

Review of Supports for Pregnant and Parenting Aboriginal Students

Prepared for UpStart, United Way of Calgary and Area

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Acknowledgments

Thank you to the many people who contributed information for this Review.

The following people participated in a face-to-face interview:

Diane Altwasser, United Way of Calgary and Area
Holly Campbell, Catholic Family Services
Rita Dickson, Louise Dean Centre
Emily Fraser, The Alex Youth Health Centre
Barbara Gross, North Rocky View Community Links
Brenda Hutchinson, City of Calgary Youth Employment Centre
LeeAnne Ireland, Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth
Laurie Jacob-Toews, North Rocky View Community Links
Minh Le, Louise Dean Centre
Christy Morgan, Calgary Urban Aboriginal Initiative
Cathy Rigby, Elbow River Healing Lodge

These people participated in telephone interviews:

Clay Aragon, FCSS Airdrie
Kim Campbell, Fourth R Strategies, Calgary Board of Education
Merrill Cooper, Guyn Cooper Research Associates Ltd.
Susan Flowers, FCSS Cochrane
Samantha Green, Awotaan Healing Lodge- Parent Link Centre
Pam Krause, Calgary Sexual Health Centre
Kim Krawec, West Rocky View Family and Community Resource Centre
Debbie Miller, Native Network Parent Link Centre
Laurel Pedersen, Cochrane Pregnancy Care Centre
Aimee Reeves, Aboriginal Services Office, Calgary and Area Child & Family Services
Kandi Santerno, Closer to Home Community Services
Jennifer Trigger, Kara Life Program, Calgary Catholic School District
Carey West, Alberta Health Services Cochrane Teen Clinic

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I. Introduction

UpStart, an initiative of United Way of Calgary and Area, requested this Review of Supports for Pregnant and Parenting Students. This project is one step to help achieve Upstart's Aboriginal Youth and Education Priority Team's mission of ensuring that supports are in place for Aboriginal youth to be involved, engaged and committed to school, do well in school and achieve their educational goals.

The scope of work states:

"One barrier for young Aboriginal women to achieve their educational goal is early pregnancy. It is called early pregnancy in that it forces young female students to cope with their pregnancy and child rearing responsibilities prior to finishing high school. Furthermore, the circumstances of early pregnancy may be an indication of a much more complex underlying situation."¹ UpStart recognizes the need to support parenting students and their children.

An indication of whether early pregnancy could be a barrier for a significant proportion of young Aboriginal women is the prevalence of early motherhood amongst Aboriginal girls and its consequences. A 2012 Statistics Canada report notes that in 2006, "8% of Aboriginal teenage girls (15 to 19 years old) were parents, compared to 1.3% of their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Almost 1 in ten (9%) of First Nations and Inuit teenage girls were parents; this proportion was higher for First Nations girls living on reserve (12%). About 4% of Métis teenage girls were parents in 2006. A recent study has found that the fertility rate of Status Indian teenagers aged 15 to 19, from 1986 to 2004, is six times higher than that of other Canadian teens. As for the consequences of being a teen parent, the study notes that 'generally speaking, early motherhood increases the vulnerability of a young First Nations woman who is already disadvantaged socio-economically by reason of her cultural background and gender.'"²

The Review included:

- A concise literature review.
- A review of existing service programs, workshops or initiatives for Aboriginal students (including fathers) who are pregnant or parenting and gaps in services
- A review of the links between family gathering places and existing service programs
- A review of the options available for students involving early pregnancy prevention supports and early intervention in Calgary and area

The report on the review concludes with recommendations for action and roles for UpStart and United Way.

¹ UpStart, United Way of Calgary and Area. (2012) *Statement of Work for Review of Supports for Pregnant and Parenting Students*. Calgary: United Way of Calgary and Area , p.1

² O'Donnell, Vivian and Susan Wallace. (2012) *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Women*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Catalogue no 89-503-x, ISBN 978-1-100-17400-6, p. 20

II. Literature Review

The literature review was conducted to determine the prevalent underlying factors related to early pregnancy. For the purposes of this review, it is referred to as “early pregnancy in that it forces young female students to cope with pregnancy and child rearing responsibilities prior to finishing school.”³

What are the underlying factors of early pregnancy?

In 2010, United Way of Calgary and Area’s Women’s Leadership Council commissioned research about teen mothers and their children in order to develop actions they and others would take to address issues that teen mothers face. The research included peer reviewed published literature and interviews with Calgary organizations serving pregnant and parenting teens. The resulting discussion paper, *Seeds of Success: Seeking solutions for teen mothers and their children*, states that although teenage mothers come from all walks of life “many teenage mothers have challenges in common, including family poverty, family dysfunction, academic problems and high school drop-out, high aggression, favorable views about pregnancy and early parenthood, negative peer associations, and limited economic opportunities. Rates of teenage pregnancy are much higher among teenagers in low-income families, with low self-esteem, low expectations for the future, and a history of family dysfunction.”⁴ The researcher, Merrill Cooper, calls these the antecedents of teen pregnancy.

In 2007, Best Start, Ontario’s Maternal, Newborn and Early Childhood Resource, in its *Update Report on Teen Pregnancy*, cite many of these antecedents. “Growing inequity in rich countries, lack of opportunities for disadvantaged youth, cultural norms and alienation from schools are all factors that increase the likelihood of a teen pregnancy.”⁵ “...high teen rates tend to occur among economically disadvantaged and marginalized segments of the population.”⁶ Best Start’s follow-up report on out-of-school approaches to teen pregnancy prevention emphasizes the need to take a determinants-of-health perspective, considering such factors as income and social status, social environment, employment, and education and literacy. “...it is apparent that many of the factors that influence our health also have a direct impact on teen pregnancies. For example, there are higher rates of teen pregnancy in lower income groups, in teens with lower educational aspirations, in rural areas, and in certain cultural groups.”⁷

³ UpStart, United Way of Calgary and Area. (2012) *Statement of Work for Review of Supports for Pregnant and Parenting Students*. Calgary: United Way of Calgary and Area, p.1

⁴ United Way of Calgary and Area (2010). *Seeds of Success: Seeking solutions for teen mothers and their children*. Calgary: United Way of Calgary and Area, p.3

⁵ Best Start: Ontario’s Maternal, Newborn and Early Childhood Development Resource. (2007) *Update report on teen pregnancy prevention*. Toronto: Best Start, p. 2

⁶ Ibid, p. 3

⁷ Best Start: Ontario’s Maternal, Newborn and Early Childhood Resource. (2008) *Update report on teen pregnancy prevention: Out-of-school approaches*. Toronto: Best Start, p. 16

What are the reasons for Aboriginal youth pregnancy?

