

Young Parents

As the median age of women giving birth increases, this can negatively affect our perception of young people becoming parents. Almost 15% of births are to parents under the age of 24.²² Young parents have different needs to those of other age groups. For example many may be studying, and need to be supported with appropriate services and programs. Young parents may face disadvantage through early school leaving, having no or low qualifications, unemployment or low paid work, living in poor housing, experiencing depression or social isolation and being dependent on income support.²³ Your support can be essential for young parents trying to achieve their parental goals while maintaining their health and wellbeing.

In this section you'll find:

- Tips on supporting young people who are about to become young parents;
- Services in the ACT specifically available for young parents; and
- Resources including a list of young parent's groups in the ACT, more information, and a date for your diary.

Note: All of the service profiles in the *Big Red Book* include information on children of clients accessing services.

The following sections also contain young parents resources: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Accommodation and Accommodation Support, Alcohol and Other Drug, Alternative Education, Counselling, Family, Health and Sexual Health, Legal, Peak Body, Some Key Government Services, Youth Centres, Youth Support and Youth Support in Secondary Schools.

Ways of Working

How to Support Young Parents

Providing support to young parents is crucial for the young person and their child/ren. Below are tips on how to help young people prepare to be parents. These tips are not intended to be exhaustive and workers should check out the *More Information* part of this section for further resources on supporting young parents.

- Assist the young person to start planning early. You could help the young person to develop check-lists to help them both before and after the birth. They may need to consider things like budgeting.
- Identify what other supports are available for the young person, both through the pregnancy and after. Does the young parent have a partner or parent that can assist them?

²² ACT Health (2006), *ACT Chief Health Officer's Report 2006*, p 168

²³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2003), *Australia's Young People: Their Health and Wellbeing*

- The young person may have difficulties informing their parents or other support people about the pregnancy, and they may want some help. First attempts may take some effort and patience. Encourage the young person to listen to their parents and support people. Encourage the young person to thank family members for listening once they feel like they've told them everything they want to.
- The changes a young parent will experience throughout pregnancy and after may result in the possible loss of friendships. It's easy for a young parent to become isolated and disconnected. Assist the young person to identify ways to keep in contact with their friends, as well as building new relationships.
- Be aware that young people go through a lot of changes to become parents. Including the social and financial changes they will experience, young parents will experience changes in their body and possibly to their mental health. Talk to the young person about this. Young people with alcohol and other drugs and/or other issues may need change in these areas to be gradual.
- Young parents will have a lot of new skills and things to learn. Encourage them to get in touch with useful resources, such as the library, *Women's Centre for Health Matters* and young parenting support groups.
- Link up to a GP the young person trusts. The young person may need to book in appointments for the length of their pregnancy. Free GPs can be accessed at the *Junction Youth Health Service* and the *Sexual Health and Planning Centre* (up to the age of 18 or full time students up to the age of 21).
- The young parent may be eligible to access Centrelink benefits such as Family Tax Benefit Part A, Family Tax Benefit Part B, Parenting payments and the Baby Bonus. Visit www.centrelink.gov.au for more information.
- If the young parent needs housing for themselves and their child you may want to assist them to put in an application to *Housing ACT*. Application kits are available from Housing ACT in Belconnen, or Canberra Connect in Tuggeranong or call 13 34 27 for more information.

Housing ACT Applicants will be required to show proof of identification, proof of income and proof of residency in the ACT for at least six months. Applicants who have not been able to access accommodation in the ACT, and have had to reside in Queanbeyan, may be considered. Once the application has been submitted, applicants will have to see an Assessment Officer. Clients/services can call in advance to try and make an appointment.

- The young parent is also still developing physically, emotionally and intellectually. This process needs to continue. For example, if the young person wants to continue finishing their education, consider alternative education options such as *CCCaes* (for young parents).

Services

Barnardos Parenting Outreach Program

Provides outreach support to young parents and their children.

Phone	(02) 6241 5466
Fax	(02) 6241 5460
Mailing Address	PO Box 384 Dickson ACT 2602
Website	www.barnardos.org.au
Location	2 Atherton Street Downer ACT

Who Can Access:

<i>Gender</i>	Females and males
<i>Age</i>	Up to 25 years
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	No
<i>Income required</i>	No
<i>Disability access</i>	Yes

How to Access	By phone, 9am – 5pm, Monday - Friday. A referral is required and young people can self refer.
Programs	Provides assistance and practical support, information, education and referrals.
Families	Specifically designed to work with families.

Horizons

Family mental health service with a focus on young parents.

