PREGNANT AND PARENTING TEENS: MAKING A TRANSITION WHILE PURSUING ACADEMIC GOALS

by

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Abstract

Research has shown that 70% of parenting teens drop out of high school, which means they will not be college and career ready at age 18. The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that assisted 30% of pregnant and parenting teens in adapting to their new role as parent while continuing to pursue their academic goals.

This study was conducted using a mix methods sequence consisting of a Likert scale survey and focus groups that were used to understand how pregnant and parenting teens utilized available services, resources, and navigated the system to successfully complete their academic goals. The qualitative instrument was used to allow teen-parent study volunteers an opportunity to give first-hand lived accounts of how they made a positive transition and developed self-efficacy through motivation from their personal network of family, friends, school, and community-based organizations. The quantitative instrument, a five-question survey conducted on Survey Monkey, was used to triangulate oral data, validating the testimony parenting teens shared in focus groups.

Results of the study indicated teen parents identified family, school, and community-based organizations as resources to help them stay engaged in pursuing their academic goals; however, teens identified their children as the motivating factors helping them to be responsible, avoid negative risk-taking behavior and give them a feeling of purpose in life.
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, EAST BAY

The Undersigned Committee Approves the Dissertation of

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PREGNANT AND PARENTING TEENS: MAKING A TRANSITION WHILE PURSUING ACADEMIC GOALS

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As another chapter in my academic journey comes to a close I would like to reflect back upon the challenges and personal growth I have made through the journey of completing classes and this dissertation. When I began this academic pursuit I truly believed I could successfully finish the task; however, I was truly humbled many times due to the intensity and rigor of the program and contemplated terminating my academic pursuit. At this time I would like to thank everyone who is responsible for helping me to be successful in completing the program.

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I would also like to thank my friends for continuing to support me through words of encouragement. Last, but not least, I want to thank the doctoral cohort that became friends for life because of the three years we struggled to finish the program. Special thanks goes to Imee Almazan, my writing partner from the beginning to end, and Corigan.
Malloy, my former coworker. These two ladies were also instrumental in keeping me on task pursuing my academic goals when I wanted to quit. My quote and philosophy for staying engaged in the academic pursuit is, “When you can’t stride, shuffle in place, don’t stop moving your feet you can still be victorious.”
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION ..............................................1

  Statement of the Problem ............................................... 1
  Purpose Statement ..................................................... 2
  Significance of the Study ............................................... 2
  Research Questions .................................................... 3
  Conclusion .......................................................... 8

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature ........................................ 10

  Theoretical Framework – Schlossberg’s Theory of Transition. ............ 11
    Self ................................................................. 12
    Situation .......................................................... 16
    Supports .......................................................... 19
    Strategy .......................................................... 23

  Conclusion .......................................................... 25

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY ............................................26

  Research Design ..................................................... 26
  Rationale ............................................................ 26
  Sample Population ................................................... 26
  Setting ............................................................. 28
  Data Instruments ..................................................... 28
  Data Collection Procedures ............................................. 29
  Method(s) of Analysis ................................................. 31
  Limitations ......................................................... 32
Chapter 4: RESULTS / OUTCOMES ........................................... 33

Introduction ................................................................. 33

Findings ............................................................................ 34

Qualitative Study Participant Data ...................................... 36

Participant 1 ................................................................. 37
Participant 2 ................................................................. 37
Participant 3 ................................................................. 37
Participant 4 ................................................................. 37
Participant 5 ................................................................. 38
Participant 6 ................................................................. 38
Participant 7 ................................................................. 38
Participant 8 ................................................................. 38
Participant 9 ................................................................. 39
Participant 10 ............................................................... 39
Participant 11 .............................................................. 39
Participant 12 .............................................................. 39
Participant 13 ............................................................. 40
Participant 14 ............................................................. 40

Results: Phase One of the Study ......................................... 41

Quantitative Data .......................................................... 41

Results ............................................................................ 41

Results: Phase Two of the Study ........................................ 45

Analysis - Self ............................................................... 51

Analysis - Situation ...................................................... 55

Question 4 (Strategy) - How did you find out about the services available
to help pregnant and parenting teens? .......................... 56
Analysis - Strategy .................................................. 62
Analysis - Support ................................................... 67
Chapter 5: Recommendations ......................................... 69
Future Study Recommendations ....................................... 74
References .............................................................. 76
Appendix A: Quantitative Likert-Scale Survey Instrument .......... 82
Appendix B: Qualitative Questions for Focus Group Sessions .......... 83
Appendix C: Cal SAFE Letter .......................................... 84
Appendix D: Power Point Orientation Presentation ................... 85
Appendix E: Participant Assent Form .................................. 86
Appendix F: Parent Permission Consent Form .......................... 89
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Birth Rate for Teens Ages 15 – 19 in the US, State, and Alameda County . . . 4
Table 1.2: California Teen Birth Rate by Ethnicity for the Years 2000, 2006, and 2012 . . . 4
Table 2.1: Diploma or GED Attainment by Age 22 by Teen or Non-teen Parents . . . . 14
Table 2.2: Diploma or GED Attainment of Parenting Teens, Age 22 by Race/Ethnicity . 14
Table 2.3: Impact of Special Services on Teen Mothers Showing the Experimental and Control Group Results ................................................................. 16
Table 2.4: Percentage of Teens Attending Alternative School vs. Traditional High School ......................................................................................... 21
Table 2.5: Teen Mother’s Dropout and Non-Enrollment in School Data 1989 - 2001 . . 22
Table 3.1: Study Participants ........................................................................ 27
Table 4.1: Study Participants and Descriptions ................................................. 41
Table 4.2: Frequencies and Percentages for Beliefs in the Ability to Complete my Academic Goals and Eventually Provide a Living ........................................ 42
Table 4.3: Frequencies and Percentages for the Program is Putting me in Touch with Community-Based Organizations .......................................................... 42
Table 4.4: Frequencies and Percentages for Believes that the Program is Helping with a Plan of Action .............................................................................. 43
Table 4.5: Frequencies and Percentages for I Know I am Making Progress Toward my Academic Goals ........................................................................... 43
Table 4.6: Frequencies and Percentages for My Family is a Source of Support and is Helping me be Successful with Academic, Social, and Parenting Goals .................. 44
Table 4.7: Frequencies and Percentages for I Believe that the Timing of my Pregnancy Impacted or Changed my Educational Goals .......................... 44
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Schlossberg’s Theory of Transition describing the 4Ss. ................. 12
Figure 4.1: Schlossberg’s 4Ss in relation to themes emerging from the data. ........ 34
Figure 4.2: Codes and themes established from recurring participant dialogue. ....... 36
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Teen pregnancy and parenting presents a dilemma for our educational system for a myriad of reasons. Yet, pregnant and parenting teens impact not only the social, economic, and workforce status of teens, they have a profound effect on the education goals set for our nation. One of our nation’s educational goals is to ensure that all students are college and career ready upon graduation from high school. One factor impeding this goal is the high dropout rate for pregnant and parenting teens. This subset of dropouts represents 26% of the cohort that leave school prior to fulfilling even the lowest goal of high school graduation (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morison, 2006). Thus, the consequences of pregnant and parenting teens not only affect the teen, but their family, schools, and community (Kirby, 2001).

The United States has the highest teen pregnancy rate in the western industrialized world and it is estimated that for every 1000 teen girls age 15 – 19 there will be 27 pregnancies (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2003). This high rate of teen pregnancy means our country also has the potential for having a high rate of teen parenting coupled with the challenges this subset of society typically experiences. Thus, teen pregnancy, and subsequent parenting, is closely related to the dropout rate for girls, age 15 to 19 due, in part, to the transition young women must make to adapt to their new role and responsibilities (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Teen parents dropping out of school are more likely to be unemployed, living in poverty, receiving public assistance, incarcerated,
divorced, unhealthy, living as single parents with children who drop out of high school themselves (Bridgeland et al., 2006), and may have low education attainment, thus, making them ill prepared for college and career due to their lack of a high school diploma (Berglas, Brindis, & Cohen, 2003).

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into what motivates and supports the 30% of pregnant and parenting teens that stay engaged in school and fulfill their academic goals. Although they are in the process of transitioning into pre-mature adults and parents, teen mothers face educational, social, and familial challenges in an attempt to adapt to their new role as both student and parent. Seventy percent of teen mothers do not fulfill their academic goals. Thus, understanding the successful strategies some teens use to stay engaged in their educational journey may help to guide program and policy development that will assist the 70% of pregnant and parenting teens who do not successfully transition and finish high school and thereby become college and career ready.

There is a need to study pregnant and parenting teens to find out what makes them successful at reaching their goals. This study will use a survey and teen parenting voices to show how they navigate the system, use resources, parent their child(ren), sometimes work, and apply strategies to stay engaged in completing their academic goals.

**Significance of the Study**

There is an abundance of literature that discussed and reported results of studies regarding teen pregnancy prevention strategies. However, there are few studies that
specifically target the essence of what makes teens actively pursue their academic goals. This study will give a voice to young women in Alameda County who have been successful in navigating the system and victoriously continuing to pursue their goals despite the many challenges they face on a daily basis.

**Research Questions**

The following are the research questions that will be utilized to explore teen pregnancy and parenting.

- What collaborative services assist pregnant and parenting teens in transitioning from childhood to adulthood? (Support)
- As pregnant teens transition through the stages of pregnancy to motherhood, how do they utilize the services that are provided to help them persist in meeting their academic goals? (Strategy)
- What characteristics and/or attributes do pregnant and parenting teens possess that enable them to navigate the transitions required to remain academically successful in school? (Self)
- How do teens explain the dilemmas they face? (Situation)

In 2010, 367,678 young women became a parenting teen in the United States (Berglas et al., 2010). The Office of Adolescent Health (2015) postulated that the teen pregnancy rate had consistently been decreasing and the birth rate for teens, ages 15 – 19 in 2013, was 273,000. If 70% of these teens dropped out of school then at least 257,381 teen mothers are out of school nation wide and possibly experiencing life challenges related to a rapid transition from child to immature adult and lack of a high school diploma. The California Department of Health reported that in 2012, 34,921 teens ages 15 – 19 experienced childbirth in the state of California. If the statistics hold true for 70%
of these young women then, 24,444.7 dropped out of school and are not seeking to fulfill their academic goals (see Table 1.1 and Table 1.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Births</th>
<th>Possible Teen Dropouts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>305,420</td>
<td>213,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>34,921</td>
<td>24,444.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alameda</td>
<td>1,322</td>
<td>925</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1.1: Birth Rate for Teens Ages 15 – 19 in the US, State, and Alameda County*

**California Birth Rate Among Ages 15 - 19**

*Table 1.2: California Teen Birth Rate by Ethnicity for the Years 2000, 2006, and 2012*

In Alameda County, there were 1,322 live births, reported as 26.2 per 1000 births to teen mothers at a cost of $25,000,000 to the taxpayers (California Department of Health, 2012). This area represents a very large and densely populated urban hub with
pockets of lower social economic neighborhoods; however, Kirby (2001) stated, in order to make an impact on the teen pregnancy and the resulting drop out issue, we must study the individual as well as the environment in which teens live.

Gest, Mahoney and Cairns (1999) interjected that neighborhood culture and poverty can shape young women’s expectations and can increase their risk of early pregnancy leaving them with little hope for a successful economic lifestyle. Limited community resources and social disorganization often result in fewer social services, poor schools, and high unemployment rates. According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (2003), only 2% of mothers who gave birth to children before age 18 completed a college degree, and 50% of all females identified pregnancy as a major cause of dropping out of school (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Nord, Moore, Morrison, Brown, and Myers (1992) reported that early childbearing is predicted by early school failure, early behavioral problems, family dysfunction, and poverty. Manlove (1998) reported that girls who are engaged in school with high educational performance and plan to attend college are less likely to be sexually active and should they become pregnant are more likely to abort an early pregnancy; however, girls who are less engaged in school tend to be more likely to drop out. Manlove, Ryan and Franzetta (2003) maintained that younger teens, specifically White and Hispanic dropouts, were more likely to be teen mothers, and although African Americans did not show a relationship for dropping out and the risk of pregnancy, there were other risk factors for this group.

Poverty-stricken neighborhoods are the environment where many of our Alameda County pregnant and parenting teens reside. Many pregnant and parenting teens are typically viewed using a deficit model lens described by Yosso and Solorzano (2005) and what Bordieu (2011) referred to as a population lacking cultural capital. The deficit model refers to the negative beliefs assumed about a marginalized cohort of people steeped in layer upon layer of subordinated traits such as race, gender, class, immigration
status, surname, etc. Typical deficit model assumptions applied to marginalized parents and students is they do not value education, or the students lack the experiences needed to be successful and therefore are not expected to excel in school. The deficit model not only blames the victim it also ignores the strengths of the marginalized people and can be the impetus for low teacher expectations (Yosso & Solorzano, 2005). Similarly, Bordieu’s (2011) theory regarded capital as the social life dictated to one due to family circumstances (SES), skills one acquires, material belongings, and education level. The more capital one possesses the more powerful the position he or she enjoys in their social grouping. Using this theory, pregnant and parenting teens due to their rapid transition to premature adulthood and their challenges in staying engaged in their academic goals may be viewed by the dominant group as lacking cultural capital, thereby not equipped to graduate from high school.

Bedyniak (2011) reported having and taking care of a baby is a challenging test that requires maturity and sacrifice. Many young mothers tend to be in relationships that are unstable or short term causing stress. As a result of the rapid transition teens make to parenthood, many young women are not capable of staying engaged in their academic journey due to the emotional challenges they experience.

