

# MOAPPP Monitor

www.moapp.org

Fall 2004

The mission of MOAPPP is to strengthen policies and programs related to adolescent pregnancy, prevention and parenting in Minnesota.

## “Parenting Is a Five-Piece Suit”

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Advocates for Youth

Parenting is tough these days, and parenting around issues of sexuality can seem especially tricky.

Parents can take heart through the following maxim: Good parenting is good parenting. In other words, raising sexually healthy children requires exactly the same set of skills that good parents and other caretakers bring to all other aspects of family life. Truthfully, this topic is really not rocket science! I always find that when I can help parents identify the things they know they do well, and then help them apply what they already know about quality parenting to the topic of sexuality, shoulders drop, tongues untie, and common sense kicks in.



*“This Five Needs Paradigm makes it clear that sexuality is simply another aspect of life and human development, not a ‘special’ topic that needs to be ‘kept from the kids’ until they’re older.”*

- **Values Clarification:** Children and adolescents need adults to share their values (about sexuality) and to clarify and interpret competing values and values systems (about sexuality) in the surrounding culture.

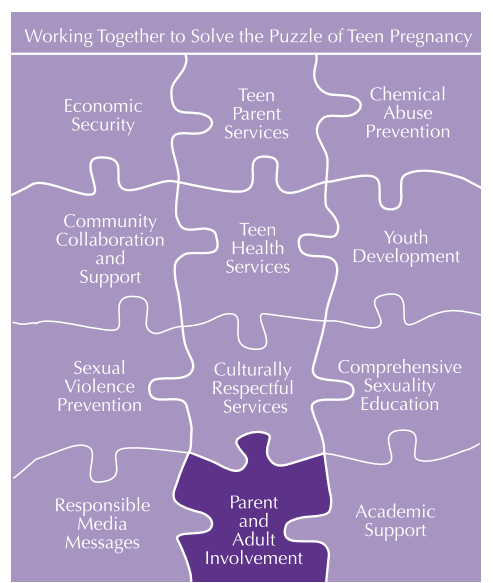
- **Limit Setting:** Children and adolescents need adults to create a healthy and safe (sexual) environment by stating and reinforcing age-appropriate (sexual) rules and limits.

- **Anticipatory Guidance:** Children and adolescents need adults to help them learn how to avoid or handle potentially harmful (sexual) situations, and to prepare them for times when they will need to rely on themselves to make responsible and healthy (sexual) choices.

This Five Needs Paradigm makes it clear that sexuality is simply another aspect of life and human development, not a “special” topic that needs to be “kept from the kids” until they’re older. It also makes the case that if children have five fundamental needs, then parents have five fundamental roles: affirmer, information giver, values clarifier, limit setter, and guide. Parents need to perform these roles in their family relationships—or, as I like to say, they need to wear them in their daily

life—as a brightly colored “five piece suit,” so that clear boundaries and expectations are evident for both parent and child.

Sexuality is different in one important way. As parents we are typically less knowledgeable about the stages of healthy sexual development (from infancy on); less comfortable with sexual facts; less clear about the values we want to pass on; less assertive about applying sexual limits; and less confident about the kind of guidance we need to provide. So, our first job is clear—to educate and even re-educate ourselves, by doing the “headwork” and the homework that will get us up to par. Then, I promise, our good instincts and common sense will kick right in. •



MOAPPP’s Teen Pregnancy Puzzle illustrates the complexity of the issue and the need for comprehensive solutions based on research.

- **Affirmation:** Children and adolescents need adults to recognize and validate their particular stage of (sexual) development.
- **Information:** Children and adolescents need factual knowledge and concepts

**DIRECTOR'S NOTES**

**Dear Friends,**

I am delighted to be writing to you as the new Executive Director of MOAPPP. I arrive at MOAPPP via the public health arena, and have worked to improve and support the health and well being of adolescents for ten years now.