Phone	(02) 6162 5800
Mailing Address	PO Box 4260 Kingston 2604
Email	programs@marymead.org.au
Website	www.marymead.org.au
Location	255 Goyder Street, Narrabundah
Parent Organisation	Marymead Child and Family Centre

Who Can Access:

<i>Gender</i>	Males and Females
<i>Age</i>	All ages with focus on young parents under 25. Must have a child under 8.
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	No
<i>Income required</i>	No
<i>Disability access</i>	No
<i>Children of clients</i>	Yes

How to Access	By phone or email, 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday. A referral is required. Young people can self refer.
Programs	Provides counselling, information, outreach support, referrals, support, case management and advocacy for families where one or more people have a mental health difficulty. Community education can also be

Other	provided. Referrals can be made to Marymead's counselling centre.
Families	Focus on young parents under 25 but all families with a child under 8 welcome.

Karinya House for Mothers & Babies

Supported accommodation for females who are pregnant or newly parenting.

Phone	(02) 6259 8998
Mailing Address	Box 6, Evatt Newsagency, Evatt ACT 2617
Email	info@karinyahouse.asn.au
Website	www.karinyahouse.asn.au
Location	Confidential

Who Can Access:

<i>Gender</i>	Females who are pregnant or newly parenting with babies up to 3 months old.
<i>Age</i>	Any age
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	No
<i>Income required</i>	No
<i>Disability access</i>	Limited
<i>Children of clients</i>	Yes (newborn babies only for residential)

How to Access	By phone and email 24 hours, 7 days a week. A referral is necessary, however, the young person must be involved in the referral process and young people can self refer.
Rent	Dependant on type of income. 25% of income if on Youth Allowance.
Number of beds	3 medium term (supported), 4 medium term (transitional).
Required Documentation	Dependant on need. A maternity card or letter from a GP confirming pregnancy may be required. Proof of income.
Programs	Provides supported and transitional accommodation, outreach services, case management, counselling, ante and postnatal support. Transport and referrals are available. Various groups have been run. Also provides long term transitional accommodation for independent young women. Minimal outreach is provided.
Families	Works with the families of outreach clients.

Young Parent's Place

Provides transitional housing and support for up to 3 young parent families for up to 12 months.

Phone	(02) 6286 2173
Mailing Address	PO Box 642, Mawson ACT
Email	families@stvincanb.com.au
Website	www.stvincanb.com.au
Location	Lion's Youth Haven, Kambah Pool Road
Parent Organisation	St Vincent De Paul Family Service

Who Can Access:

<i>Gender</i>	Males and females: single fathers, single mothers or couples with full time custody of at least 1 child
<i>Age</i>	16 – 25
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	No
<i>Income required</i>	Yes
<i>Disability access</i>	No
<i>Children of clients</i>	Yes

How to Access	By phone, 8am - 9:30pm, Monday - Friday. A referral is required. Young people can self refer. Young people must have full time custody of at least 1 child.
Rent	25% of income, 10% of Family Tax Benefit A.
Programs	Provides specific skill-building around how to balance being a young parent with school, work and finding longer term accommodation. Budget counselling, referral and advocacy, assistance finding longer term accommodation, self help and education groups are also provided.
Other	Due to location of service it is highly recommended potential families have access to a car or other means of transportation.
Families	Works directly with families.

The following services also provide young parents programs:

- Barnardos Transition Program (Accommodation and Accommodation Support)
- CCCares (Alternative Education)
- Directions ACT (Alcohol and Other Drug)
- FACES (Family)
- Junction Youth Health Services (Health and Sexual Health)
- Learning for Life Program (Youth Support)
- Menslink (Youth Support)
- Open Family Australia (Youth Support)
- Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT (Health and Sexual Health)
- Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Services (Health and Sexual Health)
- Youth Law ACT (Legal)
- See also the Youth Centres section

Resources

More Services

Kids Corner @ Youth in the City

Youth in the City

A 'kid friendly' area of the drop-in space where young parents can meet, use the Internet and entertain their children with books, games puzzles and toys.

Phone: (02) 6232 2444

Meeting Times: Drop-In Times - Monday 2 - 6pm, Tuesday 1 - 6pm, Wednesday 2 – 6.30pm, Thursday 2 - 6pm and Friday 1 - 9pm.

Age: 12 – 25 years

Cost: Free

Lanyon Young Parents Group

Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre, YWCA & Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre

A group for young mums and dads and young pregnant women to come together to socialise and share experiences. Activities and toys are available for children. Also go on local excursions. Focuses on children's development and personal development as a parent and individual.

