

CULTURAL COHESION BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS  
AND HISPANIC TEENS' MOTHERING DECISIONS

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AND HISPANIC TEENS' MOTHERING DECISIONS

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## **DEDICATION PAGE**

I dedicate this thesis to my family for sharing with me the gift of compassion and to my love, Mike, for being so patient and caring throughout this long year.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

All mothers face transitions and new challenges in their lives. Teenage mothers, in addition to facing many challenges, also face stigma (Zachry, 2005) including marginalization within schooling contexts. These challenges often lead teen moms to drop out of high school (Gleason & Dynarski, 2002). More than half of the reviewed literature (Berry et al., 2007; Crase et al., 2007; Futris et al., 2007; Gee et al., 2007; Heck & Mahoe, 2006; Herzog et al., 2007; Middlemiss et al., 2005; Mollborn, 2007; Sadler et al., 2007; Schultz, 2001; Seiger et al., 2007; Szigethy et al., 2001; Van Dorn et al., 2006 ) addressed teenage mothers in pejorative language at some point within the article. On the other hand, several articles highlighted optimism and hope toward potentiality within teen pregnancy. This study examined the narratives of six teenage mothers who decided to stay in school through degree completion including their perspectives on school supports, social supports, and their family/home cultures. The narratives' construction took the form of both interviews and naturalistic schooling observations. The sample included Hispanic teenage mothers who were enrolled in an urban charter high school which provided support systems such as monetary childcare vouchers, parenting groups, healthcare services, and home bound instructors for mothers up to six weeks after giving birth.

### *Statement of the Problem*

The problem of this study was to examine the experiences of teenage mothers who decided to remain in high school through degree completion. The following four questions guided this study:

- How did an alternative high school campus schooling site support teen mothers' dual roles of being successful students in complement to recognizing their mothering roles?
- What types of social support assisted teen mothers in remaining in school through degree completion?
- How did cultural identities and self perceptions affect teenage mothers' academic successes?
- How did internal and external cultural norms influence teens' mothering and educational decisions?

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to help parents, teachers, and educators aware of and understand low socio economic Hispanic teenage mothers' experiences so that educational and community resources could help them (a) support teen moms to help minimize the potentiality that they may drop out of high school and (b) to understand and empathize with their experiences. Support from parents and educators was essential to the academic success of teenage mothers (Futris, 2007). After reviewing the literature, it was clear that additional research needed to be conducted on Hispanic teen mothers and the unique experiences they faced throughout the Teen Mothering Cycle. An abundance of literature focused on minority teenage mothers (Berry et al., 2000; Brubaker et al., 2006;

Gleason et al., 2002; Middlemiss et al., 2005; Seiger et al., 2007; Van Dorn et al., 2006). There was limited literature available on programs within schools to support teenage mothers such as child care and parent support programs (Sadler et al., 2007). This study's aim was to help schooling communities better understand the experiences and motivating factors behind the positive academic outcomes of Hispanic teenage mothers who stayed and completed high school.

### *Significance of the Study*

As a teacher situated within an urban charter high school community, I have had the opportunity to work with a diverse population of students. My campus focused on drop out recovery and I noticed that many of our Hispanic teen mothers were dropping out of school disproportionately to other student populations. According to Seiger and Renk (2007), this topic needed to be researched because of the high rates of adolescent pregnancy in the U.S. and the obstacles they faced in society, along with factors that contributed to their positive outcomes.

### *Definition of Terms*

At-risk-Students considered likely to drop out of school based on state identified indicators.

Alternative charter high school-a schooling option that had a specific focus narrower than that of traditional public schools. In the case of this study the charter high school had a focus of drop out recovery.

Drop out recovery-the focus of the charter school was to “recover” students who had previously dropped out of high school at least once in their academic careers.

Baby's father refers to the relationship of the mother and the baby's father in which there may or may not be a romantic connection in addition to a parenting connection.

Baby Daddy refers to a relationship that does not necessitate marriage or commitment beyond negotiating parental obligations whereas

Boyfriend refers to a romantic relationship but does not necessitate that the man involved is the baby's father. Furthermore, a boyfriend could be a baby daddy to another woman's child without crossing the normative boundaries of the term which implied *romantic* involvement.

Homebound instruction-In the state of the study it was required that a school teacher be assigned to tracking progress and teaching students at the home site at least two days per week for six to nine weeks.

## CHAPTER II

### Review of Literature

I categorized the relevant academic literature by factors that directly affected the academic successes of teenage mothers. The themes were (a) school supports and their roles in helping teen mothers succeed academically, (b) social supports, including family, friends, fathers of the babies, and community supports, and their roles in helping teen mothers succeed academically, (c) the role of personal identities and teenage mothers' self perceptions regarding the intersects of motherhood and academics, and (d) cultural influences on teens' mothering decisions.

#### *School Supports*

Many factors lead teenage mothers to drop out or to stay in school. School settings impacted teen mothers staying in schools when offered on-site childcare, engagement in the curriculum, and had a culture of acceptance and support of teen pregnancy and parenthood (Sadler et al., 2007).

Many factors identified students as being at risk of dropping out of high school. According to Gleason and Dynarski (2002), drop out risks typically included the following variables: demographic and family background, past school performance, personal characteristics, adult responsibilities, and school or neighborhood characteristics. Teenage mothers fell into the risk category associated with adult

responsibilities. According to the study, students who fell into at least three of the categories had a significantly higher risk of dropping out than students who fell into only one of the categories. All participants in this study fell into three or more of Gleason and Dynarski's identified variables, which made their staying in school even more of an accomplishment.

Teenage mothers were typically at risk before they became pregnant; risk factors included neighborhood characteristics, school characteristics, family background, and personal characteristics (SmithBattle, 2007). By SmithBattle's contexts, all participants in this study were considered "at risk". Teenage mothers of minority descent or from lower social classes were at an even higher risk of dropping out of high school. High school graduation rates of African American students and Hispanic American students were significantly lower than those of Asian American or White students, especially in urban areas (Heck & Mahoe, 2006; Van Dorn et al., 2006). The Hispanic participants from urban areas in this study adhered to both studies' assessed schooling attrition demographic indicators.

Childcare was an issue for many working mothers and it was the strongest hindrance standing in the way of academic success for teenage mothers (Futris, 2007). This held true for the participants in this study. Sadler's (2007) study described a school-based parent support program and child care center. Although the study focused on maternal characteristics, child development, and health outcomes, the results found that the parent support program and school-based child care center helped teenage mothers engage with school and avoid subsequent child births. Motherhood came with inherent obstacles that made daily life as a student more difficult than other students without

children (Cruse et al., 2007). Childcare was a financial burden to such an extent that it forced teen mothers to drop out of school in order to meet the monetary needs of childcare or stay home to care for the child. Programs such as the one provided in the study offered the support needed to connect teenage mothers with parenting support and on-site childcare and kept them engaged, which helped them overcome the risk of high school drop out. The alternative charter high school allowed staff to bring children to work, but not students, which was a factor to consider for future school implementations and research.

Teen motherhood was not always a hindrance to the academic progress or determination of teen mothers; sometimes, it was a turning point in a teen's life when they rededicated themselves to their education and focused on achieving academic success (Schultz, 2001; SmithBattle, 2007). My study's findings aligned to Shultz and Smith Battle's findings in this area. When teenage mothers rededicate themselves to their education it was up to schools to step in and support their decision and to engage the recommitted mothers/students. According to SmithBattle, transitions of motivation was met with limited school support. In SmithBattle's longitudinal study, she interviewed nineteen teens from the third trimester of pregnancy to ten months after they gave birth. The study revealed that a lack of resources and support led the teen mothers toward academic failure and in most cases the teen mothers regressed to their previous undedicated academic state.

In summary, once a teenage student became a mother, the risk factors for drop out greatly increased, aside from other risk factors that were already present (Gleason & Dynarski, 2002). School support systems and on-site childcare increased the chance of

graduation and helped to engage the teenage mother in school (Sadler et al., 2007). My study did not find that pregnancy or motherhood increased the potentiality for drop out in the participants but rather, becoming a mother motivated the participants to commit to staying in school through degree completion even without the childcare incentive benefit.

### *Social Supports*

The impact of motherhood on teenagers extended beyond the schooling networks into many facets of their social lives. Financial and psychological stress factors also impacted teenage mothers' abilities to stay in school. Social supports helped teenage mothers overcome challenges taking the form of family support, support from the fathers, support from peers or friends, and support from the community (Brubaker & Wright, 2006; Crase, Hochaday, & McCarville, 2007; Futris, 2007).

Cruse, Hockaday, and McCarville (2007) examined the perceptions of social support received by non-pregnant, non-parenting adolescents, and pregnant/parenting adolescents. Although both groups identified similar types of support, the pregnant/parenting group reported less support than the nonpregnant, nonparenting group. The results for both groups were comparable; however, the results indicated that support from sisters and best friends were significantly higher for the nonpregnant, nonparenting group than for the pregnant/parenting group. For financial support, both groups identified mothers and boyfriends as being the top two contributors.

The babies' fathers' involvement in teenage mothers' lives played a major role in the social support aspect of dealing with the challenges of motherhood. According to three studies, father involvement was related to the status of the relationship he had with the mother and the cohabitation status of the couple (Futris & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2007;

Gee, McNervey, Reiter & Leaman, 2006; Herzog, Umana-Taylor, Derdich, & Leonard, 2007). In cases where the babies' fathers were romantically involved with the teen mothers, the involvement and support was greater than in cases where the mother and father were not getting along or were no longer romantically involved. Father cohabitation was the strongest factor in determining financial and non-financial support (Gee et al., 2006)

Along with childcare access, limited housing and financial support had negative impacts on teenage mothers' educational attainment (Mollborn, 2007). Mollborn's study focused on material resources and their effects on teenage parenthood. According to her study, having a child was not the key factor that put teenage mothers at risk; instead, it was related to the lack of material resources and the preexisting social class levels that attributed to a lack of academic achievement.

Teenage mothers faced many adult obligations that other traditional students did not face (Cruse, Hochaday, & McCarville, 2007). After becoming a mother, they needed to consider child care, housing, and financial responsibilities to take care of their children. Oftentimes, school moved downward on the priority list behind care for the child; social support systems were essential to helping teen mothers overcome the drop out risk and giving teenage mothers the power and ability to keep education a priority. In my study the participants discussed the increased financial challenges they faced after becoming mothers. The participants did however, prioritize school and only two of the six participants dropped out of school because of mother related issues.

### *Ethnic Identity and Self Perceptions*

Ethnicity and self perceptions were predictors for teenage motherhood for drop out risks. According to a study conducted by Berry et al. (2000), different ethnic groups displayed different risk factors in relation to teen pregnancy. The study focused on four ethnic groups: African American, White, Hispanic, and American Indian. For all ethnic groups in the study, with the exception of Hispanics, poverty was a key factor in determining the risk for teen pregnancy. For Hispanics and African Americans, self esteem was a protective factor against teen pregnancy.

In African American families, teenage motherhood signified independence, status, and a strengthening of family networks from a cultural perspective (Szigethy & Ruiz, 2001). Similarly, culture affected the acceptance of teen motherhood in Hispanic culture because of the “strong sense of family orientation” (Middlemiss & McGuigan, 2005). This did not hold true for all of the participants in my study. According to the study conducted by Middlemiss and McGuigan (2005), Hispanic teen mothers benefited more from a home-visitation program than other ethnic groups; this result was influenced by the cultural impact of family. The study showed that non-Hispanic, White teenage mothers did not have as many benefits from the program in areas of family functioning and parent-child interactions as those of Hispanic mothers.

Although there was limited literature focused on Hispanic teenage mothers, literature was available that studied African-American teenage mothers and multi-ethnic groups. A study conducted by Brubaker and Wright (2006) explored the narratives of African American teenage mothers concerning identity transformation and family

caregiving. The researchers interviewed 51 African American teen mothers and examined their perspectives on the family caregiving they received while they were pregnant. The unique perspectives of the teens added to the general understanding of the issue of teen pregnancy and parenthood. The study showed that care provided by family and friends had a positive impact on the teens' formation of new identities during and after pregnancy.

Another study conducted by Schultz (2001) took into account the perspectives of teen mothers. In her research, she conducted interviews and analyzed public writing and classroom observations of women of color. Her focus was on their perspectives of teenage motherhood and its affects on their lives; she studied teenagers who had children, were pregnant, and teenagers who did not yet have children. Her study revealed that teenagers who did not have children viewed pregnancy as a hindrance to success while teenage mothers attributed their success in school to motherhood. She also discovered that teenage mothers who stayed in school often had more detailed plans and ambition for their futures than their non-pregnant, non-parenting peers. Schultz's study concluded that teenage motherhood could be a motivating factor behind academic attainment.

Ethnic identity and self perception played roles in the risk assessment of teenage mothers (Berry, Shillington, Peak, & Hohman, 2000). Minority teen mothers were at greater risks of dropping out of high school than their non-minority peers; however, pregnancy and parenting were not always conclusive signals that a student would drop out. In some cases motherhood was a motivator to better one's education.

### *Theoretical Framework*

Delpit's (1995) *Other People's Children* formed the core theoretical framework for this study. Delpit examined issues of cultural conflict in schools centering on issues educators faced when teaching diverse populations. Delpit found that cultural awareness and knowledge were key tools educators should use when trying to resolve cultural conflicts. Delpit's work remained a seminal root in cultural conflict in public schools. Furthermore, the moral tone of her casual writing style fit well with this overly-moralized topic. While academics have often claimed neutrality in their writing, a scarce few articles on teen mothering adopted an emic vocabulary that translated the sense of choice and pride of coming into womanhood that many teen mothers felt, especially mothers from minority communities. Delpit's work appropriately framed such colonizing points of view allowing for voices based on the intersects of gender and race to become foregrounded on their own terms. What this framework lacked was for the third dimension of ageism, which further sanitized the authenticity of the multiplicity of voices within the Hispanic female teen mothering community.

## CHAPTER III

### Study Design and Procedures

Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were recruited based on self-identification with the campus as being pregnant, which qualified them to be invited to participate in the study. The campus' guidance counselors coordinated distribution of invitations to participate in the study to members of the identified population to protect privacy with the identified population. A signed consent form was required for participation in the study and if the participants were under eighteen years of age, parental/guardian signatures were required, unless a participant was a legally emancipated minor as this status legally unbanded participants from needing parental consent.

I conducted the initial interviews under the direct supervision of my advisor and then conducted the subsequent interviews on my own with advisory support off-site. Two interviews were conducted with four of the six participants and only one interview, due to scheduling difficulties, was conducted with the remaining two participants. Participants had the option to participate in one focus group after the interviews were completed, but no one chose to participate. All participants were given journals, which

helped organize their thoughts for interviews; although the journals contents were not coded due to privacy concerns.

### *Role of the Researcher*

My role was that of a researcher but was also that of a faculty member at the alternative charter high school. My proximity to the participants was affected by my role as a teacher on campus. I had daily contact with the participants. These overlapping roles of teacher and researcher allowed me to collect both formal and informal narratives from the participants. I reviewed the literature, collected consent forms from all participants, introduced the research to all participants, and conducted the interviews. The interviews were conducted as informal discussions from semi-structured interview protocols, which allowed for conversational flexibility. The interview protocol worked to guide the interview and create consistency, but was not held to strictly when relevant follow up questions were explored.

### *Participants*

Because the study was conducted in an alternative charter high school that had internal support programs in place for teen mothers, it was not possible to generalize the population to include all Hispanic teenage mothers. The population was Hispanic teenage mothers who attended urban schools with some internal support programs for teen mothers.

Six students were selected for this study. All were Hispanic and ranged in age from 17 to 20. Two participants had three pregnancies, three had two pregnancies, and only one participant had just one reported pregnancy. Five of the participants had one child, while one of the participants had two children. All participants had healthy, full-

term babies. Four of the students were seniors in high school and two were sophomores. One of the students was expelled from the high school during the course of the study.

### *Selection of Participants*

The sample was purposeful but also one of convenience. The participants included six Hispanic teen mothers from an urban charter high school in the southwestern region of the United States. The participants were current students from the charter high school and were mothers of at least one child. Four mandatory criteria determined eligibility for a student to be invited to participate in the study: (a) gender: female; (b) ethnicity: Hispanic; (c) children: to already have at least one child; (d) student status: to still be enrolled in high school with the intent to graduate.

All participants were low socioeconomic Hispanic high school females who attended an alternative charter high school campus in a major urban area in the Southwestern U.S. Angela, Johanna, Jasmine, Marta, Mila, and Valerie were all pseudonyms that remained culturally aligned to their given names. All were Mexican-American, except for Marta, who was Salvadorian. In addition, all of the babies' fathers were Hispanic. All participants were functionally and culturally fluent in Spanish. All but one of the participants were also fluent in both written and spoken English. Mila was an emergent English speaker. Mila was also the only participant born outside of the U.S. She was currently seeking U.S. citizenship. All participants dropped out of traditional high schools throughout the urban area before attending the alternative campus. Four of the five dropped out because of pregnancy; the other two, Johanna and Angela, dropped out for non-pregnancy related reasons. All participants qualified for free lunch, except Valerie. As long as the participants were attending school, communication

was frequent and easy, but during periods of absence, participants were hard to reach due to socio-economic issues such as disconnected, re-connected, and changed telephone numbers and email addresses.

**Table 1. Participants' History of Pregnancy and Children.**

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age of First Pregnancy</b>	<b>Age of Last Pregnancy</b>	<b>Number of Pregnancies</b>	<b>Number of Children</b>
Angela	18	18	2	1
Johanna	15	18	2	1
Jasmine	15	18	3	2
Marta	16	16	1	1
Mila	17	18	3	1
Valerie	17	17	1	1

### *Angela*

Angela was a social, nineteen year old high school senior who enjoyed hanging out with friends in the cafeteria. She always stayed on campus during lunch even though students were allowed to leave campus. She was immature for her age, but kept up with schoolwork. Throughout high school, before becoming pregnant, Angela was always employed, including occasional breaks from school enrollment to maintain full-time employment. Angela first became pregnant and miscarried in February of her junior year. Angela became pregnant again in July after her junior year in high school and gave birth to a full-term, healthy baby girl the spring semester of her senior year. She returned from her nine week extended homebound stay to school with only six weeks of classes until graduation. Angela was enrolled at the charter high school one year before she became pregnant the first time. At the time of the first interview, she was living with her mom and boyfriend. Her boyfriend moved out of the house before the second interview. Angela was unemployed at the time of both interviews. The father of Angela's baby was

employed during the first interview, but was unemployed by the time of the second interview. He was the father in both pregnancies. She wanted to leave this relationship, but felt tied to it due to the baby and cultural pressures. She wanted more children, but not in the near future. Angela successfully completed her high school degree directly following the second interview. She planned to get a job at a local correctional facility.

### *Johanna*

At the time of the first interview, Johanna was a bright, charismatic, and assertive nineteen year old senior who had natural gifts in leadership. She began living on her own with her older boyfriend at the age of sixteen. She had broken up with this boyfriend shortly before becoming pregnant to another man; although, according to Johanna, the long-term boyfriend offered to care for the baby as its father before going to prison. Despite multiple talents, she had continual conflicts with the schooling culture, even with the relaxed atmosphere of the alternative charter high school campus. Johanna was an intermittent student at the charter high school, on and off for two years before she had her child. She had her first pregnancy at fifteen years old as a sophomore, which ended in a miscarriage. Johanna had her second pregnancy her senior year at age 19 and gave birth to a full-term, healthy daughter during winter break of her senior year. She received homebound instruction for six weeks. After the first interview, Johanna was expelled from the charter high school and enrolled at another alternative campus in the area. Johanna's baby's father was in prison throughout her pregnancy and was released when her baby was two months old. Both pregnancies had different fathers. Johanna was unemployed at the time of the interview and living with her mom and brother who had been recently released from prison. Johanna had a record of getting into criminal trouble.

*Jasmine*

Jasmine was an enthusiastic and humorous 20 year old sophomore. Her willingness and social fortitude made up for many educational gaps. Whereas teachers and students liked Jasmine, her quickness and frustration with the schooling culture caused her a multitude of difficulties. She had her first pregnancy that ended in miscarriage at the age of fifteen. Jasmine had her first child at the age of eighteen in the spring of her freshman year. Jasmine had her second child at the age of nineteen as a sophomore. The multiple pregnancies compounded what would have already been a difficult path toward forward academic progress due to behavioral challenges and special education classification. Jasmine reenrolled in the charter school for the second time during the spring semester of her second pregnancy. According to Jasmine, she had previously dropped out because of child care issues. Jasmine was a student at the charter school during both her second and third pregnancies. The father was the same in all three pregnancies, but she was not committed to him at the time of the second pregnancy. The baby's father had another baby by another woman at the time of the second interview. I was only able to conduct one interview with Jasmine because she had school attendance issues in part attributed to child care and was unable to attend any of the four scheduled second interviews.

*Marta*

Marta was not enrolled in any school since the age of thirteen. She left a traditional high school in another urban area in the same state to move with her sister to the city where this study was conducted. Upon moving, she never enrolled in a school in the new city until she learned she was pregnant. She enrolled herself in the charter high

school as an emancipated minor. Marta became pregnant for the first time at the age of fifteen and had a healthy, full-term daughter at the age of sixteen. She entered the study as a seventeen year old, one year after giving birth. Marta was living with her baby's father during the time of the first interview but had moved into a friend's apartment by the time of the second interview. The father of the baby was the primary financial provider at the time of the first interview, but Marta was actively looking for a job and a way to support herself. Marta's parents died when she was twelve years old and she had lived with her sister for much of her life.

### *Mila*

Mila had her first pregnancy as a junior at the age of seventeen and had her second pregnancy, her first child, as a junior while taking a semester off from school at the age of eighteen. She had her third pregnancy, her second miscarriage, at the age of nineteen as a senior. All three pregnancies were with the same father who is a non-U.S. citizen. Mila was a nineteen year old senior and had enrolled at the charter high school spring semester of her senior year. Mila was living with her mother, father, siblings, and the father of her baby at the time of both interviews. Mila revealed in the second interview that her intention was to move out and separate from the father of her baby after she graduated from high school. Mila is a second generation Mexican American and did not have citizenship papers, which was something she desperately wanted. Mila did not graduate at the end of the spring semester, but was on track to graduate in the fall.

### *Valerie*

Valerie was a shy, but sweet eighteen year old senior who had difficulty with self-confidence and making friends. Her teachers described her as a "lethargic" student

who turned in excuses instead of work. In one class where Valerie had three other mothers as fellow students, the teacher said she did well and liked that there were other mothers experiencing success, but that she was unable to make friends with them. She was a seventeen year old senior at the time of her first pregnancy. She dropped out of her previous traditional high school because the teachers “discouraged her” upon learning she was pregnant. After taking five months off, she enrolled in the charter high school during the spring semester of her senior year. Valerie did not pass all of her classes to graduate and was planning to attend summer school which would fulfill her final requirement to graduate. Valerie was living with her boyfriend during the timeframe of both interviews. Valerie had a part time job during the study and her boyfriend had a full time job. They were living with his mom and younger sisters.

#### *Sources of Data*

Six Hispanic teenage mothers were interviewed for this study. The interviews were conducted to understand the experiences of these teenage mothers and to understand how schools and communities supported these students. The interviews were held in a classroom at the school. The goal was to conduct two interviews with each participant, but in the course of the study, one student was expelled and one student had issues with childcare and was unable to attend the second interview. Six participants were interviewed in the first round and four participants were interviewed in the second round. The students were also invited to participate in an optional focus group, but on the scheduled day, only one participant showed up. Two of the participants had to leave early that day because their children were sick, one was absent from school that day, and one student was “not comfortable sharing” her story with other participants, so she chose not

to participate. The interviews ranged from 30 to 45 minutes each, each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim. Journals were also given to each participant at the first interview and the students were asked to record their thoughts and reflections about being a mother. I discussed the journals several times throughout the course of the study with each participant and reminded them to write in the journals. When it came time to collect the journals, one of the participants was no longer enrolled at the school, two of the students told me that they had not written anything, and three of the students felt uncomfortable sharing what they had written and asked to keep their journals private.

### *Analyses*

Overlapping qualitative methods were utilized throughout the process. Primary analyses centered on emergent coding (Carspecken, 1995) including constructive meaning fields and discourse analysis (Gee, 1999). A case study approach was used alongside ethnographic observation. In the end, grounded theory (Boyatis, 1998; Maxwell, 1996; Strauss & Corcin, 1990), allowed for a theory on the Teen Mothering Cycle to emerge from the analyses. Findings followed the style of Wolcott (1990).

## CHAPTER IV

### Findings

While the data set was rich and the analyses uncovered multiple emergent codes and subsequent themes, five major themes emerged as central to all six participants. All findings were labeled in regard of the inference level inherent in the analyses as low inference, medium inference, or high inference, with low inference being the most straightforward and closest to the participants' words without more stringent analyses needed and high inference findings being the most nuanced and context-dependant. Of course, the more high inference the findings were, the more triangulating sources were utilized to confirm the finding. Table 2 showed the identified themes, which were expressed within their relationship to the Teen Mothering Cycle. Despite the differences between the participants, there were more commonalities found than not. Although many common themes were identified, this study focused on the five themes that were consistently identified and confirmed by multiple data sources.

**Table 2. Theme Frequency and Centrality.**

Theme	Frequency/Centrality		
	Central	Periphery	Removed
Variance and Cohesion within the Teen Mothering Cycle	6/6	0/6	0/6
The Real and the Ideal Contexts within the Teen Mothering Cycle	6/6	0/6	0/6
School Supports Throughout the Teen Mothering Cycle	6/6	0/6	0/6
Influences of Family and Home Culture on the Teen Mothering Cycle	6/6	0/6	0/6
Dynamics and Marginality Surrounding the Teen Mothering Cycle	6/6	0/6	0/6

#### *Site Description*

The charter high school utilized as the field site for this study was a diverse, urban high school that served an at risk population; the campus specialized in drop out recovery. The school had a diverse population: 57% Hispanic, 22% White, and 21% African American. To qualify to enroll at the school, students needed to be between the ages of 16 and 21. Eighty-eight percent of the student population came from low-income households. The school offered a wide variety of programs based on the individual needs of each student including counseling, health care, career placement services, and college placement. Students enrolled at the school obtained either a high school diploma or a GED. The school had an emphasis on building relationships and this belief was supported by having small student to teacher ratios. A class could not have more than seventeen students.

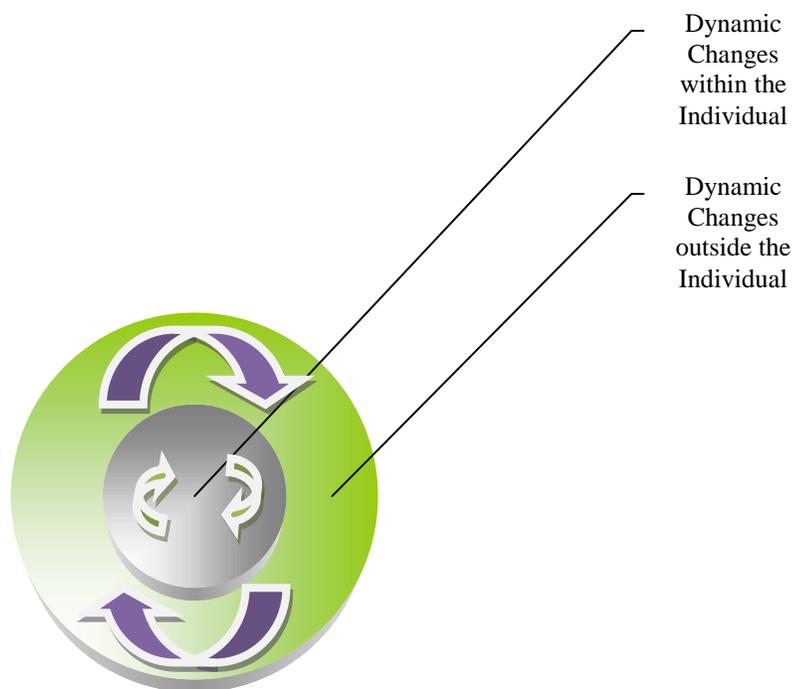
While the school emphasized service learning and “real-life” skills, inherent with the drop out recovery and at-risk populations, judgments came from the state about the students’ academic progress. The campus was cited by the state for low average daily attendance (ADA) and for a high dropout percentage. The school was in stage three of

the federal government accountability for having less than 90% attendance on the day of the state-mandated standardized test and for the actual testing scores. On average the attendance for the school was 65%, so the school saw that No Child Left Behind goals and penalties would continue to be problematic in light of their dropout recovery goals. Unlike private schools or other charter schools, it was against this campus' charter to turn away any student who met the age-requirements and who expressed a desire to get a high school diploma. The only exception was that the administrator had discretion in accepting students with a criminal record or students assigned to a disciplinary campus in a public school district, but who did not meet attendance requirements. Whereas an occasional student had been expelled for something like having drugs on the campus, in my history teaching at the school, no student has been denied admission.

*Emergent Theory: The Teen Mothering Cycle*

Participants in this study experienced what I named the Teen Mothering Cycle. This cycle began with becoming pregnant, was followed by the pregnancy itself, and continued as the teen incorporated the additional identity of becoming a mother. Unlike a typical expectant/new mother, where key life changes centered upon the women in the context of the actual changes of pregnancy and giving birth (Brubaker & Wright, 2006), the low SES, Hispanic teen mothers in this study experienced dynamic and drastic changes within the circumstances external to their pregnancies throughout each stage of the mothering cycle. These dynamic happenings within the context of their lives as well as within their pregnancies caused movement and change that made it harder for the participants to grasp, accept, reflect on, and understand the changes in pregnancy. Being exposed to continual life flux allowed for few or even no constants in the girls' lives or

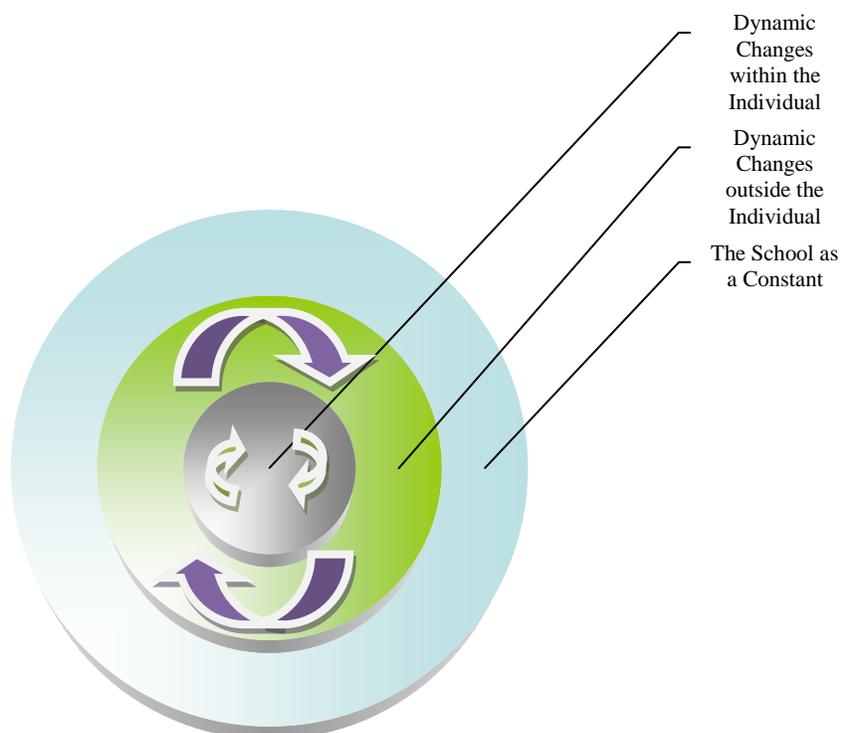
their external cultural climates in which they lived everyday life. Temporal continuity was not part of their lives; as in real life, Figure 1 shows two circles' surfaces failure to connect at any static point for any substantive amount of time. Due to the continual and opposite movement of each circle in Figure 1, both friction and heat would have been generated. Just as within the mechanics of the diagram of concentric circles spinning in opposite directions where surface damage would have occurred, the teen moms in this study felt the impact of friction in both their pregnancies—as represented by the inner circle—and in their lives—as represented in the outer spinning circle. Perhaps bodily change within the context of cultural change contributed to the high level of miscarriages and subsequent pregnancies. It is as if there were two spheres spinning in opposite directions without ever having enough common surface areas for continuity for the girls to makes sense of their pregnancy within the context of a status background life.



**Figure 1. The Teen Mothering Model.**

Positing the emergent theory of the Teen Mothering Cycle within an educational domain allowed us to understand the significance of the stability of the schooling context for the teen moms. Was the school yet another dynamic element exposing the teen mom to even more external flux or was it a stabilizing constant throughout young teens' pregnancy cycle? Schools had the opportunity to provide a stable backgrounded context to the flux of both the teens' pregnancy and their normal life changes to provide enough of a constant for them to make sense of their changing worlds. This theory challenged some traditional ideas of the purpose of education. While the theory of the Teen Mothering Cycle would not integrate well with newer content-centered views of education, it did align with both Noddings (1984) care-centered theories of education and

hooks' (2000) theories on love within educational contexts. For the students in this study, the urban charter high school was one of the few constants that helped them make sense of both their lives and their pregnancies. Furthermore, the education and diploma they could receive had the potential to help them slow some of the changes in their lives, offering more opportunities for steady employment schedules and income.



**Figure 2. The Teen Mothering Model Posited within a Supportive Schooling Context.**

The majority of participants experienced traditional high schools that they left as also being in flux upon becoming pregnant. The urban charter high school was the only school they attended that fit the second conceptual model.

#### *Emergent Themes*

Five emergent themes were identified in this study. All five themes were central to all six participants and were included in this study because of the consistency of each theme

across all interviews with all six of the participants. The interviews revealed that the participants had much commonality and faced many of the same issues in regard to the Teen Mothering Cycle.

*Variance and Cohesion within the Teen Mothering Cycle*

The interviews revealed that the participants shared many common experiences within the stages of the Teen Mothering Cycle. From the initial stage of becoming pregnant to the final stage of the cycle, becoming a mom, the mothers in this study reflected on their experiences as a mother in the context of high school and being a teenager. The participants were identifying themselves as mothers and discussing their experiences within the Teen Mothering Cycle and many of these experiences were greatly influenced by their age and their identity as students.

**Table 3. Commonalities Among Participants throughout the Teen Mothering Cycle.**

Stages	Commonalities Among Participants
<i>Becoming Pregnant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*All unmarried (6/6)</li> <li>*All Hispanic (6/6)</li> <li>*All low SES (6/6)</li> <li>*Majority from non-intact family units (5/6)</li> <li>*Romantically involved during the <i>first</i> pregnancy at the time of conception (6/6)</li> <li>*All babies' fathers were Hispanic</li> <li>*Majority lived with family member (4/6)</li> <li>*Did NOT live with baby's father (5/6)</li> <li>*Majority had <i>poor</i> school attendance (5/6)</li> <li>*Perceived family as accepting and supportive (4/6)</li> <li>*Perceived baby's father and his family as accepting and supportive of the baby (6/6)</li> <li>*Perceived baby's father as part of a romantic union (5/6)</li> <li>*Utilized birth control (0/6)</li> <li>*Perceived becoming pregnant was unintentional (5/6)</li> </ul>

<b>Table 3 Continued.</b>	
<i>Being Pregnant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*All unmarried (6/6)</li> <li>*All low SES (6/6)</li> <li>*Majority had <i>poor</i> school attendance (4/6)</li> <li>*Perceived family as accepting and supportive (4/6)</li> <li>*Perceived baby's father and his family as accepting and supportive of the baby (6/6)</li> <li>*Perceived baby's father and his family as accepting and supportive of the romantic union (5/6)</li> <li>*Lived with the baby's father (5/6)</li> <li>*Did not use governmental support such as WIC (4/6)</li> <li>*Felt charter school staff/faculty were supportive (5/6; one was not yet at the school)</li> </ul>
<i>Being a Mom</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*All unmarried (6/6)</li> <li>*All low SES (6/6)</li> <li>*Majority had <i>good</i> school attendance (4/6)</li> <li>*All experienced child care issues (6/6)</li> <li>*Perceived family as accepting and supportive (4/6)</li> <li>*Perceived baby's father and his family as accepting and supportive of the baby (6/6)</li> <li>*Perceived baby's father and his family as accepting and supportive of the romantic union (5/6)</li> <li>*Perceived baby's father as NOT being part of a romantic union (5/6)</li> <li>*Chose NOT to live with the baby's father (4/6)</li> <li>*Remained on track to graduate (5/6)</li> <li>*Felt charter school staff/faculty were supportive (6/6)</li> <li>*Felt that on-site school child care was needed (6/6)</li> </ul>

*Becoming Pregnant.* Like all humans, the participants had many similarities in the actual details of getting pregnant, but varied in their initial reactions to learning they were pregnant. Two of the six participants expressed a positive reaction to discovering they were pregnant for the first time; however, the majority of the participants still made decisions in response to their pregnancy that lead to stronger commitments to their academic success than they experienced prior to pregnancy. As the literature indicated (Berry et al., 2000) demographics alone suggested that the participants had a predisposition to becoming pregnant, which held true. This same literature also suggested that these same demographics compounded by pregnancy should have given

the participants a predilection to drop out, which did not hold true. Still, a majority of the participants had poor attendance in school when they became pregnant for the first time. All participants were unwed, Hispanic girls, from low SES backgrounds. Upon becoming pregnant a majority of the participants perceived their babies' fathers to be supportive; in addition, they viewed their own families as supportive. Five out of six of the participants considered their relationships with the fathers of their babies to be romantic when they became pregnant; although, five out of six did not live with the baby's father at that point in time. None of the six participants practiced birth control methods before their first pregnancy, but five out of six of the participants considered their first pregnancy to be "unintentional".

Angela was one of the participants who was happy to find out that she was pregnant. After having a miscarriage a few months prior to her second pregnancy, she welcomed the idea of becoming a mother. Angela was not motivated to attend school or graduate prior to becoming pregnant. Angela's response when asked how she felt about finding out she was pregnant was, "I was glad. I was happy." Of all the participants I interviewed, Angela seemed to be the most excited to talk about her baby and her pregnancy.