Some young mothers are challenged by being kicked out of their family home or leaving due to their pregnancy. This added stress adds to the dysfunction and instability a teen must experience. In a study of homeless and parenting teens conducted by Dworsky and Meehan (2012) one young mother said,

I left my mother’s house without having anywhere to go…it took really for me [to] try to figure out what is my next step and try to get my GED because I hadn’t finished high school when I came here. And try to figure out how I was going to get a job and finish my education and try to take care of my daughter. So I
would have to go out west and take her [daughter to day care] and then come back north to work and then try to get to school. It was just a lot so I just got my GED. (p. 2120)

Many scholars have produced research using the deficit model or lack of cultural capital theory with results suggesting that marginalized students are destined to be low achievers; however, SmithBattle (2007) and other scholars view teen pregnancy as a pivotal point in life for some young women. The opposite view of the disadvantaged teen parent is similarly described by Herrman (2006), Dworsky and Meehan, (2012) and Duncan (2007). These researchers argued that teen parenting is not always the futile future of a dropout destined to live off government assistance or low wage jobs, and subsequently their children becoming dropouts and repeating the cycle of teen childbearing. Duncan (2007) postulated that teen pregnancy can be the catalyst to spur academic achievement and those policies stigmatizing assumed ignorance and inadequacies of teen parents is inappropriate. Evidence from studies conducted suggest that many young mothers use the impetus of becoming pregnant to transform their lives, becoming responsible, avoiding risky behavior, embracing education, and fulfilling academic goals.

The federal government spends close to 9.4 billion dollars a year on issues related to teen pregnancy and teen parenting (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2003). One of the more salient issues related to teen pregnancy and parenting is the high number of students that drop out of school due to familial, social, and health challenges (SmithBattle, 2006). Pregnant and parenting teens experience challenges such as schooling issues, childcare, medical complications for themselves or their children, and parenting responsibilities. These challenges may limit their ability to attend school and meet graduation requirements. SmithBattle (2006) postulated that school administration’s
agenda, increasing attendance, grades and academic progress, as well as some teachers’ prejudice of teen parents create barriers that stifle teen parents’ academic engagement and negatively affect graduation rates. Oftentimes, school-sponsored organizations discriminate against teen parents. For example, teachers may have low expectations for teen parents or teachers may fail to advise teen parents of post-secondary education opportunities. The unfortunate results of many of these barriers is that school districts expend little effort in retaining parenting teens or re-engaging dropouts, thus many parenting teens do not earn a high school diploma (SmithBattle, 2006).

Amin, Browne, Ahmed, and Sato (2006) postulated that teen parents are often ill-served by the fragmented programs that are designed for the general population, resulting in their unique needs not being met and ultimately the teen mothers drop out of school. Amin et al. (2006) sited that problems such as the lack of services addressing both the mother and the baby creates a barrier to students completing high school. For example, teen mothers struggled with breastfeeding issues, childcare challenges, transportation to and from school, accessing health care services for both themselves and their children, as well as acquiring information regarding social service programs.

**Conclusion**

There is an urgent need to design programs that will assist pregnant and parenting teens in making a successful transition from high school student to parent and high school graduate. Pregnant and parenting teens often have poor academic performance prior to their pregnancy, low educational aspirations, reduced employment prospects and earning potential, and a high risk for dropping out of school prior to receiving a GED or graduation diploma. The teaching and administrative staff at comprehensive high schools may not be able to provide the unique services these teen mothers need to
be successful in fulfilling their academic goals due to low teacher expectations, general population attendance policies, and other health or parenting challenges. There is a definite need to shape these young mothers’ life habits to give them stability, nurture their self-efficacy, encourage productivity, help them to aspire to graduate from high school, and pursue post-secondary education options. Studying the elements that make the small 30% successful minority break the cycle of teen parenting and subsiding on government assistance may provide strategies that can help the 70% of pregnant and parenting teens experience success and become self-sufficient.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Pregnant and parenting teens drop out of high school at alarming rates (Berglas et al., 2003), thus becoming an issue for our nation’s public school education system. The United States has the highest teen pregnancy rate in the western industrialized world (McKay & Barrett, 2010). The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (2013) postulated that as of October 2009, there were three million, 16 – 24 year old women that were not enrolled in high school, adult school, or an alternative program and did not earn a high school diploma. Berglas, Brindis, and Cohen (2003) estimated that up to 70% of teen mothers drop out of school before they acquire their high school diplomas.

This paper will describe the factors related to pregnant and parenting teens’ high dropout rate. The paper will also highlight strategies that are used in various areas of California to assist pregnant and parenting teens fulfill their academic goals. A phenomenon of self-efficacy that helps parenting teens make a successful transition to parenthood and graduation will also be introduced. It is important that we study this segment of the population because teen mothers who drop out of school not only negatively impact their families, but the community and the nation as well due to the loss of productivity, income, educational deficiencies, social issues related to them as well as their families, and the loss of tax revenue (Sadler et al, 2007).
Theoretical Framework – Schlossberg’s Theory of Transition

Schlossberg’s Theory of Transition will be used to understand the factors that assist teen parents in staying in school. Transition theory will provide the lens to explain the phenomena of self, situation, strategy, and support that may lead teens to drop out of school or adapt to their new role as parent while continuing to pursue their academic goals.

Schlossberg developed the Theory of Transition framework (Schlossberg, 1981) to facilitate the understanding of adults coping with transition. This theory was developed as an attempt to answer the question why do people react differently to the same transition or even differently to the same transition in different times of life stages. The foundation of the theory was to aid adults facing life challenges (transitions) by helping them to connect to services and other resources in an effort to cope with the ordinary and extraordinary processes of living (Evans and Kim, 2010) and can be used to show how the transition to motherhood can be shaped to provide a higher potential for teen mothers to graduate from high school.

Schlossberg’s Theory of Transition (1981) has three components; however for the purpose of this paper one component, the 4Ss, (self, situation, strategy, and support) will be used to explain the transition or the phenomena of successful adaptability for the teen mothers. It important to note that the 4Ss represent four quadrants of liabilities or assets. This model assesses the ratio of resources (assets) to deficits (liabilities). If a pregnant or parenting teen has more assets than liabilities in relation to the 4Ss then there is a greater potential for her to make a successful transition to her new status in life as parent, premature adult, and high school graduate (see Figure 2.1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4Ss</th>
<th>Assets of liabilities that assist with the teen parent making a successful transition to parenthood while continuing to pursue their academic goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Ethnicity, strengths and weaknesses, self-efficacy, social economic status, psychological makeup, religion, and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation</td>
<td>Trigger of the event, concurrent stresses, previous experiences, timing, duration, characteristics of the event or non-event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Family, friends, network, convoy, mentors, community based organizations, school, institutions, counseling, and other options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Coping responses, information seeking, direct action, and inhibition of action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2.1: Schlossberg’s Theory of Transition describing the 4Ss.*

A transition is characterized as any event, or non-event, that has resulted in changes to one’s routines, assumptions, relationships and roles, and is more so defined by an individual’s perception to the change (Schlossberg, 1981). The term transition is taken from Crisis Theory developed by Lindeman (as cited in Parad, 1965), which explained the stages of grief. Transitions or changes disrupt equilibrium and may cause failure to adapt for some individuals. A transition can be anticipated or non-anticipated. The role of perception is an important element of transition. It is important to understand how the individual perceives the transition itself in general and how the individual feels about their existing resources available to help them cope with the transition (Schlossberg, 1981). An example of such a perception is a student teen mother characterized as disadvantaged and at high risk for dropping out of school, but believes that her baby motivated her to finish high school and eliminate risky behavior habits.

**Self**

Schlossberg (2005) reported that the self element consists of the uniqueness of the individual and encompasses ethnicity, strength/weaknesses, social economic status...
(SES), religion/values, psychological makeup, and self-efficacy. These traits describe the individual and play a definite role in how an individual will react to their transition.

Ethnicity is an important factor in the self element because of the cultural taboos and perception of others as being a member of a marginalized racial group. The strengths/weaknesses one has before the trigger of the life challenge is also important because a student who already is experiencing challenges in their academic program may have a predisposition to dropping out of school prior to the pregnancy. Cultural norms, values, and religious norms somewhat dictate to a young pregnant or parenting women what is expected of her due to pregnancy. The family’s social economic status (SES) prevents or assists her in making decisions regarding future choices for her and her child(ren). The pregnant or parenting teen’s social age is also an important factor in the transition. The younger a parenting teen is the greater the potential there is for her to drop out of school (Manlove, 1998; Perper, Peterson, & Manlove, 2010) or resort to other graduation options. Self-efficacy is an important factor because an individual that perceives they have no control over situations has a tendency to make default decisions or non-choices. The individual takes on a defeated attitude, making achievement of a goal less likely to happen; however, a teen mother who sees their pregnancy as a pivotal point (Duncan, 2007) in life may be able to benefit from the new life event. The last factor of the self element is the prior lived experiences, which plays a great role in the transition because experiences of success will give the pregnant or parenting teen a sense of hope for a brighter future or past experiences of failure may stop them from attempting to try to make a successful transition to their new life status.

Perper, Peterson, and Manlove (2010) conducted a quantitative study using government data (Child Trends’ analyses of data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth - 1997 Cohort) to determine the gap between graduation rates for teen mothers, racial cohorts, and those young women who did not give birth before age 19. The
findings revealed that 51% of the teen mother cohort earned a high school diploma by age 22, 15% of the cohort earned a GED, and 34% earned neither a high school diploma nor a GED certificate. In contrast, young women who had not become teen mothers graduated from high school at the rate of 89% by age 22, 5% of this cohort earned a GED certificate, and 6% earned neither a GED nor high school diploma (see Table 2.1).

The study also revealed that although teen childbearing is more prevalent among Black and Hispanic teens, Black teen mothers are more likely to earn a high school diploma or GED than both Hispanic and White teen mothers by age 22 (Perper et al., 2010) (see Table 2.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Diploma Earned</th>
<th>GED Earned</th>
<th>Dropout at age 22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teen Mothers</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-teen Mothers</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.1: Diploma or GED Attainment by Age 22 by Teen or Non-teen Parents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Diploma Earned</th>
<th>GED Earned</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.2: Diploma or GED Attainment of Parenting Teens, Age 22 by Race/Ethnicity*

Social Economic Status (SES) is also a factor in what makes an individual unique (Schlossberg, 1981). Completing educational goals coupled with family economics, especially those dependent on government assistance, present a challenge for not only the teen mother but the family as well. In a study by Polit and Kahn (1986) they reported that one out of five teen parents has a subsequent birth within 12 months of delivering a first child. Polit and Kahn (1986) conducted a study to examine repeat pregnancy among teenagers living in poverty. Implications for the results of this study could be used to
assist in increasing the rate of teen mother’s engagement in pursuing their academic goals. Having a subsequent birth can impact the family and make it more challenging for the teen parent to stay actively engaged in pursuing their academic goals. The methodology for the study consisted of a longitudinal strategy with three points of data collection. The sample population consisted of 17-year-old parenting teens receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The study utilized a control and treatment group. The treatment group received support from the Project Redirection program while the control group was used only for comparison purposes. At the baseline data gathering point half the teens were enrolled in school. Teenagers who were in school at baseline and who had less of a dropout record were significantly less likely than other teenagers to have a repeat pregnancy; however, at the 24-month data-gathering period 56% of the teens had two or more pregnancies (Polit & Kahn, 1986).

In another study conducted by O’Sullivan and Jacobsen (1992), with the purpose of testing the effectiveness of a special health program, where 243 African American first time adolescent mothers and their infants were randomly divided into a control group and an experimental group. The experimental group received routine care and services coupled with rigorous follow up, encouraging discussions regarding academic goals, and the use of contraceptives. The key areas of inquiry were dropout rate, subsequent births, childhood immunization rates, and emergency room visits. The researchers found that the dropout rate for the experimental group was 22% less than the control group (see Table 2.3). The subsequent pregnancy rate was 16% lower in the experimental group. The results of this study suggest that comprehensive health care and counseling for first time adolescent mothers can positively impact parenting teens.
Cohort Dropout Rate Subsequent Birth Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Dropout Rate</th>
<th>Subsequent Birth Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.3: Impact of Special Services on Teen Mothers Showing the Experimental and Control Group Results*

**Situation**

The situation element refers to the type of transition that occurred. It describes the trigger, what made the event happen, the timing, perhaps it is a bad time for the event to occur or the change is perceived as a blessing or lucky break, the affect, concurrent stresses, the duration, and the characteristics of the event. The trigger of the event is the circumstances leading up to the change, which could be gradual or sudden. The affect has two possible outcomes. The change can be perceived as positive or negative by the pregnant or parenting teen. Not all teen parenting is an unexpected consequence of sexual contact; therefore, becoming pregnant may have been a deliberate choice (Berglas et al., 2003). Berglas et al. (2003) reported that up to 20% of teen pregnancies are intended. Schlossberg (19952005) hypothesized that an individual may adapt more easily to transitions derived from deliberate choices. Concurrent stresses can be numerous, ranging from family issues, financial constraints/poverty and its accompanying dilemmas, to school challenges and impending role changes and new responsibilities. The duration factor in transition theory can be permanent, temporary, and at best uncertain; however, pregnant and parenting teen transitions are usually one of permanence, which can be complicated due to the issues associated with teen stress. The timing of teen parenting may not be considered an optimal time because teens in high school are normally getting ready to make a transition to post-secondary life, instead parenting teens have new responsibilities that may preclude high school completion (Kalil & Danziger, 2000).
Klein (2005) postulated that teen parenting is more prevalently a teen and adult problem because frequently teen mothers’ partners are adults. Amin et al. (2006) argued that male partners could be considered a barrier to teen mothers completing their academic goals. Issues stemming from male partners that teen mothers may experience consist of separation from the child’s father, divorce, and subsequent pregnancies (Klein, 2005). Klein (2005) also reported on factors that increase the likelihood of graduation; being an African American, being raised in a smaller family, the presence of reading material in the home, having parents with a higher educational level, and employment of the teen’s mother.

Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison (2006) conducted a mixed-method study with the purpose of finding out why the United States dropout rate is almost one third of the high school population. The methodology of this study consisted of surveys, focus groups, and interviewing 467 ethnically diverse dropouts from 25 different locations. Bridgeland et al. (2006) estimated that pregnant and parenting teens represent 26% of the high school dropout rate and reminded us that dropouts are more likely to be in prison, on death row, unhealthy, divorced, living on public assistance, and single parents with children who also drop out of school. One of the findings in this study particularly related to parenting teens is that the challenges of motherhood and school became unmanageable and they dropped out of school (Bridgeland et al., 2006).

Poverty is a concurrent situation and is closely associated with teen pregnancy and parenting (Johnson & Johnson, 2003; Perper et al., 2010) as well as low levels of education attainment (Costello, 2014). These two elements are considered concurrent stresses associated with the situation element.

More affluent teens and those with high education aspirations that are actively engaged in school tend to deter early sexual activity and childbearing habits (Manlove, 1998). South and Baumer (2000) argued that living in highly racially concentrated
disadvantaged neighborhoods or more so, the lack of educated/financially responsible neighbors, reduces the perceived affect that education is meaningful and its benefits can lead to obtaining rewarding career opportunities. Teens situated in lower social economic neighborhoods tend to view their surroundings as normal, adopting the habits of their neighbors which means bearing children early and dropping out of school (South & Baumer, 2000). A mixed-method longitudinal study conducted by South and Baumer (2000) illustrated both timing and environment factors. The data to conduct the study was from the National Survey of Children (NSC), which is non-school-based data. School-based data may have omitted or missed many of the teenage dropouts. The sample included 552 women (112 Blacks and 450 non-Blacks). The study revealed that Black women were more likely than White women to perceive that their peers believe it is socially acceptable to bear children out of wedlock and both Black and White women aspire to attain some college education; however, Black women reported somewhat greater attachment to their schools than White women and Black women reported less parental supervision. Young women from more affluent neighborhoods that have more educated parents and own their own homes have a lower risk of bearing children out of wedlock and those families with more dysfunction tend to have many siblings which is a higher risk for bearing children out of wedlock (Klein, 2005; South & Baumer, 2000).

Manlove (1998) reported factors related to teens’ school experiences such as the classroom, family background, individual school engagement, and opportunity costs are associated with teen childbearing. Manlove (1998) argued that high levels of school engagement are related to delayed pregnancy and childbearing. In her longitudinal study she focused on the question does teen fertility result from educational disengagement? Qualitative data gathering activities were conducted three times in 1990, 1992, and 1994. Utilizing a cohort group of eighth grade White, Black, and Hispanic students, Manlove (1998) hypothesized that students actively engaged in school and with a high opportunity
cost could delay pregnancy and childbearing as opposed to teens with low school engagement and a low opportunity cost. Students who attended Catholic and private schools with more rigorous curriculum and resources as opposed to students attending schools where there is a higher percentage of students experiencing teen parenting would realize the high opportunity costs, thus delaying pregnancy and child birth. The findings concluded that students attending a school with 50% or more of the students eligible for free lunch was an indicator for a school where students would have a higher pre-disposition for school age pregnancies. Tracking students into low ability groups was associated to losses of achievement. Black women were more likely to experience childbirth (25.1%); however, they were more likely to not drop out of school. Hispanics had the highest dropout rate at 17.2% (Manlove, 1998).

**Supports**

Supports are described as the resources that will help or hinder the outcome of a successful transition (Schlossberg, 1981). Supports are the assistance that pregnant and parenting teens can use to help them to stay engaged in academia while they are making a transition to parenthood. Family, friends, community-based organizations (CBOs), and student networks can provide invaluable assistance that allow teen parents to stay either at their own school site or transfer to a program that addresses the special needs of their eventual role and responsibility. Teens also need to have support services that help them prevent subsequent births within two years of their first child.

Amin et al. (2006) postulated that many disadvantaged lower SES teen mothers are not served or supported well by typical fragmented programs designed for the general population such as those with separated educational, health, economic, social, and psychological services. Instead, a more case management service approach with CBOs that offer a more comprehensive program may better assist teen mothers in staying
engaged in their academic pursuit. A mixed-method study using an experimental group and a control group was conducted to determine the effectiveness of an alternative program designed exclusively to assist pregnant and parenting teens was conducted. Sample participants included parenting teens that transferred to an alternative program and students who upon finding out they were pregnant chose to stay at their traditional high school. Quantitative data was collected from both sample groups; while qualitative data was collected only from the alternative education parenting teens who received psychosocial and reproductive health services as a comprehensive portion of their education program. The alternative education program’s sample of participants was randomly selected from a list of 800 students. There were 506 teen parent participants in the sample population of students who opted to stay in their public school. Both sample populations were predominantly African American students. The public school students were selected from 15 schools in lower SES areas with comparable traits to the students that attended the alternative program. Results of the study suggested that students from low SES backgrounds were better served by a comprehensive program with a range of services as opposed to a typical fragmented service delivery designed to deal with separate problems. By offering a comprehensive program in a familiar environment there is a high potential for positive outcomes (see Table 2.4).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment in School Options</th>
<th>Aspiration to Complete Grade 12</th>
<th>Pursue College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Comprehensive School</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>73.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Public High School</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4: Percentage of Teens Attending Alternative School vs. Traditional High School

Lundberg and Plotnick (1990) reported that government policies have been accused of encouraging single parenthood and teen parenting by providing welfare grants (Aid to Families and Dependent Children (AFDC)), Medicaid, and food stamps. This monetary and social services support provided an opportunity for freedom from parental supervision and a pre-mature pass to adult status for parenting teens (Blank, 1997; Ellwood & Bane, 1985). This freedom from parental supervision and lack of support may have increased the dropout rate of pregnant and parenting teens as well as subsequent pregnancies prior to welfare reform.

In 1996 welfare reform eliminated the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Clinton (1996) signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), thus the country began implementing Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). The new reform required that teen mothers must live in a home with a responsible adult and be actively enrolled in school to receive cash grants. This new rule counteracts what Blank (1997) postulated as the independent effect sought by teen parents. Evidence was collected that teen mothers valued their freedom to move out from their parents by using AFDC resources for living expenses. Free from parent scrutiny, teen parents would have the ability to engage in risky behaviors leading to dropping out of school or subsequent pregnancies.

Offner (2005) conducted a quantitative study with a difference in methodology to inquire about the impact of PROWORA (1996). Using data from National Longitudinal
Surveys of Youth, it was determined that the welfare reform helped girls to get the message that relying on welfare was a temporary fix for finances and staying in school would help them to obtain a more substantial income. According to Offner’s (2005) findings, the dropout rate for teen mothers in 1989 was 50.1%. By 2001, the dropout rate was 22.7%, a difference of 34%. Enrollment in school and continuous attendance went up for girl’s ages 16 – 17. The percentage of low-income girls not enrolled in school in 1989 went from 13.4% to a low of 8.7% in 2001 (Offner, 2005) (see Table 2.5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dropouts - 50.01</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>34% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enrolled in school – 13.4%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>4.7% decrease</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.5: Teen Mother’s Dropout and Non-Enrollment in School Data 1989 - 2001*

Encouragement in the form of preventing subsequent births is another type of support that teen mothers need to stay engaged in academia. Teen mothers experiencing subsequent births within two years of the first birth may find staying engaged in their academic pursuit challenging. Barnet, Liu, DeVoie, Alperovitz-Bichell, and Duggan (2007) conducted a mixed study collecting data from 84 African American young women ages 12 – 18 with low income SES. The study was focused on assessing the effectiveness of home visits to teen mothers by trained visitors in preventing subsequent births, improving parenting attitudes, increasing school continuation rates, and preventing parental depression. The study participants were recruited from a community-based health care clinic and were divided into two groups, an experimental group (44) that received home based visits and curriculum for up to two years after the baby’s birth by a trained home visitor and a control group (40) that received traditional care. At baseline of the study 30% of the teens had dropped out of school. The results of the study revealed the experimental group had improved parental attitudes towards parenting and
an increased rate of continuing school. Significantly more home visited teens returned to school and graduated within two years in comparison to their counterparts in the control group. It was surmised that the reengagement of teens in school and graduation was due to the consistent message of the value of education, case management, and the ongoing relationship with the teen. The study revealed there was no impact upon subsequent births or parental depression (Barnet, Liu, DeVoe, Alperovitz-Bichell, & Duggan, 2007).

**Strategy**

Strategy refers to the plan of action and the ability of coping and managing with the stress of change (Schlossberg, 1981). Coping mechanisms that pregnant and parenting teens use can be instrumental (changing the environment) or palliative (minimizing individual stress). Examples of positive coping modes are seeking information, building a network of people to provide assistance, or making plans to stay engaged in pursuing academic goals, which can be seen as positive steps toward adaptability. Ignoring the reality of an eminent role change and new lifestyle does not promote adaptability or stability for the pregnant and parenting teen or their family (Schlossberg, 1981).

Cherry, Chumbler, Bute, and Huff (2015) conducted a study using the written journals of teen parents as data. The purpose of the study was to ascertain and compare the future aspirations of pregnant and parenting teens as well as identify social or structural barriers that presented challenges in their daily lives. The sample population consisted of 52 multi-ethnic 15 – 19 year old teen mothers. A common and emergent theme from studies by Duncan (2007) and SmithBattle (2006) was that parenting gave teens a purpose in life. This purpose helped students to make a successful transition in their life, giving them the will to eliminate risky behavior such as smoking, skipping school, unprotected sex, etc. SmithBattle (2006), Duncan (2007), and Geronimus (2003) identified the difference of how many scholars view typical teen parenting through a
deficit model lens where as many teen parents view their parenting as the pivotal point in life (Duncan, 2007) that helped them to become productive and goal aspiring teens. Results of the Cherry et al. (2015) study revealed that teen parents focused many of their journal entries on motivation and aspirations to seek a better life. The findings mirrored those of the SmithBattle (2000) and Duncan (2007) study results. Implications for the study indicated that pregnant and parenting teens need a strong social support network to assist them in becoming college and career ready so that they can fulfill their aspirations and academic goals.

Duncan (2007) looked at the so called deficit factors of teen parenting and perceived an opposite view of the “official statement” concerning many policy makers view on this marginalized cohort of young women. Duncan (2007) postulated that there is was a problem with generalizing teen parents would live a life of poverty, single parent status, low-wage employment, and or drop out of school. After reviewing data from a number of longitudinal studies using the Natural Experience Approach (Bell et al., 2004; Clemmens, 2003; McDermott & Graham, 2005; Robson & Berthoud, 2003; SmithBattle, 2000,) Duncan (2007) determined that teenage parenting can be the catalyst for positive change and growth that leads to teen parents expanding their resources and obtaining employment and training. The Natural Experience Approach used study participants from two cohorts such as a set of twins (only one experienced teen childbearing) or teens that miscarried as opposed to those that had live births and analyzed the outcomes. Furthermore, Robson and Berthoud (2003) concluded from a longitudinal study that teen birth had little effect on any further disadvantages beyond that experienced by the ethnic group as a whole.

Dworsky and Meehan (2012) conducted a study on pregnant and parenting teens that found themselves homeless. One teen parent expressed her will to persevere and finished her education goals as she stated
It was so big to me because when I was in school, I was a mother of two already and pregnant with one on the way…So I got up every morning through hell, rain, you know, too hot, too windy, and I did it. It was more meaningful for my daughter to witness why mommy was going to school. (p. 2120)

**Conclusion**

Parenting teens are impacted by their role change from minor to quasi-adult status. This transition and failure to adapt to their new role may affect their ability to stay engaged in their academic goals. Social scientists estimate that up to 70% of teen mothers do not graduate from high school and 22% of these young women experience a subsequent birth within two years of their first birth.

Many social scholars view the pregnant and parenting teen using a deficit model (Yosso & Solorzano, 2005) or regard them as lacking social capital (Bordieu, 2011). This marginalized cohort of young mothers appear destined to have low education attainment, are in need of government assistance, are at risk of divorce, incarceration, poor health, and their children are at risk of not graduating from high school.

Not all scholars believe that these teen mothers are destined to live such debilitating life circumstances. Experiencing pivotal life events appears to spur many parenting teens into action. These young mothers are motivated to provide for their children, give up risky behavior, and strive to complete their academic goals. Using the resources and networks provided, up to 30% of teen mothers make a successful transition and are able to complete high school making them college and career ready.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study consisted of a two-phase sequential mixed-method data collection process. The first phase consisted of a survey conducted via computers. The second phase consisted of focus groups and individual interviews if students felt the need to further discuss their experiences in private.

Rationale

Creswell (2009) reported that a mixed-method design for studying a problem or issue is best used when using only either the qualitative or quantitative method is inadequate to fully understand the problem. In the use of mixed methods, the quantitative phase of this study is to first generally study the population to determine the variables. The second phase, the qualitative process, allows the researcher to obtain a rich view of the phenomenon through a semi-structured dialogue.

