

Countywide

Youth Survey

ROUND ONE RESULTS
1998-1999



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introduction

The Metro Council For Teen Potential

The Metro Council for Teen Potential (MCTP) is a community coalition that promotes a comprehensive, coordinated and community-wide strategy to foster youth development; and encourage young people to make healthier choices. MCTP members include many youth development organizations, the City School District, the City of Rochester, the Monroe County Health Department, the Rochester Monroe County Youth Bureau, and other concerned citizens and youth-serving institutions. Along with the University of Rochester and the City of Rochester, MCTP is a member of the Rochester Coalition Partnership for the Prevention of Teen Pregnancy, and receives major funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Baden Street Settlement is the host agency for MCTP.

MCTP assists its member agencies in incorporating “best practice” models into their existing youth programs, conducts research-based needs assessments and identifies gaps in service. It supports multi-agency collaboratives that deliver services to young people, provides staff training and program evaluation, and coordinates a faith leaders networking project. A media campaign to reach out to young people, to share information about healthy choices, relationships and sexuality; and to encourage young people to make full use of community resources is in production for release in the fall of 2002.

Round One of MCTP Random Digit Dial Telephone Survey of Teens

In 1998 and 1999, MCTP conducted a County-wide telephone survey (random digit dial) of 1,040 teens, between the ages of fourteen and nineteen. The average age was 16.8. The survey oversampled _____ teens in the northeast, southwest and northwest areas of the City of Rochester. 73% of the teens answering the survey were Caucasian, 13% were African-American, and 6.5% were Hispanic or Latino. The respondents represented over 100 schools. A second round of the telephone survey, again reaching over 1,000 teens, will be completed in 2002.

summary of findings

Issues with school

In response to the County-wide telephone survey, teens told us:

10% of City youth and 7% of suburban youth are out of school. On average, they finished tenth or eleventh grade.

Of those not in school, 26% of City youth have obtained their GED, but none of the suburban youth obtained their GED.

23% of youth, County-wide, have skipped school in the last 30 days.

Students say they spend between one and two hours a night doing homework, and over 90% say they plan to go to college.

They spend between four and six hours per week in school clubs.

22% in the City do not use a computer at least once a week; while 13% do not in the Westside suburbs and 7% do not in the Eastside suburbs.

11% of white students do not use a computer at least once a week; and 32% of minority students do not use a computer once a week.

12% of City youth have never used the internet.

67% read books for pleasure once a week.

Of those who say they have used youth programs for help with anything, 42% have received academic help.

26% of City youth have moved within the past year. Of those, 80% moved once, and 16% moved more than once. 20% of suburban youth on the Westside moved within the past year.

95% say they have had classes in school on how pregnancy occurs—10% in elementary school, 70% in middle school, and 43% in high school.

73% have had classes on saying “no” to sex in school—of those, 15% in elementary school, 68% in middle school, and 41% in high school.

70% have had classes on abstinence—of those, 11% have had classes in elementary school, 66% in middle school, and 48% in high school.

75% have had classes on birth control—of those, 7% had classes in elementary school, 59% had classes in middle school, and 56% had classes in high school.

Teen assets and risk behaviors

In response to the telephone survey, teens told us:

51% of respondents work for pay—21 hours per week in the City and 17 hours per week in the suburbs.

53% attend church or other faith community.

31% volunteer at least once a week.

On a typical weekday, they watch TV 2.5 hours, listen to the radio 3 hours, and play a video game one hour.

56% say they have smoked; and 54% of them say they have smoked within the last thirty days.

78% have had a drink of alcohol, and 54% say they have had at least one drink of alcohol within the last thirty days.

38% have smoked marijuana, and 45% of them say that they have smoked marijuana within the last thirty days.

8% have used other street drugs, and 38% of them within the last 30 days.

43% would feel both upset and happy about a pregnancy now.

70% of youth in targeted neighborhoods have had sex within the past month.

20% of those sexually active say they/their partner never uses a condom.

