



**Breaking the Cycle
of Homelessness:**
Supporting Young
Parents *and Their
Children*

NATIONAL NETWORK
 *for* **YOUTH**

Welcome!

Webinar Overview

- Introduce yourself in chat: Name, pronouns, organization, location, and an emoji of how your day is going so far. 😊 😄 😭 😬 😡 🙌
- Ask questions in the chat throughout the presentation.
- The webinar slides and a recording will be available on our website.
- Please complete the survey following the webinar so we can improve for next time.

About National Network for Youth

**NN4Y is on a mission to
transform systems so that no
young person in America
experiences homelessness.**



collaborate • advocate • transform

<http://nn4youth.org/>

NN4Y works with youth who have experienced homelessness and youth service providers from across the country to prevent and end youth, young adult, and young parent family homelessness and human trafficking. Together, we envision a future in which all young people have a safe place to call home, with endless opportunities to achieve their fullest potential.

Our Programs

- Federal Policy Advocacy
- Youth + Youth Adult Partnerships
- Community-Based Solutions



collaborate • advocate • transform

Join the National Network to End Youth Homelessness

Strengthen Your Services

Expand Your Impact

Shape Policy

Share Power

**Become a
Member Today!**



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National Youth Advisory Council
National Network for Youth



Kelsie Severson

Director of Development and Impact
Mountain Home Montana



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Chief Executive Officer
St. Ann's Center for Children,
Youth & Families

Policy Brief Release!

Overview



**Breaking the Cycle of
Homelessness:**

Supporting Young Parents
and Their Children

**Report
Coming Next
Week!**

Despite making up a significant share of the youth homelessness population, young parent families (under age 25) remain largely invisible in public policy and program design.

The result is that **both parents and children** face compounded challenges: health disparities, unsafe living situations, disrupted education, and the absence of reliable support systems.

This policy brief:

- ★ Summarizes the latest research on young parent families experiencing homelessness.
- ★ Highlights the unique risks facing young parents and their child(ren).
- ★ Offers concrete recommendations for public policy and adopting a “two-generation” approach.

Urgency of the Issue

Overview



**Breaking the Cycle of
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- ★ Nearly **44 percent of youth ages 18 to 25** who experience homelessness are parents, and approximately **18 percent of youth ages 13 to 17** are pregnant or parenting.
- ★ Counts by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found that, in 2024, the **greatest increase in homelessness of any subpopulation were families with children**—a 39.4 percent increase from 2023. HUD's 2023 count showed a 17 percent increase in family homelessness from 2022.
- ★ An estimated **1.1 million children** have a young parent under 25 who experienced homelessness in the past year.
- ★ Nearly **447,000 infants and toddlers** ages birth through three experienced homelessness between 2022 to 2023, an increase of 23 percent from the previous two years.

Urgency of the Issue

Overview



**Breaking the Cycle of
Homelessness:**

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Most youth shelters and transitional programs are not equipped to serve young parents and their children—particularly adolescent parents, fathers, or families with older children.

Adult-oriented homelessness programs also fail to meet the developmental needs of young parents, while the children's needs are frequently overlooked altogether.

What's urgently needed are **two-generation approaches** that provide safe housing alongside tailored supports for **both parents and children**.



Unique Challenges
Faced by
Young Parents and
Their Children

NATIONAL NETWORK
 for **YOUTH**

Homelessness During Pregnancy



Homelessness during pregnancy puts young moms and their babies at immediate and high risk for complications.

- ★ Pregnant youth experiencing homelessness rarely have access to prenatal care or adequate nutrition.
- ★ Homelessness increases exposure to chronic stress, environmental hazards, and violence.
- ★ All of these are associated with poor prenatal and perinatal outcomes, including *increased risks for preterm births, low birth weight, and pregnancy complications.*

Effects on Babies and Young Children



For babies and young children, the experience of homelessness negatively impacts development.

- ★ Development can be delayed by the highly stressful and unstable experiences that accompany homelessness, leading to difficulties in language acquisition, cognitive development, and social-emotional growth.
- ★ Physical health can be affected by poor living conditions, nutrition, and exposure to environmental hazards, leading to asthma, infections, and failure to thrive.