Unlike Angela, many of the girls were not happy to find out they were pregnant for the first time. Four of the six participants considered having abortions before affirming their decisions to carry the babies to full term. In their responses to my interview questions, I could see their feelings toward their pregnancies change in their own minds as impersonal pronouns like "it" gradually gave way to "he" or "she" as we progressed through the protocol. It was not until

later in the interview protocol that gendered pronouns actually aligned to their babies' gender. This helped to confirm the authenticity of their retellings. Even toward the end of the second interviews, only one participant actually used her baby's name in an interview and another softened to call her child mija. Part of their distance indicated that maybe even this first stage of the Teen Mothering Cycle had not been resolved fully in an emotional and cognitive sense, even though physically, they were well beyond having been pregnant. Marta's one response captured the ambivalence and the contemplation of action that was typical during the first phase of the Teen Mothering Cycle:

We knew I could become pregnant and I'm pregnant, so accept the consequences. That's when I decided to keep it and started going to the doctor and stuff like that. And one thing I was thinking about her or his future. What am I going to do now? I'm not in school. I just barely got out of trouble. I need to go back to school and that's when I enrolled here.

The majority of the participants expressed a concern about their child's future when discussing their decisions to keep the babies to full term. The participants were more influenced by the concept of taking responsibility for their actions than from any religious or cultural pressures.

*Being pregnant.* A majority of the participants continued to have poor attendance while pregnant with their first child; although, five out of six participants considered the staff and faculty at the charter high school to be supportive. One student was not yet enrolled at the campus during her pregnancy. Five out of the six participants began cohabitating with the father of their baby during their pregnancy while one participant's baby's father was in prison during the pregnancy.

Angela found out she was pregnant the summer before her senior year and used the pregnancy as a motivating factor in her schooling decisions. In Angela's words,

I think I'm glad that I got pregnant cause before, I was not coming to school and I didn't really care...Cause before then I had nothing to do just sittin' here not doing nothing and I didn't really care and now I have to do it for her. So it's just like a big old switch around.

Like Angela, Johanna had a miscarriage prior to her first full term pregnancy. Johanna also discovered she was pregnant the summer before her senior year; although, her reaction was not as positive as Angela's was. Johanna had been in a long term relationship with her previous boyfriend, but during a month long separation became pregnant with another man's baby. She was reluctant to let anyone know she was pregnant. Because of Johanna's history of illegal activities, she perceived pregnancy as something that would make her more physically vulnerable to violence and when she became pregnant she was reluctant to let anyone in her life know. As Johanna expressed,

I didn't want to tell anybody because I thought I was going to be looked at different...I didn't want to tell people that I affiliate with because I was in like ok...when I was dealing drugs I didn't want people to know I was pregnant because I didn't want them to be like, "Hey she's pregnant we can hit her in her stomach and take her stuff" or we can say "Hey we're gonna' hit you in your stomach." You know, so that's why I was so scared to be pregnant cause I was doing things that even where a guy with a gun could get robbed and now I was a girl and pregnant. Like I was like this big ol' target like I was like here take me take all my money.

Even though she was not excited at first to have a baby, she chose to carry the baby to full term and eventually accepted her pregnancy. Before getting pregnant, Johanna had enrolled in and dropped out of the charter high school three times within a two year

period. Pregnancy motivated Johanna to reenroll herself in the charter high school and commit to school through degree completion. In Johanna's words,

I never stayed longer than a couple of weeks or maybe a month and then I would leave and then I would enroll again and I would leave and I'd enroll again. Uh, so being pregnant is why I came back to school.

Many of the participants perceived getting pregnant as a turning point in their lives. The majority of the participants considered themselves to be "bad" or on the "wrong" path before their pregnancies. Half the participants had a criminal record. Marta, for example, was "doing drugs" and "getting into trouble with cops" before her pregnancy. She spent some time on house arrest shortly before she became pregnant. Marta, like most of the participants, attributed her commitment to school to her pregnancy. She expressed that getting pregnant made her mature faster than she would have if she had not gotten pregnant. Becoming a mother changed Marta's attitude toward school, allowed her to make differently oriented decisions about her life, and according to her, were "more positive decisions". According to Marta,

It motivated me a lot. Now that I see myself back you know I'm like a totally different person. Even my sister tells me, 'I can't believe you've changed so much.' I was really bad and really immature.

For the majority of the participants, attendance did not improve once they became pregnant even though they all expressed a renewed commitment to school. The primary challenges they faced while being pregnant were physical in nature. As Valerie addressed,

I had a lot of difficulties in my pregnancy. Like I couldn't walk. I had a lot of early contractions. I couldn't go to school so I had to stay home and

not go to school and do what I had to do. So all those absences that I was making I suffered because I wasn't going to graduate on time.

Five of the six participants did not intentionally get pregnant, but most of the participants used the pregnancies as a reason to recommit to school. Overall, the study found that becoming pregnant was a positive factor in the lives of the participants in regard to their educational decisions.

*Being a mom.* Being a new mom always has been met with identity and other changes, regardless of the population. These participants experienced drastic changes, many of which were substantively more challenging than becoming or being pregnant. In fact, they met challenges more difficult than they could have imagined, and at times, beyond their own understanding or comprehension of how to cope effectively with their new contexts. After becoming a mom, four of the six participants' attendance at the charter high school again improved. Although all six participants expressed issues with childcare and felt that on-site day care would have been helpful, five of the six participants were on track to graduate. While all participants continued to consider their baby's father to be supportive, five of the six participants no longer perceived their relationship with their baby's father as romantic and four of the six no longer lived with the baby's father.

The participants expressed both challenges and benefits within the Teen Pregnancy Cycle after becoming a mom. All six participants identified the following as their main challenges: childcare, limited financial resources, and limited time availability. Although all of the participants expressed love for their children; they all also expressed frustration at the demands of motherhood. One participant's frustrations and perceived fears extended into her everyday realities when her two children's baby daddy accused

her of neglect and the court revoked her custody. She decided to postpone efforts to regain custody until after she graduated, but she was currently only classified as a sophomore. While this was sad to hear, it did reaffirm the participants' strong commitments to education and degree attainment after they entered and completed the Teen Mothering Cycle.

Valerie was a senior at the urban charter high school. She enrolled in March of her senior year; she had left her previous school in the fall semester of that same year. Valerie lived with her boyfriend, who worked full time; she worked a part time job herself. Her boyfriend took care of the baby while she was at school. Valerie expressed that she thought about dropping out of school.

Sometimes there's something in me that wants to drop out because it's a lot. It's a long day. The day goes very slow. I have to take care of the baby. I have to get ready for work. Just a very long day. I think I would make more money if I wasn't in school.

Marta moved in with her boyfriend during her pregnancy, but after the baby was born, she moved to live with a friend. For the first six months of her baby's life, the father was the primary financial provider. Marta identified her biggest challenge after becoming a mom as an inability to manage her mothering responsibilities with her schooling responsibilities,

I get up around 6:00 a.m. and then around 6:15 a.m. I walk toward the bus stop over there by [the local middle school] and then from there I have 15 minutes to like walk and drop her off and come back in order to catch the bus to not be late to school. I get tired *every* day.

Of all the participants, Angela seemed to be able to balance her responsibilities the most effectively. She maintained a positive outlook on motherhood and showed no regret about becoming a mother. Angela said,

Being a mom is pretty hard sometimes, but you can get used to it.  
At the same time it's really cute watching my baby grow.

Sometimes, when Angela spoke, it seemed as if she viewed motherhood as playing house. This built-in fantasy take on life may have helped her to cope. Angela was also the only participant who, due to external supports, was allowed the *choice* to skip many of the mothering duties the other participants faced multiple times on a daily basis. Her baby's father watched her child during the day and her own mother watched the baby after school, which allowed her to "pick up the house" and "watch TV." Angela chose to preference the "fun" and "cute" aspects of her mothering.

Overall, the participants expressed that being a mother was challenging. Although they were faced with these challenges, five of the six participants remained on track to graduate and kept custody of their children. Only one of the participants was not on track to graduate and her long periods out of school caused her to get behind. Consequently, this was the only mother who lost custody of her children. Table 4 and Table 5 highlighted the main benefits and challenges of mothering expressed by the participants and the frequency and centrality of each benefit or challenges across the participants.

**Table 4. Benefits within Teen Mothering Cycle.**

Participant Benefit	Participant Frequency/Centrality		
	Central	Periphery	Removed
Improved Attendance	5/6	0/6	1/6
Improved School Comportment	4/6	1/6	1/6
Improved Citizenship (Legal Coherence)	3/6	2/6	1/6
Increased Commitment to High School Completion	5/6	1/6	0/6
Increased Academic Motivation	4/6	1/6	1/6
Improved Grades in School	4/6	0/6	2/6

**Table 5. Challenges of Teen Mothering Cycle.**

Participant Challenge	Participant Frequency/Centrality		
	Central	Periphery	Removed
Limited Access to Childcare	6/6	0/6	0/6
Limited Knowledge of Community Resources	4/6	2/6	0/6
Limited Access to Teen Specific Mothering Resources	4/6	2/6	0/6
Increased Physical Challenges of Pregnancy in a School Setting	4/6	0/6	2/6
Limited Financial Resources	6/6	0/6	0/6
Decreased Time Availability	6/6	0/6	0/6

*The Real and the Ideal Context within the Teen Mothering Cycle*

Many of the participants contradicted their own responses from one sentence to the next. When asked about their future desires, the participants seemed to switch between the reality of their situations and their ideal futures, as if mothering were not an obstacle. In many cases, the participants seemed so set on telling stories the way they wanted them to be that it created a sense of self deception. This self deception was also prominent for many of the participants in regard to their relationships with their mothers and their babies' fathers. In the first round of interviews, the majority of the participants painted a picture of harmony and support in their relationships, but in the second set of

interviews, they began to engage deeper narratives that blended the ideal and the reality of the relationships.

*Covert and overt self deception.* Many of the participants seem to struggle with balancing their pre-baby identities as teenagers with the newer acquired indemnities as teen mothers. These struggles led their narratives to include both the real and the ideal perspectives of their situations. I must note here that even the “ideals” were in fact “real” to them within their own personal realms of understanding. In many cases, the participants were not mature enough or lacked sufficient reflection time and/or constants in their lives to explore and understand the internal conflicts between what they wished for and what was. In this respect, the interviews were useful to them in better understanding their own realities. In most cases these ideal stories were told with such earnest that it seemed as if the participants actually believed they were true. In their ideal world, they were true. Part of clinging to the ideals within their minds, helped the participants, in the short-term, to keep moving forward in their own lives. Glimmers of hope, no matter how unrealistic, kept them from despair. Deep down, as the second interview uncovered, most of them knew they wore masks, even if they could not name these things.

As we covered previously, Johanna had a history of criminal activity. When Johanna found out she was pregnant, she needed advice and chose her grandmother as the family member to entrust with providing the needed guidance. Johanna stated in the interview,

I hadn't went to church in months, but like...I knew I had to....  
And I was just like she'll tell me because she knows that I am  
a...(long pause) I don't want to say I was a bad person, but I was  
kind of a bad person before I was pregnant, so she knew what I

was doing and I wanted to see her opinion on *if* she thought I could handle a baby.

Johanna's reputation on campus before her arrest and her pregnancy was that of a tough drug dealer. She was a leader at the school and students held her in high respect. She was a bright student, but did little to promote or further her own academic progress. After her pregnancy, she became what she called a "school Nazi" and she started excelling academically. Johanna struggled to stay focused and not get into trouble even though her friends were still on the same path she had chosen to leave. In the first interview, Johanna assured us that, even though she had the desire to "party" and "deal drugs" that she was no longer living "*that* lifestyle". This struggle to *create* an identity that was so drastically different from her pre-mothering identity caused Johanna to manipulate her narrative. Two weeks after the initial interview, Johanna was expelled from the charter high school for using illegal substances on campus.

*Real versus ideal relationships.* Self deception, as described above with Johanna, was especially prominent when the participants talked about their relationships with their mothers and the fathers of their babies. In the first round of interviews, it was revealed that four of the six participants were living with their babies' fathers and that they were in romantic, in addition to parenting relationships. The second interviews uncovered the changes in these relationships in that only two of the six participants were still living with their babies' fathers and only one of those two still considered the relationship to be romantic.

Mila lived with her baby's father, but did not consider the relationship romantic. In the first interview, she spoke of how supportive her "boyfriend" was and how he was excited when he found out she was pregnant. Mila did show some signs of discontent

with the relationship in the first interview, but nothing that seemed to reveal that the relationship would end anytime soon. During the second interview I asked Mila what she would want to change in her life if this were an ideal world. Mila's response was, "I don't want to be mean, but I would change my baby and not be with her dad." At this point in the interview, Mila started crying and telling me about her fear that her daughter would grow up without a father. She talked about how her brother lived across the street and how she was worried that her daughter would see her brother with his wife and kids and would feel like she was missing out on having a father. When asked where she saw herself in the future, Mila responded,

Now I think about it and I don't want to be with her dad anymore. I have been trying almost like a year being with him and he knows that I am just trying for the baby but uhm, I just see myself as separate with him and just me.

Angela also painted a picture of love and support when she talked about the father of her baby in the first interview. By the second interview Angela and her baby's father had gotten into a fight and he had moved out. Although Angela and her baby's father were not together at the time of the second interview, she expressed a desire to have a second child sometime in the future. When I asked Angela where she saw herself in the future her response was,

I just picture me and my baby. I picture him being there, but I don't know if we'll be together or not. Right now we're on the edge and we're not together.

Angela was not certain if she would be living with the baby's father in the future or if they would be together, but when I asked her if he was the person she expected to be the father of her second child she said, "Yeah. He's the one." This

revealed the ambiguity between the real and the ideal within the context of the parenting relationships.

*Perceptions of the ideal mother.* The notion of the real and the ideal carried over into the participants' mother/child relationships. This ideal versus real theme was prevalent in both the relationship the participants had with their mothers and the relationships they anticipated having with their children. Half of the participants expressed that they had positive relationships with their mothers, but all participants that did second interviews discussed things they would do differently with their children than what their mothers had done with them in order to create a more open and supportive relationship.

Valerie was one of the two participants whose mothers had a child as a teenager. Because of this, Valerie's mother was not happy about her pregnancy and refused to let the baby's father live with Valerie in her family of origin's house. Because of this, Valerie moved into her boyfriend's mother's house. Valerie talked a lot about how much she missed her family and how she wished that she could move back in with her family of origin. Although Valerie expressed that her mom would let her move back in at any time, it was clear that this transition would not be easy for her. Valerie expressed discontent in her relationship with her boyfriend and expressed the desire to leave him and move back to be with her mother. Although Valerie talked a lot about her family and how much she wanted to have a close relationship with her mom, she also expressed that she didn't think her mom believed that she would graduate. Valerie expressed very clearly what she expected her mom to be like and what her mom was actually like,

Yeah. Right now I feel like my family thinks I can't do it (graduate). Only because my mom's never really told me, 'Keep

on, you can do it.' Instead, she gets mad and cusses at me and tells me, 'Why aren't you studying!' Instead of saying, 'You need help? I'll help you.' You know like being a mom. She just never said - I never heard it from her mouth, 'Keep on, you can do it.'

*School Supports within the Context of the Teen Mothering Cycle*

Most of the participants showed marked improvement in both their commitment to and attendance in school as a result of entering and completing the Teen Mothering Cycle.

While they had to overcome many obstacles such as childcare and financial resources in order to make school a priority, they all acknowledged the benefits of getting a high school diploma.

*School Culture and Support.* All six of the participants expressed that they felt supported by the staff and faculty at the charter high school. Many acknowledged a sense of acceptance within the school community, peers included. None of the participants expressed a concern of feeling alienated in the school environment at the charter high school. Although they felt accepted and supported in the schooling environment, they all suggested that the school would better support the needs of teen mothers if it provided an on-site child care option.

As previously stated, Johanna was an on-again, off-again student at the charter high school. Once she became pregnant and refocused her attention on attaining her high school diploma, she was met with much support from the school. In her assessment,

Yeah yeah yeah--that's it and uhm like the school like enormously like I get nothin' but positive, positive, positive! It's not like hey you should get your GED you know like no way everyone's like we're gonna' get you in this program and we're gonna help you do this and we're gonna' get you graduated and then we're gonna' fill out applications and just pumpin' me up you know. Like I love this school like I love it.

Throughout the interviews, Johanna reiterated her love for the school and the faculty and staff that helped her stay on track to graduate. Programs within the school helped to support the teen mothers and connect them with community resources. Johanna was connected with a governmental program that provided free childcare for the hours she was in school and also provided parenting classes, but she acknowledged that it was hard to fit in the classes with all of her new mothering time commitments alongside some of her previous legal time obligations. In other words the program helped with childcare, but almost did not work because of the extra time it required of her. She felt that this would have worked better if she had used the childcare for work, which ended at the time it actually ended, than for school, which gave her homework and other assignments she needed to do beyond the school day. Angela, who did not use governmental programs beyond what the school offered, also felt that the culture of the school was supportive of teen mothers. According to her,

They (the school faculty and staff) helped me just by giving me advice and the counselors gave me resources about where I could go to who I could talk to. They're pretty helpful everybody at this school.

Valerie dropped out of a public high school located in the same urban geographic area as the charter campus in this study because she was displeased by the way the teachers discouraged her from graduating. Valerie expressed that the teachers would tell her she should drop out because she was a mom and would not be able to graduate. After coming to the urban charter high school she felt that,

The teachers here are real understanding. I tell them my situation and they say, 'This is what I can do to help you.' Instead of turning

their back on me and saying, 'I can't do nothing for you.' Cause they really can.

Overall, the participants felt that the culture of the school was one of acceptance and support. Other than the suggestion of proving on-site child care, the participants did not have any suggestions to improve the school to better support teen mothers. The overall participant impression of the school culture and environment was positive.

*Identity as a Student.* Most of the participants in the study had positive perceptions of themselves as students. Many of them saw school as a time of freedom from their children and a time to assert independence. In general, the participants were proud of their successes in school and were optimistic about their graduation plans.

After becoming pregnant, Johanna decided to turn her life around. She was serving a five year probation sentence that resulted from selling drugs and was pregnant at the time of arrest. Her pregnancy along with the arrest marked turning points in her life that lead her to dedicate herself to school instead of getting distracted by illegal activities. School became her safe spot and it allowed her to recreate herself as a model student instead of a drug dealer. As Johanna explained,

School is like my like transition phase. This is where I'm learning to be with my friends, but learning to be responsible. You know what I'm saying? This is where I'm learning or I'm teaching myself self-discipline. Because all my best friends before I was pregnant you know they leave they don't come back. It's not a big problem for them.

For many of the participants, school was a place where they could achieve things that they could take ownership of and be proud of their contributions and

accomplishments. For example, Amanda graduated from the charter high school directly after the second interview. During the interview she expressed,

I feel proud of myself. I'm the second one out of my dad's kids to graduate and I am proud. I'm the first one out of me and my brother and I'm very proud of myself that I did something on my own without my parents' help.

For other students, like Mila, school was frustrating because she was so dedicated to getting finished and doing her work that she felt that the other students were getting in the way of her goals. Mila was the type of student who would immediately complete any assignment as soon as it was given and who continually asked if there was anything else she could do to get ahead. In class, she would become frustrated with other students that did not take the class so seriously,

Sometimes, I get mad cause people they're like playing and for me I come to get the work done and finish earlier or like fast and some people they're like just playing around or talking about smoking...like I don't see why.

### *Influences of Family and Home Culture on the Teen Mothering Cycle*

As the participants were starting their own families they were also members of their original families, oftentimes still living in the household, and because of this transition the topic of the family came up often throughout the interviews. Not only did the participants have their babies as part of their new families but in most cases they were also tied to the families of the babies' fathers. The Teen Mothering Cycle influenced was influenced by this notion of the family because it caused them to question and identify what they considered to be their "family."

*Family and cultural trends of early pregnancy.* Throughout the literature, there were family trends preceding teen pregnancies. A trend did not emerge of family pregnancy as in this study only two of the six participants identified their mothers as having children as a teenager. However, a cultural trend of early pregnancy did emerge in the sense that five of the six participants had friends or family members who had children at an early age. Furthermore, the one student who did not have friends who shared this cultural early pregnancy trend in her friendships felt more isolated from both her friends and from other pregnant teenagers. When asked if she had friends with kids Angela said,

I have lots. I have a couple friends that have already had kids like at this school and at my other school, yeah.

Johanna also expressed that it was not just common, but the dominant normative expectation in her culture for girls to have children at an early age. Having babies as a teen was part of what being a heterosexual female was in her culture. Not meeting the cultural norm of having a baby while still a teen met with questions and stigma in Johanna's home cultural world. In her words,

Like, yeah, because all my other cousins have had babies when they were like sixteen or fifteen. One of my cousins is like 22 and has like 6 kids. [My grandfather] was like it was just a matter of time either she was gonna' have a kid or she was gonna be gay one of those... He thinks if you weren't gonna' have babies then you must be gay cause like my cousin that has all those kids she has a sister that didn't have no kids and he was like Maria must be gay she hasn't had no babies. Not that she must be responsible or she must be not ready its that she must be gay. He's a very old school cholo.

Johanna went on to explain that because her family was very "traditional" it is accepted and expected for girls to have babies when they are teenagers. As educators we must realize that "traditional" values are not constants across cultures, but change with the normative expectations of each culture. For me, a

description of “traditional” would imply that teenagers should not have babies. Johanna was very proud of the fact that she “made it to nineteen, an adult,” before she had her first child. This statement alone shows how schooling cultures influence, seep in, and come in, and mingle with home cultures creating hybrid normative expectations that leave students within the Teen Mothering Cycle caught between culture. These cultural borderlands were inherent to the Teen Mothering Cycle when there were normative differences between the home and schooling cultures, which added even greater flux to their already dynamic lives and pregnancies.

Valerie’s mother was one of the two mothers who had a child as a teenager. Her mother had her when she was sixteen and her dad left her mom when Valerie was only six months old. Her mother struggled throughout Valerie’s life being a single mom and often told her the story of how her father had left them. When Valerie was six months old, her father told her mother that he was going to work and he never returned. Valerie’s mother was disappointed when she found out Valerie was pregnant,

She was disappointed because she expected a lot more out of me. Just by thinking you know you already know what I went through. She didn’t think I would follow in her footsteps. I would finish school and not have kids until I was actually ready. It was something I wasn’t supposed to do.

Regardless of the values and the dynamics of the home culture, it affected the participants in how they viewed their own pregnancies.

*(Re)defining and (re)framings of “family”*. The ambiguity but strong presence of the family was woven into each interview. Through the interviews you could get a sense that there was an emerging notion of this new “family” with the new baby that was being balanced with the old “family” or what hooks (2000) calls the “family of origin”. The participants struggled to identify family units and much of the discourse was

contradictory as their own ideas of “family” circled and evolved. The participants were no longer sure what “family” was or how to define it within the context of the Teen Mothering Cycle.

Johanna’s story was especially influenced by this changing idea of “family”. When she first became pregnant she told her grandmother, someone she admired and saw as an “ideal” figure in her life. She looked to her grandmother for guidance about what decision to make. In Johanna’s story, she was pregnant by a man who was in jail, a man she had slept with while she was “on a break” from her long term boyfriend of three years. According to Johanna, the long term boyfriend had committed to staying with her and creating a family as if he were the father of the baby, but he was sent to prison a month before she gave birth. When she gave birth both the baby’s father and the long term boyfriend were in jail. Johanna shared,

Yeah, no actually yeah I was with him, my previous boyfriend, through the whole pregnancy. Yeah and he got locked up right before I had her and he was willing to accept her as his baby or him and her together.

Many of the participants had stories of families that were not intact and families that changed rapidly throughout the phases of the “Teen Mothering Cycle”. As Table 6 shows, the change of living situations represented changed relationships throughout the Teen Pregnancy Cycle and changed the teens’ perceptions of what “family” was. Only one of the participants came from a home culture where the mom and the dad were together and living in the same household. At the beginning of the study, four of the six participants were living with their baby’s father and considered the relationship to be romantic, which then equaled “family”. By the end of the study, only one of the participants considered the relationship she had with the baby’s father to be romantic and

even she expressed that she was considering moving out of his house and into her mom's house.

**Table 6. Participant Living Situations.**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>
Angela	Her Mother's house with her mom only	Mother and Baby's Father in Mother's house	Her Mother's house with her mom and her baby only
Jasmine	Baby's Father only in his apartment	Baby's Father only in his apartment	Her Mother and her baby only in mother's apartment
Johanna	Boyfriend (not baby's father) only in shared apartment	Boyfriend (not baby's father) in shared apartment	Her Mother's house with mother and baby and her younger brother
Marta	Sister only in sister's apartment	Baby's Father in his apartment	Friend's house with her baby
Mila	Family of origin's house with Mother, Father, two Siblings, and Baby's Father	Family of origin's house with Mother, Father, two Siblings, and Baby's Father	Family of origin's house with her Mother, Father, two Siblings, Baby's Father, and her baby
Valerie	Mother and two siblings in her mother's house	Baby's Father and his Mother and two Siblings in baby father's mother's house	Baby's Father, his Mother, his two Siblings, and her baby in baby father's mother's house

*Dynamics and Marginality Surrounding the Teen Mothering Cycle*

For many of the participants the Teen Mothering Cycle was a central part of their lives but at the same time the dynamic nature of their lives external to their identity as a mother interfered with their ability to fully cope or accept their situations. A few themes were identified consistently in the interviews that could be identified as "surrounding" the Teen Mothering Cycle. For example many of the participants had a fear of being a single mother and most of the participants were products of non-intact family units.

*Loss and Subsequent Pregnancies.* Love and family have always had a way of offsetting some of the hollowness of feelings of grief and loss. For many of the participants, their experiences with love, both family and romantic love, did not meet the ideals of love we all “learned” in childhood. Hooks, (2000) in her work *All About Love*, wrote at length about the paths people, and especially women, traveled in the hope of learning about love. She discussed how we were taught that love was inherent and “instinctive,” when in fact it needed to be “learned,” and in many cases how we needed to unlearn and (re)learn what we thought we knew about love. For the participants, motherhood was the last known and untested realm where love could have been found. More than any other myths about love, motherly love was taken as granted, as coming instinctively; but perhaps more than any other form of love, it needed the most teaching, learning, and (re)learning because of inherent power differentials—because of the participants already jaded and hurtful experience in love.

In the end, only one participant, Angela, inherited a situation that allowed her to live within the fantasy of “ideal motherly love” akin to “playing house” because her baby’s daddy and her own mother undertook many of the “motherly” responsibilities of raising her child. For the remainder of the participants, the held hope of “ideal motherly love” broke and fragmented upon the realities of giving birth and the subsequent assuming of motherly responsibilities. Yet, in some of their minds, bits and pieces of the image of the ideal mom lingered as a hurtful comparative tool. More than the typical mothering adjustments, within the Teen Mothering Cycle, these participants were burdened with labels and self-knowledge that their pregnancies and motherhood

initiations laid outside the normative realm of the ideal, because they were trying to maintain mothering and student identities simultaneously.

The participants knew that even in the concrete realm of reality that there were iterations of motherhood that existed that were easier than their own experiences. So while all new moms struggled to some extent rectifying the real and ideal worlds of mothering, these participants were far more vulnerable to self-judgment under pressure from these unreal expectations. Furthermore, the deeper their past hurts were, the more the participants relied on the hope that the myth of the “ideal love” of mothering would hold true. Hence, the more hurt they actually experienced once they discovered the depth and breadth of the gap between their own realities of motherhood and the ideal images they had held in their hearts, minds, and souls, that finally, *this child* was their entrance ticket to giving and receiving love.

Four of the six participants discussed experienced miscarriages before their babies were born. Mila, who was the only participant who revealed that she would rather not have had her baby if she was living in an ideal world, had one miscarriage before her baby and one miscarriage after her baby. Of all the participants Mila was the most regretful and expressed the most discontent when she found out she was pregnant. Mila shared with me, “I had a miscarriage in January and then, in May, I got pregnant again and that was my baby that I have.” Mila’s experience was unique because the other three participants discussed their miscarriages with tones of sadness and remorse.

Johanna had her first pregnancy when she was sixteen. Her best friend had already had a daughter and other friends of Johanna’s had children too. When we asked

Johanna who was the first person she told was about her pregnancy, she revealed that she had told her best friend. In Johanna's words,

She was excited. I had a very, very first pregnancy when I was sixteen and I miscarried after two months and she was the first person I told then and she had went and bought me baby presents and that made it hard after I miscarried.

Johanna did not want to talk anymore about the miscarriage and it was obvious by her atypical inward turned body movements that it was a hard subject for her to discuss. The normally enthusiastic teen was quiet and reserved when this topic arose. When we asked her if she ever told anyone else about the miscarriage besides her best friend she said, "No, I don't talk about that to anyone."

*Rapid Change.* The participants' lives were dynamic and ever changing. Each participant had a significant change in their life, whether it was the living situation, financial position, or relationship status, between the first and second interviews. Although these changes affected the Teen Mothering Cycle, they were external to the cycle itself.

Angela revealed in the first interview that she had a stable and supportive relationship with the father of her baby and that by the time of the second interview, she was no longer in a romantic relationship with him. Her baby's father had moved out of the house where she was living. In the second interview, Angela revealed that if this were an ideal world, she would change some things about her baby's father. She stated,

He did have a job and now he don't have a job and right now he supposedly he found a job but he won't tell me who and like he's hiding something, but I would change him basically. He's the one that I want to change.

Angela was not employed at the time of either interview and in the first interview, she expressed that she relied on the baby's father to provide financially for her baby. Also the baby's father was the primary babysitter while Angela was at school. This drastic change in her life between the first and the second interview was representative of the unstable lifestyle of all of the participants.

*Fear of Being a Single Mother.* Many of the participants revealed that they had fears of being alone. These fears led them to be pessimistic about their future romantic relationships. When asked where they saw themselves 10 and 20 years in the future, most of the participants said they imagined that they would be living by themselves with their children. Valerie was afraid, when she found out she was pregnant, that her boyfriend would leave her when she told him. She shared,

I was really scared because I thought my boyfriend was going to leave me and get scared and run off and leave it all up to me. My biggest fear was that I wasn't gonna' be a good mom.

Mila, on the other hand, was planning to leave her boyfriend and live on her own as soon as she graduated. Her fear was that her daughter would not grow up with a father and also that she would never find a man who could accept and love both her and her daughter. Mila was afraid but determined to move out on her own and raise her daughter as a single mom. She was not optimistic about finding someone to be in a relationship with in the future,

I think that that (pause) uhm...if I want to be with a guy he has to like my girl and he has to respect her and like her and like accept me for who I am with her and I don't think I'm gonna' find one like that.

Mila was afraid that she would not be a good mom and that her daughter would resent her for splitting from her baby's father.

Five of the six participants came from non-intact family units and most of them lived with their own single moms before they became pregnant. This fear of being alone and raising their children alone was probably in response to the culture in which they were raised.

Clearly, the data set was as dynamic as the participants' lives and the analyses revealed many commonalities among the participants' experiences in regard to the Teen Mothering Cycle. Even though the participants' experiences were all very unique, all five major themes were consistent across all the interviews with all six participants. The data revealed that the participants had much commonality and shared many similar experiences in regard to the Teen Mothering Cycle.

## CHAPTER V

### Conclusion

After reviewing, analyzing, synthesizing the scholarly literature and my own study's findings there was large deal of cohesion between what was known and what I found. This study also added some new questions and knowledge for the academic community to ponder and assess in further research. SmithBattle's (2007) findings held true in the context of this study in that the participants' Hispanic heritage compounded the gravitational pull toward the acceptability of not graduating, especially after becoming pregnant, which aligned with other studies (Heck & Mahoe, 2006; Van Dorn, Bowen, & Blau, 2006). These findings placed teenage mothers of minority heritage at even greater risks of high school drop out than other teenage mothers and my study helped flesh out and explain in more depth *why* this may have been.

The research found that teenage mothers received less social support, including financial and emotional support, than their non-parenting peers (Cruse, Hockaday, and McCarville, 2007). While the participants in this study did not for the most part utilize governmental or community supports, they did not perceive a lack of support from their families, their babies' daddy's families, or the school. The nature of the purposeful selection of teen mothers enrolled in the urban charter high school campus may have bolstered these perceptions. Middlemiss and McGuigan's (2005) findings that teen

pregnancy was less stigmatized in Hispanic communities may have contributed to the participants' feelings of support, but unlike Middlemiss and McGuigan the strong sense of family was not communality in these participants as the majority came from non-intact families and were starting their families in non-intact settings. These participants probably would not have benefited from home visits, because the places they called "home" were in flux through the study and the various stages of the Teen Mothering Cycle. Furthermore, our study's findings in the area of the real and ideal contexts within the Teen Mothering Cycle show that home visits might have caused pressure to have been perceived as the "ideal mom" and may have added self-deception and other hidden behaviors over truth.

Mollborn's (2007) study on support in the form of material resources, including child care and financial support, as the key factor that caused teenage mothers to drop out of high school spoke to the findings in that these extra care and support structures could have made the participants' journeys easier. Whereas, Molborn labeled these supports as a key factor, this study contradicted such notions of these supports as essential to success. While their journeys may have been harder and longer, the participants did not have Molborn's identified supports, yet they still were in school, on track to graduate with one participant actually graduating directly following the second interview. The study instead fell into the areas of Noddings' (1984) work on care and hooks' (2000) work in the area of love. Unfortunately campuses in the most need of Molborn's supports do not have the financial assets to provide them or the skilled grant writers to secure such funding so many public schools are caught in the gap between theory and practice. This study differs in teen mothers experiences of success were studied in the naturally

occurring absence of elaborate programs and monetary inputs showing that educators, schools, and teens did make a difference in teen mothers' attainment of a high school degree. This study's strength was located in local care, not removed top-down inputs.

Although there is limited literature focused on Hispanic teenage mothers exclusively, the research found that ethnicity uniquely influences the risk factors for high school drop out (Berry et al., 2000) Although this study was not able to show a greater increase or decrease in drop out risk in relationship to ethnicity it did show that the participants all had histories of dropping out of high school.

#### *Future Research*

After reviewing, analyzing, and synthesizing the scholarly literature on school support, social support, ethnic identity, and overcoming the dropout risk for teenage mothers, three recommendations for further research were identified.

Additional research needs to be conducted on Hispanic teen mothers and the unique challenges they face. An abundance of literature can be found that focuses on African American teenage mothers and literature that is focused on minority teenage mothers. This study shows the dynamic stories and perceptions from the Hispanic community and shows a need to use these voices in future research to better represent the population of teenage mothers and their interactions with educational environments.

There is limited literature available that reports on programs within schools to support teenage mothers such as child care and parent support programs (Sadler, et al. 2007). There is a need for additional research to study programs that offer school support to teenage mothers. The study found that the alternative charter high school provided an atmosphere of support and acceptance of teen motherhood. It is important to research

programs and schools that support teen motherhood so we educators can learn to provide the needed support systems to teen mothers.

There is a need for additional research on the impact of cultural influences on teens' mothering decisions specifically addressing Hispanic teens. Literature is available that addresses the cultural affect on African American teens' mothering decisions but there is no literature available that addresses Hispanic teens and the affect of cultural influences on their mothering decisions. With the increasing population of immigrants, especially in the southwestern part of the United States, it is important that we have research that explores the unique experiences of students with Hispanic cultural background and the influences this culture may have on their schooling decisions.

#### *Implications for Classroom Instruction*

Educators, parents, peers, and the fathers of teen mothers' children play the most significant roles in the lives of teenage mothers. Support in schools and in the social lives of teenage mothers is a key factor to help them attain academic success. Understanding the needs of teenage mothers and the unique needs of minority teenage mothers can help educators to better engage and retain teenage mothers in school. In addition, listening to the perspectives of teenage mothers can offer insight into the challenges they face. Schools must offer support systems to help teenage mothers in order to help them overcome challenges and succeed academically.

My study found that the biggest challenges faced by the participants included a lack of financial resources, lack of time availability, and child care issues. Educators can play a significant role in the lives of teen mothers by providing a classroom of support and creating a connection for the teen mothers to community resources and counselors

who can help them balance their responsibilities of being a mother and a student. The transition into motherhood can be difficult and in order to retain mothers in school and on track for graduation schools must provide support.

## Appendix A: Interview Protocols

### Interview #1 May not include all Qs depending on responses

1. Tell me about your life before you had your first pregnancy.
2. Tell me about your thoughts on pregnancy *before* you became pregnant.
3. How did you learn that you were pregnant? What were your thoughts?
4. Whom did you tell first (and why)? Was there anyone whom you did *not* tell or *did not want to* tell about it? Can you talk about that a little? Did your plan of whom you'd tell go in the order you expected? Can you describe how others responded to your pregnancy? How did these responses match with what you expected?
5. Talk about how you started to think about your pregnancy in relation to continuing with school. How did *official* schooling people respond to your pregnancy? How did being pregnant fit with school? What was easy about it? Hard about it?
6. What advice would you give to a girl who just found out she was pregnant? What about advice about continuing with school?
7. Tell me briefly about what decisions you made that affected you having a second pregnancy?
8. Walk me through a typical day in your life before you were pregnant, after the first pregnancy, and now. (ask each as a separate Q)
9. At what point did school factor into your life after you found out you were pregnant this time? How are things with school working out for you in having a child and being pregnant?
10. Tell me about your support systems.
11. Tell me about your thoughts on staying in school. Did you always think you would stay in school all the way toward getting your degree? What influences (influenced) your decisions about this?
12. How did your pregnancy affect your decision to enroll at this specific campus?
13. Talk about how supportive or not this campus has been in helping you maintain your decision to stay in school.
14. What are the top five things schools should and should not do in regard to students who are also moms or who will soon be moms?
15. Is there anything else you want to tell me about these topics that I did not think to ask you?

### Interview #2

1. What are the biggest challenges you face in being a mother?
2. How do you think these would be different if you were not a mother?
3. What advice would you give to schools to respond well to students who are also moms?
4. If this were an *ideal world*, meaning you could change anything to be just as you wanted it to be, how would things be different?
5. Given the same *ideal world*, what would you do after graduation?
6. When you were a little girl, what did you want to be when you grew up? How did that change over time?
7. Tell me about your goals in wanting to have more children or not?
8. What decisions are you making in life to support this goal?
9. Tell me about what you want your child/children to get out of life
10. Tell me about what you want your child/children to get out of school.
11. Tell me about where you want to be in 2 years.
12. Tell me about where you want to be in 5 years.
13. Tell me about where you want to be in 10 years. Tell me about where you want to be in 20 years.
14. Is there anything else you want to tell me about these topics that I did not ask?

## **Appendix B: Invitation to Participate in Research Study Letters**

January 2008  
IRB #2008-64258

Dear Parent or Guardian:

My name is Kristy Reeves. I am a teacher at\_\_\_\_\_. I am also a graduate student at Texas State University. I am working with Dr. Emily Summers on a study as part of my Masters Degree in Secondary Education. The study is about students' experiences with becoming a teen mother while finishing high school. I hope that my study will help families, schools, communities, and educators understand teenage mothers' experiences.

I understand that your child is pregnant or parenting and that is why she has been chosen for the study. You will find a consent form with this letter to sign if you allow your child to take part in this study. The study will last one semester and will only involve talking interview or writing.