Sample Population

Pregnant and parenting teens were recruited from a Cal Safe Pregnant and Parenting Teens program. Sixteen students participated in the study, of which 13 students were selected to complete both the survey and participate in focus groups. One individual
interview was conducted with a student who wanted to have privacy to express her truth. A purposeful sampling was taken into account to select diverse backgrounds of participants. The sample population consisted of five African American students, eight Hispanic students, one Pakistani student, and one Filipino student (see Table 3.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Age Now</th>
<th>Age at time of Pregnancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delia</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabrielle</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melinda</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.1: Study Participants*

The administrator of the school was asked to select a classroom of 16 students to complete the quantitative phase of the study - the survey. Fourteen of the students were self-selected to participate in the qualitative phenomenological portion of the study – a semi-structured focus group. The teen parents participated in one of three focus groups. The groups consisted of three, four, and six members. The small size of the three groups allowed each participant an opportunity to share their experiences and to elaborate on their lived experience in a small group setting.
Setting

The school is located in a densely populated urban area and is housed in a large, multi-level, older building with classrooms on the lower level of the building. In addition to the school, this facility housed a variety of wraparound programs that provide health care, nutrition, and other social services that address family and student needs.

The quantitative portion of the study was conducted in the school’s computer lab. Pregnant and parenting teens used the computers to complete the online survey. The qualitative portion of the study took place in the student cafeteria. Students had the benefit of discussing the challenges of their transitions without school staff members present or in private interviews.

Data Instruments

In the first phase of this study, a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire (see Appendix A) was provided. Quantitative results were used on survey questions and addressed a medium-sized population of students in premature transition from childhood to adulthood. This data represented a broad view of the challenges pregnant and parenting teens face, thus allowing an opportunity to customize questions for the phenomenological (qualitative) portion of the study. Participants had an opportunity to select responses from never (1) to always (5).

The second phase of the study consisted of three focus groups. Open-ended questions for the focus groups were developed to gather data related to Schlossberg’s 4Ss: self, support, strategy, and situation (Schlossberg, 2005). Using the focus group instrument as a guide, the 14 students who were asked to join one of three focus groups were prompted to start a conversation about their experiences. However, because this
was a phenomenological study with a constructivist worldview, participant responses did affect what questions were to be asked and subsequent questions were dynamically generated during the session (Creswell, 2009). The focus group dialogue was started using question one, how has becoming pregnant or a teen parent changed your academic focus?

**Data Collection Procedures**

The first phase, the quantitative portion of the study, was administered by the researcher via Survey Monkey. During the quantitative portion of the study, 15 students who had parent permission were brought into the computer lab to listen to a brief dialogue presented by the researcher on the rationale for conducting the study and how the results from the study may influence written policies that affect the outcome of all pregnant and parenting teens’ academic goals and attainment in the district. At this time participants were also reminded that their answers would be completely anonymous and upon the completion of the researcher’s dialogue all 15 participants immediately took the survey via computer. After the surveys were completed, students had the opportunity to ask questions in the group setting or in private regarding the survey process and/or their data.

This strategy of data gathering was cost effective, convenient for research processes, and cast a wide net in obtaining baseline data for this study. Data was collected and analyzed, resulting in generalizations and identified attributes of the larger population of pregnant and parenting teens (Creswell, 2009). Survey data was collected at one time period from a group of participants in their classroom computer-lab environment. The rapid turnaround of data gathering from the use of a survey allowed the researcher to narrow the scope of questions for the qualitative portion of the study.
The second phase of the study provided a phenomenological research strategy. This qualitative portion of the study was conducted using inquiry to identify the essence of the participants’ lived experiences regarding a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994) and utilized focus groups, as well as a self-identified individual interview, to augment the data gathered from the focus groups. Their lived experiences were critical in understanding the effectiveness, or ineffectiveness, of current supports available to pregnant and parenting teens and to gain an understanding of the skills they used to transition from childhood to adulthood. The 4Ss, a component of Transition Theory, was used to develop questions and analyze and explain the phenomenon of adaptability or failure to adapt (meaning the student continues pursuing their educational goals or drops out of school) upon realization of their pregnancy status. Question one illustrated situation awareness; Question two related to self; Questions three and five identified the strategies participants used to manage stress and continuance to persist towards achieving their academic goals; Questions four and five revealed the supports participants utilized to build stability as they transitioned in their new roles as parents.

The qualitative portion of the data gathering was conducted on a day separate from the survey. Students’ focus groups consisted of three, four, and six participants. These groups were formed based on their availability and the availability to meet. All groups met in a classroom that provided privacy. At the beginning of each session students were reminded of the confidentiality of the conversations that were to take place and were reminded not to repeat any of the information that was expressed in the focus groups. In addition, participants were told that they have been assigned pseudonyms to protect and ensure their privacy, and for the purpose of reporting the data, so that information could not be traced back to them. The students were given a pseudonym, using alphabetical order, in the order that the researcher began to speak to them. They
were also reminded that they may speak with the researcher, in private, if they felt uncomfortable or self-conscious in revealing certain information.

All participants in the quantitative portion of the study had anonymity due to the survey being conducted on Survey Monkey. All participants in the qualitative portion of the study were assigned fictitious names to ensure anonymity. Focus groups and interviews were not conducted in the company of any staff members of the facility. Extra precautions were put in place due to the participants being minors; therefore, all participants had signed parent permission slips to serve as a participant of the study.

**Method(s) of Analysis**

SPSS software was used to analyze the quantitative data. The data was first analyzed to assist in formulating subsequent questions in the qualitative portion of the study. These findings were also used for triangulation purposes during the analysis of the qualitative data.

All interviews and focus group interactions were transcribed. Field notes from observations during the interviews and focus groups were typed to facilitate data organization. All data was then re-read to begin identifying emotion, reflect upon recurring themes that emerged, and significant phrases. Next a coding process was developed to begin categorizing the interaction amongst focus group participants and individual interviews specifically to identify significant phrases and dialogue. The processed data was then sorted into the different categories labeled situation, strategy, self, and support. A continual process of reading, chunking data, and writing notes to describe the deep meaning occurred. Triangulation was then used to compare the qualitative data collected to the quantitative data collected from the survey. Themes were developed and a draft of preliminary findings was taken to the participants to get a
member check. The next step was to compare the developed themes to the theory, make interpretations, and display the findings.

Limitations

This study has a limitation of reliability. A phenomenological study calls for the researcher to bracket their own experiences and obtain rich lived experience data from their study participants (Creswell, 2009). To achieve reliability of a study a researcher must be able to show that the findings are a result of the data obtained/analyzed and not insert the biases of the researcher himself (Shenton, 2004). Although the researcher may be able to accomplish these two elements, a future researcher may not be able to conduct the same study and arrive at the same conclusions.

A second limitation of reliability may have occurred with the participants bonding with the researcher. Student participants may have wanted to withhold information or embellish circumstance to appear more or less worldly to impress the researcher.

A threat of external validity was also apparent. Interaction of setting and treatment is defined as comparing the characteristics of a cohort of study participants in one setting and then making a generalization that is applied to other populations (Creswell, 2009, p. 165). The sample population for this study was too small to make generalizations about other populations.

Research conducted on people always carries the potential for ethical issues. The well being of the already vulnerable participants was a top priority. Special care was used to minimize the potential for bringing harm, both physical and or emotional, to each of the participants. Therefore, the research questions were always of secondary importance. This means that if a choice must be made between doing harm to a participant, it is the research that is sacrificed (Creswell, 2009).
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS / OUTCOMES

Introduction

This chapter describes the study participants and reveals both qualitative and quantitative data gathered from pregnant and parenting teens who are actively engaged in classes leading to a high school diploma. The literature review describes the social justice issue and related dilemmas of pregnant and parenting teens regarding the low rate of graduation from high school and unsuccessfully completing post-secondary education at the four-year college level. Seventy percent of pregnant and parenting teens do not graduate from high school and only 2% ever obtain a Bachelor of Arts or science degree (Berglas et al., 2003).

The purpose of this study was to understand what factors enabled 30% of pregnant and parenting teens who become pregnant before they graduate from high school (Berglas et al., 2003) successfully transition from minor to parent while simultaneously pursuing their academic goals. It is important to understand the lived experiences of these transitioning young women for a plethora of reasons. Their truths and experiences can be used to develop effective policies regarding pregnant and parenting teens at the federal, state, and local levels, thus increasing the graduation rate for these marginalized young women. Administrators of programs can review this literature to glean best practices that modify the present outcomes to assist, retain, and re-engage other young women who find themselves pregnant before they have graduated from high school. Implementation of new programs for pregnant and parenting teens can
become environments that provide opportunity, help build students’ academic confidence, connect students to working mentors/environments, and provide a network so they become college and career ready students.

**Findings**

A number of common themes were revealed in the data obtained from these transitioning young women. The overarching themes were (a) family involvement, (b) catalyst for change motivation from child, and (c) support from their network. The themes will be described and categorized using Schlossberg’s Theory of Transition factors, self, situation, strategy, and support (see Figure 4.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description of the factor</th>
<th>Themes from the data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Religion/values, psychological makeup, social economic status, self-efficacy, strengths/weaknesses</td>
<td>Self-motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Religious practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation</td>
<td>Trigger, concurrent stresses, previous experiences, timing, duration, characteristics of an event or non-event</td>
<td>Previous lack of engagement in school/academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tired/lazy feeling, lack of sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Day care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Coping responses</td>
<td>Parenting teens working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information seeking</td>
<td>Attending youth self-help networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct action</td>
<td>Obtaining social services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inhibition of action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Family, friends, network, convoy, mentors, community-based organizations, school, institutions, counseling, other options</td>
<td>Day care, finances, parents and siblings help, motivation, transportation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.1: Schlossberg’s 4Ss in relation to themes emerging from the data.*
It is important to note that Schlossberg’s Theory of Transition indicated that the ease of adaptation depends on the balance of one’s actual or perceived resources and deficits in relation to the transition itself, the pre/post environment, the individual’s sense of efficacy, well being, and health. Themes from the data can be related to one or more of the 4S factors (Schlossberg, 1981) (see Figure 4.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>A Car</td>
<td>Transportation for the participants is discouraging because they are always dependent on someone else’s schedule, will, or weather conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG</td>
<td>Bad Grades</td>
<td>All of the participants but one noted that at some time or another they received bad grades in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/H</td>
<td>Boyfriend or Husband</td>
<td>Some of the young ladies are married; however, most of them are still involved with their child’s father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Day Care</td>
<td>All of the participants receive day care at school for their child and some of them receive other stipends that allow them to work and not have to shoulder the responsibility of paying for childcare services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Many of the participants noted that their father played an integral role in supporting their efforts to graduate from high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Many of the participants noted that their mother played an integral role in supporting their efforts to graduate from high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M/TC</td>
<td>Motivation Through Child</td>
<td>Many of the participants noted they received motivation to reach their academic goals through the desire to meet their child’s needs. They want their child to receive a better lifestyle than they experienced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SU</td>
<td>School Unimportant</td>
<td>Participants at one time felt that school was unimportant to them or even to their future. Participants noted that they were not going to school or if they did they did not engage in the work assigned by their teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TS</td>
<td>Teen Success Youth Group</td>
<td>Four of the participants attend a youth group designed for pregnant and parenting teens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>Welfare grants that provide financial aid for unemployed or under employed recipients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AFDC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TANF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WIC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP</td>
<td>Home Problems</td>
<td>Participants noted home problems kept them from focusing on academic goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>Social Economic Status of some of the participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>Social Economic Status of some of the participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tired/Exhausted</td>
<td>Many of the participants admitted to being tired quite frequently.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.2: Codes and themes established from recurring participant dialogue.*

**Qualitative Study Participant Data**

Pregnant and parenting teens were recruited from a Cal Safe Pregnant and Parenting Teens program. Fifteen students participated in the quantitative phase of the study, of which 13 students selected to complete both phases of the study - the survey and participate in focus groups. One participant only participated in the qualitative portion of the study and one other participant only completed the quantitative portion of the study.

A purposeful sampling was taken into account to select diverse backgrounds of participants. The 14 students elected to participate in the qualitative phenomenological portion of the study (a semi-structured focus group) consisted of five African American students, eight Hispanic students, one Pakistani student, and one Filipino student (see Table 3.1). The teens participated in one of three focus groups consisting of three, four, and six participants. One participant requested to be interviewed in a setting for privacy to express her truth. The small size of the groups allowed each participant an opportunity to share their experiences and to elaborate on their lived experience in a small group setting.
All student demographics were self-reported and all participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identity and confidentiality of information (see Table 3.1).

Participant 1

Anita is a 16-year-old African American student. Her child is one. Anita noted that in the ninth grade she had exceptional progress in school, but in the tenth grade her grades began to decline. She described her childhood as living in a middle class household, however her mother was single. As a young girl she attended a Baptist church, was in the choir, and feeds the homeless. Anita said that she enjoyed school.

Participant 2

Barbara is a 17-year-old Latino student. She became pregnant at age 14 and her child is two years old. Barbara stated that she was not attending school when she became pregnant. She stated that she grew up in a two parent middle class family. She also stated that she did not think about career aspirations until after her child was born.

Participant 3

Charlotte is a 17-year-old African American student. Charlotte noted that she never took school seriously even in elementary school. She had trouble in school with fighting and at one point she was expelled from school. Charlotte believes that if she were in a regular public school she would not be graduating in June. She is presently working and admits that her job conducts drug tests so she does not smoke weed.

