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# Differences in parenting skills and practices between older and younger mothers: Effects on the developmental levels of their children

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## Abstract

The relationship of parenting skills and practices to children's school achievement has been the subject of much research in the last decade (Bee et al., 1982; Bradley & Caldwell, 1980; Bradley, Caldwell, & Rock, 1988; Estrada, Arsenic, Hess, & Holloway, 1987; Hess, Holloway, Dickson, & Price, 1984; Ramey, Farran, & Campbell, 1979). The research has indicated that the foundation for children's school achievement begins with factors pertaining to the parents' education, home environment, availability of play materials, and socioeconomic status (Wadsworth, 1986).

# DIFFERENCES IN PARENTING SKILLS AND PRACTICES BETWEEN OLDER AND YOUNGER MOTHERS: EFFECTS ON THE DEVELOPMENTAL LEVELS OF THEIR CHILDREN

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# CHAPTER I

## THE PROBLEM

The relationship of parenting skills and practices to children's school achievement has been the subject of much research in the last decade (Bee et al., 1982; Bradley & Caldwell, 1980; Bradley, Caldwell, & Rock, 1988; Estrada, Arsenio, Hess, & Holloway, 1987; Hess, Holloway, Dickson, & Price, 1984; Ramey, Farran, & Campbell, 1979). The research has indicated that the foundation for children's school achievement begins with factors pertaining to the parents' education, home environment, availability of play materials, and socioeconomic status (Wadsworth, 1986).

The degree to which the parents were educated, particularly the mother, seemed to have a significant effect on early learning. Children of mothers with higher education were more likely to attend preschool and make better use of educational experiences offered to them (Wadsworth, 1986). Wadsworth (1986) also suggested that the preschool years were very important in influencing intellectual performance, level of independence, and parent-child interactions. These factors were also influenced by the amount of education attained by the mother (McGowan & Johnson, 1984).

A significant relationship between aspects of the home environment and the intellectual and language development of a child during the preschool years has been documented. Bradley and Caldwell (1984) provided evidence that early cognitive development was connected to the language stimulation available to the child, the responsivity of parents, emotional support given by parents, the number of toys and objects available, organization and safety of the home, and the variety of out-of-home experiences provided to the child.

Hess et al. (1984) outlined maternal behaviors that influenced school readiness and achievement as expectations for children's achievement, strategies for behavior management, mother-child communication, and mother's sensitivity to child's behavior. These behaviors exhibited by the mother helped predict levels of school readiness and sixth-grade performance. Hess et al. suggested that maternal behaviors effected abilities and skills that were later useful in the classroom. Maternal attitudes supported independent child behavior and interchange in parent-child relations (McGowan & Johnson, 1984).

Bradley and Caldwell (1984) pointed out that the use of manipulable objects was valuable to young children's development. Parents who provided responsive toys, stimulating materials, and experiences

facilitated concrete learning experiences which aided in the development of knowledge concepts. Not only did the availability of toys affect early learning, but their availability seemed to be related to later achievement (Bradley et al., 1988). Manipulable materials and experiences could have provided opportunities to learn from adults and older siblings.

Younger mothers tend to have lower levels of education and to provide less supportive home environments. The latest information from the Children's Defense Fund (1992) indicates that teen pregnancy is on the rise. Statistics collected for black and white women have shown a dramatic increase in the number of teens giving birth in the last decade. If the percentage of teens giving birth continues to rise, communities and school districts will need to use these data to implement programs that address pregnancy prevention and educate young women and their partners.

Listed below are data for unmarried white women and black women ages 15-19 years for births per 1,000 women:

| | 1980 | 1985 | 1989 |
|---|---|---|---|
| White Women | 16.2 | 24.8 | 28.4 |
| Black Women | 89.2 | 88.8 | 103.4 |

In 1989, a little more than one million teenagers got pregnant. This means that 1 in every 17 women (15-19 years old) gave birth in the United States. One-third of all births to teens in 1979 were to unmarried girls. By the end of the 1980s, this had risen to two-thirds (Children's Defense Fund, 1992).

These young mothers have difficulty finding work and are at risk of living at the poverty level. In 1991, one in five teenagers (18.6%) could not find work. If they were a high school dropout, they had a one out of three chance of finding a job. Three point five million 12-to-17-year-olds lived in poverty in 1990 (Children's Defense Fund, 1992). These data indicate that young mothers and their children are at risk of living at the poverty level, which means they are less likely to have regular health care.