While the underlying factors that are related to early pregnancy may apply to Aboriginal students as well, there may be other underlying factors that influence early pregnancy among Aboriginal students more often than non-Aboriginal students. One is a social norm amongst some Aboriginal families of early childrearing. The 2006 Statistics Canada Census findings indicated that parenting at a young age is more common in the Aboriginal population than in the non-Aboriginal population. In 2006, “about one in four (24%) Inuit girls and First Nations (26%) girls, and one in five (21%) Métis girls had mothers between the ages of 15 and 24; this is compared to 8% of non-Aboriginal girls.”⁸

Tradition and Culture: An Important Determinant of Inuit Women’s Health, a study of Inuit women’s perspective of their health and well-being, noted that young women spoke about teenage pregnancy from a cultural context. “Those participants felt that teenage pregnancy was accepted in the community and that it need not be seen as a negative repercussion for a young woman to drop out of school to have a child.”⁹

This factor is cited in the Best Start research as well and expressed in the larger context of communities with a tradition of early childrearing. This research includes a study with a group of First Nations teenagers in British Columbia and studies among Aboriginal Americans and Greenlandic Aboriginal peoples.¹⁰

Youth pregnancy as a social norm is also mentioned in the 2002 study by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres on urban Aboriginal youth sexual health and pregnancy conducted with 340 youth, parents, front-line workers, and Elders.

The report lists these reasons for Aboriginal youth pregnancy:¹¹

- **Alcohol and Drug Use** - the most often cited reason, participants talked about carelessness due to alcohol or a motivation to straighten out from substance abuse.
- **Youth Pregnancy as a Social Norm** – participants commented on teen pregnancy as a social norm in their communities, so teens may choose to become parents or they may be careless about using contraceptives.
- **“Nothing to Do”** – a number of youth mentioned boredom, and the report goes on to say that this could mean a sense of hopelessness, with nothing to do in the foreseeable future, as well as the short term.
- **Poor or Neglectful Parenting** – some participants referred to a lack of supervision, while others talked about the getting away from their family.

⁸ O'Donnell, Vivian and Susan Wallace. (2012) *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Women*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Catalogue no 89-503-x, ISBN 978-1-100-17400-6, p. 21.

⁹ Healey, Gwen K., Lynn M. Meadows. (2008) *Tradition and Culture: An Important Determinant of Inuit Women’s Health*. Journal of Aboriginal Health, January 2008, p. 28

¹⁰ Best Start: Ontario’s Maternal, Newborn and Early Childhood Resource. (2007) *Update report on teen pregnancy prevention*. Toronto: Best Start, p. 11-13

¹¹ Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres. (2002) *Tenuous Connections: Urban Aboriginal Youth Sexual Health & Pregnancy*. Toronto: The Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, p. 40 - 47

- **Seeking Love** - some participants mentioned wanting someone to love while others talked about pregnancy as a way to deal with feeling insecure or keeping boyfriends.
- **Lack of Education** – about sex and knowledge about the use of contraceptives.
- **Feelings of Invincibility** – that pregnancy “won’t happen to me.”
- **Sexual Abuse** – this is supported by the study’s findings that those who had been sexually abused were more likely to be involved in a pregnancy.¹²
- **Poverty** – some participants said that poverty was the root of teen pregnancy and that some youth may think that welfare and baby bonuses are ways to get money, and in some cases as a way to get out of a crowded or abusive home.

Despite acknowledging a social norm of early childrearing, the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada notes that “many Aboriginal people believe that youth today don’t have what we need to make a sound choice to have or not have children.”¹³ Their Sourcebook on sexual and reproductive health for Aboriginal communities reinforces what others have said are the reasons for early pregnancy among Aboriginal youth. “Some of us get pregnant because we think having a baby will solve other problems, or we have taken risks with sex, but others have been forced or coerced to have sex. We don’t always have the services we need to prevent unwanted pregnancy or deal with one after it happens. Community health workers identify low self-esteem and lack of other options as two major reasons for the growing number of Aboriginal women having babies at a young age.”¹⁴

The Paukkuuit Inuit Women’s Association in Ottawa also conducted a study about teen pregnancy talking to 53 people including Elders, young mothers, and people involved in health and social services and education of Inuit women and youth. The reason for teen pregnancy reflected some of the list from the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres study. On the reason of being a social norm, an Inuk Elder said:

“Enough of saying we are having babies young because we are Aboriginal or Inuit: we have the same brains, the same intelligence quotient as anyone else. This is not the reason today.”¹⁵

This study also reported:

“Many respondents indicated that pregnancy itself is not as much of a problem as the specific circumstances. For example, if the woman is too young; if she is single; if she does not have the skills or maturity to care for the baby; if she has to drop out of school; if she

¹² Ibid, p. 32

¹³ Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada. (2002) *Finding our Way: A Sexual and Reproductive Health Sourcebook for Aboriginal Communities*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada. www.anac.on.ca/sourcebook/toc.htm

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Archibald, Linda. (2004) *Teenage Pregnancy in Inuit Communities: Issues and Perspectives*. Ottawa: Paukkuuit Inuit Women’s Association, p.10

does not have the money to buy necessities for the baby; if her parents end up caring for the baby; or if she is depressed or overwhelmed by the pregnancy: ‘Young ladies are getting pregnant too early, not living with their boyfriends, not living together. Grandparents cannot always help out with the necessities like milk and diapers and the whole family suffers, especially the baby.’”¹⁶

Understanding Pathways to Aboriginal Educational Achievement, The comparative summary of the Aboriginal youth graduate and non-completers surveys done for UpStart includes this observation:

“Research tells us that ‘symptoms’ in the Aboriginal community such as poverty, child care, drugs/alcohol abuse, pregnancy, parenting, lack of culture, lack of family support, lack of community supports, discrimination/racism, transient/no constant home, domestic violence and dating violence are residual trauma experienced by generations of Aboriginal people that suffered in the Indian Residential School system (Noormohammed, 2012).”¹⁷

Many of the above “symptoms” are among the reasons given for early pregnancy as found in the literature that has been read for this review. Taken together these reasons may point to intergenerational trauma as the root cause of early pregnancy among Aboriginal youth.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 10

¹⁷ Ireland, LeeAnne. (2012) *Recommendations to Overcome Barriers: A Comparative Summary of Aboriginal Youth Graduates and Non—Completers Survey*. Calgary: UpStart, United Way of Calgary and Area, p. 9

III. Service Programs and Initiatives

Service programs and initiatives for pregnant and parenting Aboriginal students in Calgary and area were identified by interviewees and the report, *Seeds of Success: Solutions for teen mothers and their children*. They have been grouped into seven categories – education, health care, workplace skills, community based multi-service supports, housing, supports to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and sector coordination.

Education

Louise Dean Centre

120 – 23 Street NW
Rita Dickson, Principal
Minh Le, Managing Director
403-777-7635
minh.le@cfs-ab.org

The Calgary Board of Education, Catholic Family Services, and Alberta Health Services collectively provide the Louise Dean Centre, a comprehensive, full service program for pregnant and parenting girls and women.

Eligibility criteria: Pregnant or parenting young women aged 14 – 24 years old. For the school program, the age cap is 19 years by the end of September of the school year.

Cost to participant: None, except for childcare where the parent portion required by the Alberta childcare subsidy program. This is about \$350/month. Catholic Family Services endeavors to cover this where the parent cannot.

School for Pregnant & Parenting Teens

Full academic program with integrated prenatal, parenting, and life skills classes, breakfast & lunch. Aboriginal students usually account for 20 - 35% of the student population.

Child Development Centre

On-site childcare for infants & toddlers, assessment of child development, and help to build healthy bonds between moms & their babies, 6 weeks to 35 months. Because the space is limited to 35 children, the infants and toddlers of the most at risk mothers are given priority.

School-based Counseling

Counseling, parenting classes, support groups, referral to housing and other services as needed.