The experience of homelessness has one of the greatest negative impacts on infant mental health and development—even over other factors such as low income.

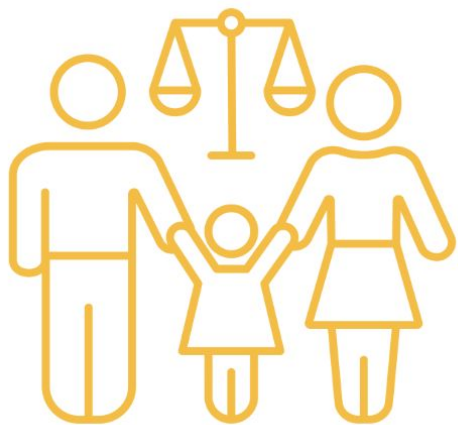
Effects on Young Parents



Adolescent parents face unique challenges due to their own ongoing development.

- ★ Parenting without support places overwhelming adult responsibilities on young people, while leaving them without the stability, guidance, and care they themselves still need to grow and thrive.
- ★ The stigma associated with being an adolescent parent, particularly for young women, can add additional psychological stress.
- ★ These pressures, compounded by trauma and isolation, can lead to significant mental health challenges.
- ★ ***Poor mental health in the parent can significantly impact their child's mental health, too.***

Becoming or Being Systems-Involved



Involvement in systems like child welfare, foster care, or juvenile justice adds another layer of challenge to an already difficult situation.

- ★ The fear of separation and systems involvement can often keep young parents from accessing supports that could help their families stay safe and together.
- ★ Without legal advocacy or a clear knowledge of their rights, young parents are especially vulnerable in custody disputes and may struggle to navigate reunification if separation occurs.

More than half of the children born to adolescent mothers in foster care *enter the child welfare system themselves*, separated from their parent, before the age of two.

Few Resources for Young Parent Families



Despite the urgent need for two-generation services, the availability nationwide is very low.

- ★ Only **9 percent** of youth homelessness programs funded by the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act are specifically for young moms and their children.
- ★ An even smaller share serve **young parents under age 18**, and/or **young fathers** with children experiencing homelessness.
- ★ Young families experiencing hidden homelessness are often **ineligible for housing and supportive services** through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's homeless assistance program.

Recommendations for Policymakers



- Expand **access to federal housing options** specifically designed for young families.
 - ◆ Learn more about the [Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act](#).
 - ◆ Learn more about the [Homeless Children and Youth Act](#).
- Invest in **research and data collection** on the prevalence, challenges, and needs of young parents and children experiencing homelessness.



Provider Spotlights:
*Experience from
the Field*

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 *for* **YOUTH**

MOUNTAIN HOME MONTANA



Mission & History

Mountain Home provides a safe home and nurturing community where young mothers can discover their strengths and children thrive.

Mountain Home's staff of nearly 50 employees provides:

- Residential Programs
- Licensed Mental Health Center
- Supportive Education & Employment Program
- Trauma-Informed Childcare Center



Holistic & Compassionate Care



Residential Services

- 20-dormitory style rooms
- Long-Term Care
- Ages 16-24



Licensed Mental Health Center

- Individualized therapy and Case Management
- Peer Support & LAC
- Ages 14-29



Supportive Education & Employment

- Supportive Education & Employment Coordinators
- 80% of moms employed or enrolled after 1 year



Trauma-Informed Childcare

- Up to 32 enrollments
- Trauma-Informed, designed by mental health professionals
- Ages 0-5



Community Resources & Partnerships

Missoula, Montana is a collaborative community. Very high number of nonprofits per capita. We have partners across these program areas to accomplish our outcomes.

- Housing partnerships
- Behavioral Health & Maternal & Infant Health Centers
- Employers & Educational Programs
- Local & State Childcare Providers

Successes

To ensure we're meeting critical community needs, Mountain Home evaluates our programs through the **Life Skills Progression (LSP) Tool**, an easy-to-use outcome measurement and intervention planning instrument explicitly designed for use during pregnancy and early parenting in low-income populations. The LSP includes **35+ parent and child scales**, which describe a spectrum of skills and abilities over six major categories of functioning.

Housing

- 60% of overall clients and 100% of residential clients are unhoused at intake.
- After 1 year 90% of families report safe & stable housing.

