

## Promoting Healthy Youth Relationships February 2010

**The Article:** "Telling It Like It Is: Teen Perspectives on Romantic Relationships"  
**Where It's From:** Child Trends

**The Findings:** The majority of teens in high school have been involved in a romantic relationship, and almost one-half of high school-aged teens report that they have had at least one sexual experience. Learning more about how teens view these relationships can provide insights that help policy makers, program providers, parents, and others promote healthy youth development in general and address the problems of teen pregnancy and STIs in particular. Toward this end, Child Trends recently conducted focus groups to hear what teens themselves have to say about these relationships.

**Some Specifics:**

Four major themes about teens' views on romantic relationships emerged from the focus groups:

- Teens have developed novel ways to describe their relationships.
- Teens have a clear understanding of what makes a romantic relationship a healthy one.
- Despite this understanding, teens have low expectations for experiencing these qualities in their own relationships.
- Teens see many similarities between the ways that they think about romantic relationships and the ways that adults define their own relationships.

**Read the Full Article:** [www.childtrends.org/Files/Child\\_Trends-2009\\_11\\_05\\_RB\\_TeenRelation.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2009_11_05_RB_TeenRelation.pdf)

**The Article:** "Ascent: Promoting Effective Leadership in Afterschool"

**Where It's From:** The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

**The Findings:** These authors argue that we need to teach young people about healthy relationships at the same time we teach them about avoiding risky sexual behavior and the value of waiting. They also argue that if we want to help ensure that children are born to two parents, happily married and ready and able to take on the difficult job of parenting, then preventing teen pregnancy is a good place to start.

**Some Specifics:**

Below are two key suggestions for educators from this article:

- Discuss the very nature of relationships. Youth are often told what to avoid, but hardly ever told how to achieve responsible and respectful relationships. Youth workers need to address what motivates teens & appeal to their aspirations rather than continue to simply try to help them manage risks.
- While young people aspire to successful futures and marriage, they are often unaware of the simple formula that can greatly help them achieve both. Namely, graduate from high school (at least), don't have a baby until you are married, and don't marry during the teen years.

**Read the Full Article:** [www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/pubs/MALC\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/pubs/MALC_FINAL.pdf)