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STAY IN SCHOOL

Are you a pregnant or parenting teen? Stay in school...Help is available

As a pregnant or parenting student, you have the same right as any other student to continue your education. If you are under 18, you are legally required to attend school.

Here are some of your rights:

- You can stay in your current school or program.

- You cannot be excluded from any school program you qualify for, including magnet, honors, or special education, because of pregnancy or parenthood.

- If you are pregnant, you may choose to attend one of the specialized programs for pregnant students. However, these programs are voluntary and you cannot be forced to attend them if you don’t want to.

- If you are a teen parent and need child care, you may be able to transfer to a high school or educational program with a child care center on campus. However, the place you choose:
  1) must have an opening for both you and your child, and
  2) must be a school site you can get to from where you live.

  You can also get a referral to a community agency that can help you arrange for off-campus free or low cost child care. See page 5 for more information.

- You can attend an alternative program that can help you stay in school, such as Alternative Education and Work Center, a Continuation School, or an Independent Study Program. See pages 11 and 12 for more information.
GET HELP

You have many choices: Get all the information you need to make the best choice for you.

If you have dropped out of school or fear you may have to drop out:

You can get help to find a program that will make it easier to return to school or stay in school. You can also get help to find one that will help you prepare for the GED test or the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE). Before deciding to get a GED instead of finishing high school, think about your goals for the future. Getting your GED or passing CHSPE does not make you eligible to attend Cal State or most other colleges and is not as helpful for getting a job as a high school diploma.

You can get help to deal with a lot of problems that make it hard to stay in school or go back to school. If something else stands in your way, your school may be able to give you information about child care resources, counseling, health care, parenting and support groups, and other assistance you may need to stay in school.

Talk to a counselor, school nurse or psychologist, the principal, or a teacher at your school. Keep asking questions until you get the help and information you need. They are there to help you!
Life is often more complicated for teen parents, but don’t give up your dreams!

Here are some helpful places you can contact to find out about choices for education and other needs.

The agencies and programs listed can help both teen dads and teen moms to:

- Make an overall plan that helps you stay in school.
- Get the special support and services you need in your new role as a pregnant teen or as a new mom or dad.
- Find health care for your baby.
- Work out problems in getting along with your family and your partner.
- Plan for your future and your baby’s future.

**Los Angeles County Adolescent Family Life (AFLP) Agencies**

**AltaMed**  
Los Angeles ................................................................. 323/307-0160  
Long Beach ................................................................. 562/595-8040

**El Nido Family Centers**  
San Fernando/Antelope Valley ........................................... 818/896-7776  
Compton ................................................................. 424/785-7908  
South Los Angeles ....................................................... 323/971-7360

**Foothill Family Service—Teen Family Services**  
Pasadena/San Gabriel Valley Area ......................... 626/564-1613  
West Covina ......................................................... 626/338-9200

**Project NATEEN**  
Hollywood, West L.A. and Downtown L.A. ........... 323/361-5981
LEGAL RIGHTS

Something else important to remember: As a student, you have legal rights!

⇒ **You have the right to be treated with respect by school staff.** Your school cannot treat you differently from other students because you are pregnant or because you are a teen parent. You deserve to be treated with respect regardless of whether you had an abortion, a miscarriage, or need to take time off from school for the birth of your baby. School staff should not allow other students to bully you or treat you with disrespect.

⇒ **You have the right to take part in all school activities.** You can participate in any classes or school-related activities, including physical education (PE), unless your doctor says you need to limit your physical activity. You can be in honors or awards ceremonies, run for student offices, take part in school clubs and after-school activities, attend field trips, and join in all graduation activities.

⇒ **However, you will need to provide a note or appointment card to excuse your absence from school if:**

   - You are absent due to an illness or condition related to your pregnancy.
   - You or your child has a medical appointment that can only be made during school hours.
   - You are absent for the birth of your child or recovery from childbirth.
   - You are absent to care for your sick child.

⇒ **You are responsible for making up work you miss and you must be given a chance to do that.** Making up missed work is the right and responsibility of any student who is absent from school due to health-related conditions, including pregnancy. When possible, it is better to plan in advance to make up work that you will miss.

⇒ **You have the right to get the help, support, and information you need to continue your education.** This includes the right to be informed about alternative educational programs that may meet your special needs or let you fill in school credits you are missing. Your school counselor, teacher, or principal can help you make progress toward your goal of graduation or earning your GED.
You have the right to have your privacy respected! Your health and personal information should be kept confidential (private) just as any other student’s information is kept private. That means information about your pregnancy, whether you have children, and whether you are married is private and should not appear in your school record. School staff should not discuss your health or other private information with anyone else without your permission. Staff also cannot use this information against you when you ask for letters of recommendation or when you are being considered for educational or job opportunities or scholarships.

- One exception to this rule is when there is a concern that you have been abused or you are a danger to yourself or others. In this situation, school staff will need to make a report to a child protective service agency to get help.

You have the right to expect your school to support your school success. Your school should help you stay in school and take certain steps to support you as a student. Some steps a school can take to help a pregnant student stay in school might include: a hall pass to use the restroom as needed, being released early from class at lunch or recess to avoid lines and crowds, or being assigned, when possible, to classes that meet on a lower floor or are closer together – especially during later months of pregnancy. Schools often make these changes for students who have injuries or disabilities. You deserve the same support whenever such changes are possible.
When your first question is: “How can I find child care”?