Aboriginal Programs

Noon hour Aboriginal Circle to develop a sense of community, integrating cultural arts and Elders. NAPI leadership program offered in 2nd semester.

Life Skills

Communication, problem-solving skills, fostering of self-esteem. This is required for all the students in the academic program.

Baby FAST

Families and Schools Together program centered on the baby with all its family members: mother, father, grandmother, and siblings. This evening program includes structured activities to reinforce the principle of the parents as the primary teachers of the baby and strengthen the family, and includes having a meal as a family. Some Aboriginal families participate.

Health Services

On-site nurse, weekly physician visits, dental and psychological services as required. These services are augmented by the addition of a nutritionist by the Healthy Babies Network for babies up to 12 months.

Discovering Choices School & Outreach Services

Holly Charles, Director of Operations
Catholic Family Services
403-205-5210
holly.charles@cfs-ab.org

Eligibility: For Outreach Team – Pregnant and parenting youth 16 – 24; Discovering Choices High School – up to 19 by September 30 of the school year.

Cost to participants: None.

Outreach Services and Child Minding Program

Catholic Family Services provides outreach support to pregnant and parenting youth at the Calgary Achievement Centre for Youth (CACY), about 15% of which are Aboriginal. The Calgary Board of Education's alternative high school, Discovering Choices, operates from here. Outreach services can include parenting programs, on-site child care and specialized health services for infants of young parents who are attending the alternative high school and employment programs at CACY.

Kara Life Program, Calgary Catholic School District

Kara Life Centre
1010-21 Avenue SE
Jennifer Trigger, Teacher/Counselor
403-500-2012 ext.252
jennifer.trigger@cssd.ab.ca
Jennifer Woo, Supervisor
Jennifer.woo@cssd.ab.ca

Eligibility criteria: Pregnant or parenting students, both female and male, who are registered in Calgary Catholic School District schools.

Cost to participants: None.

The Kara Life Program supports, guides and educates pregnant and parenting students of Calgary Catholic School District. It helps these students to achieve positive health and education outcomes for themselves and their babies. Both young women and young men can access the supports tailored to their needs; some choose to do this as a couple. The First Nation, Métis and Inuit Support Team and Community Liaisons are engaged to support Aboriginal students and find the individualized resources that work for that student to stay in school and complete school.

Academic Programs and Resources

The program and school team works with students to offer a supportive learning environment, usually in their community school. Students personalize their learning, including the option of studying independently at home or at the St. Anne Centre. The flexibility offered helps students stay in school. Exploration of career options is offered.

Prenatal Services and Medical Care

A nurse offers health education and health counseling related to pregnancy, childbirth and parenting. This includes prenatal and childbirth classes, health assessment for students and their babies, support for breastfeeding, and postnatal care, and education on proper dental care and nutrition for students and their babies. The resources of the Healthy Babies Network enrich the care. Access to health care professionals is facilitated where required.

Community Outreach

Students enrolled in self-directed study courses, which enable them to study independently at home, are provided with community visits.

Social Supports

The social support service has a holistic approach encompassing the social, spiritual, intellectual, and physical aspects of the person. This service assists students with non-educational needs of the student and her/his family. These could include assistance in finding financial aid, child-care, affordable housing, and other basic needs. It can provide outreach social work services including individual and group support and referrals. Parenting sessions, social support, and other opportunities to meet other young parents are provided through organized activities.

Health Care

Elbow River Healing Lodge

Alberta Health Services Sheldon M. Chumir Clinic
7th Floor 1213 – 4 Street SW
Cathy Rigby, Prenatal Nurse
403-955-6600
cathy.rigby@albertahealthservices.ca

Elbow River Healing Lodge is a clinic for Aboriginal people to get healthcare that is safe and respectful of their cultural beliefs. While Aboriginal youth including pregnant and parenting

students can access all of the Lodge's services, in particular teens access the following services.

Eligibility criteria: All youth who identify as Aboriginal.

Costs to participant: None.

Prenatal Program

Students are connected with Louise Dean Centre and the Healthy Babies Network run out of that Centre. Pregnant teens are provided with health services, such as physician examinations, medical history, blood tests, referrals to other services such as addictions treatment, a harm reduction approach to smoking, and delivery at the Peter Lougheed hospital. Some group activities are provided, including the teaching of traditional practices such as breastfeeding and moss bags.

Women's Health Program

Nurse led exploration of women's health issues, including sex education, healthy relationships, contraception, traditional wellness counseling. Some teens participate.

Family physician

Parenting Aboriginal teens can see clinic family practice physicians for family health care on an on-going basis.

The Alex Youth Health Centre

101 - 1318 Centre Street NE
Emily Fraser, Pre/post Natal Specialist
403-520-6270
efraser@the alex.ca

The Alex takes a holistic approach to healthcare: physical, social, mental, spiritual and emotional. It offers medical care to those who need it most, and teaches life skills to support people on their journey to wholeness. Their clients include teens and their babies who live in poverty. About 33% of youth served are Aboriginal.

The Alex Youth Health Centre provides a wide range of comprehensive health services, physical and mental, to youth 12 to 24 who are street connected, homeless or at risk of being homeless.

Eligibility criteria: age 12 to 24.

Cost to participant: None including for medication and contraceptives.

Pre and post-natal medical services

Physicians and nurses are available 5 days a week. The health clinic has on-site lab services for sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy testing. Pregnant teens are connected to maternity clinics after the first 3 months of pregnancy. A breastfeeding clinic is on site, providing information, hands on learning and medical services if required.

Pre and post-natal support

Information is provided about options, including parenting, adoption, and abortion. Assistance with decision-making is provided, including making a plan to prepare, referrals, and connections to help carry out the option chosen by the youth. If parenting is chosen, connections are made for what the teen needs to carry out her plan to become a stable parent, such as addictions treatment, housing, schooling and further education, childcare, and financial support. Partners are also assisted to become active fathers. Home visits can be made to prepare the home for the new baby. Basic needs and baby supplies, clothing and furniture is available. Advocacy is provided for young parents, with child welfare, court attendance, and case conferencing with other services. Accompaniment to other social services, and assistance securing ID documents is provided. Youth are supported to join other prenatal classes, such as the Birth and Babies Program at Peter Lougheed Hospital. When a single mom has no other natural supports, the pre/post-natal specialist can attend the birth.

Parenting Plus

Weekly parenting education and support group for pregnant and parenting youth with children up to 1 year old. Single moms and couples participate. With older children, the parents are connected with other parenting groups. Sessions include baby topics and also parent self-care topics, often with outside resources being brought in.

Young Moms Council

The purpose of this group is to assist young pregnant and parenting moms to develop natural and social supports. Youth plan and carry out social and recreational events for young moms and their children. The Alex staff facilitates leadership development. Events are held in the community and at locations where other pregnant or parenting youth may be found, such as the YWCA and Louise Dean Centre, in order to attract additional participants. Aboriginal young moms do participate.

Alberta Health Services Teen and Young Adult Clinics

Cochrane Community Health Centre
60 Grande Boulevard, Cochrane
Carey West, Nurse
430-851-6146

carey.west@albertahealthservice.ca

[Airdrie Regional Health Centre](#)

604 Main Street S, Airdrie
403-801-9229

[Okotoks Health and Wellness Centre](#)

11 Cimarron Common, Okotoks
403-995-2619

Eligibility criteria: self-identified teens and young adults up to 26 years with an Alberta Health card.

