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***Social and Economic Assistance and the Development of
Strong Character in Pregnant and Parenting Adolescents***

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Social and Economic Assistance and the Development of Strong Character in Pregnant and Parenting Adolescents

By: Alexander Oji

Research Question: There are various beliefs about the situations that teenage girls experience when they are pregnant and parenting. One of the popular beliefs is that these girls get no support from family, friends, or other people. Another popular belief is that pregnant and parenting adolescent girls do not feel strong emotionally because they had children at such a young age. But are these popular beliefs really true? I have decided to investigate the validity of these two popular beliefs by researching the following three part question: From what sources do pregnant and parenting adolescents seek and receive information about social and economic assistance? Do they seek or receive the information about social and economic assistance from teachers, family, peers, ministers, or social workers? Is receiving the information helpful towards their emotional development? After answering my three part research question, I will discuss secondary sources that are relevant to my research question. My

primary research investigates from whom pregnant teens receive social and economic assistance, but my secondary sources include information on parenting adolescents. The existing research literature I am focusing on discusses the level of support for pregnant and parenting adolescents from the following three sources: baby's fathers, mothers, and ministers, and whether support from these sources is helping their emotional well-being. By looking at both primary and secondary evidence, I show the similarities and discrepancies between my primary research and research from secondary sources.

Thesis: Through primary research, I have found that pregnant teens, in terms of social assistance, receive information from social workers while seeking it from teachers. They seek and receive information about social assistance from family, including the baby father's family. They rely on peers for social assistance information on a small level. For economic assistance, pregnant teens receive information from teachers and family, including the baby father's family. They do not rely on ministers for information about social or economic assistance. Learning about social and economic assistance helps their emotional development because they feel more confident in becoming new mothers and feel stronger. Although primary research shows support from family, including the baby father's family, and a healthier emotional development, secondary sources show a lack of social and economic support from baby's fathers and mothers, which hurts their emotional development. Religious involvement does not provide emotional support for recently parenting adolescents.

Significance: My research is significant to educational studies to dispel some of the popular beliefs about pregnant and parenting girls lacking support and emotional

strength. It is also significant to educational studies because the support that pregnant and parenting adolescents receive can affect their emotional development. The more support they receive, the stronger their emotional development can be. A pregnant or parenting adolescent who has more support and stronger emotional development has a higher chance of completing basic education (through the twelfth grade) and enrolling in and completing higher education whether it be a post-secondary certificate, an associates degree, bachelors degree, masters degree, or even higher. Not only will having quality support help the emotional development of the pregnant or parenting girl, but also the emotional development of her child. When a child sees a strong family unit that supports each other, he or she can reap the benefits of a supportive family and gain stronger emotional development, which means the child also has a greater chance of completing basic and higher education. Great support for a pregnant and parenting adolescent can be used as a strong family model and cause the success of current and future generations in the family. Not only is my research significant in terms of the possibility for success in present and future generations, but also in showing the discrepancies in the levels of support and emotional development for pregnant adolescents I interviewed versus the levels of support and emotional development for pregnant and parenting adolescents in my existing literature. By showing these discrepancies, there can be possible future research in educational studies on how to maintain and improve social and economic support for pregnant and parenting teens.

Research Methods: My primary evidence was collected by interviews at the Polly McCabe Center. Before I could conduct any interviews, I had to complete an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Request for Project Review Form. The form asked

various questions such as how I would be maintaining the confidentiality of my subjects (interviewees) and the purpose of my research. After completing the form, I, along with the help of my research supervisor Professor Jack Dougherty, composed an original consent form that explained who I am, the purpose of my interviews, how I would be maintaining confidentiality of all participants involved, and that withdrawal from participation is voluntary at any time. Not only did Professor Dougherty and I make an original consent form, but we also made original interview questions that addressed my three-part research question. These are the following six questions my interviewees had to answer:

1. Please tell me your first name only (which was replaced with a pseudonym in my research)
2. Please tell me a little about your experiences at Polly McCabe.
3. From whom have you received information about social assistance such as child-care, babysitting, proper parenting techniques, and stress management
 - a. Was it from family, peers, teachers, ministers, social workers, or someone else?
 - b. Did you seek the information about social assistance or did the people who gave you information come to you?
4. From whom have you received information about economic assistance such as Medicaid, Section 8, RAP, EBT, and WIC?
 - a. Was it from family, peers, teachers, ministers, social workers, or someone else?
 - b. Did you seek the information about economic assistance or did the people who gave you information come to you?
5. Has talking with any of the people who gave you knowledge about social and economic assistance made you feel more confident in becoming a parent?
6. Has talking with any of the people who gave you knowledge about social and economic assistance made you feel like a stronger person?

After my IRB Form was approved by Professor Haberlandt and other members of the IRB Board, I needed permission from the principal at Polly McCabe to conduct the interviews. Principal Brenda Thomas allowed me to interview students who have

completed the consent forms that were distributed to the students in school on November 12, 2003. I interviewed three students on November 14, 2003 and interviewed two more students on November 19, 2003, which means I have interviewed a total of five Polly McCabe students. Now that I have discussed how I have gathered my primary evidence, I will give background on where I have conducted my interviews and the economic assistance programs I have asked about the interviewees about.