Sincerely,

Kristy Reeves  
\_\_\_\_\_, Teacher

January 2008  
IRB #2008-64258

Dear Adult Student:

My name is Kristy Reeves. I am a teacher at \_\_\_\_\_. I am also a graduate student at Texas State University. I am working with Dr. Emily Summers on a study as part of my Masters Degree in Secondary Education. The study is about students' experiences with becoming a teen mother while finishing high school. I hope that my study will help families, schools, communities, and educators understand teenage mothers' experiences.

I understand that you are pregnant or parenting and that is why you have been chosen for the study. You will find a consent form with this letter to sign if you decide to take part in this study. The study will last one semester and will only involve talking interview or writing.

Sincerely,

Kristy Reeves  
\_\_\_\_\_, Teacher

## Appendix C: Consent Forms

January 2008  
IRB #2008-64258

### Adult Student Consent Form

My name is Kristy Reeves. I am a teacher at \_\_\_\_\_; you can contact me by phone at \_\_\_\_\_ or by email at \_\_\_\_\_. I am also a graduate student at Texas State University. I am working with Dr. Emily Summers on a study as part of my Masters Degree in Secondary Education. This research study is about students' experiences with becoming a teen mother while finishing high school.

I hope that my study will help families, schools, communities, and educators understand teenage mothers' experiences. I want to know what they feel about completing high school while learning to be a mom. One of my goals is to understand how schools can help students who have children. I understand that it may be difficult at times to talk about being a teenage mother; there will be counselors on campus if needed throughout the study.

Dr. Summers and I will interview each student in the study. There will be two interviews. Each student can also participate in an interview with other teen moms who are still in school or choose to keep a journal. Each interview will be about thirty minutes long and will cover fifteen questions. Your name and the name of the school will be left out of the report to protect your identity. This may also help you feel freer to be honest.

The discussions will allow you to reflect on your choices and allow you to review your decision-making skills and future decisions, the study models healthy life choices and provides referrals to free counseling on-campus that could benefit you along with referrals to community support programs. Because the discussions will be about emotional topics and may be difficult to discuss they may involve some stress; even though the discussion of these emotional topics could be healthy I also understand the importance of minimizing stress for teen mothers, especially if you are pregnant. For this reason I have worked closely with the counseling staff on campus to assure that they will be available if you wish to use their services.

I understand that you are pregnant or parenting and that is why you have been chosen for the study. You will find a form with this letter to sign if you want to take part in this study. I understand that this may be a sensitive topic; your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or jeopardy to your standing with the school or Texas State University. The study will last one semester and will only involve talking interview or writing. A summary of the findings will be provided to you upon completion of the study if you desire.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me \_\_\_\_\_ or by email at \_\_\_\_\_. Dr. Summers would also be happy to speak with you about any

questions or concerns you may have. Her email is \_\_\_\_\_ and her phone number is \_\_\_\_\_.

Questions about the research and research participants' rights, and research-related injuries to participants, should be directed to the IRB chairperson, Dr. Lisa Lloyd, \_\_\_\_\_, and to the OSP Administrator, Ms. Becky Northcut, \_\_\_\_\_.

### Adult Student Consent Form

\_\_\_\_\_ will participate in a study about understanding the experiences teenage mothers who are still in school. I have read the attached letter. I understand whom I can contact if I have questions. I also understand that I can stop participating at any time.

By signing this form I agree to participate in this study which will include two interviews, an optional focus group, and an optional journal. The data from the study will be kept for one year in Dr. Summers's locked office within a locked a staffed suite at Texas State University. The collected information may become part of a publication. I understand that my identity will be kept out of the study. The consent forms will be kept separate from the data and will be stored in a locked file cabinet at \_\_\_\_\_ for one year.

\_\_\_\_\_ Adult Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Kristy Reeves (Researcher)

\_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Summers (Researcher)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

Participant (Student) Consent Form

\_\_\_\_\_ will participate in a study about understanding the experiences teenage mothers who are still in school. I have read the attached letter. I understand whom I can contact if I have questions. I also understand that I can stop participating at any time.

By signing this form I am agreeing to participate in this study. The collected information may become part of a publication. I understand that my identity will be kept out of the study.

\_\_\_\_\_ Your full name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

October 2007  
 IRB #2008-64258

### Parent Consent Form

My name is Kristy Reeves. I am a teacher at \_\_\_\_\_; you can contact me by phone at \_\_\_\_\_ or by email at \_\_\_\_\_. I am also a graduate student at Texas State University. I am working with Dr. Emily Summers on a study as part of my Masters Degree in Secondary Education. This research study is about students' experiences with becoming a teen mother while finishing high school.

I hope that my study will help families, schools, communities, and educators understand teenage mothers' experiences. I want to know what they feel about completing high school while learning to be a mom. One of my goals is to understand how schools can help students who have children. I understand that it may be difficult at times to talk about being a teenage mother; there will be counselors on campus if needed throughout the study.

Dr. Summers and I will interview each student in the study. There will be two interviews. Each student can also participate in an interview with other teen moms who are still in school or choose to keep a journal. Each interview will be about thirty minutes long and will cover fifteen questions. Your child's name and the name of the school will be left out of the report to protect their identity. This may also help your child feel freer to be honest.

The discussions will allow your child to reflect on her choices and allow her to review her decision-making skills and future decisions, the study models healthy life choices and provides referrals to free counseling on-campus that could benefit your child along with referrals to community support programs. Because the discussions will be about emotional topics and may be difficult for your child to discuss they may involve some stress; even though the discussion of these emotional topics could be healthy for your child I also understand the importance of minimizing stress for teen mothers, especially if your child is pregnant. For this reason I have been working closely with the counseling staff on campus to assure that they will be available if your child wishes to use their services.

I understand that your child is pregnant or parenting and that is why she has been chosen for the study. You will find a form with this letter to sign if you allow your child to take part in this study. I understand that this may be a sensitive topic; your child's participation is voluntary and she may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or jeopardy to her standing with the school or Texas State University. The study will last one semester and will only involve talking interview or writing. A summary of the findings will be provided to you or your child upon completion of the study if you desire.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at \_\_\_\_\_ or by email at \_\_\_\_\_. Dr. Summers would also be happy to speak with you about any questions or concerns you may have. Her email is \_\_\_\_\_ and her phone number is \_\_\_\_\_.

Questions about the research and research participants' rights, and research-related injuries to participants, should be directed to the IRB chairperson, Dr. Lisa Lloyd, \_\_\_\_\_, and to the OSP Administrator, Ms. Becky Northcut, \_\_\_\_\_.

Parent Consent Form

\_\_\_\_\_ will participate in a study about understanding the experiences teenage mothers who are still in school. I have read the attached letter. I understand whom I can contact if I have questions. I also understand that my child can stop participating at any time.

By signing this form you give permission for your child to participate in this study which will include two interviews, an optional focus group, and an optional journal. The data from the study will be kept for one year in Dr. Summers's locked office within a locked a staffed suite at Texas State University. The collected information may become part of a publication. I understand that my child's identity will be kept out of the study. The consent forms will be kept separate from the data and will be stored in a locked file cabinet at \_\_\_\_\_ for one year.

\_\_\_\_\_ Your child's full name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_ Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Kristy Reeves (Researcher)

\_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Summers (Researcher)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

Participant (Student) Consent Form

\_\_\_\_\_ will participate in a study about understanding the experiences teenage mothers who are still in school. I have read the attached letter. I understand whom I can contact if I have questions. I also understand that I can stop participating at any time.

By signing this form I am agreeing to participate in this study. The collected information may become part of a publication. I understand that my identity will be kept out of the study.

\_\_\_\_\_ Your full name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

January 2008  
IRB #2008-64258

### Student Assent Form

My name is Kristy Reeves. I am a teacher at \_\_\_\_\_; you can contact me by phone at \_\_\_\_\_ or by email at \_\_\_\_\_. I am also a graduate student at Texas State University. I am working with Dr. Emily Summers on a study as part of my Masters Degree in Secondary Education. This research study is about students' experiences with becoming a teen mother while finishing high school.

I hope that my study will help families, schools, communities, and educators understand teenage mothers' experiences. I want to know what they feel about completing high school while learning to be a mom. One of my goals is to understand how schools can help students who have children. I understand that it may be difficult at times to talk about being a teenage mother; there will be counselors on campus if needed throughout the study.

Dr. Summers and I will interview each student in the study. There will be two interviews. Each student can also participate in an interview with other teen moms who are still in school or choose to keep a journal. Each interview will be about thirty minutes long and will cover fifteen questions. Your name and the name of the school will be left out of the report to protect your identity. This may also help you feel freer to be honest.

The discussions will allow you to reflect on your choices and allow you to review your decision-making skills and future decisions, the study models healthy life choices and provides referrals to free counseling on-campus that could benefit you along with referrals to community support programs. Because the discussions will be about emotional topics and may be difficult to discuss they may involve some stress; even though the discussion of these emotional topics could be healthy I also understand the importance of minimizing stress for teen mothers, especially if you are pregnant. For this reason I have worked closely with the counseling staff on campus to assure that they will be available if you wish to use their services.

I understand that you are pregnant or parenting and that is why you have been chosen for the study. You will find a form with this letter to sign if you want to take part in this study. I understand that this may be a sensitive topic; your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or jeopardy to your standing with the school or Texas State University. The study will last one semester and will only involve talking interview or writing. A summary of the findings will be provided to you upon completion of the study if you desire.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at \_\_\_\_\_ or by email at \_\_\_\_\_. Dr. Summers would also be happy to speak with you about any questions or concerns you may have. Her email is \_\_\_\_\_ and her phone number is \_\_\_\_\_.

Questions about the research and research participants' rights, and research-related injuries to participants, should be directed to the IRB chairperson, Dr. Lisa Lloyd, \_\_\_\_\_, and to the OSP Administrator, Ms. Becky Northcut, \_\_\_\_\_.

Student Assent Form

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\_\_\_\_\_ Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Kristy Reeves (Researcher)

\_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Summers (Researcher)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

Participant (Student) Consent Form

\_\_\_\_\_ will participate in a study about understanding the experiences teenage mothers who are still in school. I have read the attached letter. I understand whom I can contact if I have questions. I also understand that I can stop participating at any time.

By signing this form I am agreeing to participate in this study. The collected information may become part of a publication. I understand that my identity will be kept out of the study.

\_\_\_\_\_ Your full name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

## Appendix D: Transcribed Interviews

### Transcribed Interview 1: Angela

- 1) K: So can you tell me a little bit about your life before you had your first pregnancy?
- 2) G: My first pregnancy I was in school. I had trouble making it but I was in school. I was trying to keep my grades up. I didn't know I was pregnant at the time. I was working with my mom. And um, it was an easy normal life what teenagers going to school getting good grades. And then when I found out I was pregnant I went to the doctors 'cause I was feeling sick. I was having a lot of nausea and I didn't know what it was and the doctor told me I was pregnant but at the same time he told me my body wasn't capable of having a pregnancy. That I was still too young and it was a possibility I was gonna have a miscarriage. It was true. I did have a miscarriage. I had it April 14. It was early in the morning I had a miscarriage. It was painful.
- 3) K: Was that April 14, 2007? Last year?
- 4) G: Yeah 2007. Last year.
- 5) K: How old were you?
- 6) G: I was 17.
- 7) K: How did you feel about that experience?
- 8) G: It was painful. It was so sad because I didn't know it was gonna happen to me - that I was gonna have a miscarriage so it was sad. There was a lot of pain.
- 9) K: After you had that miscarriage did you start thinking after that you wanted to have another baby?
- 10) G: Not really. No 'cause it was too much. But then again when I had my surgery back in '05 the doctors told me there was a possibility I can't have kids and to me it was like I want one. And after that before I had a miscarriage and thought I was pregnant I was happy. And then I had it and then after I had my miscarriage I was like maybe it's not meant for me to have children until later on in life. I was planning on having children but not too soon. I was planning in like a year or two.

- 11) K: Like after high school?
- 12) G: Yeah, but after high school after I go to college and all that. But I didn't I had a baby. I was pregnant again like in June or July.
- 13) K: So you found out in June you were pregnant with the baby that you just had? How did you feel when you found out?
- 14) G: I was glad. I was happy.
- 15) K: You were happy?
- 16) G: Yeah I was happy.
- 17) K: Can you talk just a little bit about what you thought about pregnancy before you got pregnant for the very first time?
- 18) G: Well I thought that for women being pregnant it was gonna be hard because they don't get what they need. I thought that how they gonna do it financial and how they gonna support it.
- 19) K: Did you ever do anything to try to prevent getting pregnant or did you and your partner talk about it?
- 20) G: No me and my partner didn't talk about it. It was unexpected. We didn't plan about it or nothing. Just unexpected.
- 21) K: So when you found out you were pregnant this time how did you learn that you were pregnant?
- 22) G: The symptoms. I was having a lot of nausea. I was waking up with headaches and morning sickness like throughout the whole pregnancy I was having morning sickness bad. I was like, "Mom I'm pregnant."
- 23) K: Did you take a test after that?
- 24) G: Yeah I took a test. I took two tests and yeah I was pregnant. I called my doctor and I told her if I could take one of their tests and yeah I was pregnant.
- 25) K: And so you said you were really happy when you found out? Who was the first person you told when you found out?
- 26) G: My mom. Well I told it in front of my mom and my boyfriend. They were in the same room so I told both of them and they were like, "You're pregnant?" They were surprised and shocked.

- 27) K: And how did they react?
- 28) G: My boyfriend was kind of nervous because it was his first child too so he was kind of nervous. My mom was like, "Again?" But she stood by my side the whole time.
- 29) K: Was the first time when you had the miscarriage and this time the same?
- 30) G: Yea. Well the first time my mom was really mad she was disappointed. But then again she wasn't really that mad.
- 31) K: Was there anyone else you told after you found out?
- 32) G: Yeah I told my grandma. Well she found out by my mom. When I was like 5 months that's when I told my dad. Because on my dad's side - I don't know they're pretty strict and they like to gossip. My sisters like to gossip about everybody. So I just told my dad and my step mom and my little brother but my brother told everybody and they all calling me, "Amanda you pregnant, Amanda you pregnant, is it true?" I was like, "Yes yes how did you know? How did you know?" But they weren't really talking about me that much because at the same time my sister in law was pregnant so they were talking about her a lot. They weren't talking about me.
- 33) K: How did most people react in your family?
- 34) G: They were glad. They were happy. This was my dad's first grandchild so - as the girl. He has four grandchids but they're all boys. So this is the first girl so he was pretty excited. He was pretty happy.
- 35) K: Was there anyone you didn't want to tell about the pregnancy?
- 36) G: No. At first I didn't want to tell my dad, but I told him anyway when I was five months.
- 37) K: Do your parents live together?
- 38) G: They're separated. They're still married but they're separated.
- 39) K: So you're closer to your mom?
- 40) G: I'm closer to my mom than my dad, but I live with my mom. I talk to my dad everyday how I'm doing how the baby's doing and everything. I talk to him like he still lives with us.

- 41) K: That's cool. Can you talk just a little bit about how you thought about being pregnant and being in school and how those two work together?
- 42) G: Well at first I thought I was not going to be able to go to school because I was feeling a lot of sick. I was feeling sick most of the time so on those days I didn't want to get up and go to school, but my mom and my boyfriend reminded me you need to go to school you need to graduate. So every night I just think about it should I should I not but I wake up and gotta go anyway. It's pretty hard to do. The first stages of pregnancy are hard because you get sick a lot, most girls get sick. And so it's kinda hard as soon as you getting closer to the stages and closer to your due date. So it's kinda hard to go to school and being pregnant until after.
- 43) K: Until after you have the baby. Then everything changes?
- 44) G: Yeah.
- 45) K: So both your boyfriend and your mom were supportive of you staying in school?
- 46) G: Yeah
- 47) K: Cool. If you had a friend who got pregnant right now what advice would you give her?
- 48) G: What advice...
- 49) K: Anything about school in particular?
- 50) G: Yeah, if she was in school or he was in school and got pregnant I would just tell her yeah you might be pregnant and go through a lot of stages during pregnancy but also you gotta remind yourself to keep your head in school. That's the one thing that most girls don't do - they end up dropping out. They put school on the side while they're at homing doing nothing just going through the stages. I would tell them it's good for you to go to school while you can.
- 51) K: Well you kind of talked a little bit about before you were pregnant. You had a normal situation you would go to school and go home. Can you talk a little bit of what your life is like now that you have the baby?
- 52) G: I wake up in the morning around 7. I make her bottle before I leave and I get everything ready for my boyfriend so he can babysit throughout the day.
- 53) K: He watches her?

- 54) G: Yeah 'cause he goes to work at night. So I make sure he has everything then I get ready. I make sure she has her stuff first. I get ready and come to school for the four hours of school then he picks me up or I take the car and I come home. I watch my baby sleeping. She's just lying in her crib. I just clean up around the house if there's anything I need to do at the house to do. Me and my boyfriend always take off to his sister's house go over there. Right now at our house their ain't no a/c so it's pretty hot. So we go to his sister's house and just kinda hang around over there. This is her first niece so she loves her more than anything. By about five we come home and he goes to work at six. And I be watching her throughout the day throughout the night until my mom comes home. When my mom comes home she takes the baby away from me. She takes her in the other room and plays with her. I'm in the living room all by myself watching TV.
- 55) K: So she gives you a break?
- 56) G: Yeah.
- 57) K: That's nice.
- 58) G: Yeah. Every night.
- 59) K: Do you see any big challenges that you have now that you didn't have before?
- 60) G: I miss hanging out with my friends. Since she's so little I get paranoid like if I go to my friend's house I be thinking about is she o.k.? I hope my mom's doing this right or I hope my boyfriend is doing this right? If I go to my friend's house it's like I want to go home already. I've been there for five minutes and I'm like I need to go home I need to call or something. Before I didn't worry about it. I wasn't pregnant at the time. Now I'm like I need to go home because she's so little I need to be there.
- 61) K: Now that you have a baby what's the hardest part about coming to school?
- 62) G: Right now? To me I don't feel like nothing is hard right now. We only have three weeks left of school and I'm already graduating. I feel like I accomplished a lot by just being pregnant and going to school. Going to school's not really hard no more like it used to be.
- 63) K: Do you have any problems like attendance?
- 64) G: No. Except yesterday. I missed yesterday because I was sick. I have no attendance problems. I'm just getting my credits together and making sure my grades are good.

- 65) K: You were on Homebound recently? So when you came back was that an easy transition?
- 66) G: Yeah. I came back on time. I knew what I needed to do. I'm already caught up in all my classes. I was way ahead of them. Right now is a good time for me because I'm really caught up on my classes.
- 67) K: Good that's great.
- 68) K: When did you enroll in this school?
- 69) G: I enrolled back in 2006.
- 70) K: So you were already enrolled here before you got pregnant and all that? Is there anything this school did to help you or is there anything they could have done to be more supportive?
- 71) G: They helped me just by giving me advice and the counselors gave me resources about where I could go to who I could talk to. They're pretty helpful everybody at this school.
- 72) K: If you could list the top five things that any school could do to make the life of a teen mother easier what would suggest?
- 73) G: Um...
- 74) K: Just five things. Like if you could tell the principal these are the five things that would help me out being a mom what would you recommend?
- 75) G: When I was first pregnant I was so worried about this. I was so worried. Number one thing is tell me what I need to do first.
- 76) K: Some sort of class on pregnancy or something like that?
- 77) G: Like give me a review of what I should I do when I was pregnant. Tell me who I could go to and tell which doctors to see. Give me resources basically.
- 78) K: Did you find those resources in other outlets since you didn't find it here at school?
- 79) G: No all the resources I found were for the counselors at this school. They gave me the resources I didn't go no where else. Well besides my mom. My mom said her friend knew some doctors. I would rather the counselors here give me a packet of whose the best doctors or whose the best pediatricians for my baby and stuff like that so when the time do come I can have an appointment.

80) K: So what other things could this school do to help?

81) G: I don't know they really did help me a lot.

82) K: How was your Homebound experience?

83) G: It was like a normal day. It was my first Homebound. At first it was awkward having a stranger in the house. But then once I got used to it was like I was in class. Once he came over my mom had my baby in her room and it was quiet and it was like I was in class. It was fun.

84) K: It was fun?

85) G: Yeah.

86) K: So when the Homebound instructor came you actually did do your work?

87) G: The first day he came he gave me the TAKS test. I was like oh my God I don't remember none of the TAKS test.

88) K: So you had to take it?

89) G: Twice. Back in March and just recently in April.

90) K: So both of those landed during your Homebound?

91) G: Yeah.

92) K: Oh wow.

93) K: Is there anything else you want to talk about?

94) G: Being a mom is pretty hard sometimes but you can get used to it. At the same time it's really cute watching my baby grow. She started grabbing at toys. She's kinda start sitting up picking up things and lifting her head. It's cute but it can be hard at times.

95) K: It seems like you have support?

96) G: Yeah I have a lot of support on my mom's side and my dad's side

97) K: So you're living with your mom and your boyfriend is living there too?

98) G: Yeah.

- 99) K: Does he help you financially?
- 100) G: Yeah. Since I'm not working right now he's the one pulling the weight between both of us me and my baby. It's o.k. for now because when school's out I'm going to look for another job and I'm going to be helping out too.
- 101) K: How do you think a job will fit into your schedule? How do you plan to balance that?
- 102) G: Since he's working like six to three in the morning delivering stuff. I was thinking I would work in the mornings and he would babysit in the mornings and I would get off in the afternoon before he goes to work and I could baby-sit when he goes to work. But it could be reversed. Right now he's saying he don't like the job he's working so he may get a day job and if he gets a day job then I'll find a night job. Either way we'll work it out.
- 103) K: What's his reaction to being a dad?
- 104) G: He loves it. He's so attached to her. He has recordings of her talking to her on the phone. Like she talks like baby talk. He had thousands of recordings of her talking to him. He loves her so much.
- 105) K: That's cool. Thank you for doing this interview with me. Is there anything else you want to talk about?
- 106) G: No.
- 107) K: We'll do a second interview and also keep the journal we'll take all that information and compile it for research.

## Interview 2: Angela

- 1) K: Now we're recording. Has anything changed since the last time we talked?
- 2) A: Yeah, a lot has changed. My baby she just started to hold her toys yesterday...
- 3) K: Awe.
- 4) A: I put her in her bouncer and I gave her her little rattle and she actually reached out and grabbed it and started playing with it herself.
- 5) K: Was that the first time she had done something like that?
- 6) A: Yeah and when I fed her her bottle last night cause I don't hold her I put her in her bottle so she can sit up and eat, she actually grabbed her bottle for some reason. She grabbed it on the side and she was [OC: unsure of words] and I put a pillow under it and everything and she was just sitting there holding her own bottle...
- 7) K: Awe.
- 8) A: And I'm like for a three month old she's smart.
- 9) K: That's cool, anything else change in your life?
- 10) A: No, she's just holding her toys.
- 11) K: Yeah. What do you think are the biggest challenges that you are facing now as a mom?
- 12) A: Making sure she's getting fed. That's one thing cause when you feed a baby you don't know how much they need to be fed so I only feed her six ounces and when she cried in like two hours or three hours I'm like is she still hungry or does she want to go to sleep. You need to [OC: unsure of words] you need to read between the lines and it's kind of hard.
- 13) K: Is there anything about school that's making things difficult?
- 14) A: No school's like out of the way already.
- 15) K: You're kind of done with that cause you're graduating. And what are your plans for...
- 16) A: Right now I'm planning on if I when I get my diploma I'm planning on at the DV jail there hiring for people with, for receptionists for people at the front desk on the computer a lot and they pay sixteen dollars an hour. And my friend told me

that they were hiring and if not I'm going to go to Target with my mom cause she told the lady that I'm looking for a job. So I'm just going to get a job for the meantime cause I don't know what I'm want to do. I don't know if I want to go to college or if I want to go to ACC. Just right now cause I need to make some money for my baby right now so.

17) K: What do you think are going to be the hard things about working right now?

18) A: Just finding someone to babysit cause I know I can work and since I don't have school no more I just gotta find someone to babysit around my schedule and another person's schedule.

19) K: Do you have people in your life that you think you could rely on?

20) A: I could rely on my mom but sometimes she can't cause she works too but other than that I don't know who else.

21) K: Uhm, I don't know if you can picture this but if you could what do you think your life would be like right now if you weren't a mother?

22) A: If I weren't a mother? It would be like like less stress. Less things to do basically I wouldn't have to worry about another human being.

23) K: What do you think you would be doing this summer if...

24) A: Right now, be like going to places, going to friend's house, going to other family member's house. I could still kind of do that with my baby but it's gonna be hard to carry it's gonna be hard, a little bit difficult.

25) K: To take her places?

26) A: Yeah.

27) K: Uhm, well now that you're graduating and you've been through some of the challenges that you've talked about, what advice would you give to the school to help them respond to mothers who are in school?

28) A: What advice would I give to the school? Uhm, just like to never give up just keep going basically.

29) K: To the school?

30) A: To the school so when they come across another teenage mom who is struggling they can just tell them to move forward cause everything is going to be alright cause at first I thought I was, I didn't know what to do, I didn't know who to

talk to so I went to some of the counselors and they were telling me what other girls were telling them and what they were going through. They passed it on to me and they told me to move forward and that everything was going to be ok...

31) K: Did hearing other stories about other teen moms help you through it?

32) A: Yeah.

33) K: That's cool, if this were like a perfect world and you could change anything that you wanted what do you think you would change and how do you think things would be different for you?

34) A: Uhm, I would change not nothing really just her dad. Yeah he's just like, I don't know, he's not being supportive right now cause he doesn't have a job and...

35) K: Cause the last time we talked he did have a ...

36) A: He did have a job and now he don't have a job and right now he supposedly he found a job but he won't tell me who and like he's hiding something but I would change him basically. He's the one that I want to change.

37) K: And how would you change things?

38) A: Well, I would make him understand more, make him realize his priorities. Right now he has in his head all messed up. Make him, show him that his daughter's the most important that when she needs something he needs to be there and to provide as well I am. That's what I would tell him.

39) K: Has it been a lot different for you know that he doesn't have a job?

40) A: Yeah, it's been a lot different because it's there's days when she needs water and I don't have no money to go well my dad before he left out the country he loaned me \$300 for graduation and our senior trip but I have \$100 to my mom and right now it's like I'm broke and I was like when I went on the senior trip I was like where's all my money? I'm spending it and I can't cause mija needs diapers, needs this and I was like I need to budget a little bit so it's kind of hard without him so I'm still gonna work through it. Even nmy mom when she can when she gets a paycheck she will she goes and buy her stuff too.

41) K: Yeah?

42) A: Yeah. So either way she still get her stuff one way.

43) K: Are you and your boyfriend still living together?

- 44) A: No we have uh, we got into an argument over some dumb stuff and so he decided to move out to his sisters and to me I felt like that's the best thing he done cause when we live together I felt like it wasn't workin' out and him and my mom they would get off and on off and on arguing so for him it's to me. He calls every day to check up on the baby and he calls to see how I'm doing so like this is what I've been wanting. This is how we met and this is how it used to be him living somewhere else and just calling each other and to me I feel like that's the best way for us to get along.
- 45) K: So you weren't living together before the baby?
- 46) A: Before the baby we were. We were living together for a couple of months and after until now just recently he moved out.
- 47) K: How are you guys dealing with him seeing her and stuff like that is it...
- 48) A: Right now he's seeing her just the weekends cause the weekdays he doesn't have a car to come get her and stuff like that so he comes to see her on the weekdays and that's fine as long as you see her and she's not forgetting about you. That's all that matters. You can come anytime during the week that you can, nobody's stopping you, you can still come. He just chooses to see her on the weekends and that's fine with me.
- 49) K: That's cool. Uhm, do you remember when you were a little girl what you wanted to be when you grew up?
- 50) A: Uhm, I wanted to be a dancer. [OC: laughs]
- 51) K: Yeah.
- 52) A: I wanted to be like Selena, singer and dancer. Cause my mom said I had the long hair and Selena's bangs and she said you're a little Selena, you should become a singer and dancer so I was throughout the whole time I was dancing at my dad's parties when he had parties I'd be dancing and then in high school in middle school in high school I was in choir singing. My dad he says you're still Selena. I'm like no I'm not I had a baby, I'm not Selena no more.
- 53) K: That's cute. Do you remember how that changed over time or...
- 54) A: It changed cause I didn't feel like doing it no more. I just got distracted with friends and other guys and get sidetracked.
- 55) K: And when you think about the future what are your goals for having more kids? Have you thought about that or...

56) A: Uh huh. Well, I do want to have another baby. I want a boy but I want to wait until my daughter is in school and maybe have when my financial stuff is all fine and I'm having a stable job and a stable home. That's when I think I'll decide to have another baby.

57) K: When you think about that time when you have another baby do you picture you being with the father of your baby now or...

58) A: No, I just picture me and my baby. I picture him being there but I don't know if we'll be together or not. Right now we're on the edge and we're not together.

59) K: Is he the person that you think about having a second baby with?

60) A: Yeah. He's the one.

61) K: Are you doing anything now to prevent having another baby?

62) A: Uh huh. I'm on birth control. I don't want to have another baby.

63) K: So you are on birth control?

64) A: Umhum. [OC: yes]

65) K: So uh, now we're going to start talking just a little about what you want your daughter to get out of life. Just overall how do you, what do you want her to like...

66) A: Well, I want her to learn what I know, what my mom taught me, how I was raised. To go to school and be somebody and don't judge other people and don't do bad things. I want her to learn all that so she will be successful even more than what I could be cause my mom she didn't go to high school, she didn't get a diploma and she's proud of me being a grad-her first graduate student I mean daughter and I want to feel the same, I want my daughter to be the first daughter to graduate. [OC: phone rings]

67) K: So, you had a good relationship with your mom growing up?

68) A: Uh huh. [OC: yes]

69) K: Do you model your relationship with your daughter on the one you have with your mom?

70) A: Uh huh, yeah. I want my daughter to now that everything, whatever she is doing she can always call and tell me and I won't get mad or like other mother's do. I want her to know that she could tell me anything and she can come to me with any type of problem she is going through cause that's how I was. I went to my mom when

I was going through a lot in school or if kids were picking on me I'd tell my mom I'd tell her anything and that's how I want her to be with me she can tell me anything and everything and I won't say anything. Even with personal issues she could come and tell me.

71) K: That's cool, uhm do you know how old your mom was when she had her first child?

72) A: My mom was like around 25, 24 or 25 she waited that long cause she-she waited that long until she had me.

73) K: Does she ever talk to you about that decision that she made to wait that long?

74) A: Yeah she told me that she waited so long to have kids, she said she waited until she was eighteen until she first had sex and she even before that she said she waited so long and I always asked my mom how come you waited that long and she said cause she seen my sisters having kids and I see what they were going through and I don't want to go through that when I'm in school cause my aunts and both of my aunts they had kids, cause my mom is their younger sister she saw what they were going through when they were doing all of their illegal stuff and what they were going through in high school and stuff and she didn't want to go through that especially when my grandpa got after them and not at my mom. My mom was all the innocent one so my mom knew better so she decided not to do anything. She decided to wait and wait until she met my dad and that's when they had me. So they had me and my mom and my dad they had me and my brother. They had my brother a year later.

75) K: That's cool and uhm, do you have any friends that have had children while in high school?

76) A: Uh huh, I have lots. I have a couple friends that have already had kids like at this school and at my other school, yeah.

77) K: When you think about your daughter being in school, what do you want her to get out of it?

78) A: Uhm, I just I just want her to get her education, I just want her to be smart and I want her to be talented and everything. I'm not going to push her and tell her but I want her to do it. I don't want her to slack off. I don't want her to be all lazy. I want her to be in sports and do things that I couldn't do.

79) K: Now it's just like, we're going to do a series of where do you see yourself at different points in your life? The first one is where do you see yourself in two years?

- 80) A: In two years? I want to be, me have my own car, me have my own apartment and everything; and just me supporting my daughter. That's what I see.
- 81) K: So just you and your daughter in an apartment? What do you think you'll be doing on a daily basis?
- 82) A: Probably I'll be going to work and have her dad take care of her while I'm at work every day and that's all I see for now.
- 83) K: But you don't see living with the father?
- 84) A: Not yet, not any time soon. Not until I'm ready.
- 85) K: And what about five years from now?
- 86) A: Uhm, five years?
- 87) K: So she'll be five years old.
- 88) A: She'll be five years old, she'll be in school. She'll be in school and I'll have a job...
- 89) K: And you'll be 24?
- 90) A: In five more years? Yeah, I'll be 24. I would probably be still talking to her dad basically cause we're not stopping. We always gotta talk and I think in five years if everything works out fine we could probably be moved in. I want my apartment cause I don't trust him getting his own stuff. I rather have the apartment in my own name and everything and me dealing with all the financial stuff cause I think he's not too responsible. I think he's just go out there and make the money and give it to me.
- 91) K: So you think in five years you'd have your own place and be settled and have him move in?
- 92) A: Uhm huh.
- 93) K: Sometime around then. And what about ten years from now?
- 94) A: I don't know. I don't know that's long. You got me thinking. In ten years the same old thing but probably another child...
- 95) K: Yeah?
- 96) A: Probably.
- 97) K: And there's one more-20 years?

- 98) A: 20 years? I'll be dead. Just playing. [OC: laughs]
- 99) K: So she'll be 20.
- 100) A: I'll be retired probably.
- 101) K: How old will you be in 20 years?
- 102) A: Now it's 2008. In 20 years that would be what 2010, no 2020?
- 103) K: 2028.
- 104) A: 2028 I would be like I don't know uhm, like my thirties or forties somewhere around there.
- 105) K: Like 39 probably.
- 106) A: Uh huh like 39. I will be retired and let S [OC: baby's name] do all the work for me.
- 107) K: So you picture your daughter starting to take care of you 20 years from now?
- 108) A: Uh huh. Yeah.
- 109) K: Well, those are all of our questions. Do you have anything else you want to talk about?
- 110) A: No, that was it.
- 111) K: And how do you feel about graduating now?
- 112) A: I feel proud of myself. I'm the second one out of my dad's kids to graduate and I am proud. I'm the first one out of me and my brother and I'm very proud of myself that I did something on my own without my parent help.
- 113) K: Do you think you would feel differently about it if you hadn't had your daughter this year?
- 114) A: No, to me I felt, I think I'm glad that I got pregnant cause before I was not coming to school and I didn't really care and now since I've been on homebound and I had that teacher helping me with my work and just like it made me realize I got to do this. I have to graduate for my daughter. Cause before then I had nothing to do just sittin here not doing nothing and I didn't really care and now I have to do it for her. So it just like a big old switch around.

- 115) K: That's cool. Ok, well thanks for doing this.
- 116) A: You're welcome.

## Interview 1: Johanna

- 1) K: Are we ready? Ok, so the first one is tell me about your life before you had your first pregnancy.
- 2) J: Uhm, crazy uh wild not [OC: not sure of words]
- 3) K: And what were your thoughts about pregnancy before you got pregnant?
- 4) J: Uhm, I never thought about it because I've never seen myself as a mom.
- 5) K: Really?
- 6) E: Can we go back to the first question? Were these words that you would have used at the time or is that reflectively looking back?
- 7) J: No, probably words that I would have described myself at that time. I knew I was having fun and I loved being crazy [OC: said longingly and eyes went back and to the left and had a big smile].
- 8) E: Do you miss it?
- 9) J: A lot of time.
- 10) K: Does it make it harder since you are in school?
- 11) J: What do you mean?
- 12) K: Like thinking about how you were before and how you have to be now?
- 13) J: No actually like school is like my like transition phase. This is where I'm learning to be with my friends but learning to be responsible. You know what I'm saying? This is where I'm learning or I'm teaching myself self-discipline. Because all my best friends before I was pregnant you know they leave they don't come back. It's not a big problem for them.
- 14) E: They leave to go...
- 15) J: At lunch to go smoke or whatever and it's like keeping myself here, I think school is like a really good think for me, its helping me. I get to be around my friends and I get to be learning you know. I get to be doing something good and it's great because I get to be like stay with me at school this is our only time. Let's be without my baby. You know because if we are chillin' after school we have the baby with us. And that's fine and all but it's nice to have some time alone. Oh yeah they hate me, I'm like a school Nazi.
- 16) K: So, the next question is, how did you learn that you were pregnant?

17) J: I was throwing up a lot and I just had a thought. It was in the back of my mind but I pushed it back too much. I wouldn't think about it. I wouldn't be like this could be it because I've had other experiences when I was like man is there something wrong with me? But this was like-I was just dreading to go take a test. I bought a Dollar Store test for a dollar and I was like alright this is gonna' tell me right here. I knew it was probably very inaccurate but I was like now this is gonna' tell me and if it says no I was gonna' be like Yes! See ya' later but it said yes and so I went to go get checked by a doctor.

18) E: Did you go by yourself to the doctor?

19) J: Uhmhum. [OC: yes]

20) K: And what were your thoughts when you found out you were pregnant?

21) J: I cried for like a week. Literally I cried and the truth is I thought I have to get an abortion, there's no way around it.

22) E: That obviously changed at some point because you have this beautiful baby up there so how...

23) J: I told my grandma and she's very Christian and like but she knew what kind of person I was, the crazy selfish person and she said that I had to do what I had to do and that it was my responsibility now.

24) E: Is your grandma here?

25) J: Uh huh.

26) E: And she was the first person you told?

27) J: At church, we were at church and I hadn't went to church in months but like I knew I had to because I hadn't went in like a year and I used to go when I was younger like every Sunday. And I was just like she'll tell me because she knows that I am a-I don't want to say I was a bad person but I was kind of a bad person before I was pregnant so she knew what I was doing and I wanted to see her opinion on if she thought I could handle a baby because she's the person I trust the most I guess.

28) K: Well, that was the next question, who did you tell first and why and then the next one is was there anyone that you didn't tell or didn't want to tell about it?

29) J: I didn't want to tell anybody because I thought I was going to be looked at different and like I didn't wanna yeah like I didn't want to tell people that I affiliate with because I was in like ok when I was dealing drugs I didn't want people to know I was pregnant because I didn't want them to be like, "Hey she's pregnant we can hit

her in her stomach and take her stuff or we can say hey we're gonna hit you in your stomach." You know so that's why I was so scared to be pregnant cause I was doing things that even where a guy with a gun could get robbed and now I was a girl and pregnant like I was like this big ol' target like I was like here take me take all my money [OC: unsure of what was said] before I got pregnant I sold drugs for about three years. Intensely sold drugs and I made a lot of money.

30) E: Yeah?

31) J: I made a lot a lot of money and so that's why it was such a like-like-like a breaker, like it totally changed every single thing that I was doing like *every* single thing.