Education & Employment

- 60% of moms don't have their high school degree or equivalent.
- After 1 year 80% of moms are employed or enrolled in educational programs

Mental Health

- 90% of moms have trauma with 70% reporting domestic abuse.
- After 1 year 94% of moms are sober or in recovery; 88% report stable mental health.

Childcare

- Children of a primary caregiver with poor mental health were 4x's likely to have poor general health and 2x's likely to have developmental disabilities.
- After 1 year, 90% of parents improve parenting skills.

Challenges

Housing Young Families

- 54% of our moms were part of the foster care system as children
- Education Barriers

Education & Employment

- 9 moms started college this semester, including one who graduated in May and starting her MBA at UM.
- Balance of government services and sustainable employment.

Children's Services

- Added individualized children's therapy & case management in 2020. Currently have 35 children enrolled
- Added trauma-informed childcare first for children ages 0-3 and now 0-5.
- Balanced approach to funding.
 - State childcare subsidies & restrictions/barriers
 - Private grants & donations
 - State & federal grants



St. Ann's Center for Children, Youth and Families

*Supporting Vulnerable Families,
with a Special Focus on
Teen Mothers and their Babies*

Contents

- Mission & History
- Program Overview
- Model of Care
- Pillars of Working with Teen Moms
- Focus on Relationships





St. Ann's
Center for
Children,
Youth and
Families



Mission & History

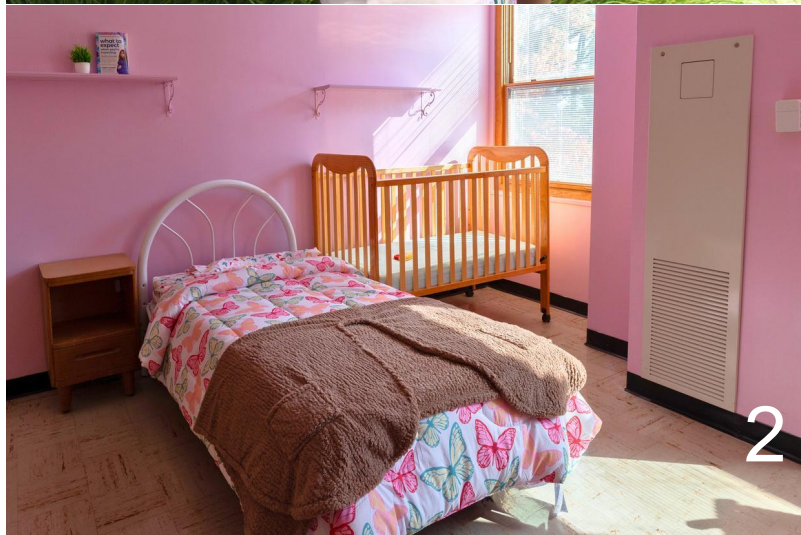
St. Ann's Center helps mothers and children overcome crisis and achieve lasting independence and stability by providing a safe and supportive home, child care, education and employment assistance, and clinical social work services within a Catholic community that welcomes all.

Three Daughters of Charity founded St. Ann's Center in Washington, DC in 1860, serving orphaned children and then widowed women when Civil War broke out.

Chartered by President Lincoln through an Act of Congress in 1863, St. Ann's has adapted in the decades since to continually meet the evolving needs of the community.



Today our mission focuses on transitional living and residential services for women and children experiencing homelessness.



Program Overview

Supportive Housing for Mothers & Children



GRACE HOUSE

Housing and support for pregnant and parenting teenagers ages 13 to 21

HOPE HOUSE

Transitional housing for mothers with young children working toward stability

FAITH HOUSE

Independent transitional housing for working mothers with young children

Counseling & Life Skills

- Trauma-informed therapy and case management
- Financial literacy, life skills and parenting workshops



Community-Based Child Care

- On-site licensed child care center for infants, toddlers, and pre-K
- Helping mothers work, study, and build a strong foundation for their child's future
- Open to St. Ann's Center families and members of the community



Education & Career Support

- High school, GED, college, and vocational training
- Job readiness and career confidence coaching