There are in existence effective programs designed to help teenagers focus on health, employment, and pregnancy prevention. Programs that have worked for teens are as follows:

1. Multiservice Family Life and Sex Education Program. This is a program of the New York Children's Aid Society. This program encompasses much more than just reducing teen pregnancy. It includes counseling, academic help, sports activities, self-expression, employment experience, health services, and family life

and sex education. When student have completed the program, they are guaranteed admission to Hunter College. Financial aid is available (Children's Defense Fund, 1992).

2. Parent-Child Sexuality Education. This program is for youths aged 9 to 17 and their parents. The goal of the program is to strengthen the parent-child relationship and to increase parent-child communication about sexuality. Other focuses of the program are developing communication, decision-making, and friendship building skills. This program seems to be helping to decrease teen pregnancy rates for the area it serves. There was a 34% drop in the area (Children's Defense Fund, 1992).

3. Youth Build U.S.A. Participants of this program spend half their time working on academic skills and the rest of the time in closely supervised work. Goals of the program are developing life skills and leadership potential.

Studies (Causby, Nixon, & Bright, 1991; Fulton, Murphy, & Anderson, 1991) have indicated that even short-term intervention programs for adolescent mothers work to improve parenting skills. Causby et al. (1991) found that a specialized curriculum helped young mothers to interact more effectively (talking with their child, structuring play periods, encouraging

child development) with their children. Fulton et al. (1991) observed a significant change in younger mothers' self-esteem and knowledge of child development and parenting skills.

## Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this paper was to synthesize and compare the research literature regarding differences in parenting skills and practices between older and younger mothers and their relationship to developmental levels of their children. This paper addressed the following questions:

1. How does the education level of the two groups of mothers affect children's development?

2. How does the socioeconomic status of the two groups of mothers influence children's development?

3. How do the two groups of mothers differ in the use of play materials and how does this impact their children's development?

4. In what ways does the home environment differ between the two groups of mothers and influence their children's development?

## Significance of the Study

Studying the relationship of parenting skills and practices and its effects on overall children's development is an important area to research. Knowledge of this relationship may help teachers better

prepare instructional material to be presented to young children in their classroom. In addition, young parents could benefit from knowledge pertaining to appropriate child development.

Intervention programs that focus on teaching parenting skills, knowledge of child development, and academics to younger mothers have proven to be beneficial (Causby, Nixon, & Bright, 1991; Fulton, Murphy, & Anderson, 1991). The younger mothers benefit by learning about parenting and child development, along with staying in school. The children benefit because the younger mothers have learned to interact better with their children, to structure play periods, and to consciously encourage child development.

## Definition of Terms

### Predictors

Refers to that which predicts (Webster's New Dictionary and Thesaurus (1990). Maternal characteristics, prenatal preparation, infant status at birth, mother-infant attitude/temperament, home environment, mother-infant interaction (Hess et al., 1984; Roosa & Vaughan, 1984).

### Older Mother

Refers to a woman between the ages of 20-32 with at least one child (Campbell, Breitmayer, & Ramey,

1986; Roosa, Fitzgerald, & Carson, 1982; Roosa & Vaughan, 1984; Vukelich & Kliman, 1985).

Younger Mother

Refers to a woman between the ages of 15-19 with at least one child (Campbell et al., 1986; Roosa et al., 1982; Roosa & Vaughan, 1984; Vukelich & Kliman, 1985).

Home

Refers to most of the subscales used in the HOME Inventory (an observation/interview technique which assesses the quality of maternal responsivity, acceptance of child, organization of environment, play materials, maternal involvement, variety of stimulation (Bradley et al., 1988; Bradley & Caldwell, 1984; McGowan & Johnson, 1984).

Environment

Refers to responsivity, interaction, attitude (communication, control strategies, affective tone, expectations, acceptance) of the mother (Bradley et al., 1988; Campbell et al., 1986; Elardo, Bradley, & Caldwell, 1977; Roosa et al., 1982a, 1982b).

Performance and Achievement

Refers to the level of intellectual and social development of a child from approximately 24 months to 7 years of age (Bee et al., 1982; Bradley & Caldwell, 1984; Bradley et al., 1988; Campbell et al., 1986;

Estrada et al., 1987; Hess et al., 1984; McGowan & Johnson, 1984; Ramey et al., 1979).

# CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Discussed in this chapter will be the influence of parents' (especially mothers') educational level, socioeconomic status, use of play materials, and home environment on their children's development. These variables will be compared between younger and older mothers with respect to their children's achievement.

### Education Level

Parents play a very influential role in their child's development. Bee et al. (1982) concluded that the educational level of the family was one of the most salient predictors of intellectual development. Many studies which have been conducted focused specifically on the mother's education, rather than on the father's or the mother's and father's combined (Bee et al., 1982; Campbell et al., 1986; Johnson, 1984; Roosa et al., 1982a, 1982b; Roosa & Vaughan, 1984; Vukelich & Kliman, 1985). The mother's level of education has been considered to be an important factor in predicting how well a child develops emotionally, physically, socially, and intellectually. More highly educated mothers (2 or more years of college) have been found to have a more powerful influence on their child's

cognitive development than mothers with less education (McGowan & Johnson, 1984). The more highly educated mothers believed that their children would see, hear, learn, and profit from being talked to early in life. These children were later found to understand language somewhat better than children who did not receive this stimulation (Bee et al., 1982).

McGowan and Johnson (1984) found a direct, positive effect at 3 years of age and an indirect positive effect at 6-8 years of age on verbal IQ with direct, positive effects on performance IQ when the child's mother was more highly educated. Negative effects upon child development were due to the lack of education of the mother, especially younger mothers (Roosa et al., 1982b). It appeared that older, more highly educated mothers had more knowledge about appropriate developmental schedules in comparison to younger, less educated mothers (Vukelich & Kliman, 1985). Mothers who had more than a high school education had children who achieved significantly higher mental test and language test scores, beginning at 24 months of age (Bee et al., 1982). These mothers provided a more enriched environment and more facilitative teaching.

Vukelich and Kliman (1985) referred to a 40-item questionnaire that assessed the knowledge a mother

needed to successfully care for her children. A high correlation was found between the number of years of education and the maternal competence score. The younger the mother, the less knowledge she had regarding child development as measured by this assessment questionnaire (Vukelich & Kliman, 1985). More educated mothers tended to seek out knowledge regarding child development and how to promote learning. These mothers were more apt to seek professional advice regarding their children. Younger mothers, with a high school degree or less, tended to be more concerned with wanting to know when their baby was sick and were less likely to seek professional advice, but were more likely to seek advice from their mothers (Vukelich & Kliman, 1985). This may explain why older mothers with higher educations had more material and informational resources related to child development than did younger, less educated mothers (Roosa et al., 1982b).

Wadsworth (1986) found that more highly educated mothers had their children attend preschool more frequently and had higher levels of verbal interaction with their children than did less educated mothers. Highly educated mothers reported themselves to be less punitive, more affectionate, and more stimulating and imaginative in terms of coping with boredom in their

children than less educated mothers. These kinds of maternal behaviors and strong self-concepts have already been established as being typical of better educated mothers (Wadsworth, 1986). Young, less educated mothers were not likely to make use of preschool and were more likely to have problems with it due to their lack of education. In a study on the impact of day care, Campbell et al. (1986) found that day care can be a source of developmental support for both the younger mother and her child. In this study, the child attained higher mental test scores and the mother was allowed the opportunity to complete secondary, and possibly postsecondary, schooling.

## Socioeconomic Status

In a study conducted by Wadsworth (1986), younger mothers lacked educational experience and achievement and were from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Their children were in need of extra attention and encouragement that a preschool could have provided. These were the children who were least likely to have attended preschool. Roosa et al. (1982b) observed that older mothers averaged 4 years or more of education beyond high school, over two and one-half times as much family income, and had family job prestige levels that were double those of the younger mothers. These comparisons indicated that older mothers provided more

material, informational, or experimental resources than younger mothers, which aided in their role as parents. Reduced number of materials, resources, etc., provided by teen mothers may be explained by their lower socioeconomic status (Roosa et al., 1982a). Young mothers are more likely than older mothers to have limited education and to have worked in lower status and lower paying jobs (Roosa & Vaughan, 1984).