51% have had sex without using a condom or birth control.

61% never use any other form of birth control besides a condom.

18% have been pregnant/gotten someone pregnant; 24% of those have been pregnant twice.

Of the teen parents, 18% say they are not in school, and are not working.

Health Issues—access to health care, contraception, issues of confidentiality

In response to the telephone survey, teens told us:

3% of white and 5% of minority youth said they had missed receiving medical care when they needed it within the past year. Reasons given were no insurance, cost, not wanting to tell parents about problem, transportation, lack of time, and “problem not that bad.”

About 5% say they do not have health insurance.

78% say they usually get medical care in a doctor's office; 13% in a health care center or neighborhood clinic; and 5% at a hospital clinic.

11% say they have had sex without birth control because birth control was too expensive.

7.5% say they have had sex without birth control because they didn't know what to use.

27% Countywide say they have not discussed issues of confidentiality with their doctor.

20% say they do not see their doctor alone, without their parents in the room.

10% say they have seen a doctor or nurse without their parents' knowledge—and 46% of them were seeking birth control or STD care.

6% say they have wanted birth control, but not gotten it because they were afraid parents would find out.

68% know where they can get free condoms.

Of those who say they have used programs for help with anything, 11% say they have gone to Planned Parenthood; 3.5% mention In Control; 2.3% mention Jordan Health.

How do families and faith groups communicate with teens?

In response to the telephone survey, teens told us:

52% attend church or other faith community.

14.5% say they have been forced or pressured to have sex with someone when they didn't want to. (6% of boys, and 20% of girls.) 21% have not told anyone.

Of those who have had classes about sex, 1% say they have had classes about pregnancy in faith-based settings; 2% have had classes on saying "no" to sex in faith-based settings; and 5% have had classes on abstinence in faith-based settings.

65% say they have talked with parent/or someone like a parent about pregnancy.

65% say they have talked with parent/someone like a parent about saying no to sex.

58% say they have talked with parent/someone like a parent about birth control.

In the past six months, 60% have talked with parent/someone like a parent about sex; 88% have talked with their friends.

10% say they have seen a doctor or nurse without their parents' knowledge—and 46% of them were seeking birth control or STD care.

6% say they have wanted birth control, but not gotten it because they were afraid parents would find out.

Media and cultural messages to teens, and teen attitudes:

In response to the telephone survey, teens told us:

8% say they have had sex without birth control because they or their partner wanted to get pregnant.

15% of those in the targeted neighborhoods (northeast, southwest, northwest) say that having a baby in high school is a problem for the mother and the baby, but not the father.

43% would feel both upset and happy about a pregnancy now.

About 40% of teens say they plan to be abstinent as a teenager; about 50% say they plan to be sexually active and use birth control all the time; and about 10% say they plan to be sexually active and use birth control some of the time or never.

Over 90% say they plan to go to college.

The survey data raises many questions, and reinforces many concerns including:

The quality/quantity of family life education in the schools, and particularly in the high schools.

The disparities in access to computers and the internet.

The frequent moves that teens report.

The number of students who report having dropped out.

The number of hours students report that they are working for pay.

Risky behaviors.

The role of faith groups in addressing the issues teens face with sexuality, and relationships.

Parent-child and parent-teen communication about relationships, sexuality, contraception.

Teens' access to, and information about contraception, and reproductive health care.

Issues of confidentiality when teens seek medical care.

Access to health care and insurance.

Teen attitudes and the cultural climate regarding sexuality and teen pregnancy, early parenting, and responsibility of males and females.

Issues of coercion, and need to support teens in developing refusal skills.

NOTE: The data has been analyzed by gender, and by residence (inner city versus total city; eastside suburbs versus westside suburbs). This information is available upon request.

The study was supported by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Reproductive Health.

This report was prepared by Sheila Driscoll, and Christine Christopher, based on data collected and tabulated by the MCTP Technical Assistance and Program Evaluation (TAPE) Unit in partnership with the University of Rochester.

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