

## Pregnant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care: Risk Factors and Service Needs

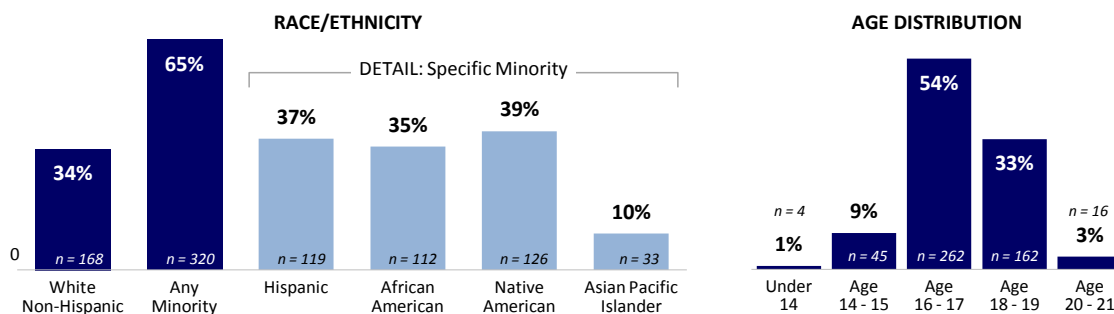
Barbara Lucenko, PhD • Callie Black, MPH • Laurie Cawthon, MD • Barbara E.M. Felver, MES, MPA

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AS PART OF THE PLANNING PHASE of a grant funded effort to guide services for pregnant and parenting youth in foster care, the Department of Social and Health Services, Research and Data Analysis Division generated some general demographic, risk and service information on this population. This report is based on the population of youth in placement, age 21 or younger, who were pregnant, gave birth, or fathered a child while in out of home placement during or prior to placement in State Fiscal Years (SFY) 2008-2011.

### DEMOGRAPHICS | Two thirds of the foster youth are minorities and half are 16 to 17 years old

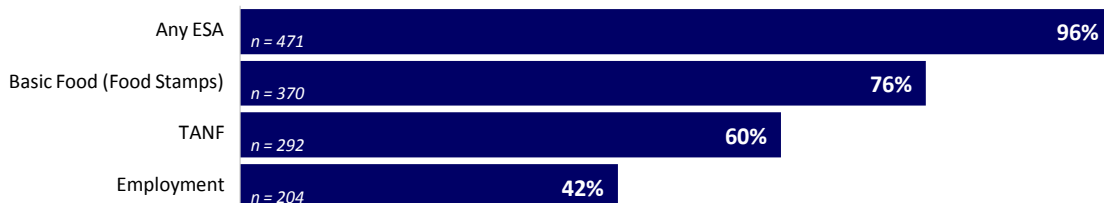
The majority of pregnant and parenting foster care youth were identified as members of a racial or ethnic minority. Most of the youth were between the ages of 16 and 19 during the most recent year of placement.



NOTE: Since a person can be a member of more than one minority group, the percents for individual racial categories will sum to more than the percent shown for "any minority."

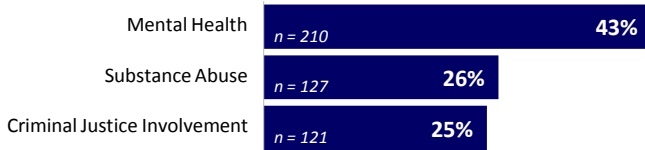
### STABILITY | Most pregnant and parenting youth rely on economic or food support

Almost all of these youth had at least one service reported through the DSHS Economic Services Administration. Basic Food and TANF were especially common. Less than half of the youth had some employment during the current placement year or one year prior.



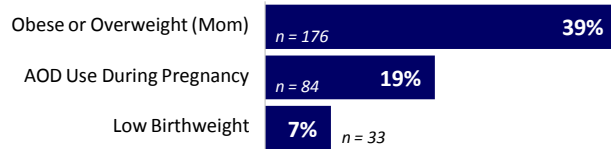
**RISK FACTORS | Over 40 percent of the parenting and pregnant foster care youth have indications of mental health problems and 25 percent have substance abuse and criminal justice involvement**

Over 40 percent of these youth had a mental health diagnosis, prescription or service recorded in medical or other service records. One-fourth had a documented substance abuse problem and one-fourth had either an arrest or conviction during the current placement year or one year prior.



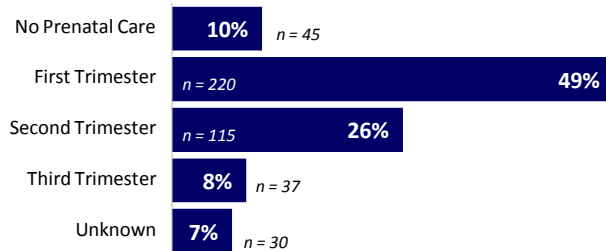
**PREGNANCY RISK FACTORS | 4 in 10 of the foster youth (females only) who gave birth were overweight and 1 in 5 used alcohol or other drugs (AOD) during pregnancy**

Of the female foster youth for whom births were identified, almost 40 percent were identified as overweight (24 percent) or obese (15 percent) based on body mass index. Infant birth weight was low for 7 percent of the female foster youth who gave birth.



**PRENATAL CARE | Half of the pregnant foster youth began prenatal care in their first trimester**

No prenatal care was received for 10 percent of the pregnant youth. About half began prenatal care during the first trimester, 26 percent in the second trimester, and 8 percent in the third trimester.