Costs to participant: No cost except the cost of birth control or medications if applicable.

Teen and Young Adult Clinics are offered in Cochrane, Airdrie, Okotoks, and Calgary and provide similar services. Their purpose is to prevent unplanned pregnancies and sexually

transmitted infections by offering drop-in and confidential clinical and counseling services provided by nurses and nurse practitioners. These clinics serve a general young population and do not offer Aboriginal specific programs. (In Calgary, the Elbow River Healing Lodge provides the same range of services from an Aboriginal perspective.)

Testing and Counseling

Tests are administered for pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Counseling is provided on the options for unplanned pregnancy, including referral to services provided for the chosen options.

Parenting Support Group

group for new parents dealing with parenting and child development issues and topics. Babies can be weighed.

Workplace Skills

City of Calgary Youth Employment Centre

351-10 Ave SE, 2nd Floor

Brenda Hutchinson, Coordinator

403-268-2406

Brenda.huchinson@calgary.ca

Sherri Kellock, Aboriginal Youth Outreach Worker

403-268-5463

sherri.kellock@calgary.ca

Eligibility Criteria: Ages 15-24.

Costs to participants: None.

Born to Be (Aboriginal Youth)

For Aboriginal youth at risk, such as out of school, some of whom are parenting, this is a twenty-one week life skills and employment readiness program, with work experience and mentoring. Commitment Coaches assist with meeting their other needs, such as housing, childcare, etc. Participants must have sufficient stability to be able to make a commitment and are paid minimum wage to attend with additional incentives included.

Discovering Opportunities

This is a five-week summer program for pregnant and parenting mothers held at Louise Dean Centre. In the past, approximately 10% have been Aboriginal. It exposes young women to career options and is aimed at keeping students in school and motivating them to plan for an after school future in the workplace. It includes being paid to attend, work placement, job-shadowing, high quality day care, bus tickets, lunches and snacks.

Youth & Family Support

Assistance for pregnant and parenting youth to help them use other employment services of the Centre. About 20% have been Aboriginal. It provides support with housing, legal issues, getting ID, getting transportation such as to the Food Bank, bus tickets, and other needs.

Community Based Multi-Service Supports

Native Network Parent Link Centre

19 Erinwoods Drive SE
Debbie Miller, Program Coordinator
403-240-4642, ext. 300
Debbie@mcfs.ca

Eligibility criteria: None though predominantly Aboriginal families, including pregnant and parenting youth and their children.

Program costs to participants: None.

Operated by Métis Calgary Family Services, the parent link centre is Aboriginal focused, offering cultural components, the participation of Elders, and women's sweat ceremonies. Some teen parents come to the Centre but usually with their mothers or other family members. Family support workers assist to identify the parents' needs, refer to other services, and can do home visits. Basic needs items are offered, such as milk, diapers, layettes, and baby and children's clothing. Being part of the Métis Calgary Family Services, referrals to preschool, youth programs and low income housing can be made.

Baby Bumps

Prenatal and postnatal classes offering information about the stages of pregnancy, addressing concerns and providing group support. The Healthy Baby Network social worker, nutritionist, and nurse offer vitamins, nutritional information, food coupons, and bus tickets to medical appointments.

Triple P Parenting

An eight-week parenting education and support program. Mothers and couples attend, and the program can be delivered in a group or one-on-one when needed. Access to milk, and baby supplies and clothes are provided to participants as well. The Centre has been approached by Tsuu T'ina Nation to offer this program on their reserve.

Mother Goose

A program for parents and their young children up to three years old. It uses stories, song and rhyme to create fun and positive interaction between parents and their children and equip parents for home activities.

Awotaan Healing Lodge - Parent Link Centre

1603 - 10 Ave. SW
Samantha Green, Program Coordinator
403-531-1880 ext. 201
Samantha@awotaan.org

Eligibility criteria: Open to all pregnant and parenting families, with an emphasis on preschool children.

Costs to participants: None.

All programs are based on Aboriginal teachings. The Centre has Aboriginal wellness workers and other Aboriginal staff and pre and post-test tools are culturally appropriate. The teen mothers who use the programs are usually in crisis. Special occasions such as Halloween, Christmas, Stampede, etc. are celebrated with an emphasis on activities for babies and young children.

Triple P Parenting Program

Positive parenting for parents with children under 5 years old. It is taught by example and is scenario based, building on the parent's skills.

New-born version adds shaken baby syndrome training, communicating with baby, including diagnostic tools, baby calming and coping skills.

Pre & Post Natal Program

Pre natal one-on-one or small group information includes baby development and healthy living. Healthy Baby Network participation adds nutrition, prenatal vitamins, and coupons for fresh fruits and vegetables. The postnatal support is usually provided one-on-one and can include in home support, hands on baby bathing instruction, showing play examples and breastfeeding tips. Wellness worker can go with mom for specialized breastfeeding training if needed. The Centre supplies formula and supplements, toy lending library, and baby play mats.

Life Skills

One-on-one with new moms including healthy living, establishing daily routine, relaxation, self-care. Provided by appointment on mother's availability.

Healing Circles

Women's healing circle conducted by Elders. Elder consultations available and childcare available. Includes a lunch after the Circle.

Aboriginal Services Office of Calgary and Area Child and Family Services

Aimee Reeves, Team Leader

403-476-4547

aimee.reeves@gov.ab.ca

Eligibility criteria: Aboriginal girls up to 18 under the protection of Calgary and Area Child and Family Services.

Costs to participants: None.

This office supports pregnant and parenting Aboriginal mothers who are under the protection of the Alberta government. Their first choice is to support the girl and her family, with counseling and parent training, for the girl to stay in her own home. This office provides financial support, baby supplies, Elder support, and refers the girls to community supports, such as Louise Dean Centre, Elbow River Healing Lodge, Elizabeth House, and the

Alex Youth Health Centre. Their case-workers meet regularly with the pregnant or parenting mother. In special cases, they have found a foster parent(s) with the skill to support a pregnant or parenting teen.

Closer to Home Community Services

3507A – 17 Ave. SW

Kandi Santerno, Manager, Aboriginal Services and West Central Resource Centre

403-543-0550 ext. 239

ksanterno@closerhome.com

Eligibility Criteria: Dependent on the program.

Costs to participants: None.

Kiwehtata Parenting Program

Young Aboriginal families with children 0-3 learn effective parenting strategies in this two-week day program. It is an intensive hands-on parent and child learning experience aimed at enhancing parental skills and reducing risk factors. Practical parenting techniques are taught by Aboriginal program leaders. Transportation to the program, childcare, and nutritional meals are provided. In home follow-up support and resources are provided to parents in their communities. The program is offered at the West Central Resource Centre, Inn from the Cold family shelter, and Pekewe House. Families are connected to community resources.

Pekewe House

A family reunification program where Aboriginal families live together in a home with their children in a safe, nurturing environment. To be eligible, families must be referred by Calgary and Area Child and Family Services. A Kiwehtata parenting program is run in this location as well. Parenting skills are practiced on a daily basis through chores, meal preparation, family outings and community events. The program provides a strong cultural component by supporting families to attend cultural events, feasts and ceremonies, and provides access to Elders. An Aboriginal Teaching Parent resides at the home. As families achieve their goals, they are supported to transition to their own homes with in home support.