Participant 4

Delia is a 19-year-old African American student. Her child is 11 months old. Delia noted that her family is living in poverty. She has three older sisters and two younger brothers. Each of her older sisters has had a child before they graduated from high
school. Delia noted that prior to giving birth to her daughter she did not think school was necessary because she had a job without having a high school diploma. She also admitted that she would “hang out with the wrong people and she had been expelled from middle school” (Delia, personal communication, January 14, 2015).

**Participant 5**

 Ellen is a 19-year-old African American student. Her child is two years old. Ellen works two jobs. Ellen was quite adept with using social and community resources to help her stay focused on finishing her academic goals. She stated that she was referred to another alternative program due to her lack of credits after she became pregnant; however, she felt the other program would not be conducive to her academic needs.

**Participant 6**

 Faith is a 19-year-old Latina student. Faith indicated that she was from a large family and she will be the first to graduate from high school. She stated that before she got pregnant she wanted to drop out of school and was not attending school. Faith stated that she grew up experiencing the struggles of being in poverty.

**Participant 7**

 Gabrielle is 19-year-old Latina student. She admitted that she was not attending school before she became pregnant. She began living with her boyfriend before she became pregnant. Gabrielle stated that her mother had her when she was 16 and never graduated from high school.

**Participant 8**

 Helen is a 19-year-old Latina student who does not speak English fluently. Her baby is seven months old. Helen stated that her mother did not finish high school. Helen
is an immigrant to the country and lives with her father. Before coming to the United States she said she had good grades in school and if she were in her own country she would probably already have graduated from high school.

**Participant 9**

Iris is 17 years old. She is a Pakistani student from Europe married to her child’s father. Her baby is seven months old. Iris declared that she had good grades and had received many achievement certificates from school before she got married and later became pregnant. She came to the United States after she was married and became pregnant. Iris is a devoutly religious young woman and acknowledges that she prays every day.

**Participant 10**

Jane is 16 years old. She is a Latina student who stated that she always went to school; however, she has family problems at home. She became pregnant at age 14. Her baby is one. She declared she grew up in a middle class home.

**Participant 11**

Kate is a 19-year-old an African American student. Her baby is two years old. Kate has a job. She acknowledged that she was not attending school even before she became pregnant. After she became pregnant school district authorities got in contact with her mother and began offering alternative school placements for her to finish.

**Participant 12**

Linda is 17 years old. She became pregnant at age 14. Her child is three. Linda revealed that she encounters family problems at home that sometimes keep her from concentrating on her academic goals. She said that at one point she just did not care
anymore and was not attending school, but after finding out she was pregnant it changed her whole life.

**Participant 13**

Mary is a Latina student. She works two jobs and attends school regularly. She stated that she does not get off from work until 3 a.m. every morning. Mary acknowledged that she was unmotivated to complete schoolwork until she found out she was pregnant. She revealed that she was always fighting and arguing with the teachers. Mary was 17 when she found out she was pregnant. This trigger helped her to become more motivated to change her risky behaviors and become a responsible student and parent.

**Participant 14**

Nancy is an 18-year-old Latina student. Nancy admitted to being real lazy prior to finding out she was pregnant. She said she would either just sit in class or skip school altogether. After she found out she was pregnant she began to focus on her daughter’s future.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Age Now</th>
<th>Age at time of Pregnancy</th>
<th>Pregnant or Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anita</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delia</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabrielle</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melinda</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.1: Study Participants and Descriptions*

**Results: Phase One of the Study**

**Quantitative Data**

In Phase One, 15 participants completed a survey via SurveyMonkey.com. The survey consisted of five questions aligned to the theoretical framework.

**Results**

In the first survey item, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement “I believe that I have the ability to complete my academic goals and eventually provide a living for me and my child.” As seen in Table 4.2, the majority
agreed ($n = 11, 73.3\%$). No respondents disagreed with this statement. On average, the sample agreed with this statement as the average rating was 4.27 ($SD = 0.45$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I strongly agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.2: Frequencies and Percentages for Beliefs in the Ability to Complete my Academic Goals and Eventually Provide a Living*

In the second survey item, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement “I believe this program is putting me in touch with the community-based organizations that will help me to gain stability for my child and me.” As seen in Table 4.3 the majority agreed with this statement ($n = 11, 86.6\%$). Only two respondents (14.3\%) disagreed with this statement. On average, the sample agreed with this statement as the average rating was 4.27 ($SD = 0.45$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I somewhat agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.3: Frequencies and Percentages for the Program is Putting me in Touch with Community-Based Organizations*

*Note:* One respondent did not respond to this survey item.

In the third survey item, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement “I believe this program is helping me to design a plan of action to help me to become self-sufficient.” As seen in Table 4.3, the majority agreed with this statement ($n = 9, 64.3\%$). Only two respondents (14.3\%) somewhat agreed with this statement. On
average, the sample somewhat agreed/agreed with this statement as the average rating was 3.64 ($SD = 0.74$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I somewhat agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I strongly agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.4:* Frequencies and Percentages for Believes that the Program is Helping with a Plan of Action

*Note:* One respondent did not respond to this survey item.

In the fourth survey item, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement “I know that I am making progress towards my academic goals as a result of my being enrolled in this program.” As seen in Table 4.5, the majority agreed with this statement ($n = 11, 78.6\%$). No respondents disagreed with this statement. On average, the sample agreed with this statement as the average rating was 4.21 ($SD = 0.42$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I strongly agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.5:* Frequencies and Percentages for I Know I am Making Progress Toward my Academic Goals

*Note:* One respondent did not respond to this survey item.

In the fifth survey item, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement “I know that my family is a source of support and is helping me to be successful with my academic, social, and parenting goals (support).” As seen in Table 4.6, the majority agreed with this statement ($n = 8, 61.5\%$). Only one respondent (7.7\%)
disagreed with this statement. On average, the sample somewhat agreed/agreed with this statement as the average rating was 3.85 ($SD = 0.80$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I somewhat agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I strongly agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.6: Frequencies and Percentages for My Family is a Source of Support and is Helping me be Successful with Academic, Social, and Parenting Goals*

*Note:* Two respondents did not respond to this survey item.

In the sixth and final survey item, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement “I believe that the timing of my pregnancy has impacted or caused me to change my educational goals.” As seen in Table 4.7, a little over 50% either agreed ($n = 6, 42.9\%$) or strongly agreed ($n = 2, 14.3\%$) with this statement. Two respondents (14.3\%) strongly disagreed and two respondents disagreed (14.3\%) with this statement. On average, the sample somewhat agreed with this statement as the average rating was 3.29 ($SD = 1.32$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I strongly disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I somewhat agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I strongly agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.7: Frequencies and Percentages for I Believe that the Timing of my Pregnancy Impacted or Changed my Educational Goals*

*Note:* One respondent did not respond to this survey item.
In summary, the research can conclude that the participants felt that the program has had an impact on them, as evidenced by the number and percentage who somewhat agreed or agreed with these statements.

**Results: Phase Two of the Study**

Although the questions used to conduct the qualitative portion of the study were aligned to elicit specific responses from the 4Ss (Schlossberg’s Theory of Transition), all of the participants tended to relate their life truths with two or more blended elements of Self, Situation, Strategy, and Support. Using a true constructivist model for gaining truths from the participants, the researcher allowed the participants’ responses to help guide the direction of the focus group. This method of questioning allows for spontaneity and results in rich meaningful data. The following analysis was organized to show continuity of the questions and flow of the dialogue responses from the participants.

**Question 1 (Self) - How did becoming a teen parent impact your academic focus?**

Participant 1 stated, “I like going to school anyway so after I had my child it made me want to do better. I don’t think becoming a teen mother has changed the timing or the path. I want to be a RN” (personal communication, January 14, 2015).

Participant 2 commented

Schoolwork is much easier and the teachers are more understanding. I was not going to school before I found out I was pregnant. I was bad when I met my baby daddy. Everybody at the school understands each other and at the other school they would be talking shit. (personal communication, January 14, 2015)
Participant 3 reported

Before I was pregnant I was getting into trouble for fighting. I was expelled from school. When I was in elementary school everything was funny and I used to talk and laugh in class all the time. When I became pregnant I became focused on school. If I was in regular school I would not be graduating. (personal communication, January 14, 2015)

Participant 4 said

I didn’t think school was important because I had a job without having a high school diploma. After I got pregnant I’m like so how am I going to support my baby. I need to get my diploma so I can have a better job that will pay me like every other week so I can have more money like $100 per month. (personal communication, January 14, 2015)

Participant 5 replied, “It really hasn’t changed” (personal communication, March 18, 2015). Participant 6 commented, “In the beginning I wouldn’t even go to school” (personal communication, March 18, 2015).

Participant 7 told the researcher

When I became a mom it like actually helped me I wanted to be like more involved in school like before I even got pregnant I didn’t even want to go to school, I wasn’t going to school and when I found out that I was pregnant my life changed. Like I wanted something better for me and for my son and now that I am in school I see things different, I actually want to be here. I want to be I want to graduate and go to college. I want to be a registered nurse, but I also want be a translator like in hospitals an interpreter. Yeah. (personal communication, March 18, 2015)
Participant 8 replied

At first I thought it would be hard because I thought I would have to drop out of school like to give all the time to my son. It is hard because I have to divide myself like into three people, I have to be a mom, a student and like a housewife. (personal communication, March 18, 2015)

Participant 9 reported

I’ve become more ambitious towards life as a whole, like I don’t think it’s the greatest motivation in my life to have people around me. I have to self-motivate myself. I get de-motivated too very easily. It’s all within me now there is no one motivating me I have to be self-motivated it’s all with in me now there no one around me motivating me. There is my mother who is like thousands and thousands of miles away, but I speak to her regularly, but I see that it’s not even about her if I want do it I can do it, it’s not like my mom calling me or anybody calling me I have become very aggressive in a way that no matter how late I am in the morning because I want to be at school. I don’t want to be at home. (personal communication, April 1, 2015)

Participant 10 said, “I was still going to school when I was pregnant. It really didn’t change my academic focus. I was continuing to come to school. I just began to make more goals for myself and my son” (personal communication, April 1, 2015).

Participant 11 said

First I wasn’t going to school at all. So I was going to Mountain and I would not go there no more, but I just couldn’t go there no more because, I don’t know. I didn’t like it. The child welfare people came to my house and said you are going to have to go school or you will go to jail and I said, “oh no”. Like I was told
the school I could go to. They told me go to Berkman but my mom said, “Oh no
she can’t go there.” So I came here and I have been doing better, cause I am here
every day. (personal communication, April 1, 2015)

Participant 12 replied

Before I was pregnant I did not go to school either. I just didn’t care anymore,
but then when I found out I was pregnant I basically changed my whole life
cause I found out I was pregnant and I came to school here. At first when I came
I really didn’t want to, but then I stopped coming for six months and that’s where
I messed up. Now I am here again and almost finished with school. (personal
communication, April 1, 2015)

Participant 13 commented

Before I was pregnant I would just show up for school and I would just leave. I
was unmotivated ad I was always fighting and arguing with the teachers, but when
I got pregnant I had to change. My son helped me to become more motivated.
(personal communication, April 1, 2015)

Participant 14 said

Before I was pregnant I would be really lazy. I would just skip school or sit in
class and eat. But then I got pregnant. I began to focus on my daughter’s future, so
now I am more motivated. She motivates me everyday. (personal communication,
April 1, 2015)
Question 2 (Self) - What issues do you face that make it challenging for you to continue pursuing your academic goals?


Participant 4 said

Day Care. One time I had to bring her to school with me and the child watch at my school they were closed because they close at 11:00 am and I there about 10:45. I had to have her sit in class with me and it was hard for me to correct my work and take a test with her like crying and trying to snatch everything up. It’s hard because sometimes her dad works you know he is not always there and I don’t want my mom to always have to watch her either. So trying to find a babysitter is hard. (personal communication, January 14, 2015)

Participant 5 stated, “I take the bus (to get to school) and sometimes I miss the bus or I wake up late or I had to work really late so I miss the bus” (personal communication, March 18, 2015).

Participant 6 commented

A car. I have to come like way in the morning. I have to wake up so early in the morning like 4:00 am in the morning sometimes like 3:00 am in the morning. I have to make a lunch or pack it for my husband’s lunch then I have to go to my mom’s house and wait till she can bring me down here to Hayward. It’s hard because my husband works early in the morning and he has to take me to my mom’s house and it’s really early, then I have to wait till she has to come to work. Oh I am tired, super tired but I have to go through all that play with the kid and
cook and clean and play with the kids and clean again. It’s non-stop. (personal communication, March 18, 2015)

Participant 7 reported

A car, because I have to walk to school. Sometimes it is really cold and I have to put my baby in the stroller and walk and it’s really cold for him or when it is really hot. It’s like Oh my God no, I don’t want to walk and also when I get home I’m obviously tired because I have to walk a lot and when I get home I am really tired and I have to clean and cook. I get tired. So a car is my obstacle. I would like to work but day care is my main thing right now. After school if I want to I would have to look for someone to take care of my son and they are expensive. And cause I don’t really trust people. It’s like you would be paying off the baby sitter it’s not like you be working for yourself because day care is so expensive. Cause babysitters are expensive. I use to pay like 35 dollars a day and all my check went to day care. I think my sister in law pays 700 or 800 dollars a week. (personal communication, March 18, 2015)

Participant 8 said, “I don’t really have any obstacles. The only thing is the language, I don’t speak English” (personal communication, March 18, 2005).