## TECHNICAL TABLES

### Client Outcomes Database (DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division)

Age	Foster Youth Moms TOTAL = 440		Foster Youth Dads TOTAL = 49		Both Moms and Dads TOTAL = 489	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
Under 14	4	1%	0	0%	4	<1%
Age 14 to 15	44	10%	1	2%	45	9%
Age 16 to 17	239	54%	23	47%	262	54%
Age 18 to 19	140	32%	22	45%	162	33%
Age 20 to 21	13	3%	3	6%	16	3%

Gender	TOTAL = 440		TOTAL = 49		TOTAL = 489	
Group	440	90%	49	10%	489	100%

Race/Ethnicity	TOTAL = 439		TOTAL = 49		TOTAL = 488	
White Non-Hispanic	153	35%	15	31%	168	34%
Any Minority	286	65%	34	69%	320	65%
Hispanic	108	38%	11	32%	119	37%
African American	97	34%	15	44%	112	35%
Native American	111	39%	15	44%	126	39%
Asian Pacific Islander	30	11%	3	9%	33	10%

Risk Factors	TOTAL = 440		TOTAL = 49		TOTAL = 489	
Substance Abuse	114	26%	13	27%	127	26%
Any Mental Health	200	46%	10	20%	210	43%
Criminal Justice Involvement	91	21%	30	61%	121	25%

Stability	TOTAL = 440		TOTAL = 49		TOTAL = 489	
Employment	179	41%	25	51%	204	42%
Any ESA	425	97%	46	94%	471	96%
TANF	265	60%	27	55%	292	60%
Basic Food (Food Stamps)	337	77%	33	67%	370	76%

### Pregnancy Risk Factors (First Steps Database, DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division)

Substance Use During Pregnancy	Birth Mom in Foster Care TOTAL = 433		Birth Dad in Foster Care TOTAL = 47		All Births TOTAL = 480	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
Prenatal Diagnosis No Treatment	34	8%	0	0%	34	7%
Prenatal Residential Treatment	5	1%	0	0%	5	1%
Prenatal Outpatient Treatment	29	7%	2	4%	31	7%
Prenatal Both Treatment	3	<1%	0	0%	3	1%
Postpartum Diagnosis or Treatment	13	3%	1	2%	14	3%

Body Mass Index	TOTAL = 447		TOTAL = 51		TOTAL = 498	
Overweight	109	24%	13	25%	122	25%
Obese	67	15%	7	14%	74	15%

Start of Prenatal Care	TOTAL = 447		TOTAL = 51		TOTAL = 498	
No Prenatal Care	45	10%	4	8%	49	10%
First Trimester	220	49%	24	47%	244	49%
Second Trimester	115	26%	11	22%	126	25%
Third Trimester	37	8%	6	12%	43	9%
Unknown	30	7%	6	12%	36	7%

Baby's Birth Weight	TOTAL = 447		TOTAL = 51		TOTAL = 498	
Very Low	9	2%	0	0%	9	2%
Medium Low	24	5%	5	10%	29	6%

## POPULATION

The study population includes youth in placement during SFY 2008 – 2011 who were age 21 and younger and identified as a birth parent (male or female) or having a pregnancy prior to placement or within 270 days of the placement end date. Births and pregnancies between the years 2002 -2011 were included. Index month was defined as the first month of the most recent fiscal year with an active placement. This index month was used to quantify risk factors for a two-year period that included the current (most recent year of placement) and prior fiscal years. Pregnancies were identified in medical records using related procedure and ICD-9 codes. Births were identified using an established file which links DSHS clients to birth parents via birth certificates.

## MEASURES

**Mental Health.** Any mental health-related diagnoses, service encounters or psychotropic medications recorded in medical claims or publicly funded mental health records within a two year period. Categories of diagnosis include: psychotic, bipolar, depressive, anxiety, ADHD, conduct, impulse control, and adjustment disorders. Psychotropic medication classes include antipsychotics, antimania, antidepressants, anxiolytics, and medications prescribed for ADHD.

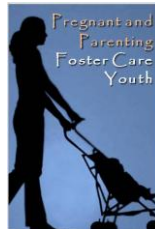
**Substance Abuse.** An Alcohol or other Drug (AOD) treatment need indicator constructed from medical claims and service records that indicates a youth received publicly funded chemical dependency or substance abuse services, procedures, or diagnoses, or a substance-related arrest during a two-year period.

**Criminal Justice.** Any arrest recorded in Washington State Patrol or court convictions for any crime category.

**Stability.** Economic services, including TANF and Basic Food, indicate that the parenting or pregnant youth received the service in the most recent placement year and/or the prior state fiscal year. Employment indicates any wages recorded in the unemployment insurance database during the most recent placement year and/or the prior state fiscal year.

**Pregnancy Risk Factors and Prenatal Care.** Several risk factors, including birth mother's weight (overweight or obese based on BMI), alcohol and other drug use (AOD) during pregnancy, and birth weight were generated from the First Steps Database, also housed within RDA. The First Steps Database links Medicaid claims and eligibility with birth and death certificates. It also includes encounter data for publicly funded chemical dependency assessments and treatment. Birth Risk Factors are for babies of foster care youth. Risks are based on birth mother's records, regardless of which parent was in foster care.

**Low birth weight.** Low birth weight is defined as medium low birth weight (1500 to 2500 grams, 3.3 to 5.5 lbs) or very low birth weight (<1500 grams, or 3.3 lbs).



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#### RDA CONTACT

Barbara Lucenko, PhD • 360.902.0890 • [barbara.lucenko@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:barbara.lucenko@dshs.wa.gov)

Copies of this paper may be obtained at [www.dshs.wa.gov/rda/](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/rda/) or by calling DSHS' Research and Data Analysis Division at 360.902.0701.

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