Contact Person: Garry Fry

Phone: (02) 6294 4633

Email: lyacc@ywca-canberra.org.au

Meeting times: Tuesdays, 10.30am – 12.30pm during school term

Age: 12 -25 years

Cost: Free

Maternity and Child Health (MACH) Nurse and Ante Natal Nurse

Junction Youth Health Service

A MACH nurse is available on Wednesday mornings, and an Ante Natal Nurse is available on Wednesday afternoons.

Phone: (02) 6232 2423

Email: junctioninfo@anglicarecg.org.au

Web: www.thejunction.org.au

Stepping Forward

YWCA of Canberra

Aims to improve the wellbeing of young pregnant and parenting women (13-25) and their children. The program will provide information and support to young women through a series of weekly workshops on General Health, Positive Parenting, Healthy Lifestyles, Supportive Relationships, Budgeting, Self Esteem, and Community Connections.

Contact Person: Gina, YWCA of Canberra Training Unit

Phone: (02) 6278 5298

Email: steps@ywca-canberra.org.au

Meeting Times: Tuesdays 10.00am – 3.00pm, Kippax Health Centre

Age: 13 - 25

Cost: Free

Young Mum's Group

Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation

For young Indigenous women, the group looks at many things including parenting, healthy eating, domestic violence, sexual assault, legal issues, children's health, personal care, art classes and screen printing.

Contact Person: Teletha Elemes

Phone: (02) 6231 9555

Email: teletha@gugan-gulwan.com.au

Meeting times: Tuesday, 10am – 2pm

Age: Under 25 years

Cost: Free

Young Parents Group

U-Turn, Belconnen Community Services

Aims to support and empower young families. Provides information, playgroup activities and support. Activities include art, craft & cooking. Lots of play equipment for children.

Contact Person: Emily Anderson

Phone: (02) 6264 0260

Email: uturnprojects@bcsact.com.au

Meeting times: Wednesdays, 11am – 1pm

Age: Under 25 years

Cost: Free

More Information

Canberra Kids

Provides information and links to services and activities for children in the ACT.

Web: www.canberrakids.com.au

Centrelink Support for Parents

Phone: 13 61 50 (Family Assistance Office)

Web: www.centrelink.gov.au

Guide of Sanity and Survival for Young Parents

A guide written by young parents for young parents.

Web: www.cyh.com/library/GOSSYP_Book.pdf

Indigenous Parenting

Parentlink, Department of Disability Housing and Community Services

Tips sheets by Indigenous people for Indigenous people. ACT specific.

Web: www.parentlink.act.gov.au/parenting_guides/indigenous

Kidsafe in the ACT

Provides a range of activities that work to improve parents' awareness of the need for safe behaviours. Services include the Infant Restraint Loan Service, the Free Restraint Checking Service, Talks Program, Information Service and a Kidsafe Centre.

Web: www.schoolsafe.org.au/act_kidsafe.htm

Parentline

Telephone counselling, information and referral. Some volunteer support, parenting courses and some face-to-face counselling available.

Phone: (02) 6287 3833

Parentlink and Parentlink Quick Guide

ACT Government

Provide information about parenting issues and family support systems in the ACT, also produces a quick reference guide of key parenting services.

Phone: 13 34 27

Web: www.parentlink.act.gov.au

Positive Parenting for Young Parents

Child, Youth and Women's Health Program, ACT Community Health

Report on the outcomes of the project.

Web: www.health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=sendfile&ft=p&fid=1157353867&sid=

Raising Children Network

Parenting website focused mostly on parenting in the pre-teenage years.

Web: www.raisingchildren.net.au

Teenage Parents

Parenting SA

An information and tipsheet for young people about parenting.

Web: www.parenting.sa.gov.au/pegs/Peg39.pdf

Young Parenting Groups Interagency Forum

Coordinated by Child, Youth & Women's Health Program, ACT Health

Shares information about current parenting programs for people in the ACT. Meetings are held bimonthly at the Junction Youth Health Service. Aims to create a pathway for the continuum of care for young parents, and support and coordinate young parenting programs.

Contact Person: Luisa Latukefu

Phone: (02) 6205 1832

Email: Luisa.latukefu@act.gov.au

Membership: Open to all services that work with young parents.

Young Parents: Capable, Mature and Articulating their Needs

OzProspect

Background paper to the NSW Young Parents Forum 2006.

Web: www.ozprospect.org/YPFBP.pdf

A Date For Your Diary

15 May International Day of Families

Provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families as well as to promote appropriate action.

Web: www.un.org/esa/socdev/family