

Harnessing the Power of Multiple Funding Streams for Parental Engagement to Build Community Support

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Learning Objectives

After attending the the forum, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the connection between parent/primary caregiver education and access to sexual health education for adolescents.
2. List at least two barriers to implementing a parent/primary caregiver education program.
3. Identify at least one opportunity to implement sustainable parent/primary care-giver engagement/education programming.
4. Identify at least one method to promote inclusivity in a parent/primary caregiver education program.

NJ Statewide Parent and Professional Engagement Program (S-PEP)

- The Statewide Parent and Professional Engagement Program (S-PEP) is a new program of the New Jersey Department of Health, Division of Family Health Services, Child and Adolescent Health Program (CAHP).
- It is designed to help parents, caregivers and professionals learn valuable communication skills to engage in meaningful conversations with teens.
- S-PEP combines resources from multiple funding sources focused on improving adolescent health and well-being, this includes emotional and mental health, physical health, and sexual health.

A Call to Action

Parent engagement is a protective factor. Research shows it leads to:

1. Improved student behavior, higher academic achievement, and enhanced social skills.^{1,2}
2. Adolescents being more likely to avoid unhealthy behaviors, such as sexual risk behaviors and substance use.^{1,2}

NJ Parents are key to improving TPP interventions:

1. Address generational components of misinformation/health.
2. Provides an opportunity for fact-based information to parents who chose to opt-out.
3. A key priority in NJ is to provide resources and services to empower and involve caregivers.³
4. Enhanced parent engagement combined with school and community-based education increases health impact.^{1,2,3}

Traditionally, the interventions in NJ Teen Pregnancy Prevention Programs typically emphasized specific health risk behaviors, such as abstinence and unprotected sex. Therefore, to enhance parent engagement, specific parent engagement activities and interventions were needed.

S-PEP Approach



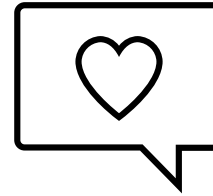
Reach

Provide programming to parents, caregivers, and professionals in all 21 counties of NJ.



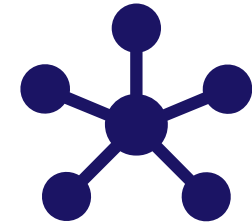
Prioritize

Engage parents and caregivers with the highest need. For example, those who have been mandated to receive parent engagement.



Include

Address the needs of special populations such as juvenile justice, foster care, LGBTQ+, pregnant/parenting, homeless/runaway, developmentally and intellectually disabled youth.



Collaborate

Work with schools, and organizations at the local level.

How Did We Get Here?

- The NJ Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) programs had parent engagement as an optional activity.
- Added Teen Speak (or other parent-engagement activity) as a required activity for SRAE sub-recipients.
- Contracted with Kean University to evaluate Teen Speak.
- Expanded Teen Speak to PREP sub-recipients.
- School Health sub-recipients from NJ Department of Health Child and Adolescent Health Program had parent engagement as an optional activity, with several grantees opting to implement Teen Speak.
- Combined resources from SRAE, PREP, and School Health funding sources to create S-PEP.
- Released a competitive RFA, and an applicant was selected. The chosen application was a collaborative effort of several organizations within NJ to meet the S-PEP parameters.⁴

Barriers to Parent Engagement

Some of the barriers identified include:

- Lack of time
- Lack of access (transportation, internet, or setting)
- Lack of childcare during sessions
- Feel like they don't need it
- Fear of judgement from child
- Avoiding an awkward or embarrassing situation
- Adolescent's fear of parental response
- Religious and cultural beliefs



S-PEP will overcome barriers by:

- Offering virtual or in-person sessions where childcare has been provided.
- Utilizing input from steering committee that includes parents and youth.
- Creating a virtual site for parents, caregivers, and professionals to access tools, resources, and information.



Activity

Answer the following questions:

1. What are some opportunities in your state/territory to implement a sustainable parent/primary caregiver engagement program?
2. What is one thing you can do to optimize inclusivity within your parent/primary caregiver engagement programming?

References

1. Parent Engagement in Schools | DASH | CDC. 17 Jan. 2023, https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/parent_engagement.htm
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Promoting Parent Engagement in Schools to Prevent HIV and Other STDs Among Teens: Information for State and Local Education Agencies. https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/PE-HIV_Prevention_Rationale.pdf
3. The National Governor's Association, and Phil Murphy. Strengthening Youth Mental Health A Governor's Playbook. July 2023, https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Strengthening_Youth_Mental_Health_A_Playbook_for_Governors_July_2023.pdf
4. New Jersey Department of Health. Statewide Parent and Professional Engagement Program https://healthapps.state.nj.us/noticeofgrant/documents/DFHS24SPE_rfa.pdf

Resources

Teen Speak: <https://drjennifersalerno.com/teen-speak-series/>

The National Governors Association and NJ Governor Phil Murphy, Strengthening Youth Mental Health, A Governor's Playbook: https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Strengthening_Youth_Mental_Health_A_Playbook_for_Governors_July2023.pdf?trk=public_post_comment-text

NJ Department of Health Request for Application for the Statewide Parent and Professional Engagement Program:

https://healthapps.state.nj.us/noticeofgrant/documents/DFHS24SPE_rfa.pdf

Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC):

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/wsc/>

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THANK YOU



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Session Evaluation

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<https://bit.ly/2024Evaluations>