FY2025

13

successful transitions to independent living



77

women & children were served



105

children served in St. Ann's Child Care Program



4

babies were born



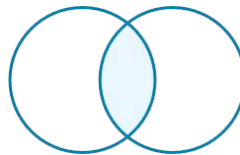
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Our Model of Care



Teen Mother-Baby Program in FY 2025

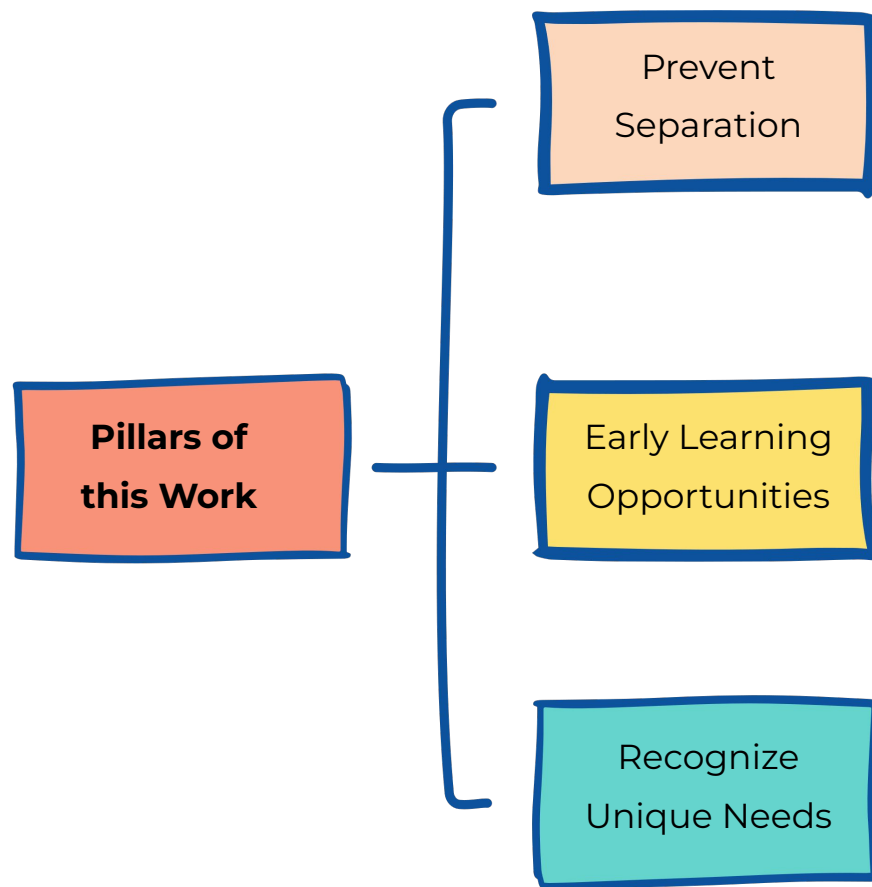
- **7** teen mothers and their **7** babies served
- **3** pregnant teen women served



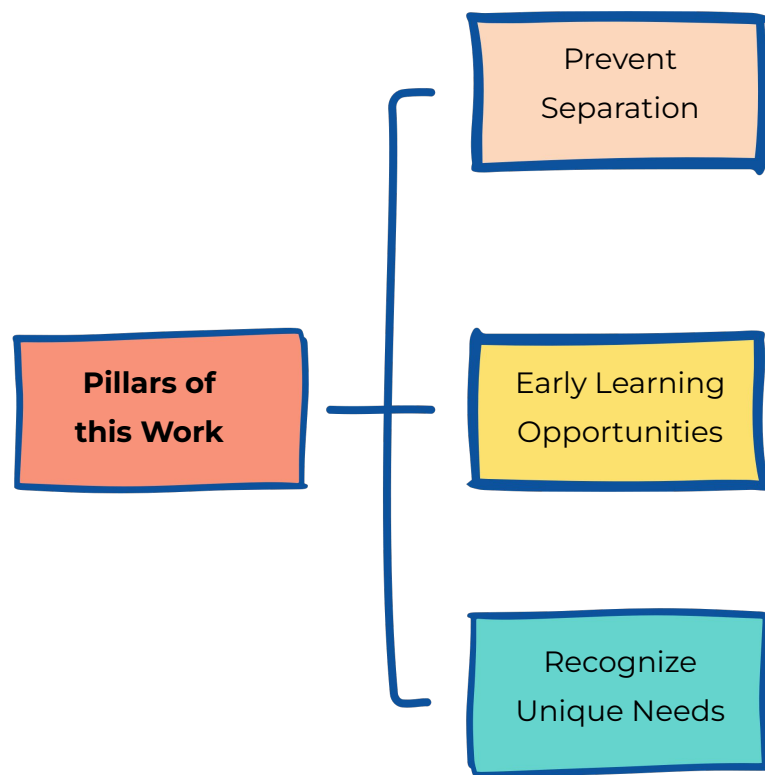
Our teen moms are both **mothers** and **developing youth** – our programs need to allow both to co-exist and serve/respect both.

