



# Expecting and Parenting Youth

## CASA Support Guide

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### **Expecting Youth**

In California, births to adolescents in foster care are 60% higher than that of the general population. *(Children's Data Network, University of Southern California)*

7 in 10 young women who age out of foster care will become pregnant before age 21. *(National Foster Youth Institute)*

Teenage girls in the foster care system are twice as likely to get pregnant before turning 19 years old than teenage girls who are not in foster care. Many of these teenagers are pregnant a second time before the age of 19 years old. *(National Center for Health Research)*

Young men in foster care, like their female counterparts, are also more likely to become parents early. Of the adolescent males included in the Midwest Evaluation, half of the boys had gotten a partner pregnant, compared with only 19 percent of their peers not in foster care. The Midwest Evaluation is generally credited with documenting for the first time the earlier start to sexual activity and the higher rates of teen pregnancy among youth in foster care. *(National Center for Youth Law)*

### **Parenting Youth**

A research study suggested that adolescent parents who are in foster care may be more likely to lose custody of their babies than adolescent parents in different living circumstances. The greatest risk was found to be in the babies' first week of life, when mothers in foster care were more than 11 times more likely to lose custody than other mothers. *(American Academy of Pediatrics)*

Separating a child from their parent(s), especially in the first few days of life, disrupts the parent-child attachment. This sadly impacts both the parent(s) and the child for the rest of their lives and can create additional trauma. Being a young parent already has its challenges, and being a young parent in the foster care system can be even more complex. It is critical that our expecting and parenting youth in foster care have the dedicated support of a CASA.

## Expecting and Parenting Youth in Foster Care: Know Their Rights

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- Foster youth are entitled to **access family planning, birth control, and abortion** without anyone's knowledge or approval.
- **Foster youth have the right to choose** to raise their baby, terminate the pregnancy, or choose adoption. Caregivers, social workers, and CASAs can offer support to the youth as they make their decision, but the decision is ultimately theirs.
- Parenting minors have the **right to have their child placed with them**. There are specialized housing options available for parenting youth in foster care.
- Just because a parenting youth is in foster care does not mean that their child is in foster care or a dependent of the juvenile court by default. **The child of a foster youth can only become a dependent of the court by the filing of a 300 petition alleging abuse and/or neglect.**



## Supporting Your Youth in Pregnancy

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*It is crucial to remember that, before any support or advocacy is offered in this area, the youth must give you their expressed permission and agree to receive the support. If expecting youth are open with you regarding their pregnancy, this does not exactly translate to blanket permission for you to advocate for pregnancy specific needs on their behalf, nor does it allow you to share or disclose any information with anyone regarding their pregnancy. Always be mindful of preserving the youth's confidentiality. Ask the youth who they've shared this with and whether or not they feel comfortable with you speaking with them about it. It's always important to consider that not everyone in the youth's life might be aware of their pregnancy.*

**Your First Step:** If you learn that your youth is pregnant or their partner is pregnant, please call or request a meeting with your Advocacy Supervisor. They will provide you with advice, practical resources, and ongoing support so that you are equipped and prepared with everything you need to help your youth. CASAs are not to disclose the pregnancy to other professionals, including the social worker, attorney, or caregiver without the youth's permission.

**Practice Nonjudgmental Compassion:** Lay aside your own personal opinions and beliefs about your youth's pregnancy and have no judgment. You can help your youth make an informed decision and explain all options that are available to them, but ultimately it is their own. Your youth needs to know that you will be by their side and support and respect them no matter what they choose. Remember that your Advocacy Supervisor is there to listen to you and help you process any challenging feelings that may come up.

**Medical Care:** Is your youth receiving prenatal care? Are they up to date on medical and dental appointments? The earlier your youth gets prenatal care and routine health care, the better the outcomes for themselves and their baby.



**Share Resources and Attend Appointments:** Help your youth have a healthy pregnancy by informing them of all resources that are available to them. There are many programs and resources that will support an expecting youth's physical, mental, and financial needs on the following pages. Remember that it may be challenging for your youth to feel comfortable requesting and receiving help. You can help your youth follow through by assisting with requesting information, making calls, scheduling appointments, and accompanying them to medical appointments (with their consent). Some youth even request to have their CASAs present at prenatal exams and birth. Commit to being there for whatever they need.

**Support Their Education:** Expecting youth can find school attendance and participation challenging. If appropriate and possible, encourage your youth to continue their education and advocate to ensure that they are receiving the proper accommodations in the classroom.