West Central Resource Centre

A coordinated approach to providing a variety of programs and services in southwest Calgary on a or appointment basis. Young Aboriginal parents use the Kiwehtata parenting program and have access to a regularly offered Aboriginal crafts group, as well as the other programs and resources at the Centre. Family Support Workers are available to spend one-on-one time to help address and resolve issues, such as housing, access to fresh food, financial strain, and parenting challenges. A Mother Goose program for parents and children up to three equips parents with new positive ways to interact with their young children.

Family Matters Program

This program is available for families in crisis in **Airdrie and Rocky View Region only**. Although not Aboriginal specific, young Aboriginal parents referred by the Ministry of Alberta Children and Youth Services would be eligible. It provides intensive in-home support by Family Specialists to improve family functioning in order to address child welfare concerns. Parents are connected to local resources that can assist them.

West Rocky View Family and Community Resource Centre and Parent Link Centre

209 Second Ave. W, Cochrane
Kim Krawec, Program Coordinator
403-851-2256
kim.krawec@cochrane.ca

Eligibility criteria: Vary by program dependent on age of child.

Cost to participant: None.

None of the Centre's programs are Aboriginal specific. Not many teen parent families use the programs.

Home Visitation Program

Families with children up to 6 years old can have the assistance of a family support worker to provide parenting support, parenting skills coaching, child development, and information and referral to other services. Respite childcare is available for short terms for families experiencing stress and turmoil. Aboriginal families access the program.

Triple P Parenting Program

This is a parenting program for parents of children from 0 – 16 years residing in Cochrane and the Rocky View County area. It gives parents practical information and advice on positive parenting approaches.

Resource Centre

Drop-in and appointments for information about community resources, summer camps, and access to food hampers, clothes, and winter jackets. play groups depending on the child's age are available, including a Just for Dads play group for dads with children up to 6 years. A parenting support group is provided with topics suggested by the participants. A community kitchen has just been opened with cooking classes and life skill programming being planned.

Supporting Fathers Involvement Program

This is the third and last year of this 16-week pilot program for couples with a child under 7. It emphasizes strategies for active fathering. Childcare is provided. Aboriginal families have participated. It is supported by researchers from Yale University, it is being evaluated, and includes a 1-year follow-up with the participating families included.

Cochrane Pregnancy Care Centre

118 – 1st Avenue W, Cochrane
Laurel Pedersen, Executive Director

403-932-2900

Eligibility criteria: Open to all pregnant and parenting women.

Program cost to participant: None.

This is a faith-based organization supported by private donations. None of their services are Aboriginal specific. The organization has had preliminary discussions with the health centre at Morley.

Options Counseling

Pregnancy tests are provided. Education is provided for a woman with an unplanned pregnancy about her options, adoption, parenting and abortion, and help through the decision making process. No abortion counseling is provided.

Pre and Postnatal Support

Prenatal instruction and nutrition information. A volunteer birth coach can be assigned to the mother and attend the birth. Information and referral to services can be made, including to a mid-wife. Support can be provided as long after the birth as the mother and family require it. Parenting classes are offered as well as lactation consultations. Baby supplies such as formula, diapers, clothing and strollers are provided to participants of the pre and postnatal classes.

North Rocky View Community Links

211, 125 Main Street NW, Airdrie
Barbara Gross, Manager, Family Resource Centre
403-945-3900
barb@nrvc

Eligibility criteria: All families; some programs are intended for parents and their preschool children.

Cost to participant: None for most services; except fee for parenting classes and a one-time fee for library materials (waived where this fee is a barrier).

Community Links is a multi-service family support centre and includes a Parent Link Centre and has premises in Airdrie and Beiseker. It does not operate with an Aboriginal perspective nor offer Aboriginal specific services and says that the Aboriginal population in the Airdrie area is very small. It offers a range of supports that help pregnant and parenting teens, some with other partners like Alberta Health Services and the library.

Parenting Programs

Triple P Parenting classes at all levels, and other workshops for parents of preschoolers.

Parent Support Groups

For pregnant and new mothers run in partnership with Alberta Health Services, this group offers support and information to have a healthy pregnancy and labor, nutrition information and access to prenatal vitamins, milk and vegetables, learning nutritious

cooking, while meeting and forming bonds with other parents. A single parent support group attracts women and men, some of which are young parents. Both groups have child-care provided.

Babies & Children/Parents Programs

These are a and registered programs organized by the age of the child, from newborn up. They include interactive play, music and language, networking with other parents, and information about parent resources. Groups available to fathers with children 0-6 years.

Parent Coaches

Individualized consultation to support parents and help strengthen parenting skills, provide referrals to other resources and services, and advocacy for families.

Toy and Resource Library

The lending library offers a wide selection of age appropriate toys for children up to 5 for families to try out. Books and videos about parenting, discipline, self-esteem, bullying, and child development are also offered.

Respite Program

This is short-term child-care for parents and caregivers with children 0-12 years who are experiencing lack of social support, family crisis, depression, etc.

Resource Centre

Drop-in and appointments for information about community resources, summer camps, and access to baby clothing and supplies, food vouchers, clothes, and household items. Referrals can be made to government programs, housing supports, and basic needs supports. Immediate, short-term crisis support is also available.

Home Visiting

A team of family support specialists provides one-on-one support for families in their homes for up to 8 weeks to prevent difficulties from becoming a crisis. (For families in crisis in Airdrie and Rocky View Region, see Family Matters Program delivered by Closer to Home Community Services, page 18).

Family Childcare

The Centre is an Alberta approved family day home agent offering selected childcare day homes for children 0-12 years under the guidance of a qualified Family Childcare Consultant.

Housing

Pregnant and parenting Aboriginal students who do not live with their families need housing. Calgary has three short-term housing facilities for pregnant and parenting teens and young women. Since none of them provide Aboriginal specific services, the information about them has been quoted from United Way's publication *Seeds of Success*. "All of the housing programs provide life skills and some form of parent training and other supports,

with the most intensive skills training and supports provided at Emma House and Elizabeth House.”¹⁸

Emma Maternity House

403-217-3244

Emma-house@yahoo.ca

“Emma House is a Christian-based facility funded through community and church donations for girls and women at risk of homelessness and/or having an abortion. Women typically arrive when they are from between three and six months pregnant and are able to stay until six months after the baby’s birth. Emma House can accommodate up to three women and their infants at one time. The vast majority of clients served at Emma House are under the age of 20.”¹⁹

Elizabeth House

Chrystal Hill, Director

403-228-9723

“This is a Christian based program funded by Catholic Charities, although residents need not be Catholic. Women can stay for the duration of the pregnancy and up to four months after the baby’s birth. Elizabeth House can accommodate up to seven mothers and their infants at one time. About 95% of residents are teenagers.”²⁰

Highbanks

317 – 19 Street NW

403-521-0082

Stephanie Schoenberg

Stephanie@highbankssociety.ca

“The Highbanks Society is a secular program funded by community members, casinos and, until 2012, an anonymous donor. This program is for young mothers who are attending school or a vocational program. Highbanks provides eight subsidized units in apartment buildings for mothers and their children, many of whom stay with the program for two years or more. Relative to the residents at the other two housing programs, Highbanks residents are lower risk. Although the program accepts girls and women aged 16 to 24 years, most of the mothers are aged 18 to 20, none experience addictions or mental health issues, and few or none have been on the streets. Although many have been dependents of the government, none or almost none are involved with child welfare with respect to their babies. Almost all participants complete high school and about one-third go on to post-secondary education.”²¹ Highbanks has housed Aboriginal youth, though not many.