Primary Source Background: I gathered my primary source evidence by conducting interviews at the Polly McCabe Center. The Polly McCabe Center is located in New Haven, CT and is a place where girls attend school when they become pregnant. Many of the girls who attend are going to be mothers for the first time. The girls choose to attend Polly McCabe and can inquire about the school at the guidance office at their host school (the school they would be attending before enrolling in Polly McCabe). Polly McCabe accepts students who are part of the New Haven Public School System and are currently enrolled in a middle or secondary school because the students currently range from age 12 through 18. Polly McCabe focuses on the core academic subjects while devoting some of the curriculum to the needs of new parents such as parenting skills, how to care for infants, and what to expect during pregnancy and childbirth. Polly McCabe stresses the need for quality education, which is expressed in their mission statement as of November 21, 2003:

The Polly T. McCabe Center is a transitional school for pregnant and parenting adolescent girls. Our mission is to provide an appropriate and supportive developmental learning community that maximizes educational continuity for these girls by enabling them to stay in school, to give birth to healthy infants, and to become responsible parents and life long learners.

“Educated Mothers! Healthy Babies!”

I interviewed five students at the Polly McCabe Center and each of them was expecting their first child and one of the questions I asked them was about economic assistance.

The examples I used in my interview question were Medicaid, Section 8, RAP, EBT, and WIC. I am providing a short explanation of each of these services that are offered by the state of Connecticut Department of Social Services website, except for information on WIC, which is offered by the Food and Nutrition Services website:

EBT: People access Food Stamp benefits by Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), which is a plastic swipe card that looks like a credit card or debit card. To be eligible for EBT a person must be a Connecticut resident and have income and assets below a certain level. For example, a household of one the income limit is \$960 monthly and a household of four is \$1,961 monthly.

RAP: RAP means Rental Assistance Program and it provides subsidies for rent payment.

Section 8: It is a certificate and voucher program and Section 8 is in many parts of Connecticut. Rent is lowered and a family can live anywhere Section 8 is accepted.

Medicaid: Under Medicaid medical care for low income individuals and families is paid for or reduced.

WIC: WIC stands for Women, Infants, and Children. It is a supplemental nutrition program that serves low-income women, infants, and children up to age five. WIC provides women, infants, and children up to age five with nutritious food that supplements healthy diets. They can also receive information on healthy eating and referrals to health care at WIC clinics. Some of the foods you can buy with WIC are cereal, bread, cheese, and milk. These grocery items must be approved by WIC and a person can find whether an item is WIC approved at their local grocery store.

I have provided background information on Polly McCabe (where I conducted my interviews) and economic assistance programs I asked about in one of my interview questions. Now I will discuss the answers to the interview questions because the answers show from where pregnant teens receive and seek information about social and economic assistance and whether it helps them become stronger and more confident in becoming new mothers.

Data for Part One and Part Two of Research Question: Based on the five interviews I conducted at Polly McCabe, pregnant teens seek and receive information about social and economic assistance from various sources. Some of the girls discussed their family and the baby father’s family being involved with providing information, while others felt that teachers and social workers provided the information they needed. One girl mentioned that a support group was helpful and another mentioned a telephone service was helpful. Not only did the girls mention that information about social and economic assistance came from different sources, but also whether they looked for the information or if the information came to them. There were also various responses for whether they looked for the information or if the information came to them. Sometimes family members came to the girls with information, while other times, the girls looked for the family members to provide information. Because there were so many different responses from the pregnant teens I have interviewed, I have made the following chart with pseudonyms to identify from whom the girls received the information about social and economic assistance and whether they approached the person for advice or the person who gave the information came to them:

Social Assistance

FROM WHOM

Mary	Tina	June	Beth	Joanne
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A friend at the school • State office • Social worker (from state office) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach Workers • Social Workers • Mother • Teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers • Infoline • Her family • Baby’s father family • Teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sisters • Grandma • Mother 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group at Yale Hospital • Life skills teacher

SEEK OR RECEIVE

Mary	Tina	June	Beth	Joanne
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received from friend (about state office) Sought some for herself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received from her mother and outreach and social workers Sought from teachers, principal, and guidance office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sought from teachers Sought and received from social workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly received

Economic Assistance

FROM WHOM

Mary	Tina	June	Beth	Joanne
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boyfriend's mother 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mother 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mother Aunts Infoline Social workers Guidance Counselors Teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boyfriend's mother 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group at Yale Hospital Teachers

SEEK OR RECEIVE

Mary	Tina	June	Beth	Joanne
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received

Based on the chart, the teens have learned about social and economic assistance from different sources and there is also a varying amount of seeking and receiving this information. Although there is much variation about who provides the information and

whether the information was sought for or given, there are some general trends from whom they receive and look for to provide social and economic assistance information.