**Work as a Team:** If the youth has shared about their pregnancy with the other professionals on their case, work collaboratively to determine how you all will best support the youth and their baby. Request a team meeting with the professionals that the youth would like to be involved.

**Advocate for Therapy:** Regardless of what your youth chooses to do, this is likely a very stressful and emotionally challenging time for them. Advocate for them to receive therapeutic support to help them navigate this time if they are open to receiving it. After the youth discloses their pregnancy to their HHSA social worker, you can request therapy by speaking with the HHSA social worker.

**Offer Ongoing Encouragement:** You may understandably struggle with what to say to your youth when they first tell you that they are expecting. After the initial conversation, be sure to check in with them regularly and reach out. Below are some ideas of messages and conversation starters that show your commitment and compassion towards them:

*“Thank you for telling me and trusting me with this information. I care about you and I will be here for you every step of the way.”*

*“Your future is going to change, but in wonderful ways. You may have some unique challenges along the way, but I know that you can still pursue and achieve your dreams.”*

*“You can do this. When you don’t think that you can, reach out to me and the rest of your support team. We will always help you.”*

*“Be sure to take care of yourself first. That means, be physically and mentally healthy starting now and continue after baby. Do what you need to do to prioritize your wellbeing; your baby will be better for it.”*

*“I know this may feel scary. It’s ok to feel however you are feeling. No matter what happens, you will realize you have a strength you didn’t even know existed.”*

*“Don’t be afraid to ask for help and take it when offered. There are lots of resources available to you, and I can help you navigate them.”*



## Supporting Your Youth in Parenthood

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**Placement:** Are the youth and their baby in an ideal placement and living in a supportive environment? If not, work with their team to advocate for a more suitable living arrangement.

**Medical and Dental:** Statistics show that parenting foster youth are less likely to receive adequate healthcare, and some youth neglect their own healthcare when their new priority becomes their baby. Ensure that the youth is up to date on their own medical and dental appointments. If they are not, encourage them to make these appointments and offer to help in doing so. Ask if there is anything you can do to help them with making medical appointments for their child.



**Mental Health and Wellbeing:** Statistics also show that parenting foster youth are more likely to struggle with mental health challenges, such as depression and anxiety. Is your youth attending therapy to help them cope? If not, are they open to it? You can discuss this with them and advocate for them to receive ongoing counseling and therapeutic support. You can also encourage your parenting youth to participate in support and social groups for new parents.

**Self-Sufficiency and Independent Living:** You can encourage your parenting youth to obtain their high school diploma/GED, pursue higher education and/or employment training opportunities, participate in independent living skills (ILS) services, and foster their interests. Empowering your youth to be self-sufficient and skillful in these areas will likely contribute to the success and wellbeing of their family.



**Advocate for Healthy Development of the Child:** You can connect your parenting youth with appropriate resources, childcare, and ongoing services for their child, including transportation and educational opportunities. Encourage your youth to read and play with their child. You can facilitate enriching outings that include their child, such as trips to the library, Balboa Park, playgrounds, and children's museums.

**Be their Cheerleader:** More than anything, parenting youth need consistent and reliable support from their CASAs. Check in with them and reach out regularly to see how they are doing and ask how you can help. Let them know that you are a champion for their child and family and that you want to see them succeed. Be a safe person for them to talk to, share their frustrations/challenges with, and seek advice from. Be sure to celebrate their victories and parenting wins along the way!

## Court Report Guidance

- ❖ CASAs cannot include information regarding a youth's pregnancy in a Court report without the youth's expressed, written consent (a text message will suffice).
- ❖ If you are working with a parenting youth, remember your focus in the report should still be on the assigned youth. While it can provide overall context to comment on the youth's child please try to relate the information shared to the youth and their needs or strengths.
- ❖ If your youth's child is a dependent, please reach out to your Advocacy Supervisor for more guidance on your report. It will be important to not provide information that could potentially be used to negatively impact the dependency case they have with their child.