Participant 9 replied

Me, myself, and I. I always use to say it’s his fault it’s her fault. I don’t know, I have given up on his and her fault it is everything is just on me now. I have that mindset on me now. I got my permit on Friday, but I don’t know how to drive yet. So eventually when my husband teaches me I can be a bit more independent and responsible. Sometimes I get here my sister in law drops me off, or brother in law drops me off, but I have to wake them up and it’s always not on time we are never
on no matter how early I wake someone up. I don’t like being late. I feel like I am disrespecting my teacher because I am late I think that I should be here earlier. (personal communication, April 1, 2015)

Participant 10 stated, “When I have problems at home. Like when I don’t have a ride” (personal communication, April 1, 2015).

Participant 11 said

Waking up is a challenge. The BART and the bus and sometimes my daughter does not want to cooperate with me. She is a challenge she talks back. I always got up and got ready for school. I don’t know what’s wrong with her. (personal communication, April 1, 2015)

Participant 12 commented, “When I have family problems and my mind is not set to be here. Just when I have problems at home” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 13 said, “I work every day after school and I get off at 9:00 pm. I feel lazy and I don’t want to get up. I work at Nation’s. I have to get dressed, get my daughter dressed and then transportation” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 14 reported, “Transportation too” (personal communication, April 1, 2015).

Analysis - Self

As we are reminded, Schlossberg’s Theory of Transition consists of the 4Ss. The S, self, is described by the factors of ethnicity, strengths/weaknesses, self-efficacy, SES, psychological makeup, and religion/values. The self quantitative data question 1, I believe I have the ability to complete my academic goals and eventually provide a living for me and my child, is triangulated to the qualitative question, How did becoming pregnant and or a teen parent change your academic focus? Seventy three percent of the
sample population responded I agree and 26% of the population responded I totally agree.

Student participant Iris’ self-efficacy is evident in her statement

I’ve become more ambitious towards life as a whole, like I don’t think it’s the greatest motivation in my life to have people around me. I have to self-motivate myself. I get de-motivated too very easily. It’s all within me now. There is no one motivating me. I have to be self-motivated. It’s all within me now. There is no one around me motivating me. (personal communication, April 1, 2015)

Participant Faith shared

When I became a mom it like actually helped me. I wanted to be like more involved in school like before I even got pregnant I didn’t even want to go to school, I wasn’t going to school and when I found out I was pregnant, my life changed. Like I wanted something better for me and for my son and now that I am back in school I see things different. I want to go to college. I want to be a registered nurse, but I also want to be a translator like in the hospitals an interpreter yeah. (personal communication, March 18, 2015)

These statements are aligned with the results of the studies of Duncan (2007), Clemmens (2003), and SmithBattle (2000, 2007). The results of their studies revealed that pregnancy could be a catalyst for positive change assisting teens in re-engaging in academic work and avoiding risky behavior.

**Question 3 (Situation) - What were your grades like before you became pregnant?**

Participant 1 responded, “I had good grades in the ninth grade. I liked going to school. My grades started declining in the 10th grade” (personal communication, January 14, 2015). Participant 2 said, “I wasn’t going to school before I got pregnant” (personal
communication, January 14, 2015). Participant 3 replied, “I was not going to school when I got pregnant. I was bad when I met my baby daddy. I didn’t think about career aspirations” (personal communication, January 14, 2015). Participant 4 said, “I had low level grades” (personal communication, January 14, 2015). Participant 5 did not answer the question.

Participant 6 reported

They were pretty bad like all F’s, because I would not go to school. I would get in fights or fight with the teachers and I would not do my work. I did not like for people to tell me what to do. I was pretty mad and there were teachers that were like racist. They kicked me out of school in Hayward. (personal communication, March 18, 2015)

Participant 7 stated

When I was in middle school my grades were good, but when I entered ninth grade they were bad really bad because I wouldn’t go to school, but instead I would just go over my friend’s house. If I did go to school I wouldn’t do my work, I would just be laughing and talking and my best friend was in the same school and the classes with me and we just talk and talk and talk. So they kicked me out of the school and I never went back. I only went to like a year of high school. When I was pregnant I wanted to go back to school but my mom wasn’t here. She left to go to Mexico it was hard for me to get in because I needed my mom to enroll in school because I wasn’t 18 yet. (personal communication, March 18, 2015)
Participant 8 said, “When I was 14 they were like perfect. I had good grades and after I became pregnant they started going down. Now my grades are pretty good again” (personal communication, March 18, 2015).

Participant 9 replied

I came to the states because I got married and my mom knew I was going to carry on at school. I could bring my grades over here and graduate, but I didn’t know things would be different. Maybe if I had known I would be in London. I was involved in a lot of clubs, student council, peer mediation group and other youth groups, peer mentors, debate team. I have a whole folder of school certificates from my old school. (personal communication, April 1, 2015)

Participant 10 said, “When I was in Modesto I had all Fs and not credits at all. I was only there for half of the year and I went to San Leandro and I was getting Bs and Cs” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 11 reported, “They were bad like I was getting Ds and Fs in the tenth grade in the eleventh grade I got pregnant and then I came here and everything got better” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 12 replied, “At first it was ok, Cs and Ds and then I came here I got As and Bs” (personal communication, April 1, 2015).

Participant 13 said

My grades were somewhat good and bad when I did my work, but when I did not go to class it showed a lot. It was still kind of the same it depends on the subjects I’m kind a not good at math. My grades are like Bs to Ds, it just depends on the subject. It depends if I am focused. (personal communication, April 1, 2015)

Participant 14 replied, “Bad, I didn’t do the work” (personal communication, April 1, 2015)
**Analysis - Situation**

SmithBattle (2006) argued that pregnancy could contribute to a new identity and inspire teens to persevere to reach new goals. The Situation in the theoretical framework consists of the trigger of the event, concurrent stresses, previous experience, timing, duration, and characteristics of an event or non-event. The Situation quantitative data for question 2, I believe the timing of my pregnancy has impacted or caused me to change my educational goals, was triangulated with the qualitative question, How did becoming pregnant impact or change your academic goals? Participant Delia stated

> Well before I had got pregnant I did not like really (sic) care about school. I did not think like (sic) it was important and like I had a job without having a diploma and it was enough money for me, but like not enough for me and my baby so I decided I better go back to school so I can get a better paying job. After I uh, no while I was pregnant I’m like so how am I going to support my baby? But again despite that like X amount of months I need to get my diploma so I can have more money like $100 per month (sic). (personal communication, April 1, 2015)

Participant Linda declared

> Before I was pregnant I did not go to school at all either. I just didn’t care anymore. But then I found out I was pregnant I basically changed my whole life. Cause I found out I was pregnant and I came to school here. At first when I came I really didn’t want to, but then I stopped coming for six months and that’s where I messed up. Now I am here again and almost finished with school. (personal communication, April 1, 2015)
Participant Charlotte offered

Before I was pregnant I was getting into trouble for fighting. I was expelled from school. When I was in elementary school everything was funny and I use to talk and laugh in class all the time. When I became pregnant I became focused in school. If I was in regular school I would not be graduating. (personal communication, January 14, 2015)

The trigger and timing of their pregnancy positively impacted their education goals and these three teens were aware of the transition they had made. They all realized the trigger of the event. They all perceived pregnancy was the catalyst for positively changing their lives. They all realized that graduation from high school was not in their plans prior to pregnancy.

**Question 4 (Strategy) - How did you find out about the services available to help pregnant and parenting teens?**

Participant 1 stated, “My mom told me about cash benefits and WIC because she use to get those services. Now she makes too much money to get it” (personal communication, January 14, 2015). Participant 2 reported, “I found out about the school through the clinic” (personal communication, January 14, 2015). Participant 3 said, “I found out about the school through the clinic” (personal communication, January 14, 2015).

Participant 4 replied, “I found out about the programs through my county worker” (personal communication, January 14, 2015).

Participant 5 commented

My brother and sister in law helped me to sign up for 4C’s. My old school told me about this school because they were going to send me to Bankerman where all
the juveniles go, where if you get kicked out of school. My mom didn’t want me sitting next to those kids that got kicked out of school. They said I was pregnant and I did not have enough credits to stay there. (personal communication, March 18, 2015)

Participant 7 said

I found this school because my boyfriend told me about it and he said, “Let’s go ask” and I was 17 then and they told me I needed my mom to be here, but they were helping me a lot and then she came that’s when I started coming. (personal communication, March 18, 2015)

Participant 10 revealed, “The district. I contacted the district” (personal communication, April 1, 2015).

Participant 11 informed the researcher

It became an issue when I stopped going to classes. So my counselor wanted to talk to my mom. We had to figure something out. So we had went to the district and they were telling us about this school and Berkman. And then my mom went to look at Berkan and the kids and she said, “there was no bus in that area and I would have to walk”. (personal communication, April 1, 2015)

Participant 12 replied

I was eight or nine months pregnant and I was going to start my freshmen year and I was ready to pop, that was when my mom went to the district and I was going to get independent studies, that’s when they told me about this program. (personal communication, April 1, 2015)
Participant 13 stared, “I found out about WIC from my doctor. I found out about the school from my counselor” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 14 said, “My counselor” (personal communication, April 1, 2015).

**Question 5 (Strategy) - How have you been able to maintain your grades?**

Participant 1 commented

It’s easier to get stuff done here. You get all of the missing work done and have a chance to turn in missing work. You get caught up on all your credits. I will be done a year earlier than regular school. (personal communication, January 14, 2015)

Participant 2 stated, “I have my own schedule and routine. I see the light at the end of the tunnel. My child motivates me to finish” (personal communication, January 14, 2015). Participant 3 reported, “The school work is much easier because teachers are more understanding. Everybody here understands each other, but at the other school they would be talking shit” (personal communication, January 14, 2015).

Participant 4 said

My grades have been good since I began the program change. It seems I learn better one on one with teachers and I am not the kind of person that will raise my hand if I don’t understand. I get easily distracted. (Participant 4, personal communication, January 14, 2015)

Participant 5 replied, “Everyone who said I can’t do it, I can do it” (personal communication, March 25, 2015).

Participant 6 revealed

My family, like my entire family, why because I see how they struggle. We struggle with everyday routine and I don’t want to be like that. I want to show them they
can do it no matter the struggles. My son is my strength. He is just the best thing. Even though they are so small. He is so happy running around. (personal communication, March 25, 2015)

Participant 7 said

My son is like my motivation. I want to do good for me and my son. I am interested in a ROP program. I was looking at going to community college after the ROP program. You have to pay more money at community college. My mom said she would pay for my school. It would be a gift for me. (personal communication, March 18, 2015)

Participant 8 replied, “My son, he is like my motivation. Ever since I had him I have done well in school” (personal communication, March 18, 2015).

Participant 9 commented

I thank God for every blessing I have. With the help of God I am here every single day. I do not share all of my struggles because I am not looking for sympathy for myself. I opened up today because I really want this interview to help you in your work. I look at my mom’s life her struggles and she is a big factor, when I get down lazy she is a wake-up call instead of staying home and sleeping I could be a doctor helping someone out. I could be there for someone else instead of being selfish. I think it is very good discipline, you go to school and there is a time for everything. I am attracted to people who have good discipline and the way that they think how everything is organized. I don’t want to be up late at night, like my husband is up late. I am attracted to discipline because I want to be successful. I am not attracted to it for the money, but without money, life is crap. My mom wanted me to be a doctor, but I am interested in being a dentist. There is a time and place for everything. (Participant 9, personal communication, April 1, 2015)

Participant 10 said, “The main thing that has helped me is my son. I don’t want him to live a rough life like I had to. Even though I don’t like it here I make an effort on coming” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 11 stated, “Imaya and my
mother and it’s just personal for me because I want to graduate and keep going. I want to be somewhere in life” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 12 said, “My daughter and mostly all of the negativity” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 13 commented, “My mom, I want to meet my goals (personal communication, April 14, 2015). Participant 14 reported, “My daughter and my dad, like everyone who doubted me, I believe in myself. I make sure I become a better me in the future” (personal communication, April 1, 2015).

Question 6 (Strategy) - What person has influenced you most, or reached out to you to help you stay in school?

Participant 1 said, “My mom. She is my rock, that’s my heart” (personal communication, January 14, 2015). Participant 2 stated, “My mom has never left me alone with my problems. She has never turned her back on me. My dad helps me financially, but I don’t talk to him about stuff” (personal communication, January 14, 2015). Participant 3 said, “My baby motivates me to finish high school. Having my son and my own schedule. I see the light at the end of the tunnel” (personal communication, January 14, 2015).