- Ask your counselor, teacher, or school nurse about high schools and alternative programs with child care on campus and about agencies, such as AFLPs, which can refer you to free or low cost child care in your local community. See page 5 for more information.

- Schools are not allowed to discriminate against you if you need to transfer to another school for child care reasons. You can usually get permission to transfer to a school with child care on campus as long as that school has openings for both you and your child and you can manage the transportation from where you are living to the new school.

- Contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral (R&R) agency for referrals to child care and development programs that meet your needs and preferences. Programs include Early Head Start and Head Start. Call 888/922-4453 to connect to your local R&R, or visit teenparent.net for more information about the R&R referral process.
Here are some of your many choices:

If staying at your current school or program is your first choice, make use of any support groups, programs, or services they provide, such as teen parent groups, school health clinic services, tutoring, and referrals for counseling, child care, and other services.

If staying at your current school is not working out, think about whether transferring to a school with a shorter day or a more flexible program may be better fit for your child care, work, or other special needs.

If you are pregnant, you can choose to transfer to a school specifically for pregnant teens. These schools offer a small school setting and some special classes for teen mothers.
Remember: Transfers to Riley, McAlister, or other pregnant minor schools are voluntary (your choice) and no one can make you transfer because you are pregnant.
LAUSD EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS

One of these LAUSD Educational Options Programs may be a good choice for you!

⇒ Thomas Riley and McAlister Pregnant Minor High School Programs. Thomas Riley has locations in South Central, Gardena, and East L.A. Call 323/563-6692 for more information. McAlister has locations in Central LA, South West, Chatsworth, and San Fernando. Call 213/381-2823 for more information.

⇒ California School-Age Family Education (CalSAFE). Another option for pregnant and parenting teen moms is Ramona High School. Ramona High School is a small, all girls campus with a CalSAFE early childhood infant/toddler center on site. Call 323/266-7600 for more information.

Other LAUSD campuses with a CalSAFE early childhood infant/toddler center on site include:
Cleveland: 818/885-2300
Locke: 323/420-2100
Roosevelt: 323/780-6500

Call L.A. County Office of Education (LACOE) at 562/940-1864 or your local school district main office for information on CalSAFE locations in other school districts.

⇒ Alternative Education and Work Center (AEWC) Programs. Serves students 14-18 who have dropped out of school for at least 45 days and are trying to return. AEWC programs offer both diploma and GED programs and have more flexible schedules. Call the LAUSD AEWC office at 213/241-3154 or contact your local school district for similar programs in your district.

⇒ Continuation High School Programs. These are in community-based sites throughout the LAUSD district. These schools offer individualized programs to help each student make up credits in order to graduate from high school. Call your local school district for information on these programs.
Adult Education and Occupational Training Center Programs. These programs, available throughout most school districts, are useful if you have child care limitations or a job that makes it hard to attend regular school hours. With afternoon, evening, and some Saturday classes as well as independent study, they offer GED and other educational and vocational programs. Call your local high school or school district office and ask to be referred to an adult education counselor at a site near you. The LAUSD information line for adult education programs is 213/625-3276, or 213/241-6701 for special education programs.

LAUSD School Programs with Child Care on Campus. Some school sites have child care programs for children of students who attend that school. Schools with child care centers on campus include:

- Locke High School (South Los Angeles LAUSD)
- Ramona Opportunity High School (East Area LAUSD) (grades 7-12)
- Roosevelt High School (East LA LAUSD)
- McAlister High School – South West campus (LAUSD)
- New Village Charter School (Central Los Angeles)

Independent Study Programs. Students work independently according to a written agreement and under the supervision of a teacher. These programs follow a district-adopted curriculum and offer flexibility. Students meet with a teacher once or twice a week for assistance and to turn in their completed work. In LAUSD, City of Angels School has independent study program locations throughout the district.

For other school districts, call your local school district or LACOE at 562/940-1864.

Home and Hospital Instruction. An education program for students confined to home (bed rest) or a hospital due to a temporary condition that makes school attendance impossible. Only serious complications to your pregnancy will make you eligible. This program requires a doctor’s referral and coordination with your school nurse. If you are an LAUSD student, call Carlson Home and Hospital at 818/509-8759.

Similar programs are available in other school districts. Check with a school counselor, administrator, or with your local school district office for information and referrals.
If you are not getting the help you need or you feel you are not being treated fairly at school - Don’t give up!

Talk about your concerns with a teacher, counselor, school psychologist, Principal, or other administrator. Try to get help from someone at the school you are currently attending.

If you attend school within LAUSD and you feel you are being treated unfairly, you can call the LAUSD Educational Equity Compliance Office at 213/241-7682. They can help if you have a complaint about unequal or unfair treatment by LAUSD school staff or students. Each district will have a similar program or staff person to assist you with complaints. Keep calling until you get the help you need.

Contact Public Counsel Children’s Rights Project at
213/385-2977 x500 OR 800/870-8090 x500
www.publiccounsel.org

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Protect your future stay in school

As a teen parent you must be wondering:

- Do I have any education rights?
- What type of services can I request to assist with my education?
- What should I do about child care?
- How to report statutory rape?

This booklet will answer questions you might have about your educational needs.

We are here to help.

HAVE QUESTIONS FOR AN ATTORNEY?
213-385-2977 X500
OR VISIT: WWW.PUBLICCOUNSEL.ORG

Public Counsel
610 SOUTH ARDMORE AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CA 90005
PUBLICCOUNSEL.ORG