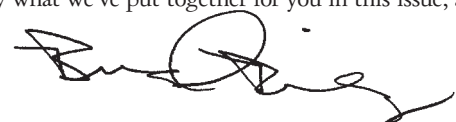
MOAPPP's unique position as Minnesota's resource for teen pregnancy information has always been important to me. I partnered with MOAPPP on teen pregnancy prevention and support for teen parents in many ways over the years; I was honored to serve on the Board of Directors and as part of the Executive Committee for three years; I was a contributor to and a distributor of the State Plan for Teen Pregnancy Prevention and Parenting. I have always been impressed by this organization's work, and fully credit the vision of the previous directors, the diligence of the staff and the continuous support of the Board and the broader community for making MOAPPP what it is today.

This issue of the Monitor focuses on the importance of parents and caring adults in young people's lives. We know from the research that the stronger the connection between youth and adults, the more protected young people are from a host of negative health outcomes. More specifically to MOAPPP's mission is the fact that young people are less likely to experience a pregnancy, HIV or STI's when they report strong connections to the adults in their lives. Thanks to Deborah Roffman, a national sexuality education expert and to Dr. Martha Farrell Erickson of the University of Minnesota, for sharing their knowledge with us.

It seems so obvious – strong connections equal better overall health. But anyone who has weathered the teen years – as a teen or an adult – knows there can be many challenges to strong connections. Thankfully, many programs across Minnesota work with parents and caring adults to address those challenges and nurture those connections with young people.

I hope you enjoy what we've put together for you in this issue, and I look forward to the future we're creating together.

My best to you,




**Brigid Riley and Nancy Nelson, current and former Executive Directors of MOAPPP**

**PUBLIC POLICY**

**Public policy that supports parent and adult involvement**

Parents, caregivers, and young people want to talk with each other about sexuality-related issues. Public policies can play an important role in supporting parents and caregivers as the primary sexuality educators of young people. Contact your state, county, and local policy makers and tell them to implement public policies that encourage parent/adult involvement.

Recommendations for policy makers:

- Form public policies consistent with the best public health research in terms of child and adolescent development, including sexuality-related issues, program effectiveness and family communication.
- Recognize that sexual development begins at birth and continues throughout life.
- Recognize that parents/caregivers can play a central role in helping young people form their values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in terms of sexuality issues.
- Support programming that provides parents/caregivers with the information and skills they need to have an ongoing dialogue with their children about sexuality issues.



**MOAPPP Board President Lynn Brofman, MOAPPP Executive Director Nancy Nelson and State Senator John Marty, MOAPPP's Policy Maker of the Year.**

- Provide coordinated and integrated family communication programs.
- Be respectful and responsive to the diversity among families—in terms of culture, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, family structure, socioeconomic status and language.
- Involve young people and their parents/caregivers in the legislative process.
- Allocate funding for programs designed to foster parent-child communication.

The above policy recommendations are from "Families Are Talking," [www.familiesaretalking.org](http://www.familiesaretalking.org), a project of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United State (SIECUS, [www.siecus.org](http://www.siecus.org)).



**FACT: Family characteristics such as parental support, parent-child connectedness and monitoring are consistently related to promotion of healthy adolescent behavior.**

- Support age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education that includes information on human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and sexuality and culture.
- Develop public policies that encourage parents/caregivers to become involved in their children's school-based sexuality education program.
- Support research and evaluation strategies that encourage parent-child communication on a wide range of issues, including sexuality.

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**Who are my elected officials?**  
<http://maps.commissions.leg.state.mn.us/website/districts>

**Where do I vote?**  
<http://pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us>

NEW RESEARCH

PCC has emerged as a "super-protector" – a feature of family life that may buffer young people from the many challenges and risks they face in today's world.\*

It seems like common sense... children who have supportive, caring and involved parents/caregivers will develop into healthier adults. Unfortunately, not all kids and teens naturally have this support and involvement from their parents/caregivers and not all adults know exactly how to provide it. We are fortunate to have research and program examples to guide our work to encourage and promote parent and adult involvement in teen pregnancy, STI and HIV prevention. The following page

shares some additional resources, useful websites and highlights one new research publication on parent-child connectedness (PCC).