Participant 4 revealed

My baby’s father, he wasn’t trying to be mean or nothing but he said “I got mine and like look at me, wouldn’t you feel good having your daughter see you walk across that stage, you should set an example for your daughter” or he would say “Having a high school diploma is nice, you should go back to school. (personal communication, January 14, 2015)

Participant 5 claimed, “From my mom and my brother sometimes my dad and my sister in law” (personal communication, March 25, 2015).
Participant 6 commented

My mom, not one of my siblings graduated from high school. I will be the first to graduate, my parents, but it started off in the beginning my dad was mad at me. My dad thought I was going to turn out like my sisters because none of them graduated and my brothers didn’t either. I’ll be the first one. (Participant 6, personal communication, March 18, 2015)

Participant 7 reported

My boyfriend, he is always supporting me. He will take care of my son so I can do homework in the house or he will try to cook. He doesn’t really know how to cook, but he will try to cook. So he is always telling me to be calm because I will soon graduate. My dad always supports me. I am the only girl and we have five boys in the family and I am the only girl. So he is always taking care of me and he tells me he wants me to have a good future. And he is always supporting me too. (personal communication, March 18, 2015)


Participant 9 commented

My mother is first. She is always giving me the example. She is from Pakistan. She left her parents. She left because she was always living her life for me and my sister, because she wanted us to be educated. She got separated from my father and went to London and she had to start from scratch. She did not know anything. She started learning English. She started going to college and she put us in school. She said that she got married too young and getting married again was a mistake. She said that if she was educated she probably would not have gotten married. Things are falling apart right now. So it’s my mother and my husband. She said that if she stayed in Pakistan we would not have been in school and God knows what life would have been like? If there is a
calamity these things follow you and she basically loves her mother they are like this (shows closeness with fingers). If her mom were to get sick she would drop everything and go back to her and it is not easy to go back there because you like your brothers and sisters and need much cash. When I got married I was like really happy with the love my husband gave me, like for a year I went to school for a couple of months, but I wasn’t motivated I was unmotivated to go to school. I would sleep whenever I wanted to, eat whatever I wanted to I was not that ambitious. My mom came over and she saw the way I was. I was like a regular student in my old school. I was getting good grades and I was doing really well. I was like I got lazy or flattered or overjoyed. She told me love is not enough. Something happened in my life and it pushed me in life so I tell myself love is not enough at any point the tables could turn and I need to make myself stronger and independent for myself and I have something for my life and my daughter’s too. (Participant 9, personal communication, April 1, 2015).

The following participant’s reported the following to question six, “my son (Participant 10, personal communication, April 1, 2015); “Imaya and my mom and just my goals that I have” (Participant 11, personal communication, April 1, 2015); “my daughter” (Participant 12, personal communication, April 1, 2015); “my son and I want to meet my goals” (Participant 13, personal communication, April 1, 2015); and “my daughter and my dad” (Participant 14, personal communication, April 1, 2015).

Analysis - Strategy

Strategy is the third S of Schlossberg’s theoretical framework. The quantitative question was, I believe this program is helping me to design a plan of action that will make me self-sufficient. This question was triangulated with the qualitative question, What services at school or in the community have you taken advantage of that helped you to continue to pursue your academic goals? Participant Delia stated
Well I go to this group every Tuesday. It’s called Teen Success Incorporated and they just motivate you to go to school and like they help you find your placements and if you need to find work. It’s like a lot of motivational speaking. They are really helpful. (personal communication, January 14, 2015)

Three other participants also mentioned the Teen Success Incorporated program and how they enjoyed the sessions. Charlotte revealed, “My job drug tests so I don’t smoke weed anymore” (personal communication, January 14, 2015).

The data reported by the participants definitely mirrors the findings of Clemmens (2003), which revealed pregnancy can be a pivotal point in life; motherhood can positively change behavior and transform pregnant teens into responsible, goal obtaining parents and mothers. It appears that the trigger, the pregnancy, helped the teen mothers to develop self-efficacy and confidence in their decision making because they had to think about how the consequences of making a bad choice impacted not only them but their child as well.

The parents of this study voiced opinions about two areas of their lives that have helped them to successfully stay engaged in their academic journey. All of the parenting teens in this study but one mentioned their risky behavior prior to becoming parents. All of the teen parents perceived that pregnancy and parenting helped them to develop a more responsible, self-motivating attitude towards their academic goals. The teen parents all expressed that their child(ren)’s needs helped them to stay focused on their goals because they wanted their child to live a good life, free from poverty.

Teen parents also mentioned their network of family friends and the school program helped them to stay engaged in pursuing their academic journey. Many of the parents felt that if they had not been enrolled in the program they would not have graduated from high school and that their family filled the gaps needed with free child
care services when they worked or had time for leisure activities. Having the network of friends, family, church, school, and community-based programs has made a tremendous difference in the lives of these parenting teens and their children because it has allowed the teen parents a chance at becoming college and career ready.

**Question 7 (Support) - What services at school or in the community have you taken advantage of that helped you to continue to pursue your academic goals?**

Participant 1 reported, “Daycare and now we have Teen Success. WIC, Food stamps and I’m in the process of obtaining cash aid (welfare)” (personal communication, January 14, 2015). Participant 2 said, “Day Care. I am in the system” (personal communication, January 14, 2015). Participant 3 commented, “Day Care and Brighter Beginnings and I have a family advocate oh and now I go to Teen Success” (personal communication, January 14, 2015).

Participant 4 replied

Well I go to this group every Tuesday. It’s called Teen Success Incorporation and they just motivate you to go to school and like they help you find your placements and if you need to find work. It’s like a lot of motivational speaking. They are really helpful. I also have a family advocate who comes to my house and she helps me to find my resources. If I run out of diapers or bottles, anything I need I can call her to help me get things and she helps me a lot. (personal communication, January 14, 2015)

Participant 5 stated

Daycare, because I would have to call a lot of people to see if they can watch my baby. I work at night so my mom keeps her. Project Eat helped me to find one of my jobs. The staff of Tiburcio Vasquez comes to the school to talk with us. I have
4Cs which is a child care service that I don’t have to pay for. 4C’s pays (day care) it for me so I can work. (personal communication, March 18, 2015)

Participant 6 said, “Church, like most of all I can talk my problems out to the priest. I also have day care” (personal communication, March 18, 2015). Participant 7 reported, “Daycare here at school, they are taking care of my baby while I’m in school. Also my boyfriend because he supports me a lot and my mom” (personal communication, March 18, 2015). Participant 8 said, “Day Care” (personal communication, March 18, 2015).

Participant 9 said Daycare, my mother, and Khadezhah, my daughter. It’s like when I see her you live for that person like when I see her I don’t want her to be negative. I want her to grow up and be raised around successful and good people. I would love to go to the mosque on Fridays I try if I have a day off from school but it is not in my religion so I don’t feel bad, but maybe if I was obligated in my religion. I went to a religious lecture, a ceremony on Friday prayer and they were talking about like how if the parents have good manners and good values it’s good to be educated and you should be educated. If people know right from wrong they can become ignorant, the religion has inspired me to be educated so I have a better understanding of it and I want to be better in English too. (Participant 9, personal communication, April 1, 2015)

Participant 10 replied, “Daycare because no one would be available to take care of my baby. If I didn’t day care I wouldn’t be able to go to school” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 11 said, “Tiburcio Vasquez and Project Eat” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 12 stated, “Daycare, that’s it” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 13 said, “Daycare and WIC,
because like it is free when Marc needs milk and I don’t have the money to buy it I can’t get it because I don’t have a job” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 14 said, “Just day care, that’s it” (personal communication, April 1, 2015).

**Question 8 (Support) - What help do you get from your family that keeps you motivated to complete your educational goals?**

Participant 1 replied, “My mom is my rock, she is my heart, my grandparents, my dad’s father” (personal communication, January 14, 2015). Participant 2 said, “My mom helps me” (personal communication, January 14, 2015). Participant 3 reported, “My mom birthed me, taking care of me. We have gotten closer. My Granny is always taking up for me” (Participant 3, personal communication, January 14, 2015).

Participant 4 commented

I know my mother like every time I ask her to watch the baby there is no problem. Everybody else works or goes to school I mean she works too. It’s not often because her father is there most of the time. (personal communication, January 14, 2015).

Participant 5 said, “I work at night so my mom keeps my daughter for me” (personal communication, March 18, 2015). Participant 6 stated, “My husband, he is the one that gets me up out of my problems” (personal communication, March 18, 2015).

Participant 7 commented

Well my mom she was 16 when she had me so she knows how hard it is. She did not finish school. She got married so she didn’t finish school, so she wants me to finish school and give my son a better future. (personal communication, March 18, 2015)
Participant 8 said, “My dad supports me. It is his dream for me to graduate from high school. My mom is in Honduras. My son motivates me and I have to give him the best” (personal communication, March 18, 2015). Participant 9 replied, “My brother in law and my sister in law drop me off at school every day” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 10 stated, “I don’t get help from my parents. I get it from my mother in law and father in law” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 11 reported, “Imaya’s dad, (her daughter) my brother helps, my mother helps and my sister helps. Like if I need them to watch her they will so I can go to work, if I want to go out they will watch her” (Participant 11, personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 12 commented, “I get help from her God parents and my mom” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 13 stated, “Daycare and WIC, because like it is free when Marc’s needs milk and I don’t have the money to buy it and I can’t get it because I don’t have a job” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Participant 14 said, “My dad, if I need something for her and I can’t get it, he will go buy it for her and I need help paying for something he will do it. I’m an only child” (personal communication, April 1, 2015).

**Analysis - Support**

Support in the theoretical framework refers to assistance rendered by family, friends, network, community-based organizations, institutions, schools, and religious affiliations. The quantitative question, I know that my family is a source of support and is helping me to be successful with my academic, social, and parenting goals, was triangulated with the qualitative question, What help do you get from your family that keeps you motivated to complete your educational goals? Ninety-two point four percent of the sample population agreed that their family was helping them to be successful in pursuing their academic goals. Participant Gabrielle stated
My boyfriend is always supporting me. He will take care of my son so I can do homework in the house or if he knows that I am tired he will help me clean the house or he will try to cook. He doesn’t really know how to cook, but he will try. So he is always telling me to be calm because I will soon graduate. (personal communication, April 1, 2015).

Participant Nancy who lives with her father offered, “My dad, if I need something for her (meaning her daughter) and I can’t get it, he will go buy it for her and if I need help paying for something he will do it” (personal communication, April 1, 2015). Barbara admitted, “My mom has never left me alone with my problems. She has never turned her back on me. My dad helps financially, but I don’t talk to my dad about stuff” (personal communication, January 14, 2015). Charlotte added, “In the beginning I kind of felt like I didn’t think I could do it, but support from the family made me feel, I can do it. I fall off sometimes, but I get right back up and keep going” (personal communication, January 14, 2015). The teen participants all commented favorably on the assistance and support they received from family, friends, and networks.
CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

As I listened to the these young women describe their pre-pregnancy situation of coming to school and leaving without going to class, eating, playing in class, fighting, arguing with teachers and not completing assignments, I thought about the elementary school students that I am working with right now. Could this transition of student to motherhood be the future that other teen mothers may experience and be transformed into academic goal pursuing students? These students’ experiences definitely mirrored the literature that Duncan (2007), SmithBattle (2000), and other scholars have studied and written about in scholarly journals. The transformation of an irresponsible, risky behavior student into an academic goal-pursuing student with self-efficacy is an appropriate process and outcome that could help increase the low graduation rate of pregnant and parenting teens.

The four questions guiding this study will now be used to summarize the findings that may add to the body of knowledge known and possibly can be used to assist pregnant and parenting teens make a successful transition from minor to mother and high school graduate.

What characteristics and or attributes do pregnant and parenting teens possess that enabled them to navigate the transitions required to remain academically successful in school? This question is related to the self element. The theoretical framework reminds us that self refers to the teen parents’ SES, religious affiliations, race/ethnicity, and strengths/weaknesses. Most of the participants perceived that they grew up in a middle class home. This would appear to be a positive attribute. Each of the participants expressed
a sense of self-efficacy that led to self-motivation that they said came through a feeling of empowerment that their impending pregnancy or baby triggered. Although family members helped with the stability factor for the parenting teen, it became apparent that these teens felt a sense of strength and empowerment (Duncan, 2007) due to the birth of their babies. This sense of empowerment, the elimination of risky behaviors, along with the wraparound programs and other forms of support ultimately kept them engaged in pursuing their academic goals.

How do students explain the situation they are in? This question describes the situation regarding the event. The theoretical framework defines the situation as the trigger, concurrent stresses, timing of the event, duration, and characteristics of the event. Most of the participants discussed their life prior to finding out they were pregnant. Many of them talked about how they engaged in risky behavior, fought with classmates and their teachers, disregarded the need for education, skipped school, or totally lost their will to go to school prior to learning they were pregnant. I argue that the timing and trigger of their event, pregnancy, may have impacted their lives in a positive manner. Their pregnancies triggered a process and journey that provided the catalyst, the motivation, acceptance of responsibility, and empowerment they needed to change their bad habits, resulting in graduation from high school, stable teen employment for some, plans to enroll in community college, and setting future career goals. I believe due to some of the young mothers’ statements that had they not become pregnant they would not have finished their academic goals at this point in their life and would have been destined to a life of low education attainment, minimum wage employment, unstable work habits, and possibly even incarceration.

What collaborative services assist pregnant and parenting teens in transitioning from childhood to adult? The theoretical framework describes support as family, friends, mentors, community-based organizations, counseling, institutions, and school. These
entities represent the parenting teens’ social capital or network. This question related to wraparound support services they received due to their pregnancy and childbirth. Participants mentioned in the qualitative portion of the study they used the services of Cal Safe Alameda County Program, WIC Program, 4C’s Childcare, Community Health Care Program, Project Eats, Social Services, Food Stamps, Teen Success Incorporated, and County Advocates. These services helped the teen parents to navigate the challenges of childcare, economic assistance, nutrition issues, and family complexities while bringing stability to the participants’ lives. Some of the participants had family members that told them about the services, but mostly they learned of the different services through the classroom presentations at the Cal Safe Program.

As pregnant teens transitioned through the stages of pregnancy to motherhood, how did they utilize the services that were provided to help them persist in meeting their academic goals? This question relates to teens using strategies to bring stability to their life. Some participants reported having family advocates through social services that helped them to obtain services. Other teens would gain access to the services through doctors’ appointments where they would receive health tips on how to eat to stay healthy and information on the stages of gestation. Parenting teens would be able to use the information from the speakers invited to the classroom at the Cal Safe program. Actively seeking out information was a strategy that helped the teens to bring stability to their lives and built confidence in their role as a parent. Participants who received WIC products said that they all heard about this service from nurses, but many of them had already heard about the program from other family members or friends (their network) which is evidence that these marginalized young women did have social capital and they learned how to use the system for positive outcomes.