32) E: Now I just want to remind you that when we tape this it is totally confidential and obviously its not anonymous because Kristy and I know who you are and this is probably pretty low risk because it's something that she's doing for school but I just want to tell you that for legal things that they can in some cases about children subpoena certain things so I just want you to be careful. I just want to make sure that you know when you say that it is confidential and its probably not going to be a big deal but...

33) J: Yeah like I'm not gonna say that I murdered someone or something. I've already prosecuted. They kicked in my door and that's when I stopped I was four months pregnant and they raided me, the apartment I was in and so...

34) E: And that's already been adjudicated?

35) J: Uh huh I'm already on probation.

36) E: Then you are probably fine because you can't be tried twice for the same thing but I just wanted to remind you of that cause I didn't want to give you, here trust us and then-and because it's your story if at any time you want to say something and you want us to turn off the tape recorder then just say hey turn that off for a second.

37) J: Ok.

38) E: I don't want to interrupt your story but I want to make sure we keep you safe with your story.

39) K: Getting back to who you told was there like did you have a plan for who you were going to tell and what order you were going to tell them? How did it happen?

40) J: I don't know after I got over the whole like I'm pregnant and I'm gonna keep it I was like I'm not gonna tell anyone 'till I show but then I would see people

and I would be like I'm pregnant just cause like I needed I wanted to tell people like alright I knew I shouldn't but I wanted to.

41) E: How'd you feel?

42) J: Especially because me and my baby daddy we all have mutual friends and he was in jail and so like I was like you're not gonna believe it. It was just like that I ended up telling. It wasn't like I was like I'm gonna tell this friend and then this friend it was just whoever I happen to talk to. And then like I'd go a whole day without saying anything and then I'd call them later on that night and be like look it I'm pregnant.

43) E: Did it help make it more real to you?

44) J: What?

45) E: Telling other people?

46) J: Yeah, yeah but it wasn't real until I had the baby. I knew I was pregnant and I was getting big and I could feel her moving around but it wasn't real until I had her. Yeah cause I was still doing what I wanted I could still go out and not have to worry about nothing. I was just taking care of myself what I been doing my whole life so it wasn't real until the baby comes and then your taking care of you and this other.

47) E: How about your baby daddy? How did you go about telling him because obviously if he was in jail that had to be purposeful.

48) J: Yeah I went to go see him in DV and there are only 20 minute visits and I told him and then I cried the whole rest of the time.

49) E: After telling your grandma or before telling other people?

50) J: Oh no I did tell him first. Yeah but he didn't count because he was in jail and he couldn't do anything it was like totally my decision. Him, I didn't even it didn't matter what he thought about my situation. I just wanted to let him know.

51) E: Just being responsible or...

52) J: Yeah it didn't matter if he thought if he wanted me to get rid of it-it didn't matter if he wanted me to keep it he wasn't an important person to me yet.

53) E: Yet?

54) J: Well yeah because he's my baby's father and whether we get along or not that's her dad and his family is really really nice

- 55) K: So the next one is can you describe how people responded to your pregnancy?
- 56) J: Shock.
- 57) E: Was it different between like your family...
- 58) J: No, it was a pretty genuine shock all the way around except for like my grandpa he was like well if she wasn't gonna have a baby she was gonna be gay, that's what he says.
- 59) E: Tell me more about that I'm not following the logic there.
- 60) J: Like yeah because all my other cousins have had babies when they were like sixteen or fifteen one of my cousins is like 22 and has like six kids. He was like "It was just a matter of time either she was gonna have a kid or she was gonna be gay one of those." He thinks if you weren't gonna have babies then you must be gay cause like my cousin that has all those kids she has a sister that didn't have no kids and he was like Jane Marie must be gay she hasn't had no babies. Not that she must be responsible or she must be not ready it's that she must be gay. He's very old school cholo. Yeah it's retarded.
- 61) E: How old were you when you had your daughter?
- 62) J: Yeah, I was an adult. I made it to 18 so I was proud of myself I was like I made it you know at least I'm not fifteen or fourteen because my best friend had a baby when she was 14 So she is 21 and her baby is six.
- 63) K: How did she respond to your pregnancy?
- 64) J: She was excited. I had a very very first pregnancy when I was sixteen and I miscarried after two months and she was the first person I told then and she had went and bought me baby presents and that made it hard after I miscarried but you know she was excited because all our other friends you know she was the only one going through it and I think she wanted like hey I'm going through it too but that didn't happen but now her kids are so older now and all our other best friends are barely having babies right now.
- 65) E: So a lot of your friends have kids?
- 66) J: Yeah two of my first cousins and they just had two girls too and two of my best friends they have one.
- 67) E: Did you talk to anyone else besides your friends about the miscarriage?
- 68) J: No, no I don't talk about it at all.

69) K: So when the people reacted to your pregnancy and they were shocked is that the way you expected them to react?

70) J: Uh hum cause it was a shock to me it's not like I had been in this. It wouldn't of been a shock if I had not have just met him you like with my previous boyfriend you remember how I was telling you it was so crazy how that worked out cause I was with a guy for three years and we had a break and I met this other guy and I got pregnant and so like it wouldn't of been a shock if I'd a got pregnant by a guy I was with for three years I was expecting it then I think people were waiting around it's real different when you're in a long relationship or your married and this and that there's no shock it's like a very happy thing you're having a baby but me it was just a total shock.

71) E: So would you have thought differently if it had been with your previous boyfriend?

72) J: Yeah, probably a lot different and who I got pregnant by it makes the whole thing like it wouldn't of been so like crying and the world's over cause I mean I didn't know this guy he was a bad guy and I was gonna have a kid with him like I didn't even know if he went to church. Like I know I wasn't doing the right thing at the moment but I knew like when I had a baby I thought it was gonna be when I was older and I was past all my phases. Like you know I wanted my baby to go to church I wanted her dad to go to church with us. Like I didn't even know what religion he was or all these things like...

73) K: Have you had those conversations with him now?

74) J: Yeah when I found out I was pregnant he was in jail the whole time until the baby so that's all we talked about like we don't know each other and we're not gonna have no time to get to know each other cause as soon as you get out the baby's gonna be here and it's gonna be about her but you know we tried as much as we could trying to get to know each other from writing back and forth but that only helps so much.

75) E: Sounds like when you talk about that that's something that you still have feelings about.

76) J: Yeah no actually yeah I was with him, my previous boyfriend, through the whole pregnancy. Yeah and he got locked up right before I had her and he was willing to accept her as his baby or him and her together.

77) K: Going back to school talk about how you started to think about your pregnancy in relationship to continuing with school.

- 78) J: Uh, being pregnant made me come back to school because I realized that uhm, I've had jobs before but it was like Church's and Wal Mart or Fiesta I didn't want to have to work at a place like that and have to depend on raising a baby like being pregnant made me come back to school that's what made me come back to school.
- 79) E: Were you going...
- 80) J: Before I got pregnant?
- 81) E: Or did you come to this school...
- 82) J: No, yeah I did come on and off before I was pregnant but I never stayed longer...
- 83) E: So this was your school...
- 84) J: Yeah, I never stayed longer than a couple of weeks or maybe a month and then I would leave and then I would enroll again and I would leave and I'd enroll again. Uh, so being pregnant is why I came back to school.
- 85) K: And you stuck with it?
- 86) J: Uh huh.
- 87) K: How did the people here at school, like the official school people how did they respond to you being pregnant?
- 88) J: I think I got positive attention. I got attention and it wasn't for being bad. So it was like not a negative thing. The officials they were like, like Lynne they had walked up to me and asked me you know if I had any parenting classes if she wanted to go like do to go talk to her if I wanted to. You know but that was pretty much it you know nobody else made any remarks about me being pregnant not 'til the very end when we were kinda going in to talk about the homebound. Like it, no one really interacted with me because I was pregnant you know.
- 89) E: You smiled when you said it was positive. Was that the first time you had had kind of positive interactions with people at school?
- 90) J: Uh, yeah well, no.
- 91) E: I mean just cause your face lit up in a way that it was like that was a good thing for you.
- 92) J: Yeah, no it was a good thing uhm, like I've always had like my teachers have always told me, hey you know your real smart you know like come to school

like what's wrong with you, you know your real smart like what are you doing? Like whatever and like but that's like the only thing I've ever gotten from everyone you know.

93) E: It's a real obvious thing you can tell by just talking to you for a couple of seconds that you are really bright.

94) J: Yeah.

95) E: You get things.

96) J: Yeah.

97) K: How did being pregnant fit in with school, what was easy about it and what was hard about it?

98) J: Being pregnant is just physically a pain in the ass. Like anyone whether they're in school or out of school like you're just going through all these changes, you're sick I mean, no matter what you're doing whether you're married or whatever pregnant women have it the same pretty much I mean not every pregnant woman is the same with their pregnancy but you know you get sickness some people don't you get bigger you don't fit in your clothes you know so I mean like being pregnant wasn't hard it's having a baby and coming to school that's hard I mean cause also when you're pregnant it's still just you, you know. You don't have to take care of someone else or worry about someone else so like being pregnant like it didn't really affect my school too much besides that I was maybe uncomfortable after sitting for a while or you know that's the only thing that being in school made it hard. Dr's appointments but usually the doctor you're like hey can I come in after 2:30? And they're like yeah you know that's when your appointment's so it's not like it's a big thing.

99) E: So for the most part like what you said earlier. How much did your attendance improve?

100) J: It didn't because I also used pregnancy as an excuse I'd be like hey I'm pregnant and I'm tired today so I'm gonna sleep and it didn't help that I was doing really well at school like I was like hey I'm doin' really good over there, they're not gonna' you know fail me, like I'm awesome like...

101) E: So it wasn't until after you had the baby that...

102) J: Yeah, and I've barely been back like four five days now, yeah...

103) E: Uhm cause babies are good excuses too not to do things.

104) J: Yeah not that like the thing now like before I was pregnant it was an excuse but like babies yeah they're an excuse but like today like I have to go pick her up like I'm not supposed to get out until 2:30 but I don't have no one to watch her and my mom she took a risk by taking her to work but she like really needs me to go get her before two you know and so it's like oh, you know like it's not that it's an excuse anymore now I might have like actual reasons you know. Before pregnancy I was just being lazy. But like now its like you know I'm really not able sometimes like this is only the fourth day I'm here and I'm already gonna have to leave early. It's like kind of a bad sign you know

105) E: So this school doesn't have any programs...

106) J: [OC: shakes head no] but hopefully next year yeah we're supposed to get a daycare.

107) K: And we can look into some sort of funding...

108) J: I'm getting TANEF the temporary assistance for needy families and uhm they have a program called Choices that when you receive money you're like mandated to do this appointment I mean program and it's nothing but job searching and career cruising uhm childcare, transportation. It's like nothing but to help you but it's a pain in the butt because you have to do 30 hours and you have to do 30 hours there like to receive any assistance and it's like hard enough getting time off to do this you know like getting to come to school like something that I need to do and like that even though it would help me like get child care like I don't have 30 hours to go do it.

109) K: 30 hours a week?

110) J: 30 hours a week.

111) E: Do you have a certain-oh so every week you have to do 30 hours? [OC: surprised]

112) J: Every week either of career cruising, job listing.

113) E: Even if your in school?

114) J: Yeah and even if you don't because most of the people that are in TANEF they're older.

115) E: Right.

116) J: They're 19, 20, they're a bunch of ladies on Section 8 that don't want to work but need some money and so TANEF makes them get jobs cause like if you don't work if you don't career cruise and if you don't get a job within a certain amount of time then they make you do community service for 30 hours a week and so

like they don't have what I have to go through cause I have to go to school and to try to do programs and volunteer service to get assistance cause in my the government is not gonna just give you money without getting something back.

117) E: Do you have an individual counselor?

118) J: Uhm...

119) E: Who you can talk to and just sort of say hey can some...

120) J: I haven't, I made an initial appointment for next Wednesday. So I'm gonna go up there and talk to them and but uh I don't know [OC: participant answers her cell phone] say Michael's got his phone, Michael got his own phone it's [OC: phone number] ok, bye [OC: while participant is talking on the phone K asks for the time from E] It's 12:37

121) E: Such responsibility, two teachers and we can't keep track.

122) J: Just cause I love my phone, as a teenager...

123) E: That's what I said, if I had my phone.

124) J: I have my phone glued to my ear.

125) E: Yeap.

126) K: So, the next section is what advice would you give a girl who just found out she was pregnant?

127) J: I guess get as many things done as she can while she's pregnant. You know cause its really really hard so if you have a chance to get your GED you know finish it before you have your baby you know cause classes and a lot of inpatient outpatient kind of stuff assessments and all this so I, I mean I have five, six years to take care of everything on my probation but I knew I was having this baby so I tried to do every single class before I had her because it's gonna be hard for me to get away three times a week for three hours a day after school when I'm already so...

128) E: Has your probation officer been...

129) J: Yes...

130) E: Sort of accommodating?

131) J: They like dropped my probation fees and stuff cause they know I'm not working and because I'm in school they're gonna drop my probation fees until I graduate cause then they're like ok you're not in school. You know they're really

understanding but like for certain government programs like for that Choices you know its like hey you gotta do this if you want this there's kinda like no way around it cause it's money they're givin' out.

132) K: Ok, so the next one is walk me through a typical day in your life before you were pregnant.

133) J: Wake up and do whatever I want [OC: laughs] eat McDonald's three times a day drink nothing but Dr. Pepper water was poison and you know just hangin out, Hangin' out totally just hangin' out not even working not anything. Just total like laid back.

134) E: But you had money access.

135) J: Yeah.

136) E: So it's not like the McDonald's was expensive then...

137) J: Hmm [OC: no] I could've gone to eat Olive Garden but I love McDonald's and it was right there on the corner so...

138) E: Has that been hard for you going from having so much money without having a kid and just meeting your own needs to all the sudden having no money and working...

139) J: Yes, I think that now it's like what was I doin' before like oh, no it like really sucks like I had all this money and I was totally secure and like now I have a baby and I don't have no income like it's really really different like it makes it makes me wanna be bad.

140) E: Yeah I was wondering if you weren't on probation if that would be more of a temptation...

141) J: Yeah, like I really have a lot of urges but I just gotta like what is it called when it's like instant like the instant gratification like in a dollar its not gonna be worth what the consequence might be because like I'm on six years and if I mess up.

142) E: And its meaningful.

143) J: Yeah and if I mess up I don't get another chance like I violate and I automatically plus I get a charge and like oh that sucks I'd probably do more than six years if I get caught again so I just gotta think that do I wanna be gone til the baby's six or do I want a hundred dollars right now?

144) E: And you're right about the term it's called delayed gratification that's the academic term, I mean you hit it right on [OC: laugh] Someone's texting you.

- 145) J: No, my phones dyin'.
- 146) E: Oh.
- 147) J: Yeah.
- 148) K: Can you walk us through a typical day in your life now since you've had the baby?
- 149) J: Since I'm back at school?
- 150) E: Uh huh.
- 151) J: Uh [OC: pause] wake up feed the baby change the baby put her back to sleep get ready come to school, get off, go straight home, wash bottles, clean house, cook dinner, and uhm put the baby back to sleep and try to do anything I have to do like wash my clothes or uhm pick out my outfit for the next day you know...
- 152) E: You live with your mom?
- 153) J: Yeah I do.
- 154) E: Who else lives with you?
- 155) J: Uh, my brother and he just got out last week so we don't know how that goes yet.
- 156) E: Got out of....
- 157) J: Prison
- 158) E: Ok, that's what I figured but I just didn't want to...[OC: laugh]
- 159) J: Yeah and he's my little brother too, crazy.
- 160) E: So a lot of takin' care of him too.
- 161) J: Uhm yeah, oh yes and it pisses me off just because it's his responsibility to go find a job and so because I'm not working like I'm supposed to be a housewife and oh he makes my job so much harder.
- 162) E: Do you see a difference in gender roles there because I've heard you kind of talk about this thing with males and prison...
- 163) J: Kids, yeah.

164) E: And mothering and cleaning. with how you've talked about things it seems like you come from a background where gender...

165) J: Well, yeah I think generally like everybody thinks that, well not everybody thinks because I mean it's really different now but we came from a society where it's women take care of kids and males provide and I think like because we came back from where my grandma was always like a church person you know she's real like, they're traditional that way like when I like-Er-when Eric got out like when my baby daddy when Eric got out they were like Eric you need to find a job and Jessica you need to stay home. The idea of Jessica get a job and Eric stay home never crossed nobody's mind.

166) E: Right.

167) J: Cause the women take care of the children.

168) E: Cause I wondered how that went with the whole governmental program where you gotta get a job?

169) J: Yeah, yeahyeahyeahyeah.

170) E: But it sounds like the governmental programs aren't really aligned with...

171) J: But I understand that and I understand what Choices is because I mean honestly when I went to the orientation JB does the TANEF things she works with Worksource over there now on the east side and so these girls are just givin' her such a hard time well "Ya'll got me child care and then ya'll took it away when I got a job," and well you have to do 30 hours and if you don't work 30 hours then you have to do community service you need to make up the rest of the 30 hours "Well that don't make no sense that ya'll are givin' me child care and ya'll are takin' it away cause I get a job," and I was just like do these girls not get it cause JB was all like "Why are we gonna pay for childcare from eight to five and you're only workin' 20 hours a week and we pay for childcare for five days and or you know for like 40 hours a week you need to be doin' somethin'," you know it's like I understand why they make those things you know like cause if they didn't people would just be using it just like they use food stamps and just like they use everything else like I understand why they have like rules and requirements cause you can see how it could get taken advantage of you know but like when someone like me comes along and it's just like I'm not tryin' to take advantage it's just like I don't have no time honestly like it sucks but if I was old and livin' at Meadowbrooks you know what I'm sayin' and I didn't have to pay no rent and no electricity and all that stuff you know then...

172) E: Is Meadowbrooks section 8 housing?

173) J: Yeah, it's a project down the street

174) K: The next question is what kind of support systems do you have at home or at school or wherever?

175) J: My mom, definitely, my dad he loves my baby extremely he like took off yesterday just to watch her.

176) K: Aw, really?

177) J: Really he took off of work!

178) K: Are your mom and dad together?

179) J: Uh huh [OC: yes] uh well I think they're getting back together. They're not divorced yet they've been separated for a while but like and before I moved back in they were working on getting back together.

180) E: It sounds like they are both pretty committed to you.

181) J: yeah yeah yeah that's it and uhm like the school like

182) Enormously, like I get nothin' but positive-positive-positive it's not like hey you should get your GED you know like no way, everyone's like we're gonna get you in this program and we're gonna help you do this and we're gonna get you graduated and then we're gonna fill out applications and just pumpin' me up you know like I love this school like I *love* it.

183) E: What are the upcoming questions? Let's maybe skip down to [OC: E points to question further down on the page]...

184) K: What are the top five things you think schools should and should not do in relationship...

185) J: I think they should keep up with homebound cause they are not keeping up with homebound.

186) K: Do you want to talk about that for a second since...

187) E: What do you mean? They pay teachers to go out and...

188) J: Yeahyeahyeah, they pay teachers uh I think they pay teachers but I don't know if R [OC: homebound instructor] has a supervisor but I don't think like they're keeping up enough with the guy they're paying. They need to make sure that they have that they are goin' out two times a week I think that uh...

189) E: So did your person come less than two times a week?

190) J: Sometimes and uhm say he woke up late right and he didn't make it to the appointment and he's like "Oh don't worry its my fault I'll still give you your perfect attendance for this week," and you know I'm sure that most of the girls are like already you know alright R I'll see you next week They'll schedule an appointment...

191) E: You're a smart girl...

192) J: And I'm like no R you know like he was like no don't worry I'll give you your perfect attendance for this week I said "Well you know what I want my two hours so do you think we could reschedule?" and I that shocked him that I said that cause I'm sure that most of the girls are like already you know I'll see you later but me...

193) E: It needs to be a constant? [OC: not sure of the words]

194) J: Yeah and like uhm like none of the teachers here have work aside for homebound girls like they wait until they see a list and they're like oh this girl is homebound and then they scurry and they try to get this work together for this girl like like I think that they have enough pregnant students and people with babies to like in this school that they're like the teachers should have something ready you know without tryin' to be like you know cause I'm not hatin' on J [OC: teacher] or nothin' right but he's like I've got all this work you know I've got stuff on my classrooms and I've got all this stuff on my plate and it's kinda hard to go out and you know give you work and so you know and he's like it's my fault you know and this and that but we're gonna catch you up. Like I have to come to school and catch up for a whole...

195) E: Did you keep up with any...

196) J: For a whole six weeks. The only person that gave me work was P and I had your work cause it was already printed out you know the semesters but those are the only two teachers. Everything I have out like Government and Economics I have to catch up for a whole six weeks and half and she's a work Nazi over there so I have this thick workbook that I should've got when I first went on homebound but none of the teachers communicate I mean there's like a there's a lack of leadership here I think that's why they have a new principal cause even before I was always complaining about things and so...

197) E: You want to make things better, you're a change person...

198) J: Yeah, you know I am I'm just I'm sad that I was so motivated to come back to school and this and that and like the people that I did come into contact with that met me and knew what kind of person I was were ready to help me get the ball rollin' but for like other teachers you know or like other people you know oh and...

199) E: Do you think it would be good to have curriculum because I think you know you can tie almost anything into-you can do economics or do you think it's just better to keep that part of your life is normal that it's just like what everybody else is learnin'?

200) J: No, yeah I think that I-no, yeah I think that if we-if I want to have like a mommy's class I should go to a mommy's class you know what I'm saying like I'm in school I want to learn what everyone else is learnin' I think.

201) E: Right.

202) K: Is there anything else you wanna say?

203) J: Yeah, homebound sucks and uhm uh school is great and uhm...

204) E: You can write 'em down in the journal, don't feel rushed or...

205) J: Oh yeah.

206) E: You can put 'em in an email and we'll have a second chance to interview you and since you're the first one...

207) J: So am I just supposed to writing a little bit of daily stuff?

208) K: Yeah, whatever you feel comfortable writing.

209) E: Whatever you think is relevant or whatever.

210) J: Like what, I don't know, what kind of stuff?

211) E: About your experiences even if it is just about daily life what-for both of us it is hard to understand what it is like to be in your shoes, you know what I mean? And that's part of this research because if we can better understand how you see and have options maybe they choose not to go to school but if you choose to stay in school then that's good and it works them.

212) J: I think like an important thing is that like Ron said like he has all these girls and he says that in the last two years that he's been doin' it that maybe 20% have came back to school you know so I think the most thing is like helping with that childcare. Childcare is...

213) E: You know any thoughts like that just things that people told you that stand out as significant to you just write those down...

214) J: Yeah.

215) E: Because four out of five don't...

216) J: Yeah, yeah honestly it's crazy.

217) E: Ok, well we'll turn this off. You are a smart lady, I look forward to talking to you again.

## Interview 1: Jasmine

- 1) K: Ok, uhm, so tell me just a little about your life before you had your first pregnancy.
- 2) G: Uhm, I went to school. I hung out with my friends a lot, went to the mall. [OC: not sure of word] have boyfriends, went to the movies. I did things that a 17 year old would do.
- 3) K: Ok.
- 4) G: Hang out.
- 5) K: Did you have any thoughts about pregnancy before you got pregnant?
- 6) G: I used to think that it would be so like wow to have a baby. I used to want a baby and, but I just knew I was too young and I wanted to finish school but I hadn't thought about it before but I didn't want to rush into it.
- 7) K: Were you doing anything to prevent having a baby?
- 8) G: Yeah, I was on, uhm, I didn't start officially 'til I was like 15 like doing I had a pregnancy and I had a miscarriage and after the miscarriage I didn't want to have a baby anymore because I went through the pain of loosing the baby and then I started to use uhm birth control. I started the patch but the patch didn't work so I did the pill...
- 9) K: Mmhm.
- 10) G: And I was on the pill for a while and then [OC: unsure of words].
- 11) K: And how, when you found out you were pregnant, how did you learn about the pregnancy?
- 12) G: Uhm, I had moved in with my kid's father. I had stopped taking birth control because it was, I just didn't like, I was afraid I wasn't ever gonna have kids because of personal family experience and then I hadn't started my period and I kept tellin' him, "I think I'm pregnant." Well we did a pregnancy test after school we found out and I didn't think, we were both actually pretty excited. We have pictures of him with the pregnancy test and us you know like little cheesy like dumb things...
- 13) K: Mmhm.
- 14) G: just happy, of us happy. You know, we were gonna have a baby and from then on we called the doctor and we just started to go from there.

- 15) K: Cool, and how old were you with the first...
- 16) G: I was seventeen.
- 17) K: Seventeen?
- 18) G: When I got pregnant. I got pregnant in 2005, October.
- 19) K: And when you, after you found out you were pregnant who did you tell. Like, what order did you tell the people in your life?
- 20) G: We didn't tell anybody really. I went to lunch with my mom and she was like, "You look different, you look different." And I was like, "What are you talking about?" I had told my cousin, yeah I had told the people like my cousin and you know, my friends and we told his mom. I want to say we told his mom I'm not really sure but my family kind of found out. My mom said my sides were changing and that's when I finally told her I was pregnant. My dad, I didn't tell my dad, he found out through the doctor's bills. And so I, he wasn't too happy. My aunt, I called my aunt and told my aunt and then we told my uncle-basically we waited until after my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to tell everybody cause he was 22 at the time and I was only 17. And so we waited 'til my birthday and on my birthday everybody had already figured it out...
- 21) K: And how far along were you at your birthday?
- 22) G: I wanna say I was four months maybe. Three or four months, I was barely like starting to show kind of. Christmas time I lost a lot of weight because at the beginning of my pregnancy I lost a lot of weight and then towards uh, my birthday and it was my birthday, it was my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and so everybody thought we were gonna go out and have fun and have fun. Well, when we were all at the restaurant I said, "Hey, I'm pregnant," and everybody said, "We already knew, we already knew." So, everybody said they already knew and then that's how everybody found out.
- 23) K: What were the reactions from the people that were closest to you?
- 24) G: Uhm, his mom was kind of, she thought I was tryin' to trap him but she didn't understand that we wanted a baby and then my mom was happy but it was weird because I had a sister born in August of 2005 and then I'm having, I got pregnant right after. So my mom was happy, my brother was happy, my parents were happy. Everybody kind of was disappointed but at the same time they were happy but then it became-during my pregnancy they told me I was diagnosed with cervical cancer and so I might not be able to have any kids after my daughter. So when that happened, when we got diagnosed with

cancer, the script kind of flipped and everybody just got kind of excited. You know, everybody's reaction was just different.

- 25) K: And how long had you been with the baby's father before...
- 26) G: We were together for, I wanna say seven months, not even...
- 27) K: Seven months?
- 28) G: that long. We had moved in together [OC: pause] seven, yeah we were together for seven months. I got pregnant in October. We were together for about eight or nine months when I got pregnant...
- 29) K: And you said he was pretty excited.
- 30) G: Yeah, we got pictures of him where he's holdin' the pregnancy test sayin' "Who's the man."
- 31) K: Yeah?
- 32) G: And he gets his thumbs up like that and he was really excited.
- 33) K: Did you expect him to be excited?
- 34) G: I was hoping he would be excited because we bought the test together, we took it together, and then I was like, "I don't want to look, I don't want to look." And when he came out the restroom he had this big smile on his face and he was like, "We're havin' a baby." And I just cried. We were both really happy but when it came to telling my dad that's when I cried you know I kind of started to think you know this isn't what I wanted but it's happening.
- 35) K: Did your dad's reaction, did it surprise you or...
- 36) G: Yeah! Because my uncle, I used to live with my aunt and uncle when I was smaller so my uncle and aunt are like my parents and then I have my mom and my dad. Well, my uncle's the more angry one, I figured my uncle'd be mad and my dad to be happy. Well, instead my dad was mad and my uncle was happy so my dad's reaction came to me like a total surprise-just, I couldn't believe how mad he got. He didn't want to have nothin' to do with me and he didn't talk to me through my whole pregnancy. He saw me once and he says, "You know what I can't believe you did this. Look at how you have to walk around. Look at you, you should be ashamed." I had a big stomach. I just told him, "Whatever." I never saw him through my pregnancy but that one time.
- 37) K: How is he now? Is he supportive now or...

- 38) G: Uhm, after I had my daughter I called him to my mom's job and he didn't even touch my little girl. He didn't want to touch her or he didn't want to hold her or nothin' he just looked at her. After that when my daughter started to get a little bigger and he started to see her, he realized man I'm a grandpa and he-right now he loves my little girl. He totally loves her but when I got pregnant for the second time he just kind of uh, but my daughter, she loves my dad and she just-every time she sees my dad she's all "Popo popo" and she just runs up to him. She knows who her grandpa is.
- 39) K: Did it change your relationship with your dad at all?
- 40) G: Mmm, not really. I've never been close to my dad. I don't get close to my mom and my dad cause I have my aunt and my uncle. Cause when I need somebody they're the last ones to help me, my aunt and uncle are so when it came to my relationship with my dad, no I don't like seeing my dad I don't like going to his house just because of my step mom. So I don't really-it didn't really change anything with him.
- 41) K: Ok. Uhm, when you found out you were pregnant did you start thinking about school differently? How did you, were you in school at the time? Can you just kind of talk about that...
- 42) G: I was. I went to T [OC: name of school] when I was pregnant with my daughter. I still went to school but it was funny because I got big really quick, after my family found out I was pregnant, that's when I started to like zoom into being humongous and so I had to by five months I had to stop sitting at desks. I had to sit at a table or at the teacher's desk. Uhm, school I mean-I went to school but because I got morning sickness I stayed home a lot. So finally, I wanna say in May I transferred to AYW and I was big at this time and uhm I had J as my counselor when J was here and I tricked him a couple of times and almost went into labor. I had to sit in uh, L's office I think it is across from-I had to sit in there. It finally got to the point where I had to drop out because I had got too big and I wouldn't fit in clothes. My feet would like swell up on their own. I couldn't, I just couldn't do it so I had to stop going to school all together which is something that I really regret but I don't regret my daughter I just regret getting pregnant at the time I got pregnant cause I could've been finished and graduated by now.
- 43) K: So it made attendance hard?
- 44) G: Yeah, it made it hard having to carry myself. Getting up early cause when you're pregnant you want to sleep a lot. You-I got used to sleeping on the weekends, in the middle of the day. I went to sleep every day and went to sleep from 3:00, I took a nap cause I got out of here so 3:00 all the time so finally I just got tired of waking up and then I worked-I worked at HEB also and so I just-I couldn't do it anymore. I had to completely stop.

- 45) K: So if you were, if one of your friends got pregnant let's say, what advice would you give her about being a mom and also about continuing with school?
- 46) G: Uhm, I just-I have friends that are pregnant and they don't want it and I'm like it's not something that you can take back, you know it's here you have to accept it for what it is. As for school, the second time around I learned. I went to school-I went back to school when I found out I was pregnant with my son. I stayed in school the whole time until my due date. I went to uhm, about them I mean they can just stay in school until their due date, get the homebound like I had got. I got homebound and then go back after homebound I mean...
- 47) K: Did homebound work out for you very well or...
- 48) G: No, because my teacher like I didn't-me and my mom. It's just for my son because my daughter, she was already one when I had my son and homebound really, I'm not the person-I don't like people showing up at my house unexpectedly. I don't like people in my house-I'm just really overprotective cause my kids live there so I don't like, so homebound she showed up sometimes, sometimes she didn't. So I had to stop doing homebound cause my son had got real sick. He has acid refluxes and so he had to go back to the hospital and he ended up in the hospital and I had to drop out of school again for the second time and I had to stop going because he had got sick but in between when my daughter was born I came back to AYW but just being a mom and my first daughter I didn't feel safe leavin' her with her dad. Just because I want to be with her-I want to be there not her dad. Her dad can go to work but I wanted to be there so that's when I had dropped out again I had dropped out three times and then with my son, now he's like-he's six months and when he was five months I came back-I'm coming back to school and it's-for me now it's like get-away, I treasure coming to school because it's me time instead of dealing with two of 'em cause I'm young and they're both in pampers so...
- 49) K: So, who keeps the babies...
- 50) G: Uhm, they uh, stay with my cousins at my house. My cousin comes to my house either the night before or the day of because I'm going through lifeworks and so I'm on the waiting list for day care and so I'm waiting for my day care to kick in. Then they'll go to daycare and...
- 51) K: So, how long have you been back in school this time?
- 52) G: I just recently came back three weeks ago...
- 53) K: Three weeks ago?

- 54) G: Yeah, around March, beginning of April maybe. No, wait [OC: pause] yeah Aprilish, yeah the beginning of April. I barely came back to AYW and the only reason they let me in is because I'm considered homeless and going through Lifeworks so they helped me out to come back to school. Cause Lifeworks had told me I needed to come back and get my diploma...
- 55) K: Can you talk a little bit about what decisions you made and what was going on when you had your-found out you were pregnant for the second time?
- 56) G: The second time, we-me and their dad had just split up. It was in January and we were still talking , I mean still messing around a little. I ended up, according to the documents I ended up getting pregnant on their dad's birthday with my son and he at the time had another girlfriend which I didn't know about. I didn't find out until he left to go to California around February, the week after Valentine 's Day is when he left for California and I hadn't-I had been getting morning sickness, I had everything I ate, I threw it up. I had, within a week I had lost 20 pounds and I just got really sick and like I said something's just not right. I told my mom I said can I have ten dollars, I need to go buy Emily-I just said something for my daughter. Well I ended up coming home, I took the test and like I'm like oh my god, I'm pregnant. I called my mom into the room and at this point I cried and I cried and my mom's like what's the matter? And I said-I couldn't-I didn't know what to tell her and I'm like mom, you know, I needed the ten dollars not for Emily and she said for what and I said a pregnancy test and she said well and I said I'm pregnant and she's like again and I said yeah and she said by Adam and I said well yeah and you know she's like-she saw how I was just kinda I shock and pain because I didn't want this I didn't want to get pregnant again and so I cried and I cried and I cried and finally their dad came back and I told their dad and he's like no you're not, you're lying, you just want to get back together with me and I said you know what, I don't but it would be nice you know and he said you're not pregnant I want the papers, I want this, I want that. Ok, so that's when I officially went to the doctor. I got the papers and I went back and threw them in his face and I said look, I'm pregnant. It's not mine, I said are you serious? Then the girlfriend started gettin her two cents into it too about how it's not his and this and this and well he still didn't believe. He thought I got fake papers or something but then he started to see that I was getting bigger and when I had got pregnant with my son, honestly I didn't want to keep my son. I didn't know it was a little boy but something-I called my aunt and uncle and I said I'm pregnant and I don't want this baby and my aunt you know she's like you cant do this, you can't-she's like your-I'm weak, I couldn't live my life knowing I had killed my own son or daughter and so she had told me you can't do-we're not paying for it and my dad was like, no if you really want this, I'll pay for it and my aunt's like you need to think about this, can you live your life knowing that you could've had another precious baby in this world and you had killed it just to satisfy

somebody else? And I had asked their dad and he was like yeah, get rid of it. And I'm like, so finally it kicked in and I'm like you know what I'm not giving you the easy way out, you know you did it just like I did it so you're gonna have to put up with it well, as I started to get bigger he started to realize that yeah I was pregnant and she started to realize that I was pregnant and that he cheated on her basically and then you know, me like a dummy we still kept messing around because you know I was still in love with my kids' dad. You know, I wanted you know we were engaged. I wanted to get married I wanted to have our family and so things started, we started getting closer and he used to-he wouldn't feel right cause he was with her but he used to touch on my tummy and my son would move and I just I couldn't get rid of it because I knew I was having a little boy, I just knew it because the pregnancies were totally different, my stomach was totally different. It was just different, well finally he started coming around, he started picking names out of the baby book and telling people, yeah I'm having a son and you know he told-our close friends called me and they're like guess what and I said what and they said A just admitted that he's having a son with you and that just made my day, I was so happy because he was finally acknowledging that he was having a baby and so he told everybody, I'm having a son, I'm having a son and so then it finally came time. I went to the doctor on a Monday in October and the doctor said oh well I have this Thursday open and I said oh well I want to do it I want to do it and we ended up having-we ended up being in labor for thirteen hours I think it was. My daughter was fourteen and my son was thirteen hours and their dad didn't get to show up because he was at work but it was really funny because everyone who would come through the drive through they're like how's your day and he was like man, I'm having a son and I'm stuck here at work and they're like leave and he's like no I can't leave I'm having a son and he just told everybody that went through his drive through that he was having a son.

57) K: He was excited?

58) G: Yeah but he wouldn't show me that he was excited but he would tell me, yeah I told [OC: unsure of words] you know but I knew he was excited. Well, he had come to the hospital and he'd sit there and he'd call like every five minutes, is the baby here? Is the baby here? Is the baby here? And I'm like no not yet. Are you excited? Did you pick a name? No, no, just can you hurry up and get here? And he's like why and I'm like I'm holdin him in until you get here. And so he came after he had got out of work. He came straight from work and he sat there with me and you know we were sitting there and you know talking and you could feel the awkwardness in the room because he had a girlfriend and it-I never imagined myself in that position. I felt as if he was married and if I was the other woman you know?

59) K: Yeah.

60) G: So I didn't like the position I was in so he left and he was like I'm coming back and I cried and I told his mom he's not coming back. Well he came-right when he came back I was in-officially in labor and I was like I kicked my mom I was tryin to kick my mom out and my mom was like no I'm sticking through this with you and I'm tryin like get out of the room let him come in and he didn't want to come in and he wanted to pace the floor you know just be like the old times so he stayed out there and after they cleaned me up he didn't want to come in because disrespect to her you know seeing and I'm like hello you've seen me we've been through this before we have a kid already you know you seen it to make the kid so what and he didn't come in after that he saw my son and I was like oh my god my son looks almost just like his family. He looked almost exactly like my daughter the only this is my daughter has my nose and he my son has his nose and so he saw my son and that day and everything went good and finally something started going wrong and they started calling the nurses into the room and I'm looking like what's going on and they're like we have to rush your son to the nursery and I'm sittin her and I'm-I'm about to cry [OC: participant gets tears in her eyes] I'm sittin here crying because I didn't get to hold my son like I did my daughter and so I'm getting cleaned up and you know the lady's like you're not going to see your son ad I'm like what's wrong with my son? And their dad's like it's ok it's ok and my son's eyes start rolling to the back of his head and I'm telling him what's wrong with my son, give me my son so they rushed him out and I'm sitting there crying and crying and my mom's like it's ok and I didn't get to hold my son. That's what matters, the first bond that you get with your baby and they took my baby and their dad could see-I could see through the pain in their dad's eyes which we didn't know what was going on with our baby. It's like he was sittin' there and talking and he was getting mad at me and he was blaming it all on me and I was like you know what why can't you just hug me why can't you just tell me it's ok? He said you know I can't do that and I said well, leave because you're not doing no help here and so they had, we were in the room been hours had been passing and I still hadn't heard nothing about my little boy I didn't know if he was alive I didn't know if he was dead, I didn't know if he was breathing if he was ok and you know the nurses come in and...