## Community Resources

*Note: Call 2-1-1 for the most up to date information and resources.*

Parenting Programs		
<a href="#"><u>Phenomenal Families</u></a>  3878 Old Town Avenue #200 San Diego, CA 92110 619-683-9340 ext. 35 info@phenomenalfamilies.org	Building Better Relationships With Your Children  1963 Apple St. Oceanside, CA 92054 760-757-3500	Catholic Charities Parents As Teachers Program – <i>Free in-            home parenting program,            services available in English            and Spanish. Available to            parents of children 0-5 or            women in 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester.</i> 619-287-9454
First 5/Healthy Development Services – <i>Parenting classes</i> 2114 National Ave. San Diego, CA 92113 619-515-2406	<a href="#"><u>Home Start Programs</u></a> - <i>Offers a variety of programs            (see website for details).</i> 5005 Texas St Suite 202 San Diego, CA 92108 619-692-0727 Ext.118	North County Lifeline 1320 Union Plaza Court Oceanside, CA 92054 760-726-4900
Positive Parenting Classes - City Heights Wellness Center 4440 Wightman Street Suite 200 San Diego, CA 92105 619-321-2920	San Diego Dads Corps - <i>Free            services designed to support            fathers succeed as spouses,            parents &amp; providers. Offers            the following services:            individual support,            fatherhood groups,</i>	Teen Options, San Diego Youth Services/Proud Parenting Program - <i>Free            classes</i> 3660 Fairmount Ave. San Diego, CA 92105 619-521-2250 x 300



	<p><i>supportive counseling, couples counseling, job readiness, and job placement.</i></p> <p>4275 El Cajon Blvd. Suite 101 San Diego, CA 92105 619-283-9624 ext 260</p>	
<p>Young Parent Network - <i>Only available for Casa De Amparo parenting residents.</i></p> <p>325 Buena Creek Rd. San Marcos, CA 92069</p>	<p>Adolescent Family Life Program - <i>Provides comprehensive case management services to pregnant and parenting teens and their children.</i></p>	<p>Gently Hugged: <i>Donated gently used or new clothing in Preemie to 12 month sizes along with blankets and accessories (hats, socks, bibs) are available for new parents. Clothes are sorted and items of each size sufficient for the first year are placed in a bag and labeled for a baby "boy" or "girl". When making an appointment, just say you are with Voices for Children and we are an approved organization.</i></p>
<p>Home Visiting Program: Voluntary evidence-based home visiting programs offer ongoing, individualized support to families during pregnancy and through a child's first years of life by matching new and expectant parents with caring, trained professionals. Examples include Nurse Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, Early Head Start Home Visiting Option, and Healthy Families America.</p>	<p>Foster Care Public Health Nurses: Every foster youth in California has a public health nurse who can provide educational information, assist with planning appointments, share paperwork and health records, interpret lab results, refer to services, and support the youth, case manager, caregiver and Child and Family Team with all health planning. This includes referrals for prenatal care, postnatal care, home visiting, and parenting classes.</p>	

Medical Care		
<a href="#"><u>Planned Parenthood</u></a> Locations County wide.	City Heights Family Health Center 5454 El Cajon Blvd. San Diego, CA 92115 619-515-2400	Comprehensive Health Center 3177 Ocean View Blvd. San Diego, CA 92113 619-662-4100
Grossmont Spring Valley Family Center 8788 Jamacha Road Spring Valley, CA 91977 619-667-6737	La Maestra 4060 Fairmont Ave. San Diego, CA 92105 619-280-4213	Logan Heights Family Health Center 1809 National Ave. San Diego, CA 92113 619-515-2300
Mid-City Community Clinic 4290 Polk Ave. San Diego, CA 92105 619-563-0250	National City Family Clinic 1136 D Ave. National City, CA 91950 619-336-2300	North Park Family Health Center 3544 30th St. San Diego, CA 92105 619-515- 2424
Operation Samahan 2743 Highland Ave. National City, CA 91950 619-474-2284	Otay Family Health Center 1637 3rd Ave Chula Vista, CA 9210 619-662-4100	Paradise Hills Family Clinic 2400 East 8th St. Suite A National City, CA 91950 619-662-4118
School Based Health Center at Lincoln H.S ( <i>Lincoln H.S. students only</i> ) 4777 Imperial Ave San Diego, CA 92113 619-662-4100	Sherman Heights Family Health Center 2391 Island Ave San Diego, CA 92102 619-515-2435	Caring Hearts Medical Foundation Free Clinic 2401 Reo Dr. San Diego, CA 92139 619-479-6767
Health Promotion Center at Church of Nazarene 4101 University Ave. San Diego, CA 92105 619-624-9851	St. Vincent de Paul (accepts uninsured pregnant women only) 1510 Imperial Ave San Diego, CA 92101 619-232-8500	Central Region Public Health Center 5202 University Ave San Diego, CA 92105 619-229-5400
County Health Services Complex 3851 Rosecrans St. San Diego, CA 92110	South Bay Public Health Center 690 Oxford St Chula Vista, CA 91911	Teen Health Center 1643 Logan Ave. San Diego, CA 92113 619-515-2333

