Your Baby Bump Is Showing: Traditional College-Aged Parenting Students

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Impacts of Early Childbearing

- **Childbearing** at an early age creates a clear and direct disadvantage to educational attrition (Zachry, 2005)

- **Educational attainment** is a consistent predictor of future life outcomes and economic stability (Wright & Davis, 2008)
  - Intellectual-based Middle Class
  - Professional aspirations & vocational fulfillment
  - Improved mental and physical health and wellness
  - Educational attainment of offspring

- **Role Conflict Theory** has been used to look at the demands of multiple roles on student parents and conclude it creates a devastating disadvantage (Sibulkin & Butler, 2005; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004; Wright & Davis, 2008)
  - Associated with feelings of stress, guilt, shame and disappointment
What is known about TCAPS?

- Traditional college age women have highest rates of unintended pregnancies (Brening 2003)
  - 75% among 18-19 year olds
  - 58.5% among 20-24 year olds

- Limited research on traditional college age parenting student
  - Pregnancy rates not tracked
  - Educational attrition reasons not tracked
  - Reclassified as Adult Students
  - Assumed will dropout
  - Hope to see you in 5 years

- Population Growing in college
  - From Retention to Persistence
  - 13% of Undergrads are unmarried parents
  - 5% complete bachelors within 5 years
Schlossberg’s Transition Theory

- Examines the coping strategies for any event or nonevent that significantly changes relationships, assumptions, routines and roles (Schlossberg, et al 1995).
  - Student parenting is typically an unanticipated experience, with a rippled affect through many aspects of student’s life.

- Transition Process goal
  - Movement from preoccupation to resolution and full integration
  - See parenting and educational attainment as compatible activities
  - Challenge is to prevent fixated, stagnation and resignation

- Appreciative Advising framework focuses on setting academic expectations and connects students with resources.

- Supportive Social Networks: Student Mama Groups, Peer Mentoring
QUESTIONS
Session Description

This session will examine the pregnancy and parenting rates of 18-25 year olds and its impact on educational attainment and higher education administration. Existing research on parenting students suggest that educational attrition is eminent or offers a limited model of success for parenting students, such as postponing educational pursuits until after the youngest child has started primary school. Contributing to recent articles (Gasser & Gasser, 2008, and Yakaboski, 2010) that recommend services for parenting students, this presentation will discuss practices shown to effectively retain young parenting students rather than being wishful of students returning after five years out of school.
References


