

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Child and Family Services Agency**



**Administrative Issuance: CFSA-13-01**

TO: All Staff

FROM: Sarah Thankachan  
Administrator, Office of Youth Empowerment

DATE: May 15, 2013

RE: New Heights Teen Parent Program

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The Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) focuses on improving key outcomes for pregnant and parenting youth who are currently in foster care. CFSA seeks to identify and engage this population, provide support and services to the youth, and provide linkages to educational opportunities as an integral part of ensuring positive educational outcomes and a successful transition to young adulthood. It is important that all youth, especially pregnant teens, are identified early and receive prenatal care and services. It is also important to identify teen fathers in care to support them in knowing their rights and being able to be involved with their child.

The District of Columbia Public Schools' (DCPS) New Heights Teen Parent program provides access to services, resources, and educational opportunities to pregnant and parenting youth (both females and males). This administrative issuance provides guidance, instruction, and information for CFSA and private agency social workers to incorporate the New Heights Teen Parent program in their case planning with pregnant and parenting youth on their caseload.

If you have questions regarding this issuance, please contact the Office of Youth Empowerment.

**The New Heights Teen Parent Program**

1. New Heights is a school-based program that provides community-based services to support the following positive outcomes for pregnant and parenting teens and youth:
  - a. Increase school attendance and graduation rates.
  - b. Enroll in post-secondary education.
  - c. Become gainfully employed.
  - d. Contribute to the health and wellness of their children.
  - e. Prevent subsequent pregnancies while in high school.

2. Students participating in the New Heights program work as partners with program coordinators to develop strengths-based solutions to the challenges confronting them and their children.
3. CFSA has partnered with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to fund a Special Populations Coordinator position with the DCPS Student Support Center specifically to assist students in foster care.

### **Eligibility for the New Heights Teen Parent Program**

1. Participants must be a teen or youth parent (male or female) or currently pregnant.
2. Participants must be in the District of Columbia foster care system.
3. Youth in protective supervision are not eligible for the New Heights Teen Parent program; they may be eligible to participate in one of the 15 DCPS sites with New Heights programs.
4. Participants must be pursuing a high school diploma or a general education degree (GED). Youth may be considered eligible if they are participating in a program granting a certificate comparable to a high school diploma or GED.
5. Participants must reside in the District of Columbia after leaving care to continue receiving program services.

### **Referral to New Heights Teen Parent Program**

When a youth has been identified as being pregnant or indicates that he or she is a parent and agrees to enroll in the New Heights Teen Parent program, the ongoing social worker ensures that the following steps occur:

1. The social worker completes the New Heights referral form (attached) and forwards the form by electronic mail or facsimile to the Special Populations Coordinator.
2. The Special Populations Coordinator then contacts the social worker to gather more information and data and sets up a meeting with the social worker and youth to discuss the New Heights program.
3. The Special Populations Coordinator meets first with the youth and engages the youth to determine needed services and resources.
4. The social worker assists the Special Populations Coordinator with access to the youth's school records, and with meeting with key persons interested in the youth's best interest (such as the birth parents as applicable, the guardian *ad litem*, and foster parents) to discuss the youth's educational needs. The social worker also participates in ongoing communication with the Coordinator about the youth's status and progress updates.
5. The youth enrolls in the New Heights program with the assistance of the Special Populations Coordinator or is provided linkages to other services and resources by his or her social worker.
6. After leaving CFSA's care, a youth does not have to be enrolled in a school that offers the New Heights program in order to receive services from the Special Populations Coordinator. The Coordinator will provide assistance to any youth who has left CFSA's care (through the youth's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday) under the following circumstances:
  - a. The youth connects with the Special Populations Coordinator before they age out.
  - b. The youth is actively engaged and/or pursuing completion of their secondary education.