Socioeconomic status was reported to be the major factor in determining a child's developmental status (Roosa et al., 1982a). High socioeconomic status mothers or their infants did better on each of the predictors of child development (temperament, behavior, intellect, attention). Roosa and Vaughan (1984) found that there is some agreement (Baldwin & Cain, 1980; Gunter & LaBarba, 1981; McGowan & Johnson, 1984) that the socioeconomic status of younger mothers probably accounts for most of the reported developmental deficits.

A study conducted by Roosa, Fitzgerald, and Carlson (1982a), looked at the socioeconomic status of younger and older mothers. Socioeconomic status was the salient predictor of child development, rather than ages of the mothers. This resulted in the assumption that a mother's age is not the critical factor in infant development. Rather, according to Roosa et al.

(1982a), critical factors that explained adverse development among the infants of younger mothers is the correlation between teenage childbearing and reduced socioeconomic status.

Younger mothers from low socioeconomic status and their children are one potential source of developmental problems (Roosa & Vaughan, 1984). If these mothers utilized a preschool program for their children, benefits could be obtained for both the mother and the child. However, these are the parents least likely to utilize preschool for their children (Wadsworth, 1986). Wadsworth (1986) studied two generations of parents and their socioeconomic characteristics in relation to their child's preschool experience. Of the first-generation parents whose children went to preschool, socioeconomic status was not significantly different from those whose children did not attend. This may be because of the availability of preschools that were provided due to working mothers during the post-World War II period. Differences were marked in the second generation, with 87.4% of higher socioeconomic families' children making use of preschool, as compared with 68.4% of children from lower socioeconomic families. Children who had attended preschool by age 4 had significantly higher verbal attainment scores as compared to children who

did not attend preschool. Wadsworth (1986) found that important differences in achieved educational levels existed between parents of children who attended preschool and parents of children who did not attend preschool. Seventy-one point six percent of parents whose children were not involved in preschool did not complete high school.

## Play Materials

Audiovisual response toys, mobiles, and a variety of other items provide much stimulation and are thought to play an important role in the cognitive development of children (Bradley & Caldwell, 1976; Elardo et al., 1975). Including sufficient and appropriate play material in the environment was a significant predictor of a child's concurrent or later intellectual or language skill (Bee et al., 1982). Wachs (1976) acknowledged a significant relationship between the number of audiovisually responsive toys and children's performance and development of schemes throughout the second year of life. Two years later, Wachs (1978) concluded that the use of audiovisually responsive toys in the second year of life was significantly related to intelligence at age 2 1/2 years. Later, Wachs et al. (1979) found that for both males and females, the number of audiovisually responsive toys was significantly related to

performance on most scales from the Uzgiris-Hunt Infant Psychological Development Scale. Due to their lower socioeconomic status, younger mothers were likely to have provided a reduced number of toys (audiovisual response toys, specifically) and mobiles for their children in comparison to older mothers (Roosa et al., 1982). Therefore, there was less opportunity for nonsocial stimulation in homes of children having younger mothers.

Ware and Garber (1972) found there was a correlation of .3 with children's scores on the HOME Preschool Inventory among Mexican-American and black 4-year-olds and the availability of materials in the home for learning. It appeared that the availability of developmentally stimulating materials and experiences were associated with the children's mental and achievement test performance (Bradley & Caldwell, 1984). Wulbert et al. (1975) found that the appropriateness and the amount of toys available during the preschool years was significantly different in the homes of language-delayed children when compared to the homes of normal children.

Bradley, Caldwell, and Rock (1988) observed that in the second year of life the use of play materials was related to later achievements (especially reading achievement) irrespective of the later environment.

The first 2 years of life are referred to by Piaget (Flavell, 1977) as the sensory-motor stage of development, in which a child's thinking tends to be dominated by sensory and motor experiences. Hence, an important source of learning would be responsible, manipulable objects geared to the child's emerging capabilities (Bradley et al., 1988). Bradley et al. (1988) discussed several factors that may have resulted in the strong relations between provisions of appropriate play materials and children's cognitive development. Children involved in the study needed concrete learning experiences to help development of knowledge and concepts because they were mostly in the sensorimotor and preoperational levels of thinking. The provision of appropriate toys may have provided these concrete experiences.