¹⁸ United Way of Calgary and Area. *Seeds of Success – Seeking solutions for teen mothers and their children*. Calgary: United Way of Calgary and Area, p.15

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 15

²⁰ Ibid, p.15

²¹ Ibid, p. 16

Supports to Prevent Unplanned Pregnancies

Elbow River Healing Lodge

Alberta Health Services Sheldon M. Chumir Clinic
7th Floor 1213 – 4 Street SW
Cathy Rigby, Prenatal Nurse
403-955-6600
cathy.rigby@albertahealthservices.ca

Elbow River Healing Lodge is a clinic for Aboriginal people to get healthcare that is safe and respectful of their cultural beliefs. While Aboriginal youth including pregnant and parenting students can access all of the Lodge's services; in particular teens do access the following ones.

Eligibility criteria: All youth who identify as Aboriginal.

Cost to participant: None.

Sex education and access to contraceptives

Teens can use these services by coming to the clinic.

Alberta Health Services Teen and Young Adult Clinics

Cochrane Community Health Centre
60 Grande Boulevard, Cochrane
Carey West, Nurse
430-851-6146
carey.west@albertahealthservices.ca

Airdrie Regional Health Centre

604 Main Street S, Airdrie
403-801-9229

Okotoks Health and Wellness Centre

11 Cimarron Common, Okotoks
403-995-2619

Eligibility criteria: Self-identified teens and young adults up to 26 years with an Alberta Health Care card.

Costs to participant: No cost except the cost of birth control or medications if applicable.

Teen and Young Adult Clinics are offered in Cochrane, Airdrie, Okotoks, and Calgary and provide similar services. Their purpose is to prevent unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections by offering and confidential clinical and counseling services provided by nurses and nurse practitioners. These clinics serve a general young population and do not offer Aboriginal specific programs. In Calgary, the Elbow River Healing Lodge provides the services from an Aboriginal perspective.

Pregnancy Prevention

Information about prevention choices is provided including abstinence and birth control options. Prescriptions for birth control are given and birth control medication and devices can be purchased.

Calgary Sexual Health Centre

304, 301-14 Street NW
Pam Krause, Executive Director
403-283-5580, ext. 314
pkrause@calgarysexualhealth.ca

Sex Education

Delivered in Calgary Board of Education and some charter and private schools. In high schools, has been part of the Career and Life Management (CALM) classes. Some Junior High Schools request their programs for Grade 7, 8 and 9 classes. Sexual Health Centre staff goes weekly to The Alex Youth Health Centre.

Reclaiming Healthy Sexuality

A 6-week program for people who have experienced trauma, such as sexual abuse.

Wise Guys

A 14-week program for Grade 9 boys aimed at violence prevention and includes healthy relationships and healthy sexuality. This is being evaluated. Pam thinks this approach might be useful in prevention of pregnancy programs, and applied to specific communities.

Fourth R Strategies for Healthy Youth Development

Kim Campbell, Alberta Coordinator, Fourth R
403-817-7262
kncampbell@cbe.ab.ca

Fourth R (Relationships) initiatives use best practice and evaluated approaches to prevent multiple forms of violence, including bullying and dating violence, and target risk behaviors to empower adolescents to make healthier decisions about relationships, substance use and sexual behavior. The CAMH Centre for Prevention Science at the University of Western Ontario has developed curricula and materials to teach this approach to grade 7, 8, 9 and 10 students. Aboriginal Perspectives enhancements were developed in collaboration with Aboriginal educators, students, and communities. A Catholic Perspective version of the program is also available.

The Calgary Board of Education has piloted the grade 8 and 9 programs with about one-half of its Junior High Schools and the grade 7 program with 16 schools. This includes training teachers to deliver it. CBE staff has also reviewed the Aboriginal Perspectives enhancements, but teacher training has not been conducted. Participation is left to the decision of individual schools.

Starting in 2012, Alberta Education is conducting a pilot of the *Fourth R* with 6 school districts, including CBE, Rocky View Schools, Edmonton Catholic School District, Edmonton public school district and 2 other districts.

North Rocky View Community Links (or Airdrie Family Resource Centre)

211, 125 Main Street NW, Airdrie
Barbara Gross, Manager, Family Resource Centre
403-945-3900
barb@nrvc

The Centre offers Girls Circles and Guys Circles, 5 – 10 week programs, to Rocky View District schools in Airdrie , Crossfield, Kathryn and Beisker. These include healthy relationships, communication skills, assertiveness, and conflict resolution and aims to promote self-esteem in children and youth. While these programs can be adapted for children from 6 to 18 years, schools have most often chosen to offer it to grades 4, 5, 6 and 9. The Centre also delivers Healthy Relationships workshops to educate students about different types of abuse, including bullying and family violence. These are one-time presentations for students in grade 7 to 12 students. The schools choose the age group to which it is offered.

Cochrane Pregnancy Care Centre

118 – 1st Avenue W, Cochrane
Laurel Pedersen, Executive Director
403-932-2900

Eligibility criteria: Open to all pregnant and parenting women.

Program cost to participant: None.

Sex Education

Volunteers trained to deliver healthy relationships based education for Grades 7, 8, and 9 and high school classes.

Sector Coordination

CANOPY – Calgary Agency Network for Pregnant and Parenting Youth

Minh Le, Chair (Louise Dean Centre)
403-777-7635
minh.le@cfs-ab.org

This is a network of organizations providing services for pregnant and parenting youth. Its goals are:

- Promoting collaboration among agencies serving pregnant and parenting youth
- Identifying gaps in service for the population
- Coordinating services for the population
- Enhancing awareness of services among agencies to ensure seamless service
- Collective voice in advocating for this population
- Enhancing access to available resources and services for pregnant and parenting youth

- Building best practice through compiling research and generating knowledge to inform programming and service delivery as well as providing professional development opportunities for members and interested professionals

Although any agency that provides services to pregnant and parenting youth is invited to be an agency member of CANOPY, its active members do not include organizations that provide Aboriginal specific services. Active members are Louise Dean Centre, The Alex Youth Health Centre, Catholic Family Services, Calgary Sexual Health Centre, Highbanks, Elizabeth House, Emma House, Calgary Pregnancy Care Centre, Families Matter, Adoption Options, Foothills Hospital Maternity Department, Alberta Health Services – Enhanced Services for Women, City of Calgary Youth Employment Centre, and YWCA Parent Link Corridor.

United Way and its Women’s Leadership Council worked with CANOPY to develop a Teen Mothers Design Table 2012-2014 Action Plan. The network provided information and assisted in convening focus groups of teen mothers for United Way’s *Seeds of Success: Seeking solutions for teen mothers and their children* report.

IV. Gaps

A number of interviewees suggested they see gaps in supports for pregnant and parenting Aboriginal students, including for the prevention of unplanned pregnancy.