The vast majority of pregnant and parenting teens are in need of various wraparound services to successfully graduate from high school due to the environment
they exist in, their family’s social economic status, and the concurrent stresses of their life. Teen pregnancy is closely associated with both low academic attainment and poverty (Berglas et al., 2003). These elements without pregnancy in the picture make it challenging enough for a teen to graduate from high school (Bridgeland et al., 2006); therefore, it is imperative that communities build effective wraparound services to meet the unique needs of teen mother students and their families (Duncan, 2007).

The teen mothers of this study discussed a number of factors that helped them to adapt and be successful in their role as student and parent; however, the means to use these strategies may or may not be in existence in all communities across the country or even in California. The author intends to recommend a set of tactics that are related to each of the 4Ss from Schlossberg’s Theory of Transition, self, situation, support, and strategy to continue to study what is most beneficial in assisting teen mothers with fulfilling their academic goals.

The self element is described as ethnicity, religion/values and are constants in one’s life; therefore, using these characteristics, strategies can be devised to attract pregnant and parenting teens and matching them with mentors within the community to introduce the teens to aspects of life that will help them to aspire to stay in school and enroll in post-secondary education. Churches in the community can adopt a Cal Safe satellite school and bring services to the teen parents that would not readily be accessible to teens living in poverty. Opportunities such as job shadowing, field trips, and one-on-one discussions could help teen parents begin to develop self-efficacy leading them to design plans and commit to strategies for making their future a positive economic outcome.

In regards to the situation element, many of the parenting teens discussed their lowered perception of education benefits and ongoing family challenges prior to their pregnancy. As Berglas et al. (2003) reported, teen parenting is related to low academic
achievement and many teens have experienced academic challenges prior to becoming pregnant; therefore, there may be a need to offer academic assistance to some teens to help them overcome studying challenges and be successful in completing their academic goals. Low cost tutoring in the community could be brought to the school sites to help students to master academic areas of challenge. Parenting teens could then be available to engage in one-on-one assistance in a familiar environment completing homework prior to reconvening their parental responsibilities in the afternoon.

Families could also take advantage of the counseling services within the community mental/medical centers. To provide the best wraparound seamless service, onsite school counseling sessions could be conducted after school allowing the teen parent to benefit from continued childcare coverage while they engage in much needed therapeutic sessions.

In the strategy element, Teen Success Incorporated or like programs may provide an extra incentive for teen parents to stay engaged in school and could be a positive addition to the Cal Safe Program. Founded in 1990 by former state senator, Becky Morgan, Teen Success is a service designed to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty by helping students to look at their present life and make the changes needed to produce positive outcomes. The goals of this program are to help underserved teen mothers graduate from high school, prevent subsequent pregnancies, and help these premature parents go on to be self-sufficient valued members of society. Teen Success boasts a 94% rate of members having graduated from high school and 100% of the mothers report that they are planning to enroll in community college or a vocational program. The national average of teen mothers having a subsequent pregnancy is 18%; however, Teen Success Incorporated has a record of only 2% of their members having a second child before they graduate from high school (Teen Success Incorporated, 2014).
Another strategy that might keep pregnant and parenting teens engaged in academia is by providing career technical education, possibly an internship as a practicum and or linked learning programs as a mandatory component of the academic curriculum at the Cal Safe schools. This introduction to career paths can be used to build a seamless transition from high school graduation to the community college and possibly involving articulation agreements giving students college credits/units towards an AA degree.

In the support element, at the present time the categorical funding which was specifically allocated to Cal Safe programs has been rolled into the Local Control Formula Funding (LCFF). It would appear that Cal Safe program’s ability to offer a full comprehensive service to pregnant and parenting teens may be modified. This author is of the opinion that services may become fragmented for the pregnant and parenting teen population due to a traditional school’s goals of grades, attendance, and the focus of non-teen parenting agendas.

Future Study Recommendations

This author recommends that future studies should be conducted to ascertain the impact of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) on the ability of pregnant and parenting teens to continue their academic pursuits. In July 2000, California Department of Education (2010) began directly funding Cal Safe programs. This funding provided the Cal Safe programs with a stable budget that allowed them to provide an academic program and collaborate with CBOs to provide a social/emotional comprehensive system to assist pregnant teens in staying engaged in their academic goals. In May 2016 the categorical funding for pregnant and parenting teens was rolled into individual school districts’ budgets giving each district the autonomy and accountability to fund their
schools programs in a manner that best provides the support for their unique population of students. School districts are now held accountable for adopting a plan and addressing six of the eight metrics, which are basic services, implementation of state standards, parental involvement, pupil achievement, pupil engagement, school climate, course access, and other pupil outcomes. These metrics are all viable strategies that can be used to spur student achievement. School districts can now choose to retain their pregnant and parenting teens within their own schools or reimburse the county Cal Safe programs for their students choosing the alternative program.

As stated earlier in the literature review, Amin et al. (2006) argued that lower SES teen mothers are not served well by typical fragmented programs designed for the general public. Studies have shown that teen mothers’ needs are better addressed using a case management service approach with CBOs that offer a more comprehensive program. The student participants stated that they do not believe they would have been successful completing their academic goals had it not been for the teacher attention and like-mindedness of the students at the Cal Safe program. Therefore, a study should be conducted to ascertain if the graduation rates of pregnant and parenting teens have increased, stayed stable, or decreased since the LCAP budgeting modifications were instituted. Results from such a study could indicate a need for a return of the comprehensive services of the alternative academic programs or that the school districts are providing the necessary services to address pregnant and parenting teens social, emotional, and academic needs.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

QUANTITATIVE LIKERT-SCALE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

I agree
I strongly agree
I somewhat agree
I disagree
I strongly disagree

1. I believe that I have the ability to complete my academic goals and eventually provide a living for me and my child (self - strengths, weaknesses, self-efficacy).

1. I believe this program is putting me in touch with the community-based organizations that will help me to gain stability for my child and me (support – community).

2. I believe this program is helping me to design a plan of action to help me to become self-sufficient (strategy).

3. I know that I am making progress towards my academic goals as a result of my being enrolled in this program (support and triangulation question).

4. I know that my family is a source of support and is helping me to be successful with my academic, social, and parenting goals (support).
QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

1. How has becoming pregnant and or a teen parent changed your academic focus? (self)

5. What issues do you face that make it challenging for you to continue pursuing your academic goals? (self)

6. What services at school or in the community have you taken advantage of that helped you to continue to pursue your academic goals? (support and strategy)

7. What help do you get from your family that keeps you motivated to complete your educational goals? (support)

8. What community resources or services did you have that enabled you to continue to pursue your academic goals? (support and strategy)

9. How did you find out about the services available to help pregnant and parenting teens? (strategy)

10. What person has influenced you most, or reached out to you, to help you stay in school pursuing your academic goals? (support)

11. What were your grades like in school before you became pregnant? (situation)

12. How have you been able to maintain passing grades in your pursuit of your high school diploma? (situation)
Appendix C

CAL SAFE LETTER

November 5, 2014

California State University, Eastbay
Institutional Review Board
25800 Carlos Bee Boulevard
Hayward, California 94542

Dear Institutional Review Board:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that I, Carolyn Hobbs, principal of Fruitvale Academy give permission to Robin Thompson-Webb to conduct the research titled, Pregnant and Parenting Teens: Making a Transition While Pursuing Academic Goals.

I am aware that Ms. Thompson-Webb is a student graduate at California State University, Eastbay and the data she collects will be used for her dissertation. This letter serves as assurance that this school complies with requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) and will ensure that these requirements are followed in the conduct of this research.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Hobbs, Principal
Fruitvale Academy
Appendix D

POWER POINT ORIENTATION PRESENTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Kind of Research Helps Teens?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By Robin Thompson-Webb</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why Conduct a Study?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To understand what makes you successful in staying in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To help construct strategies that may help other high school pregnant and parenting teens stay in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To re-engage other pregnant and parenting teens that have dropped out school</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q/A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you and your parent agree for you to participate:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 3 Hours of Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Conducted during school hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>• At the school site</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Must have a signed parent permission slip to participate in the study</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anonymous</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Your name and any information you share will not be used in any way together (pseudonyms)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No one else will contact you about our conversations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Focus group members will be asked to leave all conversations in the room.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• If you would like to share personal information you don't want others to hear I can conduct a private interview</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Method</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Survey Monkey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative Method</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Focus Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>• (Optional) Interviews</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Take an online 5 question survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Participate in a hour long focus group</td>
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<tr>
<td>• I will audio/video tape our session</td>
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<tr>
<td>• I will take notes while you talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Help me to decide if I have analyzed your conversation correct</td>
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PARTICIPANT ASSENT FORM

California State University East Bay Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study Pregnant and Parenting Teens: Making a Transition While Pursuing Academic Goals

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this research study is to learn how pregnant and parenting teens make a successful transition from child to parent while continuing to pursue their academic goals.

The researcher, Robin Thompson-Webb, is a graduate student at California State University East Bay conducting research to complete a doctoral dissertation.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a pregnant or parenting teen continuing to pursue your academic goals. The researcher is trying to determine what elements have helped you to stay in high school despite the challenges you are presently experiencing.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this research study, the following will occur:

- You will be asked to take an online survey which will take up to 45 minutes.
• You will be asked to participate in a focus group that will be audio/video taped for an hour. The focus group will be conducted at your school site or
• You will be asked to be interviewed for 30 minutes at your school site during school hours. The interview will be audio/video taped.
• The researcher may contact you later to clarify your interview answers for approximately forty-five minutes.
• total time commitment will be 4 hours.

C. RISKS

There is a risk of loss of privacy. However, no names or identities will be used in any published reports of the research. Only the researcher will have access to the research data. There is also a risk of discomfort or anxiety due to the nature of the questions asked; however, the participant can answer only those questions he/she chooses to answer, and can stop participation in the research at any time.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

The research data will be kept in a secure location at the researcher’s home office and only the researcher will have access to the data. At the conclusion of the study, all identifying information will be removed and the data will be kept in a locked cabinet or office. At the end of the study all audiotapes or videotapes will be destroyed.

E. DIRECT BENEFITS

There will be no direct benefits to the participant.

F. COSTS

There will be no cost to you for participating in this research.
G. COMPENSATION

There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

H. ALTERNATIVES

NA

I. QUESTIONS

If you have any further questions about the study, you may contact the researcher by email at rthompson-webb@horizon.csueastbay.edu or phone at (510) 459-9433.

Questions about your rights as a study participant, or comments or complaints about the study, may also be addressed to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at (510) 885-4212.

J. CONSENT

You have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to participate in this research study, or to withdraw your participation at any point, without penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate in this research study will have no influence on your present or future status at California State University East Bay.

Signature _____________________________ Date: __________

Research Participant

Signature _____________________________ Date: __________

Researcher
A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this research study is to learn how 30% of pregnant and parenting teens make a successful transition from child to pre-mature adult while continuing to pursue their academic goals.

The researcher, Robin Thompson-Webb, is a graduate student at California State University East Bay conducting research to complete her dissertation topic.

I am inviting your child to take part in the research because she is a pregnant or parenting teen.

The purpose of this research study is to learn how 30% of pregnant and parenting teens make a successful transition from child to pre-mature adult while continuing to pursue their academic goals.

B. PROCEDURES

- Your child will be asked to take an online survey which will take approximately 30 minutes.
• Your child may be asked to participate in a focus group session that will take approximately 60 minutes (a conversation with her peers.)
• The focus group session will be audio/video taped.
• The researcher will take handwritten notes during the process.
• Your child may also be asked to interview for approximately 30 minutes.
• The researcher may contact your child later to clarify her answers for approximately 30 minutes on another day.
• Total time commitment can be up to 2 1/2 hours over a time period of three weeks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Survey</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus Group with peers</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview* (optional)</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debriefing and Clarifying Answers</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
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</table>

If you agree to let your child participate in this research study all activities will take place at the school site during the regular school day.

C. RISKS

There is a risk of loss of privacy. However, no names or identities will be used in any published reports of the research. Only the researcher will have access to the research data. There is a risk of discomfort or anxiety due to the nature of the questions asked; however, the participant can answer only those questions she chooses to answer, and can stop participation in the research at any time.
D. CONFIDENTIALITY

The research data will be kept in a secure location and only the researcher will have access to the data. At the conclusion of the study, all identifying information will be removed and the data will be kept in a locked cabinet for seven years. Audiotapes or videotapes will be destroyed at the end of the study.

E. DIRECT BENEFITS

There are no direct benefits for your child’s participation in this project.

F. COSTS

There will be no costs for your child’s participation in this project.

G. COMPENSATION

There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

H. QUESTIONS

If you have any further questions about the study, you may contact the researcher by email at rthompson-webb@horizon.csueastbay.edu or phone at (510) 459-9433.

Questions about your child’s rights as a study participant, or comments or complaints about the study, may also be addressed to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at (510) 885-4212.

J. CONSENT

You have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to have your child participate in this research study. You may withdraw your
child’s participation at any point without penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate in this research study will have no influence on your or your child’s present or future status at California State University East Bay.

Child’s Name _____________________________

Signature _____________________________ Date: _________

Parent

Signature _____________________________ Date: _________

Parent

Signature _____________________________ Date: _________

Signature _____________________________ Date: _________

Researcher