61) K: There was no one that you could ask?

62) G: and I'd keep asking 'em what's wrong with my son I want my son and they'd say oh it will be a minute and I said no I want my son and so finally their dad he couldn't take it anymore so he walked over to-their dad and his two best friends were you know, they're two friends were there. They all walked over to the nursery and I said I want to know what's wrong with my son. I had the epidural in so I couldn't go anywhere you know I was totally numb and so finally they went to check on my son and next thing you know my phone rings and I get this message and it is it's my son but it's their dad feeding him. They let their dad walk in there and I'd just let out this sigh of

relief that my little boy was ok and it was their first father son moment and he is when he looked he just smiled and as soon as I saw that I said you know what he looked and him and he said-he told him he's like look that's my son and he acknowledged him. They had said that my son had got mucus in his lungs and he couldn't breathe right and that's why his eyes were rolling to the back of his head and so uhm they had went and everything was ok but all of a sudden he made some sort of comment, I'd asked him to spend the night with me because I didn't want to be alone, I wasn't used to being there by myself and he said I might as well and it turned out that she-him and his girlfriend had got into a fight and he had told her you know I'm going to go see Jennifer, she's having the baby today and he's like she had told him why it's not your son and he looked at her like that is my son and she's like weren't you saying that you weren't gonna go and he's like look man you're not gonna hold me back from seeing my kid being born so she had gotten mad and he didn't show up at the hospital the whole time that my son was there. I was there after he had showed up and he was kinda seen him and he was just he didn't want to believe it was his son and the reason he didn't want to believe it was because my son is light complected as if he was white like and his hair is reddish brown with blonde highlights in it and his eyes are hazel and he looks like that because we're half-I'm half Puerto Rican so my aunt's look like that so till this day he kind of has his doubts but he doesn't treat his son any different than he does our daughter. But they had in the outcome between him and her, she got pregnant, he left her to come back to me and now she's due any week now with their son. She's having a son but it was weird because he had treated me really bad through my whole pregnancy and I had cried a lot and my son's like the happiest little boy he's just always happy and went to the doctor and he had left us there at the doctor and it was just because of her because she had tried to control him and I told her all the time I said he's not one to be controlled. I said he's him, he does-he's a grown man you know he's gonna do his own thing but now he kind of resem-he sees that his son is starting to look like him. He named my son. My son has his middle name and his brother's middle name and my daughter has his middle name too. We just put leena at the end so my daughter and my son have the same name and they just til this day they kind of-he doesn't say it's not his son but he has a doubt but we're doing of course the child support thing and I told him you know if you want a DNA test I'll give you a DNA test for both of your kids. The families, his family doesn't help out. They call when they want to call basically.

63) K: So, your wit him though now? You're with A?

64) G: Nope.

65) K: You guys aren't together?

66) G: I can't do it. Because of the fact that he's-I saw it as she's stupid, she was stupid for being with him when he had somebody else pregnant. That means he didn't love her, that means he didn't love her because he always cheated on me-on her with me. He always found a way to come see me, he always found a way for him to stay the night. You know, basically he always found time to be with me and not her and now I see it as I'm gonna look dumb by being with-even though we weren't together when she got pregnant, I'm still gonna feel dumb by being with somebody who has somebody pregnant at this point in time. I just, I can't do it and I can't live with the fact of he's also admitted that every, I mean every child is precious, but he's admitted that that baby was a mistake that he should've never had that baby because things would be totally different between us and we still to this day we talk and it hurts because we know that we miss each other and we tell each other you know he'll come over and like we'll hang and you know whatever and I'm like man you know I sit there and I cry to him and tell him you know I really do miss you but I just can't be with you because of what you've put me through and how you've treated me and he just-it hurts him because he sits there and he says I miss my family I want, and the one thing when I was pregnant I always used to tell him, I want my family back and now he's the one telling me I want my family back I want my kids I want ya'll to be there with me. I just told him you know I have school going on and if I'm not-if I'm with you I'm not gonna go to school I'm gonna always wanna be with you and I'm not, I can't be with you just you have a baby by somebody else and...

67) K: Is he with that baby's mom?

68) G: He left her to come back to me...

69) K: So now he's single?

70) G: And he wanted to be with me and I told him you need to move on because it's not gonna happen. Now he has another girlfriend and she's stuck out-she's the type of person, I mean, I seen her-you know me and her had our problems and everything and I decided to be the bigger person and I sent her an email yesterday and I told her look, we need to be adults, our kids are brother and sister. We need to put things aside. I said, if you think I want him, I don't want him. I said you can chase him all you want but he has another girlfriend. I said I gave him hell when ya'll were together because he never saw his daughter because of you and you know basically just try to tell her you can be an adult about it or you can be a kid. Do what you want to do but in the end she never, she didn't like my little girl and I always used to tell their dad you know I'm not one to fight but my kids, when it comes to my kids. My kids are just you don't mess with somebody when they're helpless when they can't do anything for themselves and he had told me yeah she doesn't like our daughter and that's the only reason I don't really, I don't really know what she did to my daughter when she was there by herself cause my daughter's come back.

One time she was drinking her milk and she just threw up everywhere. I smell her sippy cup-there's soap in the cup. I said who washed out her cup? E [OC: name of girlfriend]. I said do you know there's soap in this cup? He said no there isn't and I said come back and so he turned around and I got the cup, I shook the cup up I opened it and I said look at all that soap in there. And he just, he couldn't believe it. I don't know what she's doin to my little girl but this shit needs to stop. My daughter would get sick all the time. She would throw up and that's when I would, I started keeping my daughter away from him and he tried to get the child support involved and he put himself on child support cause I wouldn't let him see our daughter and I went-we went to the court and I said look I said this girl doesn't like my little girl I said my little girl comes back with scratches and bruises and but she just my daughter's real clumsy too cause she was little and she had just barely started walking. I would be like E what are you doing? Till this day she'll turn, she'll have her head turned and she'll turn turn boom. And I'm like E and she just looks and she laughs and laughs or she'll hit her head just-I've noticed that if you laugh she won't cry. But then she'll keep doing it and so I just had to keep kid from her and when my son was around my son's only been around her once and that was when he kind of had both of us thinking we were with him and we busted him and he told her he didn't want nothing to do with her and he wanted to come back to us and it's all basically because I have his daughter and when she was pregnant I said man I hope she doesn't have a little girl. I said, and til this day if he ever has any more kids he says he doesn't want a little girl because the boys are the mama's boys and he doesn't have to worry about them like they get attached to him but if he has another little girl he will get attached. And my son when he sees his dad he is oh he smiles and kicks his little legs and he gets happy and my little girl she roughens up my son because she doesn't like their dad paying attention to my son...

- 71) K: Yeah, she gets a little jealous?
- 72) G: The other day she had got a DVD and she had dropped it on his head; the DVD not the player just the case. My son just laughed and laughed and laughed. Their dad records everything. He's you know he plans to leave to the military and so they have memories of their dad and stuff like that.
- 73) K: That's cool. Can you talk a little bit about who's the most supportive of you like financially, emotionally...
- 74) G: That would be my aunt and uncle.
- 75) K: Yeah?
- 76) G: If my kids need anything. When I got pregnant with my daughter they bought me a brand new car and I wasn't supposed to get a car until I graduated. Now I've totaled the car-I haven't totaled it but I've wrecked the

front of it. My motor went out and my dad's towing it today and they're gonna put I think we're lookin at four thousand dollars. That's gonna fix the whole car. So they're gonna fix it cause I don't need to be on the bus with my kids uhm if let's say my food stamps doesn't come in and I don't have any groceries they come and if I don't have pampers they get the pampers and if I go stress out because I'm doing it by myself. I go to school, I take care of my kids, try to find employment so they take my kids. They take my kids sometimes during the week and they take them every weekend to help me out to give me a break, to let me go, you know cause they're thing is yeah I have kids but I don't have to grow up you know I can still do what a 20 year old does. And so, they're the ones that are there really financially, emotionally. My aunt has been there for me when I've gone up and down this roller coaster with their dad. I'm crying and wanting him and now she's really proud because now I don't want him at all. You know it's a lot of progress from what we started at so they're there for me both physically and emotionally. They even help me out to where I got so stressed out with having two kids that they flew to Puerto Rico, they took my little girl with them for two weeks but then I missed her like crazy but they just-they're the ones who helped me out no matter what. I don't ever get a no. If I get a no I don't worry about it cause about a hour later I'll get a yes. [OC: class bell rings]

- 77) K: Let's do one more question before we have to leave. Can you talk a little about how schools could help teen moms or how this school has helped you or not helped you.
- 78) G: It hasn't helped me because I don't like leaving my kids at home. I prefer, I mean they say they're in the process of having a day care but I came in 2006 and they were in the process of getting a day care and now they're saying next year. I mean two years or three years is kind of unacceptable. You know, there's a lot of teen moms here and you know leaving your kid, you know, if your kid's in the same place you're fine you know. If I know that my kid's here and I could just come peep through the window and see my daughter or my son then I'm fine but knowing that they're at home and then the babysitter has to leave early sometimes I'll have to miss school and so if they could help out you know by having a daycare.
- 79) K: Other than having a daycare is there anything else that you would suggest a school could do?
- 80) G: Basically, I mean that's mainly it. That's the main reason that kids don't teen moms don't come to school because the babysitter or because the kid's sick yeah but really they don't come to school because [OC: unsure of words] I mean that's what kept me out of school for the longest was having somebody to help watch my kids. I can't afford to pay like a nine hundred dollar daycare so really it's the school that would help out the most.

81) K: Cool, well thanks for doing this.

82) G: No problem [O.C. joking in poor Spanish].

## Interview 1: Marta

- 1) K: Ok, one thing I do have to tell you if anything is like put in anyway like to get you in trouble if you don't want to say it on the recorder, you can just tell me to turn the recorder off and then tell me off the recording.
- 2) G: Ok, does it have some personal questions?
- 3) K: No, but if you want to tell me a background story about something and you just don't feel comfortable having it on the recorder then you can just tell me to turn it off and I'll turn it off and then we can turn it back on.
- 4) K: So first thing is, can you talk a little bit about your life before your pregnancy?
- 5) G: Before I became pregnant, um, I was living in Houston, I've been living over there all my life until I was 12 years old - that's when my parents passed away and I went into my uncle's custody in Colorado with my sister. She turned 18, she decided to come back to Houston and she left me over there.
- 6) K: In Colorado?
- 7) G: [OC: unsure of word] not working now, they were different religion, they wanted me to dress their religion and just do all these things.
- 8) K: What sort of religion were they?
- 9) G: They were Christian, but I don't know...
- 10) K: Different then...
- 11) G: Like they dressed different and like I had a certain amount of time to watch TV and like I don't know it was just weird.
- 12) K: Strict?
- 13) G: Like I couldn't wear no makeup - you know things like that. I called my sister so then I came back to live with her in Houston and we just never got along. I started getting in trouble hanging out with the wrong people and started doing drugs. She would kick me out of the house and I would leave and go to my friend's house and just party all night. Then one time she told me she was going to move to Austin. So she told me either you decide you want to stay with your friends here in Houston or your going to go with me to Austin. And I was like I don't want to go over there, but she was my only

family so if I stay in Houston with my friends - I'm not going to be with my friends my whole life.

So then I decided to move with her. I came here and the week after we had been here we got in an argument. So I left I took the bus. I didn't know where I went. Somewhere downtown in the park and I went down I started walking and you know just thinking about all this stuff and cops did the flashlight thing and asked me what I was doing in that park after curfew and I lied about my identity because at that time I was never in juvie or anything like that. So I lied about my age and lied about my name.

14) K: And how old were you at that time?

15) G: I was 15, yeah I was 15 and then so they took me. That cop talked on the radio and found out I was lying. They took me to the juvenile and that's where I gave all my information out. I stayed there for a week and I had court with my sister. She said that I was getting in trouble a lot so the judge decided to keep me there for another week to see how I was doing. Finally, I came out on house arrest for a month. Everything was going good. I just had a week left to finish my house arrest then we got into a fight. Like a physical fight and she kicked me out. Instead of me calling the people...because I couldn't even go out to take out the trash without letting them know, instead of calling them I just left. I just left. At that time my boyfriend was my friend. My baby daddy. I went over to his house and I was staying there for...I stayed there for quite a long time like two months or three months that's the maximum. And then that's when I became pregnant. I didn't want to go to my sister but he was like you need to talk to her and let her know you are pregnant you need to go back to that to live with her. He forced me to.

16) K: Your boyfriend did?

17) G: Yeah, he told me either you back or I'm not going to be helping you with that child. So I was like "God", but he didn't mean to do it in a bad way you know just take myself to talk to her and you know.

18) K: And you were still 15 at the time?

19) G: Yeah, I was 15 when I became pregnant.

20) K: What were your thoughts about being pregnant before you became pregnant? Like what did you think about pregnancy before?

21) G: I didn't even...like my sister doesn't have a kid so I've never been around babies. I'm the youngest one in the family. I don't have any little brothers or sisters so I didn't really know what a pregnancy was like or what a baby was like. But, I knew...we weren't using protection. So we both new at any time I would become pregnant without using condoms.

- 22) K: Did you guys discuss that at all?
- 23) G: Yeah, and he told me he was gonna be there for the child and that's about it and like a week later that's when we found out I was pregnant.
- 24) K: How did you learn that you were pregnant?
- 25) G: How did I find out?
- 26) K: Yeah
- 27) G: I had told one of my friends that I had missed my period for two days which that was normal for me sometimes because sometimes it will come like after two days or something like that and she just told me, "you're pregnant", and she had a pregnancy test and I did it. I was like, "that's gonna come out negative." I was real confident in myself that I wasn't pregnant and it showed that I was pregnant.
- 28) K: What did you think?
- 29) G: I was shocked. All these things ran through my mind like what was I gonna do. He told me he was gonna be there for me but what if he's not going to be there? So I called him and it was like he knew because he had the symptoms. That's how I didn't know either because I was normal. I was totally normal.
- 30) K: He had symptoms?
- 31) G: Yeah. And that day I called him and I was like you need to come over because I need to talk to you. And he was like, "about what?" I'm like, "it's just something really really important." And he was like, "you're pregnant."
- 32) K: He guessed while you were on the phone?
- 33) G: Yeah. So he came over and we spoke about it. He told me that he wanted to eat all these weird things then he'd throw up. And I was like "how come you didn't tell me nothing?" He goes "I thought something was wrong with my stomach." After that he was looking for an apartment and ever since then we started living together.
- 34) K: So when you found out you were pregnant was he the first person you told besides the friend that you were with? Did you tell anyone else?
- 35) G: No because I didn't have no friends. She was my only friend.

36) K: Did you ever end up telling your sister?

37) G: Yeah. He took me and we spoke and they were like, "Ya'll knew what you were getting yourselves into so now ya'll need to work it out for that baby and ya'll need to figure out what to do." Especially me, because I was real - I would just talk back to my sister. I would be real...um what's the word? I wouldn't care about nothing. She told me I had to act more mature and to think about things. I wasn't in school at that time too. I was out like for a year.

38) K: Before that?

39) G: Yeah, my sister - I told her to enroll me in school once we got here but then I got into the juvenile center and then after that she told me she was too busy to enroll me in school so I was just working.

40) K: So how did the pregnancy affect you going back to school?

41) G: Like I thought to myself I'll have this baby. To be honest with you the first thing I thought was abortion. Which I think every girl that gets pregnant...every teenage girl that get pregnant that's the first thought that pops into their mind.

42) K: And how did you make that decision?

43) G: It just popped up. I was like I'm not able to take care of a baby. I'm too young. I'm just doing whatever I want. I'm doing drugs. What am I gonna teach the child? How am I going raise him or her? I told my boyfriend I think I'm gonna have an abortion. He was like do whatever you want to do. He was gonna support me in whatever decision I made. But then after a while I was like it's not his or her fault. We knew I could become pregnant and I'm pregnant so accept the consequences. That's when I decided to keep it and started going to the doctor and stuff like that. And one thing I was thinking about her or his future. What am I going to do now? I'm not in school. I just barely got out of trouble. I need to go back to school and that's when I enrolled here. In February last year.

44) K: So February of 2007?

45) G: Yeah.

46) K: Then you had your baby while you were at this school?

47) G: It was in the summer. That was the good thing. It was in July. Ever since then like I put my mind to all my subjects you know. All people are like, "

Are you a nerd? Why do you do so much?" I just want to get out of school and start my career.

48) K: Do you think being pregnant then having a baby helped motivate you or did it make it harder?

49) G: It motivated me a lot. Now that I see myself back you know I'm like a totally different person. Even my sister tells me, "I can't believe you've changed so much." I was really bad and really immature.

50) K: Is your sister being supportive?

51) G: Yeah. We don't argue anymore. We're real together now.

52) K: That's good.

53) K: What advice would you give to another girl if she just found out that she was pregnant?

54) G: Um. Well I would say, you know because most people say, "Oh, I'm not ready to have a kid." You're never gonna be ready. You see the experience but you never feel it. You don't know what you're going to go through with your baby. Like, I would just say, "You know what you were into so you know accept the consequences because they're gonna come to you."

55) K: Would you give them any specific advice about school?"

56) G: I would just say to keep going. I know it's hard. I know the subjects are sometimes really boring. I know there are some subjects that I just hate but you have to get them in order to graduate and to have a better life for yourself and your child instead of like working. Let's say I quit school. O.k., I'm gonna work at McDonald's, Burger King making like \$6.50 an hour for the rest of my life without a GED, without a diploma? You know? O.k., if you don't want to graduate all right but get your GED but at least you're gonna do something with that GED and a diploma would be much more better, but if you can't do it that's fine. If you're a single mother get your GED. That way you can go to school two hours and work the rest of the day. It's hard but it's worth it.

57) K: So could you just sort of walk us through a typical day in your life before you had the baby and then how it changed and then a day in your life now with the baby? Like just a normal day.

58) G: Well before when I wasn't pregnant I would go to school I would come home I would just relax and then there was a time when I was working I would go to work and then I would come back sleep I would go to school like

that but it wasn't pressured like I have to do this. If I really wanted to do it I would do it. If I didn't I wouldn't do it. Cause it was me you know. I had time to do it. But then when I had my baby I gotta go to school and I ride the bus so I have to go drop her off come to school come pick her up go home cook, clean everything to get ready for when my boyfriend gets out of work for him to be able to eat.

59) K: So you take her to day care on the bus?

60) G: Yeah. Good thing I just take one bus. I mean around.

61) K: So do you have to get up really early in the morning?

62) G: I get up around 6:00 a.m. and then around 6:15 a.m. I walk toward the bus stop over there by Mendez and then from there I have 15 minutes to like walk and drop her off and come back in order to catch the bus to not be late to school. I get tired every day.

63) K: What time do you get out of school?

64) G: 2:30 p.m.

65) K: Normal school day. Then you pick her up?

66) G: Yeah. Then I go pick her up and we go home. It's pretty hard though.

67) K: It's a long day?

68) G: Yeah. It's pretty hard especially with her she's real active. The only time she stays still is when she sleepy. I'm not kidding.

69) K: So once you're home you're pretty busy while you're home too?

70) G: Yeah.

71) K: So who in your life or what in your life is most supportive of you being a mom?

72) G: I would say my boyfriend cause he supports me he doesn't even - like I'm gonna get a part time job during the summer or right now, but he says no just take your school and once you get your diploma or your GED whatever you want then you could work. He tells me just worry about your school. You don't have to work I'm working I pay the bills there's no need for you to work.

- 73) K: So financially he's supporting you and your daughter?
- 74) G: Yeah.
- 75) K: Can you talk just a little bit about this specific campus and how maybe AYW helps you or doesn't help you or what they could do better to help?
- 76) G: When I came and enrolled here I thought it was like a regular school.
- 77) K: So you didn't choose this school because of any particular thing?
- 78) G: No. I didn't know. The reason why I came here and enrolled myself is because I heard you would be able to enroll yourself. I was with my sister and I knew she was too busy so she's not going to be able to do it. I was like I'm gonna enroll myself. I had L for a counselor and I told her about my situation because ever since my mom passed away I was receiving social security checks and my sister never told me that until like I would see that she would be getting checks but she never told me. Like I knew I was getting them but I never told her like, "hey that's my money." I would be dumb and never tell her nothing. She would never ask me if I need anything if I need clothes, hey lets go to the grocery store. Let's go do something with that money for you but instead she kept it for herself. I had told Leslie about it and she said if I was pregnant and I wasn't getting along with my sister and my boyfriend was supportive then I would be able to get emancipated and that way I would be able to get the social security checks under my name and be able to use that money for myself. So she helped me do that. It was a long process and real hard but then everything had worked out. Those are the two helpful things AYW has done for me.
- 79) K: If you could say the top 5 things that the school could do to help moms out more what would you suggest?
- 80) G: For this school?
- 81) K: For this school. For any school.
- 82) G: I would say child care, and the reason that I say that is because now that I think about it being a mom is real real hard and coming to school is hard. And most moms because once they have their babies they stay home. They're like, "I'm not going to be able to go back to school because child care is too expensive." My daughter is enrolled in Child, Inc., which is kind of a school. A child care school. It's free. For teen parents it's free because they know you're trying your best to get your education.
- 83) K: Did someone help you find Child, Inc.?

- 84) G: Yes. Somebody just mentioned it to me, but then I looked in the phonebook and I got the phone number and called and that's how it worked out. I would say child care because for me it's real real hard to get on the bus and drop her off in 15 minutes because I still need to talk to the teacher so I need to know what time she ate, how she has been feeling, what time she slept and how she's been. So it takes me a couple of minutes. Then I have to walk back to the bus stop to get here on time. Yeah, and that way you know sometimes I have to leave school because she's on medication and they're not allowed to give it to her. I have to go over there give her the medication and come back to school. If we had a child care here I would feel much more safer myself because I would know my child is next door or the next building close to me and I know anything that happened I could be there in a minute or two. I'm learning. They're learning. We come to school together. We leave school together. That would be really really helpful.
- 85) K: Is there anything other than day care or child care that you think would be helpful?
- 86) G: Um, sometimes bring the students together to understand the purpose of going to school. Because your friends aren't going to be there for the rest of your life. You gotta think of your future. What you want to do. Like this morning some student from here is my friend I asked him for a ride because it was kinda raining this morning so he took me to my child day care then we went to pick up another student from school. He was planning on coming to school but she told him to go smoke weed...that somebody had weed and I don't know what. So I was like "you're not gonna go to school" and he was like "no." He was saying "they bad influenced me." And I was like, "because you let yourself." And he was going, "yeah that's true." So he knows what he's doing so he chooses to go smoke weed instead of coming to school to learn something. But at least he knows what he's doing, you know? And he chooses to you know. Cause it's in you. If you don't want to do something nobody is gonna...I don't care if they punk me out I don't care. I'm doing it for me and I'm going to succeed. You know?
- 87) K: Is there anything else about being a mom or teen pregnancy that we talked about that you want to talk about more while we're recording?
- 88) G: I would just say be careful what you do and being a teen mom is real real hard. There's plenty of time for that. You know? Right now just take care of school and get your education and do what you gotta do and then in the future once you find someone that you know you're gonna be with and that person wants to be with you and then both of ya'll are mature enough so that's what you want to do then ya'll should think about a baby. Other than that...condoms!

- 89) K: Is that something you think about now like to prevent having another child? You and you're boyfriend.
- 90) G: Yeah. There's birth control. Some people say it doesn't feel the same but there's birth control. They work.
- 91) K: So you're definitely not trying to have another baby?
- 92) G: No. No, it's hard. My little one she's nine months old and she's everywhere. I can't even like turn around and look back and she's not there no more. She's not going to be my only child but for right now she's going to be the only one 'till I get my education and I have everything ready and we're gonna plan. We're gonna have the money we know everything's gonna be good.
- 93) K: Cool. Well thanks so much for doing this.
- 94) G: You're welcome.

## Interview 2: Marta

- 1) K: And we're recording, ok. So, I wanted to ask you uhm, what age your mother and grandmother were if you know when they had their first child.
- 2) G: Oh, I don't know [OC: laughs] I know I was the last one but I don't, I know my mom was young though. I know that.
- 3) K: Do you think she might have been a teenager or...
- 4) G: Yes, mmhum.
- 5) K: Probably?
- 6) G: But not this young but...
- 7) K: Do you have any uhm, knowledge of like what her experience was like as a mom?
- 8) G: I really don't know. I know with me but with my other brothers and sisters cause we didn't grow up together so, but I know that she wasn't with them like most of their lives cause she was with me and they're in El Salvador so they grew up with my grandma and I grew up with her-with my mom.
- 9) K: I see, so your mom came to the states and then had you.
- 10) G: She came pregnant from El Salvador.
- 11) K: Do you have the same father as your...
- 12) G: No...
- 13) K: It's different? And just one thing relating to the first interview that we did I know that you mentioned that people ask you, you know, if you're a nerd because you're in school so much and you focus on school. What perception did people have of you before you had your baby and before you sort of refocused on school?
- 14) G: I was bad. Like I wouldn't pay attention at school. I would skip, I would talk back to teachers. I would always be in the office, the principal's office.
- 15) K: Yeah?
- 16) G: Yeah.

17) K: Ok, so do you want to talk a little bit about the changes that have happened since the last interview?

18) G: [OC: participant sighs] It's a lot of changes. I know that I had said that I was with my daughter's dad and which I'm not no more because he just became too aggressive and when I told him that I didn't want to be with him no more that you know to give ourselves some time like he he didn't know how to take it and he acted like real, like he just went crazy and the first thing he thought was that I had someone else. And like, no that just-it wasn't gonna work out no more. And uhm, like right now I'm staying with my friend right now; I'm looking for a place. I'm looking for a job. It's real hard but it's better than to be in a situation that I was. And then he reminded me of my dad. Every time he would like, cause he can't control his anger and like every time he would like anything that comes to his mind he'll say it but he won't think about it before. And like he would just remember me of my dad like the way he was with my mom and I don't know it's just that I decided to just get out of it, you know? So...

19) K: Is that something you had been thinking about for a while or...

20) G: About what?

21) K: Leaving him or...

22) G: Yes. Cause I gave him a last chance and I knew that it wasn't going to work out but that way I said to myself I'll give myself another chance to see if there's something there still. If there's, if this could work out one more time but it didn't. I would, he would take me out to eat, we would go to the mall, he would buy me things, we would have fun but I wouldn't be happy.

23) K: And before he was sort of the financial provider, right? So how different is it now that, I mean is he still...

24) G: He's still there for the baby I mean he buys her water, he buys her diapers, he buys her whatever she needs. And me, I'm supporting myself with my mom's social security income.

25) K: So you still have communication with him?

26) G: Mhum, yeah.

27) K: Ok.

28) G: And uhm, I didn't I mean I don't see the necessity to put him on papers you know cause he's being responsible right now. He's giving me money, he's taking care of her cause I take her the weekends with him. Before, like two weekends ago, I wouldn't trust him, them alone. I would go and we would go out to eat but just for

him to see her and to spend time with her and then this past weekend I decided you know what well ok, you know I'm gonna let you, you know I'm gonna let her stay and spend the night with you and you know we'll see how that goes and he was fine. It went good.

29) K: Good.

30) G: And he understood. I told him if you call me during the week I guarantee you that I'm not gonna be sure if I'm gonna be able to take her to you. So the most probability that there will be is that you'll only be able to see her every weekend or you know...

31) K: Uh huh, how's he handling it all?

32) G: It's hard but like he told me, I rather have a weekend with her than you know just like one day out of the week or you know cause he sees her both days, Saturday and Sunday.

33) K: Cool, so it seems like you guys are handling it very maturely and dealing with it. Well, let's get onto this. What do you think are the biggest challenges and obviously they are different now that you're by yourself but that you face with being a mom?

34) G: The biggest challenge it's, cause I'm looking for a job and I'm thinking I'm so used to being with her after school that once I'm working I'm gonna be like I'm gonna feel weird cause she's not by me and I know she's gonna feel weird and it's gonna be pretty hard.

35) K: Has the baby handled the transition well or...

36) G: With the dad and mom thing? Yeah, I mean she's been close to me lately. Well, ever since Spring Break started to I don't see it in her that she misses her dad but whenever she sees him she gets all excited and you know. But like whenever I go pick her up when she sees me she comes to me. That's what she, you know, that's the way she acts...

37) K: Uhm, how do you think that the challenges that you're facing in your life now would be different if you didn't have a child? Like what, can you even imagine...

38) G: [OC: pause] I would be graduating probably. I mean I couldn't say that I would be doing good at this time because if I would have not gotten pregnant I know that it would've been real real hard for me to like mature fast enough you know and be like you know what my friends are not gonna be with me forever you know I need to graduate. I know, cause I'm a hard headed person-not no more but before I was so I know that it would have taken a long time.

- 39) K: And where do you think you would be right now if you didn't have a baby?
- 40) G: Right now [OC: pause] I really don't know. I'd probably be in like a foster care or something cause my sister. I know she wouldn't put up with me all this time she probably would've given me away or something.
- 41) K: And, uhm, we talked a little bit about this on the last interview what advice you would give to schools to respond to teen moms. Is there anything you want to add to what you said last time?
- 42) G: About a mom? Hmmm.
- 43) K: Yeah, how schools could help in that situation.
- 44) G: Schools?
- 45) K: Mhum.
- 46) G: Well, I mean you get your education and then you show your baby or once that they get bigger that you did it, you know, they can do it too. Uhm, and hopefully they'll understand what a teen mom's like you know struggling with the baby and coming to school and being pregnant and having doctor appointments and your baby getting sick and all that stuff.
- 47) K: Yeah, so the school could just be aware and respond to everything that the teen mom has to deal with. Ok, and if this was an ideal world, so like the perfect world and you could change anything you wanted to change about it how would the world be different? [OC: pause] It's a big question.
- 48) G: I don't think I would change anything. I think I'm, no I'm good. I don't regret anything. I don't regret my pregnancy, I don't regret being pregnant. I don't regret having my baby. I don't regret taking care of her every night. I don't regret it at all.
- 49) K: Is there anything you would change about any of the other situations in your life that are just sort of like school or your home situation or anything that you would want to be different?
- 50) G: I would change my parents. My par-what had happened like I would change that.
- 51) K: When your parents passed away?
- 52) G: They passed away when I was twelve. Yeah I would change that.

- 53) K: How do you think that would affect your life?
- 54) G: To be honest with you, I know that if they would still be alive and that day that I found out I was pregnant I know that I would have been like in big huge trouble. Like I know my mom would have like hit me and drug me all over the apartment or do something you know. But I think that like afterwards she would understand and that you know she'd be supporting me, you know, with the baby and...
- 55) K: In a way that your sister doesn't?
- 56) G: Yeah.
- 57) K: And in that same scenario, like if you could change anything about the world, uhm, what would you do after graduation if you could do anything you wanted?
- 58) G: Hm, probably just do the job that I want to do and I've always wanted to travel so I'd probably travel everywhere.
- 59) K: What sort of job do you wish that you could have?
- 60) G: Right now I want to be a nurse and like I've always thought about space and being an astronaut and stuff but I feel like that, stuff like that goes real real far from me. You know, so like in the perfect world that's what I would be but [OC: laughs] it's a long way.
- 61) K: And what do you see, well we'll get to that in a little bit. Uhm, when you were a little girl do you remember what you thought you wanted to be when you grew up?
- 62) G: I remember the first thing I wanted to do was a teacher. And then uh, what do you call them? Firefighter? And I think that's it.
- 63) K: Why do you think that those ideas changed?
- 64) G: Cause of the way teachers would act and now a days I still go back and I'm like a teacher? No. Cause they handle a lot you know with students and I know I'm patient but for certain things but I know that I wouldn't be patient with students.
- 65) K: So that's just something that you've learned about your personality? What about being a firefighter?
- 66) G: That, I mean I like helping people but I heard that it's really a dirty job you know cause I've heard a lot of weird cases. [OC: giggles] Yeah.

- 67) K: And can you just talk a little about your ideas or your goals about your future family and like how many, if you want to have more children or...
- 68) G: Right now what I'm thinking since like we're not together you know and like we're giving ourself time but like I'm not giving him another chance. I know myself, you know, cause there's nothin left there's, I mean he killed it all and it could happen that we could go back together and if we do I'm still planning on having more kids but if we don't I think that this will be my only child but then I think about it too, if I'm with another partner, you know, and I'm in love and I know that he would want to have kids and I would want a kid of his but right now that's the way I see it.
- 69) K: So, you're open to the possibility of having more kids in the future?
- 70) G: I am but then I'm not. Yeah.
- 71) K: Are you doing anything right now to sort of prevent...
- 72) G: Well, I'm not having any uh, intercourse with nobody so I'm not worried about that.
- 73) K: Yeah. Uhm, let's move on to talking a little about what you want for your child's life. What do you want her in general, like what do you want her to get out of life?
- 74) G: Uhm. [OC: pause] That like life is hard and she'll be just like have to deal with it. Anything that comes could happen. I just want her to and I'm, I hope I will make her understand that you know be prepared for whatever's coming cause we really don't know what's gonna come the next day or you're even gonna be there to live it you know? That's like the main thing, the other things I'm thinking that...[OC: recorder was paused because someone interrupted the interview]
- 75) K: About what you want your child to get out of life?
- 76) G: Oh yeah, but I think that's the main thing I think the other things like every person learns it in their own way. What they do, you know they learn it in their lives you know I can't, I couldn't do nothing about it.
- 77) K: So, what do you kind of see for her future?
- 78) G: It's hard, it's hard to picture it cause she's a baby still but I just hope for her to be, to do the best that she cans in life and you know and just take my life as and example to think right and to think about the consequences that will happen. Like my mom did that and this is what happened to her and I don't want to be like that you know.
- 79) [OC: Recorder was stopped and restarted]

- 80) K: What do you hope that she gets out of school?
- 81) G: I hope she learns a lot.
- 82) K: Yeah.
- 83) G: I hope, I know she's not gonna like some classes cause I think everybody's like that but I hope that she'll stick to something since in school she'll be able to use all through her life. That's the main thing.
- 84) K: Uhm, and now we'll go back to what you see in your future. And we're just gonna go through a series of what we see at certain points in your life. So just kind of imagine like where you're gonna be. The first one is where do you see yourself in two years or where you want to be in two years?
- 85) G: I see myself still in college.
- 86) K: In college?
- 87) G: Mhum.
- 88) K: So you're graduating...when are you graduating?
- 89) G: [OC: laughs] in two years...
- 90) K: Two years? So then you would be going to college right during that time? Ok and then the next one, do you have any ideas what you want to do in college, where you want to go?
- 91) G: You know I'm thinking I'm sticking with the nurse thing but like I don't know if that's the thing for me you know, it's only once you get there that you actually get the class that you learn about it if you feel it or not.
- 92) K: So that's what you're going to try for and then see if you...
- 93) G: Yeah.
- 94) K: If you like it.
- 95) G: Hopefully I will though.
- 96) K: And then where do you see yourself in five years? So that would be three years after you graduate.
- 97) G: From high school?

- 98) K: Mhum.
- 99) G: Still in college.
- 100) K: Still in college? And your baby will be what...
- 101) G: Like six...
- 102) K: Almost six?
- 103) G: No like three years and two more-five like five or no, six.
- 104) K: Six. So she'll be in school?
- 105) G: Yes.
- 106) K: And you'll be in school.
- 107) G: In second grade
- 108) K: Wow.
- 109) G: I know. [OC: laughs]
- 110) K: How does it make you feel to think about that? Five years down the road.
- 111) G: It's, I don't know, it's scary.
- 112) K: Ok, let's jump to ten years so ten years from now...
- 113) G: I see myself in a big house. I see myself as a nurse still working in a hospital, helping people...
- 114) K: And she'll be ten.
- 115) G: She'll be ten, hopefully not giving me trouble. [OC: laughs]
- 116) K: Do you see yourself with a partner or with...
- 117) G: I see myself alone with her...
- 118) K: In a big house.
- 119) G: Yes.

- 120) K: And then 20 years. So she'll be out of high school.
- 121) G: Yeah. Uhm. [OC: pause] I don't know, I see her like in a university still going for her career and me I see, like I don't exactly see myself like not doing nothing but doing something but I can't see it, you know?
- 122) K: So you can't see that far? So 20 years from now how old will you be?
- 123) G: I'll be 27, no 20 years?
- 124) K: 20 years from now.
- 125) G: 37.
- 126) K: Wow.
- 127) G: I think but I think I will jump to another career...
- 128) K: Instead of being a nurse? Like be a nurse for a while and then do something different?
- 129) G: Yeah. Yeah.
- 130) K: Is there anything else about your future that you kind of want to talk about? Like what you expect...
- 131) G: Uhhh. I just expect to give my daughter the best that I can you know like stick together through worst and good times. Hopefully, I hope that we don't argue. I hope that we're like best friends you know and she feels good telling me what to tell me you know...
- 132) K: Cool, uhm and with anything with any topic open is there anything else you want to talk about?
- 133) G: Not really.
- 134) K: No. So you talked about wanting to have a good relationship with her. Can you talk a little about what you see, what mothering ideal, you know like the perfect mother, how do you see that?
- 135) G: I see it like if she comes up to me and tells me something that she did wrong or something that she wasn't supposed to do and then she knew it wasn't right like I would take it, I wouldn't take it like to scream at her. You know I would be like you know well, you did it you know you got to think about next time you do it or if there's you know if you can go back and fix it you know but like talk talk to her like through it. Not get all furious, well it depends on what she tells me too but I'll try not

to you know. I'll try to understand cause I was once a teenager too when she gets, you know.

136) K: How is that different than the relationships that you've experienced with people who have kind of taken the parenting role in your life?

137) G: Like how?

138) K: Like you've sort of said that the ideal mothering role would be to open the communication and talk through things...

139) G: The reason why I say that, it's because like when I was a kid my mom was never like that, like she she wouldn't sit down and talk to me like that was wrong you shouldn't do this. They would always scream at me and yell at me and spank me and like punish me and that was it.

140) K: And what was your relationship like with your sister? Did she ever feel like she was sort of like the parent to you or...

141) G: Me? No, hu uh.

142) K: Even though you were living with her...

143) G: I do feel like she was a parent like financially but never like as a sis-like how could I say it, I never saw her as my mom. I knew she was my sister but she wouldn't act like my sister.

144) K: Did she set rules and boundaries for you and sort of...

