles.*
- * If you need a mouth guard, wear one.*

You have to check all equipment, new and old, to see that it fits. You need to check it to make sure it’s still safe or not broken. If it gets used a lot, it may not hold up. Make sure helmets and boots are sized correctly. Make sure the equipment is in good shape. If you’re concerned, ask a sales person at a ski shop.

Skills Assessment

If it’s a new activity, work with your child to master the skill first. For example, play it safe by starting with a snowboarding lesson before you all hit the slopes.

It’s recommended, appropriate, and safe, to start slow or on a more gentle slope. Practice with your equipment and gradually build up to a steeper slope or faster speed. Be patient and resist pressure to take on more than you’re ready for.

By taking a few precautions, you can make sure that your children get the healthy benefits of winter exercise without taking unnecessary risks.”

For these and other safety tips, visit www.healthychildren.org.

UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Have training opportunities to share? Send them to Khart2@mt.gov

Positive Indian Parenting

National Indian Child Welfare Association-

- January 10 –11, 2013 • Albuquerque, NM
- January 14–15, 2013 • Minneapolis, MN
- January 17–18, 2013 • Tulsa, OK

<http://www.nicwa.org/training/institutes/>

17th International Breastfeeding Conference

Healthy Children

- January 14–18, 2013 • Orlando, FL

<http://www.healthychildren.cc/pdf/flyer2013.pdf>

2013 AMCHP Annual Conference

Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs

- February 9–12, 2013 • Washington, DC

<http://www.amchp.org/Calendar/Conferences/amchp-conference/Pages/default.aspx>

Healthy Relationships Training of Trainers

Native Wellness Institute

- March 12–14, 2013 • Clackamas, OR

<http://www.nativewellness.com/events/eventshome.html>

Life Skills Training of Trainers

Native Wellness Institute

- March 12–14, 2013 • Clackamas, OR

<http://www.nativewellness.com/events/eventshome.html>

2013 National Training Institute: Addressing Challenging Behavior

Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention and the Florida Center for Inclusive Communities

- March 20–23, 2013 • Clearwater, FL

<http://nti.cbcs.usf.edu/>

Making Children and Families a Priority: Raising the Bar 2013 National Conference

Child Welfare League of America

- April 14–17, 2013 • Washington, DC

<https://netforum.avectra.com/eWeb/DynamicPage.aspx?Site=CWLA&WebCode=2013NC>

Adults Working with Native Youth Training of Trainers

Native Wellness Institute

- May 14–16, 2013 • Prior Lake, MN

<http://www.nativewellness.com/events/eventshome.html>