## **Role of Special Populations Coordinator**

The Special Populations Coordinator collaborates with the CFSA liaison from the Office of Youth Empowerment to assist youth parents and their children with the following services and support activities:

1. Supportive case management and assistance with securing school-based and community services, such as a childcare voucher, or services provided by the District's WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), pre-employment skills, job training opportunities, college/university admissions, and more.
2. Educational workshops, including such topics as pre-natal care, parenting, life skills, financial literacy, career planning, healthy relationships, and other issues concerning today's youth.
3. Receive referrals from assigned social workers of youth (female and male) interested in enrollment into the New Heights Teen Parent Program.
4. Engage youth and conduct assessment of their (and their children's) service and resource needs.
5. Coordinate referrals to the New Heights program with the CFSA liaison and provide regular updates to the social worker and CFSA liaison on youth who have been referred to the program.
6. Ensure that youth enrolled in the New Heights program are also enrolled in the DCPS Home/Hospital Instruction Program (HIP) in advance of the birth and then alert DCPS once the youth has given birth to ensure that services commence.
7. Provide an incentive program that allows youth parents to earn free items for their children such as diapers, clothing, toys, equipment, and accessories.
8. Collaborate with other school-based coordinators if youth are enrolled at existing New Heights' schools.
9. Team with social workers to encourage youth to attend transition planning meetings. The Special Populations Coordinator and the CFSA liaison attend transition meetings to assist youth in identifying specific next steps and goals.
  - For older youth who may hold a high school diploma or a GED and are therefore ineligible for the New Heights program, the Special Populations Coordinator may still provide resources as needed.

## **Role of Social Worker**

It is expected that the assigned social worker will complete the following tasks to ensure successful educational outcomes for youth parents and their children:

1. Identify and engage female or male youth on their caseloads who are pregnant and/or parenting, including identification through referrals from nurse care managers (NCMs) assigned to youth who are pregnant.
2. Maintain confidentiality if a pregnant youth does not want her pregnancy status revealed to her birth parent or guardian. (See policy on [HIV, Sexual, and Reproductive Health Services](#)).

3. Collaborate with the Health Services Administration's (HSA) NCM on the provision of services to pregnant youth. If a youth becomes pregnant while in care, the social worker notifies the HSA to assign an NCM.
4. Refer pregnant and parenting youth who are in need of services to complete their secondary education to the Special Populations Coordinator.
5. Provide information to the youth on the role of the Special Populations Coordinator and the referral process to the New Heights program, ongoing engagement on issues of education, family planning and parenting, and ongoing support to the youth and their children.
6. Provide a complete documentation of youth engagement and participation in FACES.NET.

### **Role of the Health Services Administration (HSA)**

HSA's on-site medical clinic, the Healthy Horizons Assessment Center (HHAC), provides medical screenings and comprehensive health assessments for youth entering and re-entering care. In addition, HHAC provides services and support to pregnant and parenting youth as described below.

1. A medical screening tool is used to gather information on the health status and medical needs of youth entering or re-entering care, including the status of a pregnancy and whether a youth (male or female) is currently a parent.
2. A youth who is pregnant upon entering out-of-home care (whether already known or by a positive pregnancy test by HHAC) or who subsequently becomes pregnant while in foster care shall be assigned an NCM. The NCM notifies the social worker that the youth is enrolled in the NCM program and that she has been linked for pre-natal care. The NCM also monitors the youth to ensure timely receipt of the pre-natal care.
  - The NCM maintains the confidentiality of the youth but encourages the youth to disclose to the social worker, birth parent, and/or guardian in order to ensure compliance with prenatal appointments.
3. The HHAC nurse practitioner routinely discusses issues with the youth, such as safe sex, contraceptive and condom use, and sexually transmitted diseases. The nurse practitioner also makes referrals for youth, as needed, for sexually transmitted infection tests, vaccines for the prevention of certain types of human papillomavirus, and other treatments.



## Attachment A: New Heights Program for Expectant and Parenting Students Referring a Student to New Heights

Please complete this form to refer expectant or parenting students to the New Heights program by emailing it to [cdouglass@studentsupportcenter.org](mailto:cdouglass@studentsupportcenter.org) or faxing it to 202-222-0888. Thank you!

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Referring Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the person making referral: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's email & phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of High School or GED Program: \_\_\_\_\_

If not enrolled, last school of attendance: \_\_\_\_\_

Age & DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Placement (circle one):    Group Home       Foster Parents       Independent Living       Kinship Care

Please check one of the following:

- I have talked with this student, and he/she would like to be referred to New Heights. The student is expecting someone to follow up to schedule an intake and initial meeting.
- I have NOT talked with this student about New Heights, and have not asked his/her permission to refer the student to the program.

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**NOTE:** Please call 202-288-6251 with questions. We will contact you upon receiving this referral to discuss the enrollment process and scheduling a meeting time with you and the student.