145) G: Yes, and like I think that's the reason why I got more you know like I started going out, skipping class and everything because like they wouldn't let me go out at all. You know, like not even outside just go throw the garbage to the trashcan and come right back. I couldn't talk on the phone and if I did she would tell me you have ten minutes to talk on the phone. You know so I think that pushed me to where I wanted to skip school you know and hang out with friends cause I never did that it was only in school. And friends would tell me let's go to the movies this weekend and I'd be like uh I have something else planned you know but I would just be home cleaning or washing dishes or whatever or watching TV but I had to be home.

146) K: Since you experienced that what sort of boundaries do you expect to set for your daughter or how do you think that will affect your being a mother?

147) G: I think that I will give her freedom but you know like all moms tell me who you're going with and I hope that she doesn't lie to me that's why I want to have that relationship with her you know for her to tell me anything and you know I just

want to be able to trust her and know that she's gonna be good and I'm gonna be expecting her home at a certain time, you know.

148) K: And can you talk just a little bit about a scenario or maybe prevention of your daughter becoming a-having a child at an early age. Like how do you feel about that situation?

149) G: I think that I would talk to her about my experience you know and I'm not hoping and you know I know it might happen but it's like I sit real far from it. I know how she's not gonna be like old people old days, be a virgin til you get married. I know that that's not gonna happen so I don't make myself think that that's gonna happen. I know it's gonna happen probably when she's a teenager. But I wish she would tell me and tell me hey mom you know take me to the doctor to get some birth control you know. I mean I don't have no-I mean we're women you know I don't see nothing wrong with that.

150) K: Yeah, well that's your philosophy and at least you've thought about it and you have a plan for that. That's important. That's good, do you want to talk about anything else? We're done with the questions.

151) G: No.

152) K: Thankyou.

153) G: Thank you.

## Interview 1: Mila

- 1) K: uhm, so tell me a little bit about your life before your before your first pregnancy.
- 2) M: Before?
- 3) K: Yeah, just like what was your life like before you got pregnant...
- 4) M: Well I went to school uh, I played soccer hmm [OC: pause] I was passing all my classes.
- 5) K: Yeah?
- 6) M: Like I hadn't had no boyfriend like I just went to school, practiced and then I went home.
- 7) K: Ok, and what did you think about pregnancy before you got pregnant? Did you have any thoughts about...
- 8) M: I thought that I was not gonna have kids cause I would have already taken care of my two little brothers.
- 9) K: How old are your little brothers?
- 10) M: They're uh, one is seven and one is five. So I always tell my friends that I was not gonna have kids till like thirty [OC: said with strong accent] and [OC: pause] yeah.
- 11) K: And when you, how did you learn that you were pregnant? When you were pregnant.
- 12) M: Well, I [OC: pause] I just that I miss my period...
- 13) K: And then you just thought that you might be pregnant?
- 14) M: Yeah.
- 15) K: Did you take a pregnancy test or...
- 16) M: One but then I had [OC: participant smiled as she said this] I don't know what they're called but you're like wanting food that's...
- 17) K: Like a craving?
- 18) M: Yeah, like a lot.

- 19) K: And so then...
- 20) M: With my first pregnancy.
- 21) K: So your first pregnancy? And then what happened with that?
- 22) M: Then I had a miscarriage in January and then in May I got pregnant again and that was my baby that I have.
- 23) K: Ok, and how old is your baby now?
- 24) M: She's one and four months.
- 25) K: And when you found out you were pregnant who did you tell first?
- 26) M: His father-her father, yeah.
- 27) K: Her father? And how did her father react?
- 28) M: Oh, well he was happy but I wasn't.
- 29) K: He was happy?
- 30) M: Cause he's old, he's older than me.
- 31) K: Yeah.
- 32) M: So I did understand that he wanted a family but not me.
- 33) K: Yeah, who else did you tell after him?
- 34) M: Nobody and then like a month later I told my mom.
- 35) K: How did she react?
- 36) M: She was-she was mad, disappointed and me too cause like I had always told my friends that I was not gonna have babies. And I didn't-I didn't want it.
- 37) K: When did you tell your friends?
- 38) M: Uhm [OC: pause] I didn't tell nobody cause I had vacations till like when I was like four months pregnant. Told my frien' and she laugh at me and then we neber talk.

- 39) K: After that? And so what did you start thinking about school when you found out you were pregnant?
- 40) M: What?
- 41) K: What did you think about school when you found out you were pregnant? Did you want to-want, did you decide to stay in school, did you...
- 42) M: I didn't at first when I knew I didn't want the baby I wanted to do an abortion. Cause I didn't want it cause it was too soon, I didn't had I didn't finish school so I wanted to finish and I didn't know about babies [OC: she smiled as she said babies] and my mom didn't let me and they talked to my dad and they didn't let me to take an abortion so I had like when I was like 'til seven I didn't want the baby and [OC: pause] like they made me went to school and I didn't want to cause then my friends they were gonna see me pregnant cause I was in my school I was very quiet and there then they were gonna see me that I was pregnant so [OC: pause] so I didn't want to...
- 43) K: Was there anything, like what was the hardest thing about being pregnant and being at school?
- 44) M: [OC: pause] well, when you're pregnant it's not too hard cause you still have to go to school normal. Don't worry about the baby. But like for me I didn't wanted to go because I [OC: unsure what was said] all my friends they didn't, they stopped talking to me. So I went to school and I didn't talk to nobody.
- 45) K: Why do you think they stopped talking to you?
- 46) M: Maybe cause-cause I always tell 'em I wasn't gonna have get married or have a baby soon but then I was the first one.
- 47) K: Do you talk to any of them now or...
- 48) M: No.
- 49) K: And do any of them have babies now?
- 50) M: No.
- 51) K: No? Do you have any friends that do have babies?
- 52) M: Right now? [OC: pause] No.
- 53) K: So if you-if one of your friends did find out she was pregnant what advice would you give her?

- 54) M: Uh, if she was pregnant I would help her like help her with the baby like how to get to like take care of her cause I know.
- 55) K: Yeah...
- 56) M: And about the labor too about when you're in the labor [OC: labor]
- 57) K: And would you tell her anything about staying in school?
- 58) M: Yeah, but if be-she wanted to get pregnant I would tell her that no don't get pregnant cause it's hard.
- 59) K: Can you just sort of talk through a normal day? You kind of said before that your normal day before you had a baby you would go to school and play your sports and go home and hang out with your friends. What's a typical day in your life now that you have a baby?
- 60) M: Now that I go to school, I wake up my baby is beside me and I left-I leave her a bottle of milk. Uhm, I come to school, during school I'm worried cause maybe she's not eating maybe she's fighting with her cousins uhm and then when I don't have a ride, uh I don't know if I had to go early, I go to my house and have to take care of her and maybe to put her sleep or clean the uh the room and then cook for her. Give her some food and then I have to go outside and play with her like till like maybe two hours or three hours and then at night I give her more food, I feed her and then like around nine I take her a bath, give her some cereal, and that's it.
- 61) K: And then she goes to sleep?
- 62) M: Yeah, I don't go out. If I go out I have to buy some pampers or go buy milk like I don't have time for me.
- 63) K: Who are you living with right now?
- 64) M: With my mom and my dad.
- 65) K: Do they help? Are they supportive?
- 66) M: Yeah.
- 67) K: Is there anyone else in your life that's supportive of you being a mom? Financially or emotionally or...
- 68) M: Her dad.
- 69) K: Her dad is still supportive?

- 70) M: Yeah.
- 71) K: Are you still together with her dad?
- 72) M: Yes.
- 73) K: Does he help you take care of her?
- 74) M: A little bit but he wants to maybe he doesn't realize that he has a baby cause he wants to go out with his guy friends and like I tell him that you can't cause I can't like but he does helps me.
- 75) K: So, right now you're in school, are you sticking with staying in school? How do you feel about graduating?
- 76) M: The counselors tells me that maybe if I come to school in December I'm gonna graduate and like for me I don't-I like school and I like it here cause it's easy but I would choose to stay with my daughter and work and not come to school.
- 77) K: So what influences you on coming to school? Like what makes you come to school?
- 78) M: My dad whose just like-he's just always fighting with me cause I have to finish school cause I have to get a good job and then for me, my baby. So that she can learn and she knows that, like she will be proud of me.
- 79) K: Did having a baby affect you coming to this school in particular? Like, was there anything about this school that made you want to come here?
- 80) M: No, well in some ways the hours of school.
- 81) K: The hours? What about the hours...
- 82) M: They're longer, like my other school I get out at 12 and I was home by 12:20 or 12:30 and now it's like and over there I had to take a bus and over here it's longer, I get out at 1:40 and I have to take three busses to get home and when my mom can't babysit her I have to go early...
- 83) K: Go home early?
- 84) M: Yeah.
- 85) K: Has this campus been supportive or has anything about it been not supportive of you being a teen mom?

- 86) M: Yeah [OC: pause] well, they have helped me to come to school in a way cause I have been going to like four different schools and I had changed and they helped me to come to school and get done.
- 87) K: So, who is it that's helping you come to school?
- 88) M: I think everybody, that's why sometimes I get mad cause people they're like playing and for me I come to get the work done and finish earlier or like fast and some people they're like just playing around or talking about smoking like I don't see why.
- 89) K: So if you could give five suggestions to whoever runs the school on things that should change to help teen moms, what are the things you would change about this school?
- 90) M: I don't know.
- 91) K: Is there anything that the school could do that would help you?
- 92) M: Well, no cause they can't do nothing about the natural [OC: not sure what was said]. They were saying that they were gonna have a daycare. That's good.
- 93) K: Would you use it? Would it help you?
- 94) M: Yeah. Yeah it would and then I guess all the moms they would be like released.
- 95) K: Is there anything else that you want to talk about-about being a teen mom or...[OC: shook head no] ok, well thanks for doing this.

## Interview 2: Mila

- 1) K: So, some of these questions they are just going forward from the other questions. The other questions we talked about what your day is like and what it's just your every day experience is like and what it was like when you found out you were having a child. The questions we are doing today are going to focus more on what you see for your future. The first one is what are some of the biggest challenges you face as a mother?
- 2) M: Uhm.
- 3) K: Like anything that's hard, makes things harder. Like any problems...
- 4) M: Like now I have been having problems with her dad and like since she was born I wanted to separate but I can't do it like for the baby. Like staying with him for the baby. That's one problem, uhm...
- 5) K: And if the baby wasn't in the picture you wouldn't be with him?
- 6) M: Everything, it is different. Like me graduating already maybe have a job, go to college.
- 7) K: Uhm, and that's sort of the next question. How do you think your life would be different if you didn't have a child?
- 8) M: A lot different. First of all I wouldn't be here I think. I would already be graduated like two years ago. Uhm, I think I would be I would've finished my cosmetology school and I would like work and have like a job and like I could go out places.
- 9) K: Do you think you would have stayed at your home school?
- 10) M: Yeah.
- 11) K: We kind of went over this the last time but what advice would you give to schools to make things better for you or easier for you?
- 12) M: Well, this school it's like. Well, they have already helped me a lot cause sometimes I miss school because I don't have a baby sitter but uhm maybe having a daycare like a little bit. I don't know.
- 13) K: So, if this were an ideal world or like a perfect world meaning that you could change anything you wanted in your life; how would your life be different?
- 14) M: I don't want to be mean but I would change my baby and not be with her dad.

- 15) K: Is there anything else in your life that you would change?
- 16) M: Maybe like, I would I could change that I could come early so that I would have like papers so that I could be like here.
- 17) K: Ok, so that you could be a citizen, have citizenship?
- 18) M: Uh huh.
- 19) K: What do you mean by come early?
- 20) M: Cause there was, they had the amnesty.
- 21) K: Oh, ok so if you had come at a different time you would have had amnesty? Uhm, and in that same situation if you could change anything you wanted and do anything you wanted, what would you do after you graduated?
- 22) M: After I graduated? I'm planning to go to a cosmetology school cause it's something I can finish and then and just like work and maybe move out like out of my mom's house and have my own place with my baby.
- 23) K: Is cosmetology school something that it you could do anything that you wanted that's what you would want to do?
- 24) M: I like to do like business like some sort of business like study business law or something but uh I think it takes more time.
- 25) K: More time? And is time something that you just don't have enough...
- 26) M: One just cause one I don't have a babysitter like for sure and I don't want to have to take her to a daycare then I need money so I have to work cause like my parents they can't gave me, they can't give me cause like they have enough for the house and for the brothers but...
- 27) K: Do you remember when you were a little girl and what you thought you wanted to be when you grew up?
- 28) M: I wanted to just be happy just do whatever I wanted to. I wanted to be a cook like a chef. Yeah and do make up and hair.
- 29) K: Is being a chef something that you still think about doing?
- 30) M: Not really, like I do it at the house but uh...
- 31) K: Why do you think that changed?

- 32) M: I don't know.
- 33) K: But you cook at the house?
- 34) M: Yeah but one I have to and I like it and it's because I think that by cooking I can express myself.
- 35) K: Cool, uh do you have any goals or ideas about having more children in the future?
- 36) M: Since I have two miscarriage I can't I can't get pregnant.
- 37) K: You can't?
- 38) M: Maybe in like five years at least later but uhm I don't want to.
- 39) K: Is that something that the doctor told you...
- 40) M: Yes.
- 41) K: That you couldn't have any. You had one miscarriage before your daughter...
- 42) M: I had one miscarriage before and then she was born and then another one like in August.
- 43) K: Is uhm, are you doing anything about trying not to have another baby?
- 44) M: I am just doing that ab abstinence [OC: struggles for word].
- 45) K: Abstinence? So not having intercourse or anything. And if five years down the road if you could have another baby when you picture your family do you picture more children than just the one?
- 46) M: Now I think about it and I don't want to be with her dad anymore. I have been trying almost like a year being with him and he knows that I am just trying for the baby but uhm, I just see myself as separate with him and just me.
- 47) K: So do you picture it...
- 48) M: I don't picture no one.
- 49) K: Just the two of you...

- 50) M: Yeah because I think that that uhm if I want to be with a guy he has to like my girl and he has to respect her and like her and like accept me for who I am with her and I don't think I'm gonna find one like that.
- 51) K: So you don't have a lot of hope about finding another partner? Uhm, can you talk a little about what you want your daughter to get out of life?
- 52) M: Like what?
- 53) K: What do you see for her in the future?
- 54) M: Uhm, I hope that whatever decision I make that she will be happy and not suffer the consequences that I have. [OC: Crying]
- 55) K: What are you worried about?
- 56) M: That she is not gonna have a dad no more like she used to.
- 57) K: Do you think that if you are separate from him that he won't be a part of her life?
- 58) M: Yeah. I just since like she was born he has been there for her and now that I just don't want to I think that she is gonna suffer more but I think that I have to now so that she doesn't grow up like seeing us fight every day.
- 59) K: Is that what you are afraid of, is happening right now?
- 60) M: Yeah and my brother lives like right across the street and I'm afraid that she's gonna see that my brother is with his kids and she's not.
- 61) K: So your brother and he has a wife and they have a family? Pretty traditional family like mother father and children and you're worried that she's gonna see that and...
- 62) M: Yeah, lately.
- 63) K: And you grew up with two parents. Do you think it would have been different if you had just had your mom?
- 64) M: She's just gonna miss so much, so many things like to go to bed besides him.
- 65) K: Does he stay with you now?
- 66) M: With her not with me. They stay in my room and I stay with my sister. And I just I am waiting to like finish school and talk to my dad.

- 67) K: Is your family supportive of you separating from...
- 68) M: My mom but I don't think my dad will...
- 69) K: He doesn't like the idea?
- 70) M: No he just I just am worried about the baby but at the same time my dad has always been there for her like take-like I see that my dad feels different about my daughter than my nieces.
- 71) K: In what way?
- 72) M: Like he cares more about my daughter. He plays with her. He dance with her. Like my nieces come to the house and everything like...
- 73) K: How do your parents feel about your baby's father?
- 74) M: At first they like him but then we have live with them like almost a whole year and they know how he is how he act and my mom had asked me why I did it why I didn't wait? [OC: crying] Like he, my mom's the person and my dad...
- 75) K: Your dad thinks you should stay with him? So does your dad like...
- 76) M: I guess like a little bit. Cause yeah I think cause he's a nice guy but then he's like he has like two faces like with me he acts bad and then he comes like drunk and I try to tell him something and my dad has he's fighting with me, my dad he doesn't I think like my dad should support his daughter and he's not.
- 77) K: So that makes it hard for you?
- 78) M: Yeah.
- 79) K: Uhm. What, when you think about your daughter and you think about her going to school like you went to school, what do you want her to get out of school? Have you thought about that much?
- 80) M: Uhm, just to be happy go to school, finish, graduate and have a nice career.
- 81) K: Do you think about helping her a lot with school?
- 82) M: Yeah, I try to give her advice that I didn't get...
- 83) K: And we're gonna go through a series of where do you see yourself in two years, where do you see yourself in five years. The first one is where do you picture

your life in two years from now? So what will be going on in your life two years from now?

84) M: I hope that, uhm, I just I have been separated from her dad and I'm gonna still live with my mom and I already graduate and I like barely finish my cosmetology school and I have a job.

85) K: And how old will you be two years from now?

86) M: 21.

87) K: And how old will your daughter be?

88) M: Like three.

89) K: And now can you talk about where you will be five years from now?

90) M: Probably have my apartment, live with her and maybe my sister or a friend live with me and just working. Like enjoy her, take her to school, pick her up.

91) K: So she'll be about six years old five years from now. So she'll be in school. And then what about ten years from now?

92) M: I don't know.

93) K: Is that too far off?

94) M: Yeah. Like I can't even see myself in a month.

95) K: And I guess 20 years is just, the next one is 20. So 20 years from now you'll be 39? And she'll be 21? Can you picture at all what that might be like or what you want that to be like?

96) M: Maybe I will have a close relationship with her like a friend and a mom and I think there's a dad at the same time. [OC: crying] And I can't...

97) K: Is there anything else? That's the end of our questions so if there's anything else you want to talk about like if there's anything that's hard for you or you want to be better in the situation.

98) M: I just hope to be strong with her and she won't get mad at me in a few years.

99) K: What, when you think about the mom that you want to be how does that look?

100) M: Uhm, kind of like my mom, she's there for you and she tells you what you do best and like that and be friends with her and have a nice relationship that she would tell me anything.

101) K: And you had that with your mom?

102) M: Yeah, yeah a little bit.

103) K: Well, thank you for doing the interview.

Interview 1: Valerie

- 1) K: One thing we have to say since it is recorded if there's something you don't want to say on the recorder just have me turn it off and you can tell me without having it on. Just incase for some reason a court wanted to subpoena the information. It's all confidential. We're going to change your name and everything. Just so you know. I can turn it off then we can turn it back on.
- 2) G: ok
- 3) K: To start off can you tell me a little bit about your life before you had your first pregnancy?
- 4) G: It was different 'cause I didn't have a lot of responsibilities and I had more freedom to do what I wanted. I could do sports or hang out with friends. I can't do that now.
- 5) K: What did you think about pregnancy before you got pregnant?
- 6) G: It was hard. I always heard stories. But, um I think it's different for every mother. I think it's different, you know? I always heard the same thing like it's hard or it's a lot of responsibility, you have to work a lot.
- 7) K: Did you think about wanting to be a mom before?
- 8) G: No
- 9) K: How did you first learn that you were pregnant?
- 10) G: I didn't find out I was pregnant until 5 months. I was very small and skinny. I was in athletics. I was still working out and everything. I had a really flat stomach. I noticed I was gaining a little bit of weight and that wasn't really me because I was always in shape. So like I started noticing my breasts getting bigger and my stomach. I told my boyfriend I thought I was pregnant. I took a pregnancy test and it came out it was positive. I didn't tell my mom. She found out on her own because she bought a test for me to take.

- 11) K: Wow, so 5 months? When did you find out that you were five months along?
- 12) G: I don't remember.
- 13) K: So when you first found out that you were pregnant what were your thoughts?
- 14) G: I was scared because I could barely take care of myself and my brothers and sisters. I saw the way my mom struggled. My mom told me a lot of stories because my dad wasn't there for her and me. I was really scared because I thought my boyfriend was going to leave me and get scared and run off and leave it all up to me. My biggest fear was that I wasn't gonna be a good mom.
- 15) K: How old is your baby now?
- 16) G: He's 5 months.
- 17) K: Was your boyfriend the first person you told or did you tell anyone else?
- 18) G: It was my boyfriend.
- 19) K: Then what order did you tell other people?
- 20) G: No first it was my sister. We talk a lot. Then my boyfriend. My mom assumed I was. My dad really wanted to know. So when they came home my sister called me and said, "You better be ready because mom's bringing a pregnancy test." I was scared. I was crying. I didn't think my mom would love me. I thought she would disown me and not help me out, but she helped out a lot.
- 21) K: How did she respond when she first found out you were pregnant?
- 22) G: She was disappointed because she expected a lot more out of me. Just by thinking you know you already know what I went through. She didn't think I would follow in her footsteps. I would finish school and not have kids until I was actually ready. It was something I wasn't supposed to do.
- 23) K: And your boyfriend, how did he respond?
- 24) G: He was crying. He was scared that we weren't going to make it by 19. He told me he would always be there for me and help me out. He would have to do it as his responsibility.

- 25) K: Did they respond the way you thought they would?
- 26) G: My mom?
- 27) K: Your mom and your boyfriend.
- 28) G: My boyfriend, no. I knew the kind of person he was but I was scared. A lot of girls boyfriend's leave them. They're by themselves. I really didn't expect it. I thought he was gonna be like other guy like, "It's not my baby." My dad cried. He told me I didn't know what I was getting myself into. He didn't know why I did it. He was crying. Like with him he has a lot - he's real strict. Real old school you know? Real like don't have kids until your married. I thought he was going to be real embarrassed of me and not take me to see his family. He's not my dad. He's my step dad. I thought he was going to disown me but he didn't. He expected a lot out of me. Just by what my mom has told me. It was like that for my grandma too. Everybody thought the same. Once your mom says something that's what everyone thinks.
- 29) K: When did school come into question, like how did you start thinking about school once you find out you were pregnant? Because obviously you were in sports...
- 30) G: I thought I'm going to finish. I'm not going to drop out. I have a kid now. I have to do not just for myself but for him too because he's going to depend on me to support him and buy what he needs. What if later on in life my boyfriend isn't there for me anymore and I'm single? I'm not going to have a good education so I can't get a good job. But then I did drop out of school for two months but not because I didn't want to be in school but because I was having problems at home you know like it was too strict. Well not really that, but I didn't see my boyfriend the way I wanted to see him. I wanted him to see his child everyday. I just felt like something was missing. I feel like when your family you should be together and not just see each other every weekend or every Saturday when he's off.
- 31) K: Did he go to the same school you went to?
- 32) G: No. He went to another school.
- 33) K: What was the hardest part about being pregnant and going to school?
- 34) G: Being able to get up and go. I had a lot of difficulties in my pregnancy. Like I couldn't walk. I had a lot of early contractions. I couldn't go to school so I had to stay home and not go to school and do what I had to do. So all those absences that I was making I suffered because I wasn't going to graduate on time. If I wouldn't have got pregnant I could have graduated already and everyone would have been like you did it.

- 35) K: Do you think people's reactions will change once you do graduate?
- 36) G: Yeah. Right now I feel like my family thinks I can't do it. Only because my mom's never really told me, "Keep on, you can do it." Instead she gets mad and cusses at me and tells me, "Why aren't you studying!" Instead of saying, "You need help? I'll help you." You know like being a mom. She just never said - I never heard it from her mouth, "Keep on, you can do it."
- 37) K: When are you supposed to graduate?
- 38) G: They said next year because I have two math classes to take. A math class and a science class.
- 39) K: If you found out someone was pregnant what advice would you give them?
- 40) G: Not to give up. It's not easy. It's hard but anyone can do it. You just can't let things get to you because you know you got a kid you gotta start looking forward instead of looking backwards. Instead of being down you gotta think straight.
- 41) K: Would you give them any specific advice about school? Staying in school?
- 42) G: Do what you gotta do. Don't worry about nothing else.
- 43) K: Let's walk through a typical day in your life before you had the baby and now that you have the baby. Just a typical day - getting up, going to school, whatever you did.
- 44) G: Before I go to sleep I would do homework, do what I had to do get ready for the next day and wake up go to school. After school I would go to practice. Go home and do homework. Now it's go to school, take care of the baby. You gotta take care of the baby after school and after work. You gotta go to work. The baby is always there. You can't ignore him.
- 45) K: Where's the baby when you're at school?
- 46) G: My boyfriend's taking care of him. But before, I missed a lot of days here at this school cause I don't have daycare so it's difficult for me to come to school. My boyfriend was getting his GED and my grandma is old. I can't expect a lot out of her to take care of him. It's kinda hard.
- 47) K: Your boyfriend is still supportive? You mentioned your grandma. Who else is supportive of you being a mom?

- 48) G: My mom. She's there for me - whatever I need if I need to talk to her. I don't live at home anymore. It got a lot harder though. She's not there the way I want her to be. I don't see her that much. My whole family is there for me.
- 49) K: Are you working?
- 50) G: I'm working my boyfriend's working. I only work three days out of a week. That's not even enough money to last me two weeks. That's only \$200 I make - not even. My boyfriend's the one who makes the money because he works from 4-11 and during the weekends he works like from 10-11. So he works a lot.
- 51) K: What's your living situation? Are you living with your grandma?
- 52) G: I live with my boyfriend.
- 53) K: So back to about staying in school. What influences your decision to stay in school? Is there ever a question about dropping out or do you plan on staying in school until you graduate?
- 54) G: Sometimes there's something in me that wants to drop out because it's a lot. It's a long day. The day goes very slow. I have to take care of the baby. I have to get ready for work. Just a very long day. I think I would make more money if I wasn't in school. My boyfriend's not getting an education. He was in the process of getting his GED, but he's not doing it no more. So if he's not doing it I have to do it you know. I don't want my son...I'm not the type of person who likes to ask for my mom or his mom for money. I feel like it's my responsibility. I should take care of it by myself. Maybe I ask sometimes. Sometimes I ask but it's hard. I feel like it's my responsibility I'm the parent so I feel like I should be taking the responsibility of what my son needs.
- 55) K: What do you think are the benefit of finishing to graduation?
- 56) G: Getting a good job. Going to college and getting a good job. Support my family. Help my boyfriend. If I get out of school it will be a lot easier. Then I don't have to worry about it if I get pregnant again. I'll have money. I can take care of my kids or whatever. If something happens to my son and I need money I'll have money to support him.
- 57) K: So you're defiantly not making any decisions to have a second child?
- 58) G: No

- 59) K: Did your pregnancy have anything to do with you enrolling at our school and this specific campus?
- 60) G: No
- 61) K: Because you came here after you had the baby?
- 62) G: Yeah he was like 3 or 4 months.
- 63) K: Is there anything this school has done to help support you being a mom or do you think there is something lacking in the school that could help?
- 64) G: I don't want to say daycare because I think that's my thing. It's not the school's thing to find daycare. That is kinda my problem is daycare. The only reason why I went to school everyday is because at my other school it had daycare it had transportation. I got up at 6 everyday. I went to the daycare and dropped off my son. It had parenting classes. After the parenting classes I'd go straight to school. So I would take an extra class that I don't even need, not that I don't need but it's not a part of the other school or whatever. That school really did help me out a lot. I had to pass my classes to keep my son in daycare not for them to take it away from me or somebody else take my spot. So it really made me work. I had to go to school everyday. I had to get up early and get on the bus because if I missed the bus there wasn't no way I was getting to school. Wherever I was living at my house my parents went to work very early. I was there with the baby then we leave.
- 65) K: What made you leave that school?
- 66) G: I really didn't want to. That school the teachers - I knew I wasn't going to graduate that year. One teacher for some reason made me feel really bad telling me in front of the whole class, "I'm sorry but you're not going to graduate. You're not going to walk the stage with your class." Just telling me all this stuff making me feel bad. I started crying. I know I'm not going to graduate you don't have to tell the whole world. He was telling me to drop out - that's the only thing you have left. He should be telling me to come to school but he was giving me all the wrong ideas. They don't understand how hard it is to be a young parent, go to school and do what you have to do. It's hard. It's not easy. I'm pretty sure if they had kids when they were younger - if they were a young mom or whatever then they would understand. A lot of teachers don't really care what you have to say because it's school. I think if they knew how it was they would understand and give you more chances. At that school some teachers are real strict. If you miss school you don't get make up work. You just have to do a better job on whatever's next to come.
- 67) K: Do you see any difference between this school and other schools?

- 68) G: Yeah, the teachers here are real understanding. I tell them my situation and they say, "This is what I can do to help you." Instead of turning their back on me and saying, "I can't do nothing for you." Cause they really can.
- 69) K: So if you could imagine the perfect school - what are the top 5 things that you think schools should think about to help teen moms?
- 70) G: Daycare is the biggest thing. I think that's what stops a lot of mother's from coming to school. It's very expensive and not many daycares do it for free. My old school did it for free as long as I was coming to school and doing my work. I think that's the main thing is the daycare and the teacher's pushing you to do. Whatever you need I'll be there to help you how I can instead of turning their back.
- 71) K: Is there anything else or are those the top two?
- 72) G: Yeah
- 73) K: Is there anything else you want to talk about that we haven't covered yet about being a teen mom?
- 74) G: No. I mean you can ask me whatever I'll be straight up with you let you know the way it is. There are a lot girls that are really young. Being pregnant at 13. They can't even work. Like what are they thinking? When I was that old I didn't even know what sex was. I wasn't even thinking about it. I was the kind of girl who played games. You know I'd go outside. My boyfriend's sister goes to [OC: name of school]. Two of her friends are 12 going on 13 and they're pregnant. I don't know what they were thinking. They cannot work. Who is gonna help them to support their child? Their mom?
- 75) K: Whenever you were with your boyfriend were you guys thinking maybe we'll get pregnant?
- 76) G: I knew what could happen. I never thought I'm not gonna get pregnant. I wasn't on birth control. I had unprotected sex. I knew what I was doing. I'm not dumb. I don't feel like I made a mistake. I just feel like I made a wrong decision. My child isn't a mistake. I could have lost him so many times. I went to Disneyworld. I got on all the rides. That's when I was in my early stages.
- 77) K: Like in the first 5 months?
- 78) G: Way before I was a month or two months. I went to Six Flags when I was pregnant. I never lost it. For some reason my son is here. He's meant to be. For some reason, I'm thinking because my boyfriend he was in trouble. A lot of trouble. He smoked marijuana. He didn't care about nothing or nobody. I

think why my son is here to show my boyfriend that he needed to change the way he is. His ways. And to change me too. Make me realize and open up my eyes. Maybe because I was gonna drop out. Who knows what was gonna happen or what I was gonna do. Maybe I was gonna make a worse decision. I knew what I was doing. I told my mom, "I'm sorry but I'm going to have this baby." She never told me I need to have a miscarriage. A lot of mom's tell their kids that. That's your grandchild you know. You tell your daughter I know what it's like. I'll be there for you whatever you need. Because they don't know what they're getting themselves into. It's hard.

79) K: So we'll have a second interview to talk about more of how you see the future. We'll set that up next week. Thanks for doing this one.

Interview 2: Valerie

K: So, V is there anything that's kind of changed in your life since the last interview that we did?

V: Hm, no not in not having to do with the baby.

K: But other things? Other things like, you can talk about other things that aren't, that don't have to do with the baby.

V: Yeah, like my grandpa has cancer and my grandmother uh she's 95 and dying soon so yeah cause they decided that they're supposed to cut her leg off and she decided on not having it done. So, they're just giving her medication to sleep like all the time so she'll be drugged all the time so...

K: And does that immediately affect your life at all or...

V: Yeah, cause we're really close and I don't know how to deal with it. It's hard.

K: How are you trying to deal with that?

V: Just, I don't know. Just trying to let the days go by, you know try not to think about it and make it come faster than what it's supposed to. Just let it come.

K: Ok, so in the last interview you said you saw how your mom struggled with having children and how your dad wasn't there for her. Uhm can you just tell me how old your mom was when she had her first child?

V: She was uhm, sixteen I think, fifteen or sixteen when she had me. I was the first child.

K: So you're the first child?

V: Umhum.

K: Uhm and what was your parents' relationship like? Do you know?

V: With my mom and my read dad? Not good, cause uh he left her when she was six months pregnant and he lied to her saying that he was gonna go work and he never came back to help her out.

K: So, did you have any conversations with her when you found out you were pregnant about her experience and your experience and...

V: Yeah, uh huh...

K: Did you guys talk about that? How did she react to it in that way?

V: I don't know like, she was just talking to me like right. You know like it's ok cause I had been having problems with my boyfriend right now with his family so I finally decided on calling my mom and stop being like everything is ok when it's not. I really need someone to talk to. So I finally called my mom and she was talking to me letting me know that she was there for me you know whenever I wanted to go back home that it was ok that I didn't have to ask just to go. It feels good knowing that my mom's there for me, you know.

K: Uh huh. Do you think your mom had anyone there for her when she was...

V: Just her mom.

K: Her mom? And another thing you mentioned in the last interview was that you were afraid that you weren't going to be a good mom. Now that you are a mom how do you feel? Do you feel that you're a good mom or...

V: Mm. I don't feel, I feel that I'm a good mom to my son but right now it's really easy cause I don't have to deal with you know things right now with him...

K: What do you mean?

V: Like now that he's small I can be a good mom now but I don't know how I would react to things later like when he's bad or doesn't listen to me so like I don't know if I'm gonna be a good enough mom to deal with it or how to deal with it.

K: What are the biggest things that you're afraid of when he gets older?

V: Him getting into things that he shouldn't have to be getting into because his father smokes and smokes weed and does bad things and I just hope he's not like that because the only reason my boyfriend was or was getting into that stuff was because of his dad because his dad introduced it to him when he was really young like middle school. So I just hope that he doesn't follow his father's footsteps.

K: Let's see. And I know that in your last interview I know that you talked a little about the struggle that you're having with your mom and I know that she's not doing some of the things that you sort of expect her to do. Now that you're a mom what are your ideals? Like if you could just explain the perfect mom how would you...

V: I don't know, I don't think there is the perfect mom because nobody is perfect. Everybody makes mistakes, every mother makes you know no mother is perfect to me you know cause nobody is perfect.

K: What are some of the attributes of being a really good mom?

V: Being there for their kids and helping them whenever they need things or when they struggle or when they're in pain or when their sad. Just being there for them.

K: And what are the biggest challenges that you face in being a mother?

V: Hmm. Money just money cause a baby is really expensive you gotta buy pampers and, sometimes you don't have the money for it so you have to depend on other people but it's not their responsibility it's ours.

K: And you're both working so...

V: Yeah, we got bills to pay and it's hard...

K: So that's the biggest thing is just financial. And if you like if you didn't have a baby how do you think that would be different?

V: I wouldn't have to worry about anything I would just worry about myself and you know get done with school. I would probably be done already but I had made a decision in dropping out because I thought it was the best thing for me but really it wasn't cause I didn't I thought about it and I knew if I dropped out I wasn't gonna have a good education, I couldn't get a good job you know. So we would never be bringing in any money cause my boyfriend's not trying to get his GED you know. So it's hard.

K: So we're just going to do a couple of pretend questions. If this were a perfect world or an ideal world and you could change anything to be the way you wanted them to be, how would things in the world be different? Like in your life or...

V: [OC: laughs] Uhm, I don't know.

K: It's your world so you could change anything you wanted.

V: I could change anything I wanted in my world? I would say struggle. I would change struggle cause like there would be no struggle and no pain. Life would be perfect you know?

K: What would a day in that life be like?

V: No, like no fights just like a normal day you know no fighting you're just happy and you have no worries.

K: And in that same setting if you could make the world whatever you wanted it to be, what would you do after you graduated?

V: What would I do after I graduate?

K: Uhhuh. If you could do anything you wanted.

V: Go to school again. Cause that's the next step you know cause I know if I take a break I won't come back to school. You know cause I'd have too much fun and not care you know cause once you're out of school you're like yes! but I have to think straight and I have to go to school.

K: What would you go to school for?

V: Something in the medical field but I'm not sure what yet.

K: So, when you were a little girl can you remember what you wanted to do when you grew up?

V: Uhm, well I wanted to be, I always like I always wanted to be I don't know like a ballerina [OC: looks down and smiles] that was my thing you know or to be like a doctor or something.

K: A ballerina or a doctor? And how did that change as you grew up?

V: Well, I knew I couldn't be a ballerina [OC: laughs] but a doctor I knew I had a chance at it but I had to work at it to get what I want and I have to go to it cause it's not gonna come to me.

K: Is there still a part of you that wants to do that?

V: Uh huh. Not a doctor but something. You know?

K: And do you have any particular goals about having more children or increasing your family?

V: Yeah I want to have more kids but when I'm ready. I know no kids are guaranteed to have their father there but uh I want to make sure that I'm ready and I'm done with school and I have a career and I have money and I'm not struggling. I know that I'm married and he'll be there for me just not yet I don't want any kids right now not anymore. Not right now, I'm not ready.

K: Are you making any decisions to prevent having more kids at this time?

V: Yeah, I'm on birth control.

K: Do you and your partner, you and your boyfriend do you guys talk about having more kids?

V: We do but not now. That's what we decided on was waiting making sure that everything is ok so that we don't have to go through the same thing that we are going through now with my son.

K: Yeah, so now let's talk about your son. What do you want him to get out of life? I know that's a big question...

V: I don't know. Like everything you know, like to be successful not worry about girls so much you know cause I don't want him to go through what I went through what me and his dad are going through cause I want him to enjoy life, whatever's best for him. Whatever he wants to do is fine with me as long as he's doing the right things and not getting himself into trouble cause what mother wants her kids to get into trouble?

K: Have you thought about what you would do if he came to you and had a girl pregnant or...

V: I wouldn't be mad cause you know things happen as a reason and I see it as a lesson. Especially if he's young, I see it as a lesson in life. Like you know, like now he knows it's not gonna be easy so he's gonna have to deal with the struggling and everything that comes with it you know the work and worries, everything. I see it as a lesson, that's what I see it as.

K: And what do you want him to get out of school?

V: A good education.

K: Do you have any plans for his schooling or have you thought about...

V: Uh huh. I don't have any insurance for him or you know like my grandma she has money aside with some guy I don't know I guess it's an insurance guy. She has money aside for me you know to graduate and she has money for college. You know, right now I don't have that but I don't even have a bank right now but we're putting money aside for him in case you know later on he wants to decide on doing something. It may not be a lot but it'll be something you know.

K: And now, we're going to go through a series of points, where you picture yourself at different points in your life. And the first one is where do you want to be or where do you see yourself in two years?

V: Two years? I see myself in college you know. That's my goal but right now I have to finish school right now and finish my TAKS test.

K: And you'll be done this summer?

V: Yeah, hopefully. Yeah. You know I'll have a good job you know and I'll be where I am now.

K: And your son with be two and a half at that time?

V: He'll be three or maybe three? I don't know.