ETR Associates and the PCC BRIDGE Project

In an effort to further understand the characteristics and impact of parent-child connectedness (PCC), ETR Associates developed the PCC BRIDGE Project, "Parent-Child Connectedness: Bridging Research and Intervention Design." With funding assistance from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, ETR researchers reviewed existing literature and surveyed professionals to produce materials that explore what parent-child connectedness is and what programs should include to promote this highly protective quality. The PCC BRIDGE Project identified eight components of parent-child connectedness: 1. Attachment/Bonding, 2. Warmth/Caring, 3. Cohesion (closeness and conflict), 4. Support/Involvement, 5. Communication, 6. Monitoring/Control, 7. Autonomy Granting, 8. Maternal/Paternal Characteristics.\*

\*Lezin, N., Rolleri, L., Bean, S. & Taylor, J. (2004). Parent-child connectedness: Implications for research, interventions, and positive impacts on adolescent health. Santa Cruz, CA: ETR Associates. For more information about the major findings of the PCC BRIDGE Project that could help to support your parent programming, go to the Topic in Brief or Current Research sidebar at [www.etr.org/recapp/](http://www.etr.org/recapp/).



Emerging research from the fields of public health, psychology, education and others demonstrates that the condition of "parent-child connectedness" (PCC) serves as an important protective factor for a variety of adolescent health outcomes, including the prevention of adolescent pregnancy, STI's and HIV.\*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Child Trends

Research organization dedicated to improving the lives of children by conducting research and providing science-based information to improve the decisions, programs and policies that affect children and their families.

Website: [www.childtrends.org](http://www.childtrends.org)

Shoulder to Shoulder. Raising Teens Together

A Minnesota collaborative effort dedicated to helping make parents' jobs easier by connecting fellow parents and caregivers, and sharing the insight of those who have been there before. Resources also available in Spanish.

Telephone: Dial 211 and ask for "Shoulder to Shoulder"

Website: [www.shouldertoshoulderminnesota.org](http://www.shouldertoshoulderminnesota.org)

University of Minnesota Extension Service Parenting Education Resources

Information and resources on parenting and parenting education.

Resources also available in other languages.

Telephone: 612-624-2200

Website: [www.parenting.umn.edu](http://www.parenting.umn.edu)

USEFUL WEBSITES

Advocates for Youth: [www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org)

Parents' Sex Ed Center: [www.advocatesforyouth.org/parents/index.htm](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/parents/index.htm)

Birds and Bees, Minnesota-based resource: [www.birdsandbees.org](http://www.birdsandbees.org)

Campaign for Our Children, Parent Resource Center: [www.cfoc.org](http://www.cfoc.org)

National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy: [www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org)

National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention: [www.noappp.org](http://www.noappp.org)

SIECUS: [www.siecus.org](http://www.siecus.org)

Families are Talking: [www.familiesaretalking.org](http://www.familiesaretalking.org)

La Familia Habla: [www.lafamiliahabla.org](http://www.lafamiliahabla.org)

Planned Parenthood Education Department: [www.plannedparenthood.org/education/](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/education/)

Say Not Yet, Minnesota-based resource: [www.saynotyet.com](http://www.saynotyet.com)

Talking with Kids About Tough Issues: [www.talkingwithkids.org](http://www.talkingwithkids.org)

MOAPPP's 13th Annual Conference Brings Hope and Inspires Action

Young people with hope for a bright future make life choices that turn their dreams into reality. We face a time when our sense of hope is being challenged. Economic and political realities constrain our ability to serve the youth and families in our communities. Therefore, it is particularly important that we stay focused on providing programs that are grounded in what we know works in teen pregnancy, HIV/STI prevention and support for teen parents. MOAPPP's 13th annual conference, "Building Hope Building Lives," May 6-7, brought together more than 350 educators, service providers, youth workers, health professionals, government workers, advocates and students for two jam-packed days of speakers, workshops and networking. The conference focused on current research, promising strategies and innovative approaches to adolescent pregnancy prevention and support services for teen parents. The goal of the two days was to inspire, challenge and better prepare all of us to make a difference in the lives of young people.

