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THE TEEN MOTHER PROGRAM: AN OVERVIEW

The Teen Mother Program is an alternative educational opportunity for the pregnant minor. The program is founded by the State Department of Education as a preventative measure against the birth of handicapped children. Experience and research show pregnant minors to be a high risk group with respect to problem pregnancy and child abuse. Because of this, the Teen Mother Program provides the young mother with instruction in prenatal care, nutrition, general health and child development. Class instruction in these areas includes the use of community resources in the way of field trips and guest speakers. Weekly classes in Childbirth Education (LaMaze) are provided, and coaches are encouraged to attend these classes with the girls.

The Teen Mother Class also allows the girl to continue her regular academic program. Course work is done on an individual basis within the group setting. Because of the motivational nature of the class setting, girls are able to make up deficient academic credits, while some accelerate and possibly graduate early. On an average the girls earn seven credits a semester.

One of the distinctive characteristics of the Teen Mother Program is the accepting and supportive nature of the class environment. A great emphasis is put on meeting the emotional needs of the girls during this critical time. Care is taken that each girl feels free to make her own decisions in regard to her pregnancy and child care. Careful decision-making and mutual respect are encouraged.

Teen Mother Classes are currently located at the Door of Hope, Garfield Independent learning Center and the Bandini Site. SDUSD provides bus transportation to and from the girl's home and location. The class enrollment ratio is twenty girls to one teacher. In the case of a waiting list, priority is determined by date of delivery.

The Teen Mother Program is administered under the Home Teacher Office of the Guidance Services/Physically Handicapped Department. Referrals are made through the district counselor assigned to that office. Contacts with the district counselor should be made early in the pregnancy to allow for careful decision-making and planning. Should the girl choose to continue with her pregnancy, the district counselor will explain her educational options and possibly arrange for a visit to a Teen Mother Class. Should the girl choose to enroll in a Teen Mother Class, the district counselor will work with the school staff and family to determine the best time and manner of transfer. The district counselor will continue to work with the girl during the program and help facilitate her graduation plans or return to a regular school program. Some follow-up work is also done.

Girls who complete their graduation requirements through the Teen Mother Program receive their diplomas from their previous school of attendance. In some cases arrangements for adult school graduation are made.