These gaps are:

Education

- Insufficient space in Louise Dean Child Development Centre for all students to have their children enrolled.
- Income support for pregnant students. While Louise Dean Centre has just received funds for it to administer for supporting students at its school, this is not available for students attending other Calgary and area schools.
- Shared understanding of the Aboriginal learner so they are not under-motivated, or placed on less challenging education paths.

Health

- Sexual health services delivered from an Aboriginal perspective outside of central Calgary. (Since Elbow River Healing Lodge does deliver from an Aboriginal perspective, this gap would need to be defined more specifically).
- Advocacy for young moms while in the hospital because Aboriginal liaisons are too busy with acute and trauma care cases.
- Insufficient amount of long-term Aboriginal awareness training for hospital staff.

Housing

- Housing for couples.
- Insufficient amount of supported housing for pregnant teens.
- Affordable housing for young families.

Others

- Lack of affordable childcare that is accessible for young parents.
- Insufficient number of qualified Aboriginal professionals, such as teachers, social workers, nurses, etc., so that Aboriginal youth are served by Aboriginal staff.
- Aboriginal specific support for couples. (Closer to Home, Awotaan and Native Network Parent Link all offer some support, so clarification is required).
- Assistance with custody issues, especially for single dads.
- Insufficient capacity in outreach to Aboriginal youth, and particularly to parenting fathers and male partners of pregnant students.
- Transportation for young moms.
- No financial assistance for pregnant teens under 18.
- Lack of coordination between services.

Prevention

- Effective information dissemination about sexually transmitted diseases.
- Programs intended for males.
- Ways for boys and girls to see the struggles and responsibilities of early parenting.

- Lack of sufficient, effective sex education at a young enough age.

The *Seeds of Success: Seeking solutions for teen mothers and their children* report offers analysis on what is missing in supports for pregnant and parenting teens in Calgary. While that research did not examine what the particular needs are of Aboriginal teens, that report reinforces some of the gaps that were identified by interviewees for the current project. The gaps that were also identified in *Seeds of Success* are:

- Insufficient spaces in the Louise Dean Child Development Centre.
- Insufficient amount of supported housing for pregnant teens.
- Affordable housing. *Seeds of Success* explains the Alberta government policy regarding income support that contributes to the inability of a teenage mother to afford housing.²²
- No financial assistance for pregnant teens under 18. *Seeds of Success* explains the Alberta government policy regarding income support for social assistance for teenage mothers to attend school or single parents under the age of 16.²³

Seeds of Success is a good resource for understanding other gaps in supports for all pregnant and parenting teen mothers, such as social supports and workplace skills that were not mentioned by interviewees of this review of supports for pregnant and parenting Aboriginal students.

²² United Way of Calgary and Area. *Seeds of Success – Seeking solutions for teen mothers and their children*. Calgary: United Way of Calgary and Area, p.16

²³ Ibid, p.20

V. Links of Services for Pregnant and Parenting Students with Family Gathering Places

The terms of reference for this project asked for a review of the links and perceived strength of the links between family gathering places, such as parent link centres and resources centres, and existing services. In the category of family gathering places for this review, these are the centres that were reviewed:

1. Awotaan Healing Lodge Parent Link Centre
2. Native Network Parent Link Centre, operated by Métis Calgary Family Services
3. West Central Resource Centre, operated by Closer to Home Community Services
4. North Rocky View Community Links (Airdrie area)
5. West Rocky View Community Resource Centre (Cochrane area)

The supports that these centres provide, including for the prevention of unplanned pregnancy, are included in Section III. Service Programs and Initiatives.

The first three are located in Calgary. These centres provide supports specifically for Aboriginal families. They offer services that could help pregnant and parenting Aboriginal families, such as prenatal and parenting classes, baby supplies, parent support and referral to other supports. From discussion with the operators, it appears that not many pregnant or parenting teens use these centres, that is, they are used more by older parents and their families. School staff that work with pregnant and parenting students suggested that the reason these centres might not be used by parenting students because they operate day programs that are not very convenient for students.

Another Calgary Parent Link Centre, YWCA Parent Link Corridor, is an active member of CANOPY. The supervisor there said Aboriginal teens rarely use their services so it was not included in the review.

The other two Parent Link centres, located in Rocky View as part of family resource centres, do not provide culturally specific services for Aboriginal families. These are integrated family support services and provide services that help pregnant and parenting families. The West Centre says they do not serve many teen families, neither Aboriginal nor non-Aboriginal. The North Centre says pregnant teens and young parent families use their services, but since Aboriginal youth are a very small portion of the population in their service area around Airdrie, Aboriginal youth do not use their services.

Based on the assessment of the operators of these family gathering places about who uses their services, and their lack of participation in CANOPY, it is concluded that the Calgary centres are not well connected with other services for pregnant and parenting Aboriginal youth. The parent link centres in Airdrie and Cochrane are perceived by the teen health clinics and the Cochrane Pregnancy Care Centre to be well connected to other community services in their communities. Furthermore, they offer a range of family support services and perhaps due to being in the smaller communities view themselves as well connected with other supports.

VI. Prevention Options

People interviewed through this review had suggestions for the prevention of unplanned, early pregnancies. Some of the literature reviewed to understand the underlying factors of early pregnancy among Aboriginal youth also suggested options for prevention. And prevention supports are available to some extent in Calgary and area as listed in Section III. Services and Initiatives of this document. Taking all these sources into consideration, the following are options for prevention supports that could be more fully implemented.

1. Early Healthy Relationships Education and Family Life Education

Numerous people and sources suggested variations of this option. Some suggested age appropriate aspects of healthy relationships and family life education from a preschool age, others suggested starting in Kindergarten, and others in Elementary School. They agreed that preteens need to have sexuality information and the skills to make good decisions before they are sexually active. A number of sources stressed that some young people are sexually active at an early age so this education and skill development needs to happen before Junior High School when sex education is more commonly provided. Three sources stressed the importance of healthy relationship training particularly for boys.

The *Fourth R* (for relationships) is an example of a comprehensive and integrated approach to reduce violence and risk taking amongst youth, by engaging students in developing the ability to have healthy relationships. The program builds communication and decision-making skills as a way to prevent bullying and dating violence, and reduce risky behaviors such as sexual activity and substance use and abuse. It is delivered to all students where it is being used and in mixed girls and boys groups. It currently has curriculum resources from Grade 7, a Catholic perspective version, and Aboriginal perspective enhancements. Aboriginal staff of Calgary Board of Education have reviewed the Aboriginal perspective enhancements and given a favorable assessment.

Other suggestions for healthy relationships and healthy sexuality development included other delivery options. These were:

1. Delivery in gender specific groups to promote open discussion
2. One-on-one counseling for confidentiality and comfort
3. Peer based by teen parents who have experienced the challenge of early parenting
4. Family involvement, including training for parents to talk to their children
5. Substance abuse prevention, since a significant proportion of unplanned pregnancies result when alcohol and drugs are used
6. Involvement of Elders and traditional knowledge/practices
7. Address intergenerational trauma in sexuality education

2. Easy access to contraception

Contraceptives are available at Teen Clinics, the Elbow River Healing Lodge, The Alex Health Centre, and made available openly at the Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth, but still some sources believe that most teen pregnancies are unplanned. Therefore, a prevention option is making contraceptives even more accessible, combined with reinforcing with youth that they need to be used. Actions related to this option that were suggested are:

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1. Promote Teen Clinics to make sure youth know their services are confidential and free.
2. Encourage all youth programs to have condoms always available and to incorporate discussion of safe sexuality in their programming.