K: And you son is how old right now?

V: He'll be one in November.

K: So, he's about six months? And then where do you see yourself in five years.

V: Uh. [OC: pause] I don't know. I see myself happy with my family not just with my baby but hopefully things will work out with my boyfriend cause I'm just scared of being lonely but I know if my mom can do it I can do it, anybody can do it. It's just a matter of you pushing yourself to do it.

K: When you picture yourself in five years do you picture your boyfriend and your baby and everyone together?

V: Yeah.

K: And then what about ten years from now?

V: Uh. Something like that. Hm, I don't know. That's a long way from now.

K: The next one is 20 years so that would be 28, no 38.

V: Oh I really don't know. Hm.

K: No idea?

V: No! Cause life is like things happen out of nowhere so I really don't know you know maybe more kids maybe not, you know, maybe I'm with my boyfriend still or maybe I'm married to someone else. I don't know.

K: So you're just kind of leaving it all. So it 20 years your son will be 20.

V: Hopefully he's in school still or got him a job or something I don't know. I just want the best for him. That's really what I want.

K: Well, those are all the questions I have. Is there anything you want to talk about other than those...

V: I don't know. Like I'm having problems now with my boyfriend cause I don't want him smoking or selling drugs. I don't know I don't want him to do any of that. And he promised me, he made me promise when I was pregnant that he would stop doing what he does and that he change and become a man cause you know you're still doing stuff like that you're immature and being a kid. Why? Why do all that when you have a son and a family to come home to. And I told him maybe your just maybe you just don't care. And I hate to say it but I really don't think he cares about his son cause if he cared he'd be worrying about what if I don't make it home or what if I get in trouble. Cause what if he gets locked up I'm not taking him out cause he needs to learn his lesson. To me I think what it's gonna take is change, since he can't change now is for him to loose his family or for something bad to happen to us. I think that's the only thing that's gonna make him change cause his cousin uhm was high and he was taking his baby a bath and he almost drowned her. She was in the water and she was drowning but he picked her up and she was gasping for air and that's really scary you know. That's what I'm telling him you know you shouldn't wait for something like that to happen you should just take the decision on yourself and not wait for something bad to happen.

K: Yeah. Is that, the problems that you're having is that what prompted you to contact your mom and talk to her about the situation?

V: Yeah, because I'm dealing with his sisters and the mom. The mom's never home so she depends on me and she depends on the girls, the daughters to clean the house you know and I told my mom you know I don't think it's fair cause I have to worry about my schoolwork, I have to when my son's asleep that's all I do. I 've been working on your work and because if he's awake oh my goodness I have no time to myself at all. I have to worry about him like being ok not falling or I can't leave him with the little girls cause they get mad. They take, he says, my boyfriend says that I leave him with them to get taken care of like to get-like she's really watching my son. I don't think that's true. I just you know need her help sometimes you know if I'm eating or cleaning or cooking. I can't do both hold the baby and cook you know.

K: Are you pretty close to your family?

V: Yeah.

K: Do you get to see them very much?

V: Huh uh. I miss them.

K: Is that hard for you?

V: Yeah it really is. I try not to think about it but it's hard cause it's even more hard when you have your sister calling you saying when you gonna bring the baby or when you coming home V I miss you you know and to know that it's the littlest one calling for you. You know cause she's only five I think so it's really hard you know. Cause I

was really close to her and to my brother like my mom and my dad are going through a divorce and it's hard cause my dad is never around for my brother. So my mom told me that my brother, he went to the counselor cause he was really upset and the teacher wanted to know what was wrong with him and he said he was upset and depressed cause his father was never there to play with him. You know and I think that is really sad and I'm scared cause I've heard so many stories about kids who are so depressed that they wind up hurting themselves and I do not want that for my brother you know.

K: So, you don't get to see them that often?

V: No, not at all.

K: What is the biggest thing preventing you from seeing them?

V: My boyfriend, I don't have a ride and when my mom comes she's too busy or don't have gas or so I don't have no choice but to stay home.

K: How far do they live from you?

V: They live almost to DV.

K: So it's pretty far?

V: Yeah.

K: Well, is there anything else that you want to talk about?

V: Huh uh.

K: Ok.

## Appendix E: Sample Coding that constructed the Themes and Corresponding Participant Supporting Quotations

### Color Coding of Quotes:

Angela (blue, interview 1; light blue, interview 2)

Johanna (red, interview 1)

Marta (orange, interview 1; light orange, interview 2)

Mila (green, interview 1; light green interview 2)

Jasmine (violet, interview 1)

Valerie (pink, interview 1; rose, interview 2)

### Baby as Positive Motivator

114) A: No, to me I felt, I think I'm glad that I got pregnant cause before I was not coming to school and I didn't really care and now since I've been on homebound and I had that teacher helping me with my work and just like it made me realize I got to do this. I have to graduate for my daughter. Cause before then I had nothing to do just sittin here not doing nothing and I didn't really care and now I have to do it for her. So it just like a big old switch around.

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78) J: Uh, being pregnant made me come back to school because I realized that uhm I've had jobs before but it was like Church's and Wal Mart or Fiesta I didn't want to have to work at a place like that and have to depend on raising a baby like being pregnant made me come back to school that's what made me come back to school

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38) G: [OC: pause] I would be graduating probably. I mean I couldn't say that I would be doing good at this time because if I would have not gotten pregnant I know that it would've been real real hard for me to like mature fast enough you know and be like you know what my friends are not gonna be with me forever you know I need to graduate. I know, cause I'm a hard headed person-not no more but before I was so I know that it would have taken a long time.

39) K: And where do you think you would be right now if you didn't have a baby?

40) G: Right now [OC: pause] I really don't know. I'd probably be in like a foster care or something cause my sister. I know she wouldn't put up with me all this time she probably would've given me away or something.

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41) G: Like I thought to myself I'll have this baby. To be honest with you the first thing I thought was abortion. Which I think every girl that gets pregnant...every teenage girl that get pregnant that's the first thought that pops into their mind.

42) K: And how did you make that decision?

43) G: It just popped up. I was like I'm not able to take care of a baby. I'm too young. I'm just doing whatever I want. I'm doing drugs. What am I gonna teach the child? How am I going raise him or her? I told my boyfriend I think I'm gonna have an abortion. He was like do whatever you want to do. He was gonna support me in whatever decision I made. But then after a while I was like it's not his or her fault. We knew I could become pregnant and I'm pregnant so accept the consequences. That's when I decided to keep it and started going to the doctor and stuff like that. And one thing I was thinking about her or his future. What am I going to do now? I'm not in school. I just barely got out of trouble. I need to go back to school and that's when I enrolled here. In February last year.

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47) G: It was in the summer. That was the good thing. It was in July. Ever since then like I put my mind to all my subjects you know. All people are like, "Are you a nerd? Why do you do so much?" I just want to get out of school and start my career.

48) K: Do you think being pregnant then having a baby helped motivate you or did it make it harder?

49) G: It motivated me a lot. Now that I see myself back you know I'm like a totally different person. Even my sister tells me, "I can't believe you've changed so much." I was really bad and really immature.

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### Challenges Being a Mom/Being Pregnant

18) A: Just finding someone to babysit cause I know I can work and since I don't have school no more I just gotta find someone to babysit around my schedule and another person's schedule.

40) A: Yeah, it's been a lot different because it's there's days when she needs water and I don't have no money to go well my dad before he left out the country he loaned me \$300 for graduation and our senior trip but I have \$100 to my mom and right now it's like I'm broke and I was like when I went on the senior trip I was like where's all my money? I'm spending it and I can't cause miya needs diapers, needs this and I was like I need to budget a little bit so it's kind of hard without him so I'm still gonna work through it. Even my mom when she can when she gets a paycheck she will she goes and buy her stuff too.

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98) J: being pregnant is just physically a pain in the ass. Like anyone whether they're in school or out of school like you're just going through all these changes you're sick I mean no matter what you're doing whether you're married or whatever pregnant women have it the same pretty much I mean not every pregnant woman is the same with their pregnancy but you know you get sickness some people don't you get bigger you don't fit in your clothes you know so I mean like being pregnant wasn't hard it's having a baby and coming to school that's hard I mean cause also when you're pregnant it's still just you, you know. You don't have to take care of someone else or worry about someone else so like being pregnant like it didn't really affect my school too much besides that I was maybe uncomfortable after sitting for a while or you know that's the only thing that being in school made it hard. Dr's appointments but usually the doctor your like hey can I come in after 2:30? and they're like yeah you know that's when your appointments so it's not like it's a big thing

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104) J: yeah not that like the thing now like before I was pregnant it was an excuse but like babies yeah they're an excuse but like today like I have to go pick her up like I'm not supposed to get out until 2:30 but I don't have no one to watch her and my mom she took a risk by taking her to work but she like really needs me to go get her before 2 you know and so it's like oh, you know like its not that its an excuse anymore now I might have like actual reasons you know. Before pregnancy I was just being lazy. But like now its like you know I'm really not able sometimes like this is only the 4<sup>th</sup> day I'm here and I'm already gonna have to leave early. It's like kind of a bad sign you know

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108) J: I'm getting TANEF the temporary assistance for needy families and uhm they have a program called Choices that when you receive money you're like mandated to do

this appointment I mean program and it's nothing but job searching and career cruising uhm childcare, transportation. It's like nothing but to help you but it's a pain in the butt because you have to do 30 hours and you have to do 30 hours there like to receive any assistance and its like hard enough getting time off to do this you know like getting to come to school like something that I need to do and like that even though it would help me like get child care like I don't have thirty hours to go do it

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34) G: The biggest challenge it's, cause I'm looking for a job and I'm thinking I'm so used to being with her after school that once I'm working I'm gonna be like I'm gonna feel weird cause she's not by me and I know she's gonna feel weird and it's gonna be pretty hard.

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44) M: [pause] well, when you're pregnant it's not too hard cause you still have to go to school normal. Don't worry about the baby. But like for me I didn't wanted to go because I [unsure what was said] all my friends they didn't, they stopped talking to me. So I went to school and I didn't talk to nobody.

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26) M: One just cause one I don't have a babysitter like for sure and I don't want to have to take her to a daycare then I need money so I have to work cause like my parents they can't gave me, they can't give me cause like they have enough for the house and for the brothers but...

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30) K: And what are the biggest challenges that you face in being a mother?

31) V: Hmm. Money just money cause a baby is really expensive you gotta buy pampers and, sometimes you don't have the money for it so you have to depend on other people but it's not their responsibility it's ours.

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42) G: Well at first I thought I was not going to be able to go to school because I was feeling a lot of sick. I was feeling sick most of the time so on those days I didn't want to get up and go to school, but my mom and my boyfriend reminded me you need to go to school you need to graduate. So every night I just think about it should I should I not but I wake up and gotta go anyway. It's pretty hard to do. The first stages of pregnancy are hard because you get sick a lot, most girls get sick. And so it's kinda hard as soon as you getting closer to the stages and closer to your due date. So it's kinda hard to go to school and being pregnant until after.

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84) G: Yes. Somebody just mentioned it to me, but then I looked in the phonebook and I got the phone number and called and that's how it worked out. I would say child care because for me it's real real hard to get on the bus and drop her off in 15 minutes because I still need to talk to the teacher so I need to know what time she ate, how she has been feeling, what time she slept and how she's been. So it takes me a couple of minutes. Then I have to walk back to the bus stop to get here on time. Yeah, and that way you know sometimes I have to leave school because she's on medication and they're not allowed to give it to her. I have to go over there give her the medication and come back to school. If we had a child care here I would feel much more safer myself because I would know my child is next door or the next building close to me and I know anything that happened I could be there in a minute or two. I'm learning. They're learning. We come to school together. We leave school together. That would be really really helpful.

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34) G: Being able to get up and go. I had a lot of difficulties in my pregnancy. Like I couldn't walk. I had a lot of early contractions. I couldn't go to school so I had to stay home and not go to school and do what I had to do. So all those absences that I was making I suffered because I wasn't going to graduate on time. If I wouldn't have got pregnant I could have graduated already and everyone would have been like you did it.

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### Covert and Overt/What I have and what I want/Self Deception

117) K: And when you think about the future what are your goals for having more kids? Have you thought about that or...

118) A: Uh huh. Well, I do want to have another baby. I want a boy but I want to wait until my daughter is in school and maybe have when my financial stuff is all fine and I'm having a stable job and a stable home. That's when I think I'll decide to have another baby.

119) K: When you think about that time when you have another baby do you picture you being with the father of your baby now or...

120) A: No, I just picture me and my baby. I picture him being there but I don't know if we'll be together or not. Right now we're on the edge and we're not together.

121) K: Is he the person that you think about having a second baby with?

122) A: Yeah. He's the one.

123) K: Are you doing anything now to prevent having another baby?

124) A: Uh huh. I'm on birth control. I don't want to have another baby.

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94) A: I don't know. I don't know that's long. You got me thinking. In ten years the same old thing but probably another child...

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98) A: 20 years? I'll be dead. Just playing. [OC: laughs]

99) K: So she'll be 20.

100) A: I'll be retired probably.

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17) J: I was throwing up a lot and I just had a thought. It was in the back of my mind but I pushed it back too much. I wouldn't think about it. I wouldn't be like this could be it because I've had other experiences when I was like man is there something wrong with me? But this was like, I was just dreading to go take a test. I bought a Dollar Store test for a dollar and I was like alright this is gona' tell me right here. I knew it was probably very inaccurate but I was like now this is gona' tell me and if it says no I was gona' be like Yes! see ya' later but it said yes and so I went to go get-checked by a doctor.

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27) J: at church, we were at church and I hadn't went to church in months but like I knew I had to because I hadn't went in like a year and I used to go when I was younger like every Sunday. And I was just like she'll tell me because she knows that I am a...I don't want to say I was a bad person but I was kind of a bad person before I was pregnant so she knew what I was doing and I wanted to see her opinion on if she thought I could handle a baby because she's the person I trust the most I guess

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140) E: yeah I was wondering if you weren't on probation if that would be more of a temptation...

141)J: yeah, like I really have a lot of urges but I just gotta like what is it called when its like instant like the instant gratification like in a dollar its not gonna be worth what the consequence might be because like I'm on six years and if I mess up

142) E: and its meaningful

143) J: yeah and if I mess up I don't get another chance like I violate and I automatically plus I get a charge and like oh that sucks I'd probably do more than six years if I get caught again so I just gotta think that do I wanna be gone til the baby's six or do I want a hundred dollars right now

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60) G: Right now I want to be a nurse and like I've always thought about space and being an astronaut and stuff but I feel like that, stuff like that goes real real far from me. You know, so like in the perfect world that's what I would be but [OC: laughs] it's a long way.

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68) G: Right now what I'm thinking since like we're not together you know and like we're giving ourself time but like I'm not giving him another chance. I know myself, you know, cause there's nothin left there's, I mean he killed it all and it could happen that we could go back together and if we do I'm still planning on having more kids but if we don't I think that this will be my only child but then I think about it too, if I'm with another partner, you know, and I'm in love and I know that he would want to have kids and I would want a kid of his but right now that's the way I see it.

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154) G: I see myself still in college.

155) K: In college?

156) G: Mhum.

157) K: So you're graduating...when are you graduating?

158) G: [OC: laughs] in two years...

159) K: Two years? So then you would be going to college right during that time? Ok and then the next one, do you have any ideas what you want to do in college, where you want to go?

160) G: You know I'm thinking I'm sticking with the nurse thing but like I don't know if that's the thing for me you know, it's only once you get there that you actually get the class that you learn about it if you feel it or not.

13) K: So, if this were an ideal world or like a perfect world meaning that you could change anything you wanted in your life; how would your life be different?

14) M: I don't want to be mean but I would change my baby and not be with her dad.

68) V: Uh huh. I don't have any insurance for him or you know like my grandma she has money aside with some guy I don't know I guess it's an insurance guy. She has money aside for me you know to graduate and she has money for college. You know, right now I don't have that but I don't even have a bank right now but we're putting money aside for him in case you know later on he wants to decide on doing something. It may not be a lot but it'll be something you know.

70) V: Two years? I see myself in college you know. That's my goal but right now I have to finish school right now and finish my TAKS test.

71) K: And you'll be done this summer?

72) V: Yeah, hopefully. Yeah. You know I'll have a good job you know and I'll be where I am now.

21) G: I didn't even...like my sister doesn't have a kid so I've never been around babies. I'm the youngest one in the family. I don't have any little brothers or sisters so I didn't really know what a pregnancy was like or what a baby was like. But, I

knew...we weren't using protection. So we both new at any time I would become pregnant without using condoms.

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70) G: And he wanted to be with me and I told him you need to move on because it's not gonna happen. Now he has another girlfriend and she's stuck out-she's the type of person, I mean, I seen her-you know me and her had our problems and everything and I decided to be the bigger person and I sent her an email yesterday and I told her look, we need to be adults, our kids are brother and sister. We need to put things aside. I said, if you think I want him, I don't want him. I said you can chase him all you want but he has another girlfriend. I said I gave him hell when ya'll were together because he never saw his daughter because of you and you know basically just try to tell her you can be an adult about it or you can be a kid. Do what you want to do but in the end she never, she didn't like my little girl and I always used to tell their dad you know I'm not one to fight but my kids, when it comes to my kids. My kids are just you don't mess with somebody when they're helpless when they can't do anything for themselves and he had told me yeah she doesn't like our daughter and that's the only reason I don't really, I don't really know what she did to my daughter when she was there by herself cause my daughter's come back. One time she was drinking her milk and she just threw up everywhere. I smell her sippy cup-there's soap in the cup. I said who washed out her cup? E [OC: name of girlfriend]. I said do you know there's soap in this cup? He said no there isn't and I said come back and so he turned around and I got the cup, I shook the cup up I opened it and I said look at all that soap in there. And he just, he couldn't believe it. I don't know what she's doin to my little girl but this shit needs to stop. My daughter would get sick all the time. She would throw up and that's when I would, I started keeping my daughter away from him and he tried to get the child support involved and he put himself on child support cause I wouldn't let him see our daughter and I went-we went to the court and I said look I said this girl doesn't like my little girl I said my little girl comes back with scratches and bruises and but she just my daughter's real clumsy too cause she was little and she had just barely started walking. I would be like E what are you doing? Till this day she'll turn, she'll have her head turned and she'll turn turn boom. And I'm like E and she just looks and she laughs and laughs or she'll hit her head just-I've noticed that if you laugh she won't cry. But then she'll keep doing it and so I just had to keep kid from her and when my son was around my son's only been around her once and that was when he kind of had both of us thinking we were with him and we busted him and he told her he didn't want nothing to do with her and he wanted to come back to us and it's all basically because I have his daughter and when she was pregnant I said man I hope she doesn't have a little girl. I said, and til this day if he ever has any more kids he says he doesn't want a little girl because the boys are the mama's boys and he doesn't have to worry about them like they get attached to him but if he has another little girl he will get attached. And my son when he sees his dad he is oh he smiles and kicks his little legs and he gets happy and my little girl she roughens up my son because she doesn't like their dad paying attention to my son...

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76) G: If my kids need anything. When I got pregnant with my daughter they bought me a brand new car and I wasn't supposed to get a car until I graduated. Now I've totaled the car-I haven't totaled it but I've wrecked the front of it. My motor went out and my dad's towing it today and they're gonna put I think we're lookin at four thousand dollars. That's gonna fix the whole car. So they're gonna fix it cause I don't need to be on the bus with my kids uhm if let's say my food stamps doesn't come in and I don't have any groceries they come and if I don't have pampers they get the pampers and if I go stress out because I'm doing it by myself. I go to school, I take care of my kids, try to find employment so they take my kids. They take my kids sometimes during the week and they take them every weekend to help me out to give me a break, to let me go, you know cause they're thing is yeah I have kids but I don't have to grow up you know I can still do what a 20 year old does. And so, they're the ones that are there really financially, emotionally. My aunt has been there for me when I've gone up and down this roller coaster with their dad. I'm crying and wanting him and now she's really proud because now I don't want him at all. You know it's a lot of progress from what we started at so they're there for me both physically and emotionally. They even help me out to where I got so stressed out with having two kids that they flew to Puerto Rico, they took my little girl with them for two weeks but then I missed her like crazy but they just-they're the ones who helped me out no matter what. I don't ever get a no. If I get a no I don't worry about it cause about a hour later I'll get a yes. [OC: class bell rings]

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10) G: I didn't find out I was pregnant until 5 months. I was very small and skinny. I was in athletics. I was still working out and everything. I had a really flat stomach. I noticed I was gaining a little bit of weight and that wasn't really me because I was always in shape. So like I started noticing my breasts getting bigger and my stomach. I told my boyfriend I thought I was pregnant. I took a pregnancy test and it came out it was positive. I didn't tell my mom. She found out on her own because she bought a test for me to take.

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74) G: No. I mean you can ask me whatever I'll be straight up with you let you know the way it is. There are a lot girls that are really young. Being pregnant at 13. They can't even work. Like what are they thinking? When I was that old I didn't even know what sex was. I wasn't even thinking about it. I was the kind of girl who played games. You know I'd go outside. My boyfriend's sister goes to [OC: name of school]. Two of her friends are 12 going on 13 and they're pregnant. I don't know what they were thinking. They cannot work. Who is gonna help them to support their child? Their mom?

75) K: Whenever you were with your boyfriend were you guys thinking maybe we'll get pregnant?

76) G: I knew what could happen. I never thought I'm not gonna get pregnant. I wasn't on birth control. I had unprotected sex. I knew what I was doing. I'm not dumb. I don't feel like I made a mistake. I just feel like I made a wrong decision. My child isn't a mistake. I could have lost him so many times. I went to Disneyworld. I got on all the rides. That's when I was in my early stages.

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### Family and Cultural Trends of Early Pregnancy

72) A: My mom was like around 25, 24 or 25 she waited that long cause she-she waited that long until she had me.

73) K: Does she ever talk to you about that decision that she made to wait that long?

74) A: Yeah she told me that she waited so long to have kids, she said she waited until she was eighteen until she first had sex and she even before that she said she waited so long and I always asked my mom how come you waited that long and she said cause she seen my sisters having kids and I see what they were going through and I don't want to go through that when I'm in school cause my aunts and both of my aunts they had kids, cause my mom is their younger sister she saw what they were going through when they were doing all of their illegal stuff and what they were going through in high school and stuff and she didn't want to go through that especially when my grandpa got after them and not at my mom. My mom was all the innocent one so my mom knew better so she decided not to do anything. She decided to wait and wait until she met my dad and that's when they had me. So they had me and my mom and my dad they had me and my brother. They had my brother a year later.

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75) K: That's cool and uhm, do you have any friends that have had children while in high school?

76) A: Uh huh, I have lots. I have a couple friends that have already had kids like at this school and at my other school, yeah.

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60) J: like yeah because all my other cousins have had babies when they were like sixteen or fifteen one of my cousins is like 22 and has like 6 kids He was like it was just a matter of time either she was gonna have a kid or she was gonna be gay one of those. He thinks if you weren't gonna have babies then you must be gay cause like my cousin that has all those kids she has a sister that didn't have no kids and he was like Jane Marie must be gay she hasn't had no babies. Not that she must be responsible or she must be not ready its that she must be gay. He's very old school cholo. Yeah its retarded.

61) E: How old were you when you had your daughter?

62) J: yeah, I was an adult. I made it to 18 so I was proud of myself I was like I made it you know at least I'm not fifteen or fourteen because my best friend had a baby when she was 14 So she is twenty one and her baby is six

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9) K: Ok, so in the last interview you said you saw how your mom struggled with having children and how your dad wasn't there for her. Uhm can you just tell me how old your mom was when she had her first child?

10) V: She was uhm, sixteen I think, fifteen or sixteen when she had me. I was the first child.

11) K: So you're the first child?

12) V: Umhum.

13) K: Uhm and what was your parents' relationship like? Do you know?

14) V: With my mom and my read dad? Not good, cause uh he left her when she was six months pregnant and he lied to her saying that he was gonna go work and he never came back to help her out.

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46) G: Uhm, I just-I have friends that are pregnant and they don't want it and I'm like it's not something that you can take back, you know it's here you have to accept it for what it is. As for school, the second time around I learned. I went to school-I went back to school when I found out I was pregnant with my son. I stayed in school the whole time until my due date. I went to uhm, about them I mean they can just stay in school until their due date, get the homebound like I had got. I got homebound and then go back after homebound I mean...

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20) G: No first it was my sister. We talk a lot. Then my boyfriend. My mom assumed I was. My dad really wanted to know. So when they came home my sister called me and said, "You better be ready because mom's bringing a pregnancy test." I was scared. I was crying. I didn't think my mom would love me. I thought she would disown me and not help me out, but she helped out a lot.

21) K: How did she respond when she first found out you were pregnant?

22) G: She was disappointed because she expected a lot more out of me. Just by thinking you know you already know what I went through. She didn't think I would follow in her footsteps. I would finish school and not have kids until I was actually ready. It was something I wasn't supposed to do.

### Fear of Being Alone/Single Mother

58) A: No, I just picture me and my baby. I picture him being there but I don't know if we'll be together or not. Right now we're on the edge and we're not together.

59) K: Is he the person that you think about having a second baby with?

60) A: Yeah. He's the one.

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80) In two years? I want to be, me have my own car, me have my own apartment and everything; and just me supporting my daughter. That's what I see.

81) K: So just you and your daughter in an apartment? What do you think you'll be doing on a daily basis?

82) A: Probably I'll be going to work and have her dad take care of her while I'm at work every day and that's all I see for now.

83) K: But you don't see living with the father?

84) A: Not yet, not any time soon. Not until I'm ready.

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116) K: Do you see yourself with a partner or with...

117) G: I see myself alone with her...

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48) M: I don't picture no one.

49) K: Just the two of you...

50) M: Yeah because I think that that uhm if I want to be with a guy he has to like my girl and he has to respect her and like her and like accept me for who I am with her and I don't think I'm gonna find one like that.

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56) M: That she is not gonna have a dad no more like she used to.

57) K Do you think that if you are separate from him that he won't be a part of her life?

58) M: Yeah. I just since like she was born he has been there for her and now that I just don't want to I think that she is gonna suffer more but I think that I have to now so that she doesn't grow up like seeing us fight every day.

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89) K: And now can you talk about where you will be five years from now?

90) M: Probably have my apartment, live with her and maybe my sister or a friend live with me and just working. Like enjoy her, take her to school, pick her up.

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29) G: I was shocked. All these things ran through my mind like what was I gonna do. He told me he was gonna be there for me but what if he's not going to be there? So I called him and it was like he knew because he had the symptoms. That's how I didn't know either because I was normal. I was totally normal.

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14) G: I was scared because I could barely take care of myself and my brothers and sisters. I saw the way my mom struggled. My mom told me a lot of stories because my dad wasn't there for her and me. I was really scared because I thought my boyfriend was going to leave me and get scared and run off and leave it all up to me. My biggest fear was that I wasn't gonna be a good mom.

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28) G: My boyfriend, no. I knew the kind of person he was but I was scared. A lot of girls boyfriend's leave them. They're by themselves. I really didn't expect it. I thought he was gonna be like other guy like, "It's not my baby." My dad cried. He told me I didn't know what I was getting myself into. He didn't know why I did it. He was crying. Like with him he has a lot - he's real strict. Real old school you know? Real like don't have kids until your married. I thought he was going to be real embarrassed of me and not take me to see his family. He's not my dad. He's my step dad. I thought he was going to disown me but he didn't. He expected a lot out of me. Just by what my mom has told me. It was like that for my grandma too. Everybody thought the same. Once your mom says something that's what everyone thinks.

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### Ideal Mother

70) A: Uh huh, yeah. I want my daughter to now that everything, whatever she is doing she can always call and tell me and I won't get mad or like other mother's do. I want her to know that she could tell me anything and she can come to me with any type of problem she is going through cause that's how I was. I went to my mom when I was going through a lot in school or if kids were picking on me I'd tell my mom I'd tell her anything and that's how I want her to be with me she can tell me anything and everything and I won't say anything. Even with personal issues she could come and tell me.

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99) K: What, when you think about the mom that you want to be how does that look?

100) M: Uhm, kind of like my mom, she's there for you and she tells you what you do best and like that and be friends with her and have a nice relationship that she would tell me anything.

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28) V: I don't know, I don't think there is the perfect mom because nobody is perfect. Everybody makes mistakes, every mother makes you know no mother is perfect to me you know cause nobody is perfect.

29) K: What are some of the attributes of being a really good mom?

30) V: Being there for their kids and helping them whenever they need things or when they struggle or when they're in pain or when their sad. Just being there for them.

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36) G: Yeah. Right now I feel like my family thinks I can't do it. Only because my mom's never really told me, "Keep on, you can do it." Instead she gets mad and cusses at me and tells me, "Why aren't you studying!" Instead of saying, "You need help? I'll help you." You know like being a mom. She just never said - I never heard it from her mouth, "Keep on, you can do it."

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48) G: My mom. She's there for me - whatever I need if I need to talk to her. I don't live at home anymore. It got a lot harder though. She's not there the way I want her to be. I don't see her that much. My whole family is there for me.

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### Identity as a Mother

12) A: Making sure she's getting fed. That's one thing cause when you feed a baby you don't know how much they need to be fed so I only feed her six ounces and when she cried in like two hours or three hours I'm like is she still hungry or does she want to go to sleep. You need to [OC: unsure of words] you need to read between the lines and it's kind of hard.

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56) A: Uh huh. Well, I do want to have another baby. I want a boy but I want to wait until my daughter is in school and maybe have when my financial stuff is all fine and I'm having a stable job and a stable home. That's when I think I'll decide to have another baby.

57) K: When you think about that time when you have another baby do you picture you being with the father of your baby now or...

58) A: No, I just picture me and my baby. I picture him being there but I don't know if we'll be together or not. Right now we're on the edge and we're not together.

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151) J: uh...(pause),,,wake up feed the baby change the baby put her back to sleep get ready come to school get off go straight home wash bottles clean house cook dinner and uhm put the baby back to sleep and try to do anything I have to do like was my clothes or uhm pick out my outfit for the next day you know...

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165) J: well, yeah I think generally like everybody thinks that...well not everybody thinks because I mean its really different know but we came from a society where its women take care of kids and males provide and I think like because we came back from where my grandma was always like a church person you know she's real like they're traditional that way like when I like..Er...when Eric got out like when my baby daddy when Eric got out they were like Eric you need to find a job and Jessica you need to stay home. The idea of Jessica get a job and Eric stay home never crossed nobody's mind

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46) G: Well, I mean you get your education and then you show your baby or once that they get bigger that you did it, you know, they can do it too. Uhm, and hopefully they'll understand what a teen mom's like you know struggling with the baby and coming to school and being pregnant and having doctor appointments and your baby getting sick and all that stuff.

47) K: Yeah, so the school could just be aware and respond to everything that the teen mom has to deal with. Ok, and if this was an ideal world, so like the perfect world and you could change anything you wanted to change about it how would the world be different? [OC: pause] It's a big question.

48) G: I don't think I would change anything. I think I'm, no I'm good. I don't regret anything. I don't regret my pregnancy, I don't regret being pregnant. I don't regret having my baby. I don't regret taking care of her every night. I don't regret it at all.

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74) G: Uhm. [OC: pause] That like life is hard and she'll be just like have to deal with it. Anything that comes could happen. I just want her to and I'm, I hope I will make her understand that you know be prepared for whatever's coming cause we really don't know what's gonna come the next day or you're even gonna be there to live it you know? That's like the main thing, the other things I'm thinking that... [OC: recorder was paused because someone interrupted the interview]

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135) G: I see it like if she comes up to me and tells me something that she did wrong or something that she wasn't supposed to do and then she knew it wasn't right like I would take it, I wouldn't take it like to scream at her. You know I would be like you know well, you did it you know you got to think about next time you do it or if there's you know if you can go back and fix it you know but like talk talk to her like through it. Not get all furious, well it depends on what she tells me too but I'll try not to you know. I'll try to understand cause I was once a teenager too when she gets, you know.

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149) G: I think that I would talk to her about my experience you know and I'm not hoping and you know I know it might happen but it's like I sit real far from it. I know how she's not gonna be like old people old days, be a virgin til you get married. I know that that's not gonna happen so I don't make myself think that that's gonna happen. I know it's gonna happen probably when she's a teenager. But I wish she would tell me and tell me hey mom you know take me to the doctor to get some birth control you know. I mean I don't have no-I mean we're women you know I don't see nothing wrong with that.

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8) M: I thought that I was not gonna have kids cause I would have already taken care of my two little brothers

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42) M: I didn't at first when I knew I didn't want the baby I wanted to do an abortion. Cause I didn't want it cause it was too soon, I didn't had I didn't finish school so I wanted to finish and I didn't know about babies [smiles] and my mom didn't let me and they talked to my dad and they didn't let me to take an abortion so I had like when I was like til seven I didn't want the baby and [pause] like they made me went to school and I didn't want to cause then my friends they were gonna see me pregnant cause I was in my school I was very quiet and there then they were gonna see me that I was pregnant so [pause] so I didn't want to...

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60) M: Now that I go to school, I wake up my baby is beside me and I left I leave her a bottle of milk. Uhm, I come to school, during school I'm worried cause maybe she's not eating maybe she's fighting with her cousins uhm and then when I don't have a ride, uh I don't know if I had to go early, I go to my house and have to take care of her and maybe to put her sleep or clean the uh the room and then cook for her. Give her some food and then I have to go outside and play with her like till like maybe two hours or three hours and then at night I give her more food, I feed her and then like around nine I take her a bath, give her some cereal, and that's it.

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62) M: yeah, I don't go out. If I go out I have to buy some pampers or go buy milk like I don't have time for me.

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6) M: Everything, it is different. Like me graduating already maybe have a job, go to college.

7) K: Uhm, and that's sort of the next question. How do you think your life would be different if you didn't have a child?

8) M: A lot different. First of all I wouldn't be here I think. I would already be graduated like two years ago. Uhm, I think I would be I would've finished my cosmetology school and I would like work and have like a job and like I could go out places.

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22) M: After I graduated? I'm planning to go to a cosmetology school cause it's something I can finish and then and just like work and maybe move out like out of my mom's house and have my own place with my baby.

23) K: Is cosmetology school something that it you could do anything that you wanted that's what you would want to do?

24) M: I like to do like business like some sort of business like study business law or something but uh I think it takes more time.

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22) V: Mm. I don't feel, I feel that I'm a good mom to my son but right now it's really easy cause I don't have to deal with you know things right now with him...

23) K: What do you mean?

24) V: Like now that he's small I can be a good mom now but I don't know how I would react to things later like when he's bad or doesn't listen to me so like I don't know if I'm gonna be a good enough mom to deal with it or how to deal with it.

25) K: What are the biggest things that you're afraid of when he gets older?

26) V: Him getting into things that he shouldn't have to be getting into because his father smokes and smokes weed and does bad things and I just hope he's not like that because the only reason my boyfriend was or was getting into that stuff was because of his dad because his dad introduced it to him when he was really young like middle school. So I just hope that he doesn't follow his father's footsteps.

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60) G: I miss hanging out with my friends. Since she's so little I get paranoid like if I go to my friend's house I be thinking about is she o.k.? I hope my mom's doing this right or I hope my boyfriend is doing this right? If I go to my friend's house it's like I want to go home already. I've been there for five minutes and I'm like I need to go home I need to call or something. Before I didn't worry about it. I wasn't pregnant at the time. Now I'm like I need to go home because she's so little I need to be there.

61) K: Now that you have a baby what's the hardest part about coming to school?

62) G: Right now? To me I don't feel like nothing is hard right now. We only have three weeks left of school and I'm already graduating. I feel like I accomplished a lot by just being pregnant and going to school. Going to school's not really hard no more like it used to be.

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94) G: Being a mom is pretty hard sometimes but you can get used to it. At the same time it's really cute watching my baby grow. She started grabbing at toys. She's

kinda start sitting up picking up things and lifting her head. It's cute but it can be hard at times.

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95) G: I get up around 6:00 a.m. and then around 6:15 a.m. I walk toward the bus stop over there by Mendez and then from there I have 15 minutes to like walk and drop her off and come back in order to catch the bus to not be late to school. I get tired every day.

96) K: What time do you get out of school?

97) G: 2:30 p.m.

98) K: Normal school day. Then you pick her up?

99) G: Yeah. Then I go pick her up and we go home. It's pretty hard though.

100) K: It's a long day?

101) G: Yeah. It's pretty hard especially with her she's real active. The only time she stays still is when she sleepy. I'm not kidding.

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92) G: No. No, it's hard. My little one she's nine months old and she's everywhere. I can't even like turn around and look back and she's not there no more. She's not going to be my only child but for right now she's going to be the only one 'till I get my education and I have everything ready and we're gonna plan. We're gonna have the money we know everything's gonna be good.

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6) G: I used to think that it would be so like wow to have a baby. I used to want a baby and, but I just knew I was too young and I wanted to finish school but I hadn't thought about it before but I didn't want to rush into it.

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44) G: Before I go to sleep I would do homework, do what I had to do get ready for the next day and wake up go to school. After school I would go to practice. Go home and do homework. Now it's go to school, take care of the baby. You gotta

take care of the baby after school and after work. You gotta go to work. The baby is always there. You can't ignore him.

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54) G: Sometimes there's something in me that wants to drop out because it's a lot. It's a long day. The day goes very slow. I have to take care of the baby. I have to get ready for work. Just a very long day. I think I would make more money if I wasn't in school. My boyfriend's not getting an education. He was in the process of getting his GED, but he's not doing it no more. So if he's not doing it I have to do it you know. I don't want my son...I'm not the type of person who likes to ask for my mom or his mom for money. I feel like it's my responsibility. I should take care of it by myself. Maybe I ask sometimes. Sometimes I ask but it's hard. I feel like it's my responsibility I'm the parent so I feel like I should be taking the responsibility of what my son needs.

55) K: What do you think are the benefit of finishing to graduation?

56) G: Getting a good job. Going to college and getting a good job. Support my family. Help my boyfriend. If I get out of school it will be a lot easier. Then I don't have to worry about it if I get pregnant again. I'll have money. I can take care of my kids or whatever. If something happens to my son and I need money I'll have money to support him.

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### Identity as a Student/Teenager

24) A: Right now, be like going to places, going to friend's house, going to other family member's house. I could still kind of do that with my baby but it's gonna be hard to carry it's gonna be hard, a little bit difficult.

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52) A: I wanted to be like Selena, singer and dancer. Cause my mom said I had the long hair and Selena's bangs and she said you're a little Selena, you should become a singer and dancer so I was throughout the whole time I was dancing at my dad's parties when he had parties I'd be dancing and then in high school in middle school in high school I was in choir singing. My dad he says you're still Selena. I'm like no I'm not I had a baby, I'm not Selena no more.

53) K: That's cute. Do you remember how that changed over time or...