Highlights of this year's conference included keynote presentations by Loretta Sweet Jemmott, Center for Urban Health Research at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing; Bill Smith from SIECUS (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States), Washington, D.C.; and Cordelia Anderson of Sensibilities, Inc. in Minneapolis. The Youth Performance Company premiered a production entitled, "The Talk: An Intercourse on the Coming of Age."

Based on the evaluations, the conference met its goals. Participants reported that they left with renewed energy, new skills, increased knowledge and a sense of hope. The overall response to the conference is reflected in the words of a few participants:

"I am so revived! I can't wait to apply what I've learned."

"It recharged my batteries and renewed my spirit and drive. I also acquired new materials and skills."

"[The conference] always gives new ideas, information and hope. Great for networking, making friends in the community and a huge stress reliever."

"MOAPPP legitimizes what we do and offers hope for the adolescents we serve. It helps me do my job better!!"

"[The conference] encourages me to believe that one person does make a difference."

We owe a tremendous thank-you to our sponsors who generously supported the conference. Through their sponsorship, we were able to offer high quality programming and materials as well as provide over 30 participant scholarships. •



Thank you sponsors!

- HealthPartners
- The Minnesota Department of Education
- The Minnesota Department of Health
- The National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Research Center, University of Minnesota

We welcome new sponsors for 2005!

Please contact Marilyn Colby Rivkin if you would like to become a sponsor. 651-644-1447, x 15 [marilyn@moappp.org](mailto:marilyn@moappp.org)



"MOAPPP legitimizes what we do and offers hope for the adolescents we serve. It helps me do my job better!!"

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW

MOAPPP's 14th Annual Conference May 5-6, 2005 Earle Brown Heritage Center Brooklyn Center, MN

Phyllis Stringfield, Jan Hayne, Molly Oberweiser, Gina Young, and Leah Sweet surround and congratulate Youth of the Year Joe Ubani. All pictured above are trainers for the Dads Make a Difference program.

FOR A LIST OF UPCOMING EVENTS AND TRAININGS, GO TO [WWW.MOAPPP.ORG](http://WWW.MOAPPP.ORG).

## “Child-Adult Attachment: A Lens for Viewing Decisions that Affect Children and Families”

Martha Farrell Erickson, Ph.D. and Lyn Glenn  
Children, Youth and Family Consortium  
University of Minnesota  
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When we look for information on what can make a difference for our children, research points to a relationship with a caring, supportive adult. While relationships play an important role at all stages of development, recent research points to the importance of a child’s earliest relationship with his/her primary caregiver when attachment occurs.

A secure attachment in infancy lays the foundation for healthy, competent development in later years. Without it, children are at risk. They are likely to have difficulty forming relationships, exhibit anti-social behavior, and lack confidence, enthusiasm and persistence that facilitate success in school and work. Recent research shows the early relationship with a caregiver becomes a prototype for interactions and relationships a child will have later in life.



*“Teen parent programs have a unique opportunity to support healthy attachment between young parents and their children.”*

### What factors help parents and children develop a secure attachment?

Research points to several critical factors, all of which sound relatively simple and basic--but are often not basic to our programs and policies.

- When parents’ basic needs for housing, food, clothing, transportation, and healthcare are met, parents have the energy to meet their children’s needs.
- When parents have emotional support for themselves, they are better able to care for their children sensitively and consistently.
- When parents understand child development, particularly the meaning of certain key child behaviors, such as

separation anxiety in the infant or negativism in the toddler, they have more realistic behavioral expectations. Knowledge, understanding, and perspective-taking are fundamental to the sensitive care that facilitates secure attachment.

- Finally, how a parent cares for his/her children is strongly influenced by the

care the parent received in his/her own childhood. Of course, we cannot go back and change a parent’s history, but research indicates that what is most important is how a parent thinks now about his/her own history – facing experiences that were painful, acknowledging their ongoing influence, and choosing what to repeat and what not to repeat.

Teen parent programs have a unique opportunity to support healthy attachment between young parents and their children. The better we understand the theory and power of attachment the better able we will be to apply it to our work. For a complete version of this article and for more information on attachment theory and practice, contact the Children, Youth and Family Consortium at the University of Minnesota 612/625-7849 or cyfc@umn.edu.