3. Instill a sense of purpose, direction and opportunity

A few sources identified an underlying cause of early pregnancy among Aboriginal youth as a lack of hope about the future, or not seeing promising options for themselves. Some sources suggested that the following approaches would address teen pregnancy in an indirect manner:

1. Support and strengthen families so that they provide good beginnings for their children to feel secure and have positive childhood development.
2. Protect children and youth from negative sexual experiences and treat children who do experience them.
3. Engage children and youth in out-of-school programs that incorporate the building of self-esteem, developing healthy relationships, expect goal setting, and provide role models so youth can see new possibilities for themselves.
4. At a community or systemic level, address root causes of higher early pregnancy. These include poverty, barriers to economic opportunity, and intergenerational trauma. The result would need to be that real opportunities for economic advancement are available for Aboriginal youth.

4. Youth Development Programs to Create Conditions to Reduce Teen Pregnancy

The literature review on preventing teen pregnancy included holistic approaches to complement school based sexual and reproductive health education. An evaluated successful comprehensive program example has the goals of positive youth engagement and empowerment. Its components include academic support, employment, community involvement, cultural and arts opportunities, family life and sexuality education, sports, mental health and medical care.²⁴ Other programs that are more immediate and oriented to youth growth and responsibility have used cultural activities, bibliotherapy or book clubs, popular and participatory theatre, and sports.²⁵

5. Responsibility Campaign

Social marketing has been used to persuade people to change behavior over time, such as reducing tobacco use and increasing physical activity. While it is an untried option with respect to pregnancy prevention, this option would be a campaign of teaching the responsibility required of being good parents. Consistent messages from a variety of sources would reinforce the campaign.

²⁴ *Teen Pregnancy Prevention: Exploring Out-of-School Approaches* p. 22

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 23 - 27

VII. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been synthesized from the range of sources included in the Review, with a particular emphasis on identifying the role of UpStart and United Way in implementing them.

Ask Aboriginal Youth

Aboriginal students' perspectives would be valuable to UpStart's next steps. This would be for both what is effective in terms of prevention of unplanned pregnancies and what pregnant and parenting students need for support.

1. UpStart should ask Aboriginal youth what they think would help prevent unplanned pregnancies and what they need to stay in school if pregnant or parenting.
 - a. Explore their perceptions of gaps and the accessibility of what is in place.

Early Education about Healthy Relationships, Family Life and Sexuality

Early education about healthy relationships, family life and sexuality for children and youth was the most often recommended preventative approach. Many players should have a role - parents, schools, and out-of-school programs.

2. UpStart should explore with Calgary and area school districts the extent to which a healthy relationships approach is included in their health education programs with the view to encouraging the inclusion of this approach.
3. UpStart should study the *Fourth R* curriculum to determine whether it has a sufficient family life and sexuality focus and whether it is delivered at a sufficiently young age to be preventative of early pregnancies. The study should also include how the Aboriginal perspectives enhancements can be best used in school programs. Should those enhancements be included for all students? Or should the Aboriginal perspectives enhancement be targeted to schools with high Aboriginal student populations and in out-of-school Aboriginal programs?
4. United Way and UpStart should promote the inclusion of healthy relationships and sexuality education in programs for Aboriginal children and youth, working with programs that United Way funds, as well as other funders of Aboriginal children and youth programs.
5. Confirm that Circle of Supports is including this component in its program, and explore what, if any, changes in the evaluation of the program should be undertaken.

Role Models for Aboriginal Youth

Aboriginal youth deserve to have hopes and dreams, to envision the benefits of further education, to aspire to leadership, and to see themselves in meaningful careers.

6. UpStart should develop a plan with its stakeholders to engage Aboriginal role models for Calgary and area Aboriginal youth. There could be a range of roles, such

as role models telling their story, creating job-shadowing opportunities, or mentoring youth.

Funding Louise Dean Early Childhood Development Centre

The Louise Dean Centre's comprehensive approach and its success with Aboriginal students were praised by a number of sources. This type of wrap around service is a best practice of early intervention for the development of the children of teen mothers. The Centre can accommodate all the young women who wish to attend school, but less than half of the mothers can have their children in the Child Development Centre. Both mother and baby benefit by gaining good parenting skills whose development are nurtured and practiced by participating in the Child Development Centre. The Louise Dean Centre's administration wants funding for additional spaces in the Childhood Development Centre.

7. United Way should confer with the Calgary Board of Education about whether it wants additional spaces in the Childhood Development Centre. If it does, then United Way should convene the right players, including donors and funders, to find funding for additional Child Development spaces at Louise Dean Centre.

Health Services Participation in Early Pregnancy Initiatives

Alberta Health Services should be included in UpStart's efforts to address early pregnancy since this institution shares common interests in Aboriginal youth and their children.

8. UpStart should discuss with staff of the Elbow River Healing Lodge how best to engage Aboriginal youth and their children.

Coordination with Groups with Intersecting Interests

In the course of this project, other efforts for pregnant and parenting students and prevention strategies were encountered. United Way's Women's Leadership Council has been working with CANOPY to help teen mothers and their children; the domestic violence preventions strategy of the University of Calgary, SHARE, is working with Alberta Education to test implementation of the *Fourth R* curriculum in Alberta school districts; six districts are piloting the program at the moment, this may be expanded to eleven. United Way is participating in the domestic violence prevention initiative and Calgary Board of Education and Rocky View Schools are involved in the pilots. UpStart's work could benefit from coordination with these other groups.

9. UpStart should share the results of this project with the Women's Leadership Council and become familiar with the progress on the Teen Mothers Design Table 2012 - 2014 Action Plan and discuss areas of collaboration and areas where specialization would be preferable.
10. UpStart should explore with the Women's Leadership Council and United Way which policies act as barriers for pregnant and parenting teens should be changed. A potential area for policy change is the restrictions on financial supports that would enable pregnant or parenting teens to complete school.

11. UpStart should discuss with CANOPY members whether there is a need for coordination in services to pregnant and parenting Aboriginal students.
12. UpStart should explore convening the family centres, Awotaan, Native Link, and West Centre Resource Centre, together with education supports to discuss the benefits of their services to parenting Aboriginal students. If barriers to their use by parenting students are uncovered, then removing those barriers should be explored.
13. UpStart should ask SHARE if its research has found examples of Aboriginal specific approaches to healthy relationships that have included early pregnancy prevention.
14. UpStart should examine if it should play a role in the SHARE initiative.

Information Sharing

Many people gave information and advice for this project. The project report may be the first product that UpStart commissions on this topic.

15. UpStart should develop a communication plan for informing the participants who were interviewed for this project, as well as the Full Circle Team, about what actions it takes as a result of this research.
16. UpStart could consider whether it would be a useful role for UpStart to act as a clearing-house of information on early pregnancy of Aboriginal students in Calgary and area.

Future Research

17. UpStart should undertake research about whether there is a connection between unsuccessful parenting students and the high number of Aboriginal children in the care of the Provincial government.
18. Addressing areas that would benefit from policy change, as suggested in recommendation 10, would require further research to identify the nature of the barrier and the change that would remove it.

VIII. References

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