Bradley et al. (1988) observed that subscales of play materials and parental involvement showed the most pronounced relationship to 10-year achievement. Learning from adults and older siblings provided opportunities in the context for the acquisition of secondary reinforcers that encouraged habits promoting academic achievement.

Klass (1987), along with Bradley and Caldwell (1984), stated that while children are playing with toys parents should join in and use the toy as a

vehicle to facilitate learning and assist and instruct their children. This experience allows children to hear their parents talk (language development), to learn problem-solving skills, and to partake in social experiences of shared enjoyment (Bradley & Caldwell, 1984; Klass, 1987).

## Home Environment

Assessments conducted by Bradley and Caldwell (1976, 1980) of children's home environment demonstrated concurrent and predictive correlations between aspects of children's early home environment and their intellectual performance. Emotional and verbal responsivity from the mother along with her involvement with the child and use of age-appropriate toys have all been demonstrated to be positively correlated with children's intelligence (Bradley & Caldwell, 1976, 1980; Bradley et al., 1988). Children's intelligence, during the early childhood years, has been positively correlated to several parental characteristics within the parent-child relationship (Bradley et al., 1977, 1979; Caldwell et al., 1970; Elardo et al., 1975, 1977; McGowan & Johnson, 1984). McGowan and Johnson (1984) stated that the characteristics involved were:

1. Parental encouragement of independent child behavior.

2. Warmth and affection toward the child.

3. The level of mother-child interaction.

4. Reciprocal interaction between parent and child.

Home environment, in the first year of life, was a good predictor of later IQ or language performance (Bee et al., 1982). Watson et al. (1983) found similar results in a study they conducted. The outcome was that parents did make a difference in children's school performance. The kind and quality of home environment did affect the children's school progress. Children from positive home environments scored higher on both knowledge and inference levels of the Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery compared to children from negative environments. Expressive and receptive language and visual recognition skills were also influenced by home environment (Watson et al., 1983). Parents who provided a positive home environment had quality involvement with their children. They provided active support in the home and enrolled their children in quality preschools. These parents also encouraged their children to achieve and became actively involved with the children's learning process (Watson et al., 1983).

Findings of a research study conducted by Estrada, Arsenio, Hess, and Holloway (1987) suggested ways in which a positive home environment influenced children's cognitive abilities. These children were:

1. More socially competent.
2. More accepting of adult assistance.
3. More likely to initiate and persist in challenging intellectual tasks.

Children from negative home environments were less likely to possess these abilities.

Roosa and Vaughan (1984) compared younger mothers with older mothers and found that younger mothers provided less optimal home environments, less verbal stimulation, and less contingent responsiveness to their infants than did the older mothers. Younger mothers were also found to be less interactive, less warm and involved, and to have maintained a more authoritarian attitude. Since these attributes play an important part in cognitive and social development, their absence could explain the developmental differences between children of young mothers and older mothers. According to Roosa et al. (1982), younger mothers tended to live in more crowded homes that did not have a quiet place for the children. Children of younger mothers were more apt to experience an excess of social stimulation with little chance of relief from

the stimulation (excessive stimulation is thought to have a detrimental effect on children's development) (Roosa et al., 1982). Maternal behaviors in low socioeconomic families have been presumed to be important for later child achievement (Ramey et al., 1979). Ramey et al. (1979) found that children's subsequent IQ, within a sample of low socioeconomic children, could be predicted from information about their mothers' behavior and attitude. Mothers from low socioeconomic backgrounds interacted (demonstrating toys, reading, touching, holding, talking to child) less with her children than did the general population. They also displayed a more authoritarian attitude. The level of prediction on Stanford-Binet scores was remarkably high for toddlers when only knowing information about their mothers' attitude and behavior (50% and 65% of the variance can be accounted for in children's 36-month Stanford-Binet).

# CHAPTER III

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to synthesize and compare differences in parenting skills and practices between older and younger mothers and their relationship to developmental levels of their children as described in the research literature. The following questions were addressed:

1. How does the education level of the two groups of mothers effect children's development?

2. How does the socioeconomic status of the two groups of mothers influence children's development?

3. How do the two groups of mothers differ in the use of play materials and how does this impact their children's development?

4. In what ways does the home environment differ between the two groups of mothers and influence their children's development?

Differences related to reported developmental levels were found in the mother's level of education, socioeconomic status, and the home environment. The differences are summarized below.