54) A: It changed cause I didn't feel like doing it no more. I just got distracted with friends and other guys and get sidetracked

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112) A: I feel proud of myself. I'm the second one out of my dad's kids to graduate and I am proud. I'm the first one out of me and my brother and I'm very proud of myself that I did something on my own without my parent help.

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7) J: No, probably words that I would have described myself at that time. I knew I was having fun and I loved being crazy [OC: said longingly and eyes went back and to the left and had a big smile]

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29) J: I didn't want to tell anybody because I thought I was going to be looked at different and like I didn't wanna yeah like I didn't want to tell people that I affiliate with because I was in like Ok when I was dealing drugs I didn't want people to know I was pregnant because I didn't want them to be like hey shes pregnant we can hit her in her stomach and take her stuff or we can say hey we're gonna hit you in your stomach. You know so that's why I was so scared to be pregnant cause I was doing things that even where a guy with a gun could get robbed and now I was a girl and pregnant like I was like this big ol' target like I was like here take me take all my money...(more) before I got pregnant I sold drugs for about three years. Intensely sold drugs and I made a lot of money.

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132) K: Ok, so the next one is walk me through a typical day in your life before you were pregnant.

133) J: Wake up and do whatever I want (laugh) eat McDonald's three times a day drink nothing but Dr. Pepper water was poison and you know just hangin out, Hangin' out totally just hangin' out not even working not anything. Just total like laid back

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13) K: It's different? And just one thing relating to the first interview that we did I know that you mentioned that people ask you, you know, if you're a nerd because you're in school so much and you focus on school. What perception did people have of you before you had your baby and before you sort of refocused on school?

14) G: I was bad. Like I wouldn't pay attention at school. I would skip, I would talk back to teachers. I would always be in the office, the principal's office.

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88) M: I think everybody, that's why sometimes I get mad cause people they're like playing and for me I come to get the work done and finish earlier or like fast and some people they're like just playing around or talking about smoking...like I don't see why

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58) G: Well before when I wasn't pregnant I would go to school I would come home I would just relax and then there was a time when I was working I would go to work and then I would come back sleep I would go to school like that but it wasn't pressured like I have to do this. If I really wanted to do it I would do it. If I didn't I wouldn't do it. Cause it was me you know. I had time to do it. But then when I had my baby I gotta go to school and I ride the bus so I have to go drop her off come to school come pick her up go home cook, clean everything to get ready for when my boyfriend gets out of work for him to be able to eat.

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86) G: Um, sometimes bring the students together to understand the purpose of going to school. Because your friends aren't going to be there for the rest of your life. You gotta think of your future. What you want to do. Like this morning some student from here is my friend I asked him for a ride because it was kinda raining this morning so he took me to my child day care then we went to pick up another student from school. He was planning on coming to school but she told him to go smoke weed...that somebody had weed and I don't know what. So I was like "you're not gonna go to school" and he was like "no." He was saying "they bad influenced me." And I was like, "because you let yourself." And he was going, "yeah that's true." So

he knows what he's doing so he chooses to go smoke weed instead of coming to school to learn something. But at least he knows what he's doing, you know? And he chooses to you know. Cause it's in you. If you don't want to do something nobody is gonna...I don't care if they punk me out I don't care. I'm doing it for me and I'm going to succeed. You know?

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### Loss and Subsequent Pregnancies

64) J: She was excited. I had a very very first pregnancy when I was sixteen and I miscarried after two months and she was the first person I told then and she had went and bought me baby presents and that made it hard after I miscarried but you know she was excited because all our other friends you know she was the only one going through it and I think she wanted like hey I'm going through it too but that didn't happen but now her kids are so older now and all our other best friends are barely having babies right now

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22) M: then I had a miscarriage in January and then in May I got pregnant again and that was my baby that I have

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104) M: Since I have two miscarriage I can't I can't get pregnant.

105) K: You can't?

106) M: Maybe in like five years at least later but uhm I don't want to.

107) K: Is that something that the doctor told you...

108) M: Yes.

109) K: That you couldn't have any. You had one miscarriage before your daughter...

110) M: I had one miscarriage before and then she was born and then another one like in August.

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2) A: My first pregnancy I was in school. I had trouble making it but I was in school. I was trying to keep my grades up. I didn't know I was pregnant at the time. I was working with my mom. And um, it was an easy normal life what teenagers going to school getting good grades. And then when I found out I was pregnant I went to the doctors 'cause I was feeling sick. I was having a lot of nausea and I didn't know what it was and the doctor told me I was pregnant but at the same time he told me my body wasn't capable of having a pregnancy. That I was still too young and it was a possibility I was gonna have a miscarriage. It was true. I did have a miscarriage. I had it April 14. It was early in the morning I had a miscarriage. It was painful.

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10) G: Not really. No 'cause it was too much. But then again when I had my surgery back in '05 the doctors told me there was a possibility I can't have kids and to me it was like I want one. And after that before I had a miscarriage and thought I was pregnant I was happy. And then I had it and then after I had my miscarriage I was like maybe it's not meant for me to have children until later on in life. I was planning on having children but not too soon. I was planning in like a year or two.

11) K: Like after high school?

12) G: Yeah, but after high school after I go to college and all that. But I didn't I had a baby. I was pregnant again like in June or July.

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80 G: Yeah, I was on, uhm, I didn't start officially 'til I was like 15 like doing I had a pregnancy and I had a miscarriage and after the miscarriage I didn't want to have a baby anymore because I went through the pain of losing the baby and then I started to use uhm birth control. I started the patch but the patch didn't work so I did the pill...

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55) K: Can you talk a little bit about what decisions you made and what was going on when you had your-found out you were pregnant for the second time?

56) G: The second time, we-me and their dad had just split up. It was in January and we were still talking, I mean still messing around a little. I ended up, according to the documents I ended up getting pregnant on their dad's birthday with my son and he at the time had another girlfriend which I didn't know about. I didn't find out until he left to go to California around February, the week after Valentine's Day is when he left for California and I hadn't-I had been getting morning sickness, I had everything I ate, I threw it up. I had, within a week I had lost 20 pounds and I just got really sick and like I said something's just not right. I told my mom I said can I have ten dollars, I need to go buy Emily-I just said something for my daughter. Well I ended up coming home, I took the test and like I'm like oh my god, I'm pregnant. I called my mom into the room and at this point I cried and I cried and my mom's like what's the matter? And I said-I couldn't-I didn't know what to tell her and I'm like mom, you know, I needed the ten dollars not for Emily and she said for what and I said a pregnancy test and she said well and I said I'm pregnant and she's like again and I said yeah and she said by Adam and I said well yeah and you know she's like-she saw how I was just kinda I shock and pain because I didn't want this I didn't want to get pregnant again and so I cried and I cried and I cried and finally their dad came back and I told their dad and he's like no you're not, you're lying, you just want to get back together with me and I said you know what, I don't but it would be nice you know and he said you're not pregnant I want the papers, I want this, I want that. Ok,

so that's when I officially went to the doctor. I got the papers and I went back and threw them in his face and I said look, I'm pregnant. It's not mine, I said are you serious? Then the girlfriend started gettin her two cents into it too about how it's not his and this and this and well he still didn't believe. He thought I got fake papers or something but then he started to see that I was getting bigger and when I had got pregnant with my son, honestly I didn't want to keep my son. I didn't know it was a little boy but something-I called my aunt and uncle and I said I'm pregnant and I don't want this baby and my aunt you know she's like you cant do this, you can't- she's like your-I'm weak, I couldn't live my life knowing I had killed my own son or daughter and so she had told me you can't do-we're not paying for it and my dad was like, no if you really want this, I'll pay for it and my aunt's like you need to think about this, can you live your life knowing that you could've had another precious baby in this world and you had killed it just to satisfy somebody else? And I had asked their dad and he was like yeah, get rid of it. And I'm like, so finally it kicked in and I'm like you know what I'm not giving you the easy way out, you know you did it just like I did it so you're gonna have to put up with it well, as I started to get bigger he started to realize that yeah I was pregnant and she started to realize that I was pregnant and that he cheated on her basically and then you know, me like a dummy we still kept messing around because you know I was still in love with my kids' dad. You know, I wanted you know we were engaged. I wanted to get married I wanted to have our family and so things started, we started getting closer and he used to-he wouldn't feel right cause he was with her but he used to touch on my tummy and my son would move and I just I couldn't get rid of it because I knew I was having a little boy, I just knew it because the pregnancies were totally different, my stomach was totally different. It was just different, well finally he started coming around, he started picking names out of the baby book and telling people, yeah I'm having a son and you know he told-our close friends called me and they're like guess what and I said what and they said A just admitted that he's having a son with you and that just made my day, I was so happy because he was finally acknowledging that he was having a baby and so he told everybody, I'm having a son, I'm having a son and so then it finally came time. I went to the doctor on a Monday in October and the doctor said oh well I have this Thursday open and I said oh well I want to do it I want to do it and we ended up having-we ended up being in labor for thirteen hours I think it was. My daughter was fourteen and my son was thirteen hours and their dad didn't get to show up because he was at work but it was really funny because everyone who would come through the drive through they're like how's your day and he was like man, I'm having a son and I'm stuck here at work and they're like leave and he's like no I can't leave I'm having a son and he just told everybody that went through his drive through that he was having a son.

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### New and Old Families/What is Family?

- 21) J: I cried for like a week. Literally I cried and the truth is I thought I have to get an abortion, theres no way around it.
- 22) E: That obviously changed at some point because you have this beautiful baby up there so how...
- 23) J: ...I told my grandma and she's very Christian and like but she knew what kind of person I was, the crazy selfish person and she said that I had to do what I had to do and that it was my responsibility now.
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76) J: Yeah no actually yeah I was with him my previous boyfriend through the whole pregnancy. Yeah and he got locked up right before I had her and he was willing to accept her as his baby or him and her together

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179) J: uh huh, uh well I think they're getting back together. They're not divorced yet they've been separated for a while but like and before I moved back in they were working on getting back together

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8) G: I really don't know. I know with me but with my other brothers and sisters cause we didn't grow up together so, but I know that she wasn't with them like most of their lives cause she was with me and they're in El Salvador so they grew up with my grandma and I grew up with her-with my mom.

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54) G: To be honest with you, I know that if they would still be alive and that day that I found out I was pregnant I know that I would have been like in big huge trouble. Like I know my mom would have like hit me and drug me all over the apartment or do something you know. But I think that like afterwards she would understand and that you know she'd be supporting me, you know, with the baby a

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161) G: The reason why I say that, it's because like when I was a kid my mom was never like that, like she she wouldn't sit down and talk to me like that was wrong you shouldn't do this. They would always scream at me and yell at me and spank me and like punish me and that was it.

162) K: And what was your relationship like with your sister? Did she ever feel like she was sort of like the parent to you or...

163) G: Me? No, hu uh.

164) K: Even though you were living with her...

165) G: I do feel like she was a parent like financially but never like as a sis-like how could I say it, I never saw her as my mom. I knew she was my sister but she wouldn't act like my sister.  
nd...

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4) V: Yeah, like my grandpa has cancer and my grandmother uh she's 95 and dying soon so yeah cause they decided that they're supposed to cut her leg off and she decided on not having it done. So, they're just giving her medication to sleep like all the time so she'll be drugged all the time so...

5) K: And does that immediately affect your life at all or...

6) V: Yeah, cause we're really close and I don't know how to deal with it. It's hard.

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98) V: Yeah it really is. I try not to think about it but it's hard cause it's even more hard when you have your sister calling you saying when you gonna bring the baby or when you coming home V I miss you you know and to know that it's the littlest one calling for you. You know cause she's only five I think so it's really hard you know. Cause I was really close to her and to my brother like my mom and my dad are going through a divorce and it's hard cause my dad is never around for my brother. So my mom told me that my brother, he went to the counselor cause he was really upset and the teacher wanted to know what was wrong with him and he said he was upset and depressed cause his father was never there to play with him. You know and I think that is really sad and I'm scared cause I've heard so many stories about kids who are so depressed that they wind up hurting themselves and I do not want that for my brother you know.

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32) G: Yeah I told my grandma. Well she found out by my mom. When I was like 5 months that's when I told my dad. Because on my dad's side - I don't know they're pretty strict and they like to gossip. My sisters like to gossip about everybody. So I just told my dad and my step mom and my little brother but my brother told everybody and they all calling me, "Amanda you pregnant, Amanda you pregnant, is it true?" I was like, "Yes yes how did you know? How did you know?" But they weren't really talking about me that much because at the same time my sister in law was pregnant so they were talking about her a lot. They weren't talking about me.

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37) K: Do your parents live together?

38) G: They're separated. They're still married but they're separated.

39) K: So you're closer to your mom?

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5) G: Before I became pregnant, um, I was living in Houston, I've been living over there all my life until I was 12 years old - that's when my parents passed away and I went into my uncle's custody in Colorado with my sister. She turned 18, she decided to come back to Houston and she left my over there.

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### Pregnancy as Happy or Positive Thing

12) K: So you found out in June you were pregnant with the baby that you just had? How did you feel when you found out?

13) G: I was glad. I was happy.

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12) G: Uhm, I had moved in with my kid's father. I had stopped taking birth control because it was, I just didn't like, I was afraid I wasn't ever gonna have kids because of personal family experience and then I hadn't started my period and I kept tellin' him, "I think I'm pregnant." Well we did a pregnancy test after school we found out and I didn't think, we were both actually pretty excited. We have pictures of him with the pregnancy test and us you know like little cheesy like dumb things...

13) K: Mmhm.

14) G: just happy, of us happy. You know, we were gonna have a baby and from then on we called the doctor and we just started to go from there.

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### Rapid Change/Unstable Situations

16) A: Right now I'm planning on if I when I get my diploma I'm planning on at the DV jail there hiring for people with, for receptionists for people at the front desk on the computer a lot and they pay sixteen dollars an hour. And my friend told me that they were hiring and if not I'm going to go to Target with my mom cause she told the lady that I'm looking for a job. So I'm just going to get a job for the meantime cause I don't know what I'm want to do. I don't know if I want to go to college or if I want to go to ACC. Just right now cause I need to make some money for my baby right now so.

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34) A: Uhm, I would change not nothing really just her dad. Yeah he's just like, I don't know, he's not being supportive right now cause he doesn't have a job and...

35) K: Cause the last time we talked he did have a ...

36) A: He did have a job and now he don't have a job and right now he supposedly he found a job but he won't tell me who and like he's hiding something but I would change him basically. He's the one that I want to change.

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43) K: Are you and your boyfriend still living together?

44) A: No we have uh, we got into an argument over some dumb stuff and so he decided to move out to his sisters and to me I felt like that's the best thing he done cause when we live together I felt like it wasn't workin' out and him and my mom they would get off and on off and on arguing so for him it's to me. He calls every day to check up on the baby and he calls to see how I'm doing so like this is what I've been wanting. This is how we met and this is how it used to be him living somewhere else and just calling each other and to me I feel like that's the best way for us to get along.

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70) J: uh hum cause it was a shock to me its not like I had been in this. It wouldn't of been a shock if I had not have just met him you like with my previous boyfriend you remember how I was telling you it was so crazy how that worked out cause I was with a guy for three years and we had a break and I met this other guy and I got pregnant and so like it wouldn't of been a shock if I'd a got pregnant by a guy I was with for three years I was expecting it then I think people were waiting around its real different when your in a long relationship or your married and this and that theres no shock its like a very happy thing your having a baby but me it was just a total shock

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18) G: [OC: participant sighs] It's a lot of changes. I know that I had said that I was with my daughter's dad and which I'm not no more because he just became too aggressive and when I told him that I didn't want to be with him no more that you know to give ourselves some time like he he didn't know how to take it and he acted like real, like he just went crazy and the first thing he thought was that I had someone else. And like, no that just-it wasn't gonna work out no more. And uhm, like right now I'm staying with my friend right now; I'm looking for a place. I'm looking for a job. It's real hard but it's better than to be in a situation that I was. And then he reminded me of my dad. Every time he would like, cause he can't control his anger and like every time he would like anything that comes to his mind he'll say it but he won't think about it before. And like he would just remember me of my dad like the way he was with my mom and I don't know it's just that I decided to just get out of it, you know? So...

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4) M: Like now I have been having problems with her dad and like since she was born I wanted to separate but I can't do it like for the baby. Like staying with him for the baby. That's one problem, uhm...

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86) V: No! Cause life is like things happen out of nowhere so I really don't know you know maybe more kids maybe not, you know, maybe I'm with my boyfriend still or maybe I'm married to someone else. I don't know.

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**Real vs. Ideal/Mom and Baby Daddy**

38) A: Well, I would make him understand more, make him realize his priorities. Right now he has in his head all messed up. Make him, show him that his daughter's the most important that when she needs something he needs to be there and to provide as well I am. That's what I would tell him.

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48) A: Right now he's seeing her just the weekends cause the weekdays he doesn't have a car to come get her and stuff like that so he comes to see her on the weekdays and that's fine as long as you see her and she's not forgetting about you. That's all that matters. You can come anytime during the week that you can, nobody's stopping you, you can still come. He just chooses to see her on the weekends and that's fine with me.

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66) A: Well, I want her to learn what I know, what my mom taught me, how I was raised. To go to school and be somebody and don't judge other people and don't do bad things. I want her to learn all that so she will be successful even more than what I could be cause my mom she didn't go to high school, she didn't get a diploma and she's proud of me being a grad-her first graduate student I mean daughter and I want to feel the same, I want my daughter to be the first daughter to graduate. [OC: phone rings]

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80) In two years? I want to be, me have my own car, me have my own apartment and everything; and just me supporting my daughter. That's what I see.

81) K: So just you and your daughter in an apartment? What do you think you'll be doing on a daily basis?

82) A: Probably I'll be going to work and have her dad take care of her while I'm at work every day and that's all I see for now.

83) K: But you don't see living with the father?

84) A: Not yet, not any time soon. Not until I'm ready.

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90) A: In five more years? Yeah, I'll be 24. I would probably be still talking to her dad basically cause we're not stopping. We always gotta talk and I think in five years if everything works out fine we could probably be moved in. I want my apartment cause I don't trust him getting his own stuff. I rather have the apartment in my own name and

everything and me dealing with all the financial stuff cause I think he's not too responsible. I think he's just go out there and make the money and give it to me.

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50) J: Oh no I did tell him first. Yeah but he didn't count because he was in jail and he couldn't do anything it was like totally my decision. Him, I didn't even it didn't matter what he thought about my situation. I just wanted to let him know.

51) E: just being responsible or

52) J: yeah it didn't matter if he thought if he wanted me to get rid of it it didn't matter if he wanted me to keep it he wasn't an important person to me yet

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218) J: uh hum cause it was a shock to me its not like I had been in this. It wouldn't of been a shock if I had not have just met him you like with my previous boyfriend you remember how I was telling you it was so crazy how that worked out cause I was with a guy for three years and we had a break and I met this other guy and I got pregnant and so like it wouldn't of been a shock if I'd a got pregnant by a guy I was with for three years I was expecting it then I think people were waiting around its real different when your in a long relationship or your married and this and that theres no shock its like a very happy thing your having a baby but me it was just a total shock

219) E: So would you have thought differently if it had been with your previous boyfriend?

220) J: yeah, probably. a lot different and who I got pregnant by it makes the whole thing like it wouldn't of been so like crying and the world's over cause I mean I didn't know this guy he was a bad guy and I was gonna have a kid with him like I didn't even know if he went to church. Like I know I wasn't doing the right thing at the moment but I knew like when I had a baby I thought it was gonna be when I was older and I was past all my phases. Like you know I wanted my baby to go to church I wanted her dad to go to church with us. Like I didn't even know what religion he was or all these things like

221) K: Have you had those conversations with him now?

222) J: yeah when I found out I was pregnant he was in jail the whole time until the baby so that's all we talked about like we don't know each other and were not gonna have no time to get to know each other cause as soon as you get out the baby's gonna be here and its gonna be about her but you know we tried as much as we could trying to get to know each other from writing back and forth but that only helps so much

223) E: Sounds like when you talk about that that something that you still have feelings about

224) J: Yeah no actually yeah I was with him my previous boyfriend through the whole pregnancy. Yeah and he got locked up right before I had her and he was willing to accept her as his baby or him and her together

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28) G: And uhm, I didn't I mean I don't see the necessity to put him on papers you know cause he's being responsible right now. He's giving me money, he's taking care of her cause I take her the weekends with him. Before, like two weekends ago, I wouldn't trust him, them alone. I would go and we would go out to eat but just for him to see her and to spend time with her and then this past weekend I decided you know what well ok, you know I'm gonna let you, you know I'm gonna let her stay and spend the night with you and you know we'll see how that goes and he was fine. It went good.

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96) K: Her father? And how did her father react?

97) M: oh, well he was happy but I wasn't.

98) K: he was happy?

99) M: cause he's old, he's older than me

100) K: yeah

101) M: so I did understand that he wanted a family but not me

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74) M: A little bit but he wants to maybe he doesn't realize that he has a baby cause he wants to go out with his guy friends and like I tell him that you can't cause I can't like but he does helps me

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46) M: Now I think about it and I don't want to be with her dad anymore. I have been trying almost like a year being with him and he knows that I am just trying for the baby but uhm, I just see myself as separate with him and just me.

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18) V: I don't know like, she was just talking to me like right. You know like it's ok cause I had been having problems with my boyfriend right now with his family so I finally decided on calling my mom and stop being like everything is ok when it's not. I really need someone to talk to. So I finally called my mom and she was talking to me letting me know that she was there for me you know whenever I wanted to go back home that it was ok that I didn't have to ask just to go. It feels good knowing that my mom's there for me, you know.

19) K: Uh huh. Do you think your mom had anyone there for her when she was...

20) V: Just her mom.

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59) K: Do you and your partner, you and your boyfriend do you guys talk about having more kids?

60) V: We do but not now. That's what we decided on was waiting making sure that everything is ok so that we don't have to go through the same thing that we are going through now with my son.

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78) V: Uh. [OC: pause] I don't know. I see myself happy with my family not just with my baby but hopefully things will work out with my boyfriend cause I'm just scared of being lonely but I know if my mom can do it I can do it, anybody can do it. It's just a matter of you pushing yourself to do it.

79) K: When you picture yourself in five years do you picture your boyfriend and your baby and everyone together?

80) V: Yeah.

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88) V: I don't know. Like I'm having problems now with my boyfriend cause I don't want him smoking or selling drugs. I don't know I don't want him to do any of that. And he promised me, he made me promise when I was pregnant that he would stop doing what he does and that he change and become a man cause you know you're still doing stuff like that you're immature and being a kid. Why? Why do all that when you have a son and a family to come home to. And I told him maybe your just maybe you just don't care. And I hate to say it but I really don't think he cares about his son cause if he cared he'd be worrying about what if I don't make it home or what if I get in trouble. Cause what if he gets locked up I'm not taking him out cause he needs to learn his lesson. To me I think what it's gonna take is change, since he can't change now is for him to loose his family or for something bad to happen to us. I think that's the only thing that's gonna make him change cause his cousin uhm was high and he was taking his baby a bath and he almost drowned her. She was in the water and she was drowning but he picked her up and she was gasping for air and that's really scary you know. That's what I'm telling him you know you shouldn't wait for something like that to happen you should just take the decision on yourself and not wait for something bad to happen.

89) K: Yeah. Is that, the problems that you're having is that what prompted you to contact your mom and talk to her about the situation?

90) V: Yeah, because I'm dealing with his sisters and the mom. The mom's never home so she depends on me and she depends on the girls, the daughters to clean the house you know and I told my mom you know I don't think it's fair cause I have to worry about my schoolwork, I have to when my son's asleep that's all I do. I've been working on your work and because if he's awake oh my goodness I have no time to myself at all. I

have to worry about him like being ok not falling or I can't leave him with the little girls cause they get mad. They take, he says, my boyfriend says that I leave him with them to get taken care of like to get-like she's really watching my son. I don't think that's true. I just you know need her help sometimes you know if I'm eating or cleaning or cooking. I can't do both hold the baby and cook you know.

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54) G: Yeah 'cause he goes to work at night. So I make sure he has everything then I get ready. I make sure she has her stuff first. I get ready and come to school for the four hours of school then he picks me up or I take the car and I come home. I watch my baby sleeping. She's just lying in her crib. I just clean up around the house if there's anything I need to do at the house to do. Me and my boyfriend always take off to his sister's house go over there. Right now at our house their ain't no a/c so it's pretty hot. So we go to his sister's house and just kinda hang around over there. This is her first niece so she loves her more than anything. By about five we come home and he goes to work at six. And I be watching her throughout the day throughout the night until my mom comes home. When my mom comes home she takes the baby away from me. She takes her in the other room and plays with her. I'm in the living room all by myself watching TV.

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102) G: Since he's working like six to three in the morning delivering stuff. I was thinking I would work in the mornings and he would babysit in the mornings and I would get off in the afternoon before he goes to work and I could baby-sit when he goes to work. But it could be reversed. Right now he's saying he don't like the job he's working so he may get a day job and if he gets a day job then I'll find a night job. Either way we'll work it out.

103) K: What's his reaction to being a dad?

104) G: He loves it. He's so attached to her. He has recordings of her talking to her on the phone. Like she talks like baby talk. He had thousands of recordings of her talking to him. He loves her so much.

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13) G: Like I couldn't wear no makeup - you know things like that. I called my sister so then I came back to live with her in Houston and we just never got along. I started getting in trouble hanging out with the wrong people and started doing drugs. She would kick me out of the house and I would leave and go to my friend's house and just party all night. Then one time she told me she was going to move to Austin. So she told me either you decide you want to stay with your friends here in Houston or

your going to go with me to Austin. And I was like I don't want to go over there, but she was my only family so if I stay in Houston with my friends - I'm not going to be with my friends my whole life. So then I decided to move with her. I came here and the week after we had been here we got in an argument. So I left I took the bus. I didn't know where I went. Somewhere downtown in the park and I went down I started walking and you know just thinking about all this stuff and cops did the flashlight thing and asked me what I was doing in that park after curfew and I lied about my identity because at that time I was never in juvie or anything like that. So I lied about my age and lied about my name.

14) K: And how old were you at that time?

15) G: I was 15, yeah I was 15 and then so they took me. That cop talked on the radio and found out I was lying. They took me to the juvenile and that's where I gave all my information out. I stayed there for a week and I had court with my sister. She said that I was getting in trouble a lot so the judge decided to keep me there for another week to see how I was doing. Finally, I came out on house arrest for a month. Everything was going good. I just had a week left to finish my house arrest then we got into a fight. Like a physical fight and she kicked me out. Instead of me calling the people...because I couldn't even go out to take out the trash without letting them know, instead of calling them I just left. I just left. At that time my boyfriend was my friend. My baby daddy. I went over to his house and I was staying there for...I stayed there for quite a long time like two months or three months that's the maximum. And then that's when I became pregnant. I didn't want to go to my sister but he was like you need to talk to her and let her know you are pregnant you need to go back to that to live with her. He forced me to.

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72) G: I would say my boyfriend cause he supports me he doesn't even - like I'm gonna get a part time job during the summer or right now, but he says no just take your school and once you get your diploma or your GED whatever you want then you could work. He tells me just worry about your school. You don't have to work I'm working I pay the bills there's no need for you to work.

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26) K: And how long had you been with the baby's father before...

27) G: We were together for, I wanna say seven months, not even...

28) K: Seven months?

29) G: that long. We had moved in together [OC: pause] seven, yeah we were together for seven months. I got pregnant in October. We were together for about eight or nine months when I got pregnant...

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57) K: He was excited?

58) G: Yeah but he wouldn't show me that he was excited but he would tell me, yeah I told [OC: unsure of words] you know but I knew he was excited. Well, he had come to the hospital and he'd sit there and he'd call like every five minutes, is the baby here? Is the baby here? Is the baby here? And I'm like no not yet. Are you excited? Did you pick a name? No, no, just can you hurry up and get here? And he's like why and I'm like I'm holdin him in until you get here. And so he came after he had got out of work. He came straight from work and he sat there with me and you know we were sitting there and you know talking and you could feel the awkwardness in the room because he had a girlfriend and it-I never imagined myself in that position. I felt as if he was married and if I was the other woman you know?

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64) G: I can't do it. Because of the fact that he's-I saw it as she's stupid, she was stupid for being with him when he had somebody else pregnant. That means he didn't love her, that means he didn't love her because he always cheated on me-on her with me. He always found a way to come see me, he always found a way for him to stay the night. You know, basically he always found time to be with me and not her and now I see it as I'm gonna look dumb by being with-even though we weren't together when she got pregnant, I'm still gonna feel dumb by being with somebody who has somebody pregnant at this point in time. I just, I can't do it and I can't live with the fact of he's also admitted that every, I mean every child is precious, but he's admitted that that baby was a mistake that he should've never had that baby because things would be totally different between us and we still to this day we talk and it hurts because we know that we miss each other and we tell each other you know he'll come over and like we'll hung and you know whatever and I'm like man you know I sit there and I cry to him and tell him you know I really do miss you but I just can't be with you because of what you've put me through and how you've treated me and he just-it hurts him because he sits there and he says I miss my family I want, and the one thing when I was pregnant I always used to tell him, I want my family back and now he's the one telling me I want my family back I want my kids I want ya'll to be there with me. I just told him you know I have school going on and if I'm not-if I'm with you I'm not gonna go to school I'm gonna always wanna be with you and I'm not, I can't be with you just you have a baby by somebody else and...

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4) G: It was different 'cause I didn't have a lot of responsibilities and I had more freedom to do what I wanted. I could do sports or hang out with friends. I can't do that now.

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50) G: I'm working my boyfriend's working. I only work three days out of a week. That's not even enough money to last me two weeks. That's only \$200 I make - not even. My boyfriend's the one who makes the money because he works from 4-11 and during the weekends he works like from 10-11. So he works a lot.

51) K: What's your living situation? Are you living with your grandma?

52) G: I live with my boyfriend.

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### School Support Before During and After

30) A: To the school so when they come across another teenage mom who is struggling they can just tell them to move forward cause everything is going to be alright cause at first I thought I was, I didn't know what to do, I didn't know who to talk to so I went to some of the counselors and they were telling me what other girls were telling them and what they were going through. They passed it on to me and they told me to move forward and that everything was going to be ok...

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13) J: No actually like school is like my like transition phase. This is where I'm learning to be with my friends but learning to be responsible. You know what I'm saying? This is where I'm learning or I'm teaching myself self-discipline. Because all my best friends before I was pregnant you know they leave they don't come back. Its not a big problem for them.

14) E: They leave to go...

15) J: ...at lunch to go smoke or whatever and its like keeping myself here I think school is like a really good think for me, its helping me. I get to be around my friends and I get to be learning you know. I get to be doing something good and its great because I get to be like stay with me at school this is our only time. Lets be without my baby. You know because if we are chillin after school we have the baby with us. And that's fine and all but its nice to have some time alone. Oh yeah they hate me, I'm like a school Nazi.

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225) J: yeah, I never stayed longer than a couple of weeks or maybe a month and then I would leave and then I would enroll again and I would leave and I'd enroll again. Uh, so being pregnant is why I came back to school.

226) K: And you stuck with it?

227) J: Uh huh

228) K: How did the people here at school, like the official school people how did they respond to you being pregnant?

229) J: I think I got positive attention. I got attention and it wasn't for being bad. So it was like not a negative thing. The officials they were like, like Lynne they had walked up to me and asked me you know if I had any parenting classes if she wanted to go like do to go talk to her if I wanted to. You know but that was pretty much it you know nobody else made any remarks about me being pregnant not til' the very end when we were kinda going in to talk about the homebound. Like it no one really interacted with me because I was pregnant you know

230) E: You smiled when you said it was positive. Was that the first time you had had kind of positive interactions with people at school?

231) J: Uh, yeah well, no

232) E: I mean just cause your face lit up in a way that it was like that was a good thing for you

233) J: yeah, no it was a good thing uhm, like I've always had like my teachers have always told me, hey you know your real smart you know like come to school like what's wrong with you you know your real smart like what are you doing? Like whatever and like but that's like the only thing I've ever gotten from everyone you know

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181) J: yeah yeah yeah that's it and uhm like the school like enormously like I get nothin' but positive positive positive its not like hey you should get your GED you know like no way everyone's like we're gonna get you in this program and we're gonna help you do this and we're gonna get you graduated and then we're gonna fill out applications and just pumpin' me up you know like I love this school like I love it

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187) J: yeah yeah yeah, they pay teachers uh I think that pay teachers but I don't know if R has a supervisor but I don't think like they're keeping up enough with the guy they're paying. They need to make sure that they have that they are goin' out two times week I think that uh

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85) K: Has this campus been supportive or has anything about it been not supportive of you being a teen mom?

86) M: Yeah [pause] well, they have helped me to come to school in a way cause I have been going to like four different schools and I had changed and...they helped me to come to school and get done.

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65) K: You were on Homebound recently? So when you came back was that an easy transition?

66) G: Yeah. I came back on time. I knew what I needed to do. I'm already caught up in all my classes. I was way ahead of them. Right now is a good time for me because I'm really caught up on my classes.

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70) K: So you were already enrolled here before you got pregnant and all that? Is there anything this school did to help you or is there anything they could have done to be more supportive?

71) G: They helped me just by giving me advice and the counselors gave me resources about where I could go to who I could talk to. They're pretty helpful everybody at this school.

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77) G: Like give me a review of what I should I do when I was pregnant. Tell me who I could go to and tell which doctors to see. Give me resources basically.

78) K: Did you find those resources in other outlets since you didn't find it here at school?

79) G: No all the resources I found were for the counselors at this school. They gave me the resources I didn't go no where else. Well besides my mom. My mom said her friend knew some doctors. I would rather the counselors here give me a packet of whose the best doctors or whose the best pediatricians for my baby and stuff like that so when the time do come I can have an appointment.

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78) G: No. I didn't know. The reason why I came here and enrolled myself is because I heard you would be able to enroll yourself. I was with my sister and I knew she was too busy so she's not going to be able to do it. I was like I'm gonna enroll myself. I had L for a counselor and I told her about my situation because ever since my mom passed away I was receiving social security checks and my sister never told me that until like I would see that she would be getting checks but she never told me. Like I knew I was getting them but I never told her like, "hey that's my money." I would be dumb and never tell her nothing. She would never ask me if I need anything if I need clothes, hey lets go to the grocery store. Let's go do something with that money for you but instead she kept it for herself. I had told Leslie about it and she said if I was pregnant and I wasn't getting along with my sister and my boyfriend was supportive then I would be able to get emancipated and that way I would be able to get the social security checks under my name and be able to use that money for myself. So she helped me do that. It was a long process and real hard but then everything had worked out. Those are the two helpful things AYW has done for me.

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42) G: I was. I went to T [OC: name of school] when I was pregnant with my daughter. I still went to school but it was funny because I got big really quick, after my family found out I was pregnant, that's when I started to like zoom into being humongous and so I had to by five months I had to stop sitting at desks. I had to sit at a table or at the teacher's desk. Uhm, school I mean-I went to school but because I got morning sickness I stayed home a lot. So finally, I wanna say in May I transferred to AYW and I was big at this time and uhm I had J as my counselor when J was here and I tricked him a couple of times and almost went into labor. I had to sit in uh, L's office I think it is across from-I had to sit in there. It finally got to the point where I

had to drop out because I had got too big and I wouldn't fit in clothes. My feet would like swell up on their own. I couldn't, I just couldn't do it so I had to stop going to school all together which is something that I really regret but I don't regret my daughter I just regret getting pregnant at the time I got pregnant cause I could've been finished and graduated by now.

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47) K: Did homebound work out for you very well or...

48) G: No, because my teacher like I didn't-me and my mom. It's just for my son because my daughter, she was already one when I had my son and homebound really, I'm not the person-I don't like people showing up at my house unexpectedly. I don't like people in my house-I'm just really overprotective cause my kids live there so I don't like, so homebound she showed up sometimes, sometimes she didn't. So I had to stop doing homebound cause my son had got real sick. He has acid refluxes and so he had to go back to the hospital and he ended up in the hospital and I had to drop out of school again for the second time and I had to stop going because he had got sick but in between when my daughter was born I came back to AYW but just being a mom and my first daughter I didn't feel safe leavin' her with her dad. Just because I want to be with her-I want to be there not her dad. Her dad can go to work but I wanted to be there so that's when I had dropped out again I had dropped out three times and then with my son, now he's like-he's six months and when he was five months I came back-I'm coming back to school and it's-for me now it's like get-away, I treasure coming to school because it's me time instead of dealing with two of 'em cause I'm young and they're both in pampers so...

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51) K: So, how long have you been back in school this time?

52) G: I just recently came back three weeks ago...

53) K: Three weeks ago?

54) G: Yeah, around March, beginning of April maybe. No, wait [OC: pause] yeah Aprilish, yeah the beginning of April. I barely came back to AYW and the only reason they let me in is because I'm considered homeless and going through Lifeworks so they helped me out to come back to school. Cause Lifeworks had told me I needed to come back and get my diploma...

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64) G: I don't want to say daycare because I think that's my thing. It's not the school's thing to find daycare. That is kinda my problem is daycare. The only reason why I went to school everyday is because at my other school it had daycare it had

transportation. I got up at 6 everyday. I went to the daycare and dropped off my son. It had parenting classes. After the parenting classes I'd go straight to school. So I would take an extra class that I don't even need, not that I don't need but it's not a part of the other school or whatever. That school really did help me out a lot. I had to pass my classes to keep my son in daycare not for them to take it away from me or somebody else take my spot. So it really made me work. I had to go to school everyday. I had to get up early and get on the bus because if I missed the bus there wasn't no way I was getting to school. Wherever I was living at my house my parents went to work very early. I was there with the baby then we leave.

65) K: What made you leave that school?

66) G: I really didn't want to. That school the teachers - I knew I wasn't going to graduate that year. One teacher for some reason made me feel really bad telling me in front of the whole class, "I'm sorry but you're not going to graduate. You're not going to walk the stage with your class." Just telling me all this stuff making me feel bad. I started crying. I know I'm not going to graduate you don't have to tell the whole world. He was telling me to drop out - that's the only thing you have left. He should be telling me to come to school but he was giving me all the wrong ideas. They don't understand how hard it is to be a young parent, go to school and do what you have to do. It's hard. It's not easy. I'm pretty sure if they had kids when they were younger - if they were a young mom or whatever then they would understand. A lot of teachers don't really care what you have to say because it's school. I think if they knew how it was they would understand and give you more chances. At that school some teachers are real strict. If you miss school you don't get make up work. You just have to do a better job on whatever's next to come.

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68) G: Yeah, the teachers here are real understanding. I tell them my situation and they say, "This is what I can do to help you." Instead of turning their back on me and saying, "I can't do nothing for you." Cause they really can.

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## VITA

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