619-692-8550	619-409-3110	
Teen Clinic 1637 3rd Ave Suite K Chula Vista, CA 91911 619-662-4100	South Bay Family Health & Urgent Care Center 678 3rd Ave Chula Vista, CA 91910 619-662-4100	Rady Children's Urgent Care - Central 4305 University Ave Suite 150 San Diego, CA 92105 619-280-2905
Rady Children's Urgent Care – La Mesa 5565 Grossmont Center Drive La Mesa, CA 91942 619-713-5375	Rady Children's Urgent Care - Escondido 625 W. Citricado Parkway Escondido, CA 92025 760-739-1543	Rady Children's Urgent Care - Oceanside 3605 Vista Way Oceanside, CA 92056 760-547-1000

Education		
Cal-SAFE - <i>Offers a flexible high school education program designed to increase support services for pregnant and parenting teens</i> 858-496-1908	Home Hospital Program - <i>Home studies program for students who can't go to school for documented medical reasons (i.e. preterm labor precautions). A teacher from the San Diego School District comes to student's home twice a week to provide instruction &amp; school work to do at home. Enrollment is via Cal-SAFE program.</i> 858-874-1144	San Diego Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting Program (SANDAPP) - <i>Provides case management services to pregnant &amp; parenting teens. Provides help with school enrollment &amp; other resources.</i>  2716 Mercy Ave. San Diego, CA 92113 619-344-6430

Food Assistance		
Birthline - Central 3660 Clairemont Dr. Suite 4 San Diego, CA 92117 858-270-2491	Birthline – South Bay 1220 3RD Ave. Chula Vista, CA 91911 619- 425-5012	Catholic Charities Emergency Assistance Program 349 Cedar St San Diego, CA 92101 619-231-2828
CCSA Clairemont Service Center	Community Care 4271 Clairemont Mesa Blvd.	Food Bank 858-527-1419

4167 Rappahannock Ave. San Diego, CA 92117 858-274-2273	San Diego, CA 92117 858-483-4005	
Gleaning Field Foundation 22222 Watson Way Vista, CA 92083 760-945-1003	Golden Share Foods 619-590-1692	Home Start 5296 University Ave Suite F-2 San Diego, CA 92105 619- 229-3660 ext.0
Horizon Christian Fellowship 590 Fir St. 92101 619-236-8150	Lutheran Social Services 619-698-1716	Interfaith Community Services 550 West Washington St B Escondido, CA, 92025 760-489-6380 x236
Metro Good Neighborhood Center 906 N. 47th St. San Diego, CA 92102 619-264-0368	Mid-City Family Resource Center 5296 University Ave. Suite F2 San Diego, CA 92105 619-229-3660	Mission Vida Nueva Food Pioneer Elementary School 760-500-2397
Neighborhood House Association 841 S 41st St. San Diego, CA 92113 619-263-7761	WIC- <i>Call to be referred to corresponding site based on zip code.</i> Provides food, health care referrals, nutrition education, and breastfeeding support. Available to babies and children up to age 5, pregnant women and new mothers. 1-800-500-6411	Info Line 211 <a href="http://www.211sandiego.org">www.211sandiego.org</a>

Financial Resources		
Expectant Parent Payment: Provides \$2,700 to pregnant minor and nonminor dependents 3 months prior to their expected due date. (Payment amount is equal to 3 months of the monthly	Infant Supplement: Provides \$900 per month to foster youth who are custodial parents. The payment is made to the caregiver or placement provider, except in the case	Parenting Support Plan: Provides \$200 per month to non-minor dependents living in a Supervised Independent Living Placement if they create a Parenting Support

<p>\$900 infant supplement which starts at birth). Prior to automation in July 2023 the payments will be made through county workarounds in the form of a check, debit card, or electronic payment. The payment is made directly to the pregnant youth. This benefit will be available after January 1, 2022.</p>	<p>of nonminor dependents placed in Supervised Independent Living Placements who may receive the payment directly. This is in addition to the monthly EFC stipend.</p>	<p>Plan with a responsible adult mentor.</p>
<p>Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Youth: Provides a childcare voucher or payment and assistance with finding a subsidized childcare placement.</p>	<p>CalFresh: California's food stamp program, which issues monthly electronic benefits that can be used to buy most foods at many markets and food stores. Eligibility is determined based on income, assets, household composition, the amount of rent and utility expenses, student status, and other factors.</p>	