For information on upcoming training opportunities on the practical application of attachment theory and research, go to the Harris B. Training Center for Infant and Child Development website at [www.harristrainingcenter.org](http://www.harristrainingcenter.org) for information on a course being offered in late September. •

### What is attachment? Is it the same as bonding?

Bonding refers to what happens between an infant and caregiver during a relatively short period of time--the warm, close feelings a parent experiences in the first hours and days of the infant’s life. Bonding is basically one-sided--the parent’s experience with her/his new infant.

In contrast, attachment is a mutual, reciprocal relationship in which the child is an active, knowing partner. It is a relationship that develops gradually during the early months and years of a child’s life.

### How do secure attachments develop?

Research demonstrates that the major factor leading to a secure attachment is the caregiver’s sensitivity and responsivity to the child’s needs. The securely attached child has learned to trust that the caregiver will meet his or her needs, and equally important, the child has learned to trust in his or her own ability to solicit care.



The fall in Minnesota, a time for changing leaves, dropping temperatures, and families talking about sex. Yes, that’s right, families need to talk about sex. October is Let’s Talk Month (LTM), a time to emphasize the importance of communication between adults and youth in helping young people develop responsible, positive attitudes and behaviors about sexuality.



**FACT:** Young people want to talk to their parents and caregivers about healthy sexuality.

Minnesota is not alone in recognizing Let’s Talk Month. Nationally, October is recognized as Let’s Talk Month by organizations such as Advocates for Youth ([www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org)) and The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy ([www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org)). Since MOAPPP supports parents as the primary sexuality educators of their children, we support LTM, too.

MOAPPP wants to support your community in promoting LTM. Please contact MOAPPP for assistance with your LTM plans. Check out what YOU can do for LTM by visiting [www.moappp.org](http://www.moappp.org). MOAPPP will post events and activities happening for LTM around the state on our website. If you are interested in publicizing your community event on the MOAPPP Calendar or want more information contact Lisa Turnham at the MOAPPP office (651) 644-1447 x18, [lisat@moappp.org](mailto:lisat@moappp.org). •



Let’s Talk Month posters are available in English and Spanish. Contact Lisa Turnham at the MOAPPP office (651) 644-1447 x18, [lisat@moappp.org](mailto:lisat@moappp.org) if you would like to order posters.

**FACT:** Young people who feel connected to their family and clearly understand their family’s values concerning sexuality and relationships are more likely to avoid risk-taking behaviors.



## 10 Tips on Raising a Sexually Healthy Child

1. Let your child know they can trust you and come to you even when they make mistakes.
2. Know your children’s friends and their families. Friends have a strong influence on each other.
3. Answer questions honestly! Tell your child what they want to know using words they can understand.
4. Be patient. The same question may be asked again and again.
5. Start conversations and be a good listener. Regularly make time to spend together.
6. Do not use myths and fables. Don’t talk about animals and plants when children want to talk about people.
7. Inform your child about sexual assault in the same manner that you would warn them about other dangers.
8. Help your child learn how to make good decisions and how to stand by them.
9. Know what your children are watching, reading, and listening to. Current media images are full of negative messages.
10. Share and model desirable sexual values, attitudes, and behaviors. Your examples are the most powerful messages you can provide.

Visit the Let’s Talk Month website at [www.moappp.org](http://www.moappp.org) and find out what YOU can do to help families START TALKING!

## MOAPPP Monitor

Newsletter of the Minnesota  
Organization on Adolescent  
Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting

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## Support MOAPPP and become a member!

**MOAPPP counts on memberships to provide the many programs and services that you, and others who work with and care about youth, have come to depend on:**

- **Annual conference:** the only one of its kind in Minnesota that showcases prevention research, strategies and program ideas
- **Frequent trainings** throughout the year bringing you the latest information and skills
- **Valuable information** about the most current science-based, best practice strategies from the field
- **A website** that contains over 150 pages of online information and resources
- **Public policy and advocacy initiatives, trainings and information**
- **MOAPPP Monitor**
- **Electronic E-Monthly**
- **Networking opportunities** with others who work in the field
- **Community awareness** through media partnerships

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