Working with Teen Moms and their Children at St. Ann's Center

Our focus is on a **two generation solution** – looking to end the cycle of poverty, homelessness, and challenges that can arise from foster care involvement.



Working with Teen Moms and their Children at St. Ann's Center



Programs should design services that **prevent separation**, particularly for young mothers in foster care.

Ensuring that parenting youth can remain with their children while accessing housing and supports is essential to breaking cycles of family disruption.

Embedding child care and early learning opportunities—such as **Early Head Start & Head Start**—within transitional housing ensures children are supported developmentally while giving parents the ability to pursue school or work.

This two-generation approach fosters stability for the entire family.

Youth homelessness programs should **recognize the unique needs** of adolescent mothers and immigrant families.

Offering age-appropriate services, legal and educational advocacy, and culturally relevant parenting supports builds trust, increases engagement, and promotes long-term stability.

Working with Teen Moms and their Children at St. Ann's Center

Focusing on **developmentally-appropriate**, **culturally sensitive**, and **relationship-centered** services is particularly vital for clients who have experienced trauma, foster care, and immigration challenges.

For instance, staff advocate directly with schools and social service agencies to ensure education is accessible and suited to each young mother's needs, whether that means transportation to their home school or access to GED programs in their native language.

Through mentoring, social work, and community engagement, **St. Ann's equips mothers with the tools to build healthy relationships**—with their children, their employers, and themselves.



stanns.org

Our staff cultivate a therapeutic and culturally responsive environment, where counseling and mentoring help young women build resilience, while recreational activities and community volunteers create opportunities for **joy**, **growth**, and **connection**.



Questions?

I AM HERE: Vital Document Legal Hotline for Youth

A free, dedicated state-specific legal assistance hotline for **youth experiencing homelessness** to help obtain:

State ID cards and licenses

Social Security Cards

Birth certificates

Documents needed to obtain an ID and license

**Text or
Call!**

1-888-870-DOCS

*Voicemails and texts are welcome and will be returned.

Every Wednesday

12 to 8 PM Eastern | 11 AM to 7 PM Central

10 AM to 6 PM Mountain | 9 AM to 5 PM Pacific

**Baker
McKenzie.**

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NETWORK
for **YOUTH**



Vital Document Hotline FAQs

Who is answering the phone?

- ❑ Pro bono legal professionals and lawyers

Do I need to be experiencing homelessness to call?

- ❑ No! Any young person can call.
- ❑ Youth experiencing homelessness are highly encouraged, as they often face steep barriers to accessing their vital documents.

What happens when I call or text?

- ❑ During operating hours, you can call or text with someone directly.
- ❑ Outside of Wednesdays, text or leave a voicemail to be returned, possibly outside of Wednesday.

Who is organizing the hotline?

- ❑ National Network for Youth + Baker McKenzie

Next Open Cohort: Registration opens February 2026, starts April 2026
2026 NN4Y Members get discounts!



NATIONAL NETWORK
for **YOUTH**

presents...



Sharpen Your Skills in:

-  Youth Advocacy
-  Partnership Development
-  Systems & Funding
-  Administration
-  Project Management
-  Facilitation

Join the open cohort or connect with Sarah (sarah.billings@nn4youth.org) to
bring a customized certificate program to your community!

**Together, we
can end youth
homelessness.**

Contact Us:

darla.bardine@nn4youth.org
trinady.maddock@nn4youth.org

Visit Our Website:

nn4youth.org

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