Education Level

In comparing mothers with more education (2 or more years of college) to those with less education, mothers with higher education used a variety of sources to obtain knowledge regarding child development. Mothers having a higher education were more affectionate, made use of preschool and, in general, had more knowledge regarding child development. In comparing children with higher educated mothers to children with mothers of less education, the children with higher educated mothers performed better on intellectual and language tests.

Socioeconomic Status

Older mothers averaged more years of education and higher income than younger mothers. Older mothers provided more material, information, and experimental resources for their children. The children also performed better on each of the predictors of child development.

Younger mothers were usually from low socioeconomic backgrounds, did not make use of preschool, had less materials regarding child development, lived in crowded conditions, and did not provide many play materials. Their children were in need of extra attention and encouragement. Socioeconomic status of younger mothers probably accounts for most of the reported developmental delays.

Play Materials

The older mothers were more likely to have an education beyond high school and to have a higher income than younger mothers. These two factors provided the opportunity for older mothers to have a variety of play materials available for their children. Play materials provided impacted the children's development by providing an opportunity for parents to foster learning. Klass (1978) recognized this was time for interaction, problem solving, and social experiences to take place. Through these interactions, language and intellect were stimulated which could have resulted in higher mental and language scores.

Home Environment

A variety of stimuli provided early in life had some beneficial effects in terms of behavior. Children having a responsive environment early in life appeared to feel more comfortable and to act more responsively in situations encountered later in childhood. Positive home environments offered needed support which fostered self-worth, perseverance, learning basic rules and routines, and confidence.

Home environments of older and younger mothers were found to be different. The older mothers provided the more positive environment. Parental encouragement of independent child behavior, warmth and affection toward the child, the level of mother-child interaction, reciprocal interaction

between parent and child were found to be possessed by older mothers and to positively influence the child's development. Younger mothers provided less positive home environments. As stated earlier, younger mothers lacked the knowledge necessary for "good" parenting (Roosa et al., 1982). If younger mothers lacked parenting knowledge, especially of child development, it would be difficult for them to feel they could control or change a child's behavior, to be accepting of childish behavior, or to feel that there was anything to be gained from listening to or communicating with their children.

## Conclusions

The following conclusions can be made from this literature review:

1. Mothers with 2 or more years of college had more knowledge regarding child development.

2. Older mothers averaged more years of education and had a higher income than younger mothers.

3. Older mothers provided a variety of play materials which impacted their child's development.

4. Older mothers provided a more positive home environment.

Older mothers possess more of the needed parenting skills than young mothers due to more years of education and a higher income. They provide more play materials and a positive home environment, which are important for the

development of a child. Younger mothers do not provide a variety of play materials and a positive home environment.

## Recommendations

This paper has addressed the difficulties most younger mothers have in parenting and the reasons why older mothers possess more of the necessary knowledge about child development and parenting skills and practices. As the number of young women giving birth increases, young women need to become educated about sexuality and family life.

School systems and the government need to look at programs that help prevent teen pregnancy and that help younger mothers gain knowledge about child development and parenting skills. Local health agencies, centers, and community hospitals need to work closely with school systems to help make programs accessible to younger mothers. Programs and clinics should be located on school grounds or close to school facilities. It would also be beneficial to place programs near low socioeconomic neighborhoods.

Listed below are three recommendations that could help address this problem:

1. Health clinics to be established in the schools (especially middle and high schools). Schools serving low socioeconomic youth would be priority for the establishment of clinics. These clinics should be allowed to counsel and facilitate pregnancy prevention. Pre- and postnatal

education programs need to be implemented by these on-site clinics.

2. Sexuality education be mandatory for all middle and high school students. This course should resemble the Parent-Child Sexuality Education course described earlier in this paper (Children's Defense Fund, 1992). Parents need to be involved in this course.

3. Intervention programs that focus on child development and parenting skills for younger mothers and fathers be mandatory for all young parents to attend. The program must be located in the schools. This would allow young parents to continue their education while developing parenting skills. .

The statistics stated in this paper show that increasing numbers of younger women (ages 15-19 years) are giving birth. By comparing parenting practices of younger and older mothers, it becomes evident that there is a definite need for various types of programs. These programs need to exist in many of the nation's communities and/or school districts. More research needs to be conducted concerning the types of programs that are most effective and best meet the needs of a particular community.

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