Analysis for Part One and Part Two of Research Question: By presenting the trends from whom the pregnant teens receive and look for to provide social and economic assistance information, I am answering the first two parts of my three-part research question. Because all of the girls I have interviewed were expecting their first child, none of them are currently parenting. Although none of the girls are parenting, I am still partly answering the first part of the question which is: From what sources do pregnant and parenting adolescents seek and receive information about social and economic assistance? I am also partly answering the second part of the question: Do they receive the information about social and economic assistance from teachers, family, peers, ministers, or social workers? I am partly answering the first two parts of my question because my primary research focuses on pregnant teens who are currently not parenting, which is the majority of the Polly McCabe student body. I will focus on parenting adolescents in my secondary research while answering my three-part question. The trends in my research for the first two parts of my research question show how many girls and the percentage of girls who mentioned using a particular source for social and economic assistance information. For example, three out of five girls, or sixty percent of them, mention teachers providing information about social assistance. I go into analysis about how much percent seek and receive the information also. For example, out of sixty percent of the girls who mention receiving information about social assistance from teachers, forty percent, or two out of five girls, say they sought the information while twenty percent, or one out of five girls, said the information was given to them

(received). These are the trends in my primary research that address the first two parts of my three-part research question:

Social Assistance

Teachers: 3 out of 5 (60%)
40% SOUGHT AND 20% RECEIVED

Family (including baby father's family): 3 out of 5 (60%)
20% SOUGHT, RECEIVED, AND UNIDENTIFIED

Ministers: 0 out of 5 (0%)

Peers: 1 out of 5 (20%)
RECEIVED

Social Workers: 3 out of 5 (60%)
RECEIVED (20% SOUGHT AND RECEIVED)

Economic Assistance

Teachers: 2 out of 5 (40%)
Family (including baby father's family): 4 out of 5 (80%)
Ministers: 0 out of 5 (0%)
Peers: 0 out of 5 (0%)
Social Workers: 1 out of 5 (20%)

ALL RECEIVED (TEACHERS, FAMILY, AND SOCIAL WORKERS)

My primary evidence shows that pregnant adolescents seek and receive social assistance. They receive knowledge about social assistance from social workers while seeking social assistance information from teachers. They do an equal amount of seeking and receiving information about social assistance from family members, including the baby father's family. They rarely rely on peers for information about social assistance and do not rely on ministers. The pregnant adolescents I interviewed not only seek and receive social assistance because they receive information about economic assistance. They do not seek information about economic assistance, but receive it primarily from teachers and family members, including those that are part of the baby father's family. Using my primary

research, I have answered the first two parts of my three part research question and will now focus on using my primary research to answer the final part of my three part research question.

Data for Part Three of Research Question: Now that we know from whom pregnant adolescents seek and receive information about social and economic assistance, we need to see if receiving this information is actually helpful for their emotional development. The third part of my research question focuses on whether seeking and receiving information about social and economic assistance helps the pregnant teens increase emotional development. The questions that I use to assess emotional development focus on confidence in becoming a new parent and feeling strong. In my interview I ask the girls if talking with people about social and economic information helped them become more confident in becoming new mothers and if talking with the people made them feel stronger. In general, the girls answered that they felt both more confident and stronger after talking with people about social and economic assistance information. Although the girls generally felt more confident and stronger, some of them felt nervous about being new parents. In responding to my question about whether talking with someone about social and economic assistance has made her feel stronger, June expressed her nervousness in our November 14, 2003 interview:

Alex: Has it made you feel like you can...

June: Do this? Uh-huh.

Alex: But you still are kinda...

June: Nervous.

Alex: Yeah, shaky. That's understandable.

June is not the only pregnant teen I interviewed who expressed nervousness because Joanne expressed her nervousness when responding to whether talking to anyone about social and economic assistance information has made her feel more confident in becoming a new parent in our November 19, 2003 interview:

Alex: Has talking to any of the people who gave you knowledge about social and economic assistance made you feel more confident in becoming a parent?

Joanne: Umm. Yeah, a little.

Alex: But you seem kind of hesitant?

Joanne: Well yeah, they tell me a lot of stuff about it. But to me I'm nervous because I don't know how it's gonna feel. You know, I don't know what to expect, 'cuz there's no book out there telling you how to raise your child, and I have to, you know, just flow with it. Just flow. So nervous, very nervous.

Although Joanne seemed extremely nervous and lacked some confidence in becoming a new mother, she still felt like a stronger person because she puts high priority on her actions so that her child will reap benefits of her actions:

Alex: Has talking to any of the people who gave you knowledge about social and economic assistance made you feel like a stronger person?

Joanne: Mm-hmm. Strong? I wake up everyday, every morning to come to school. Before I never use to think of it. I'm like I'm never gonna go through, you know, I'm never gonna get through it. I'm never gonna make it. But coming here (Polly McCabe) it made me, you know, they made me realize that I have a child and I have to you know, do right.

Alex: So Polly McCabe made you realize that?

Joanne: They sure did.

Although, all of the girls said that talking with people about information on social and economic assistance made them feel more confident about being a new mother and stronger, some of the girls, such as June and Joanne, expressed some uneasiness. In my data and analysis to the third part of my research question, I refer to expressed doubt or uneasiness as reservation. Some of the girls gave definitive yes responses to the

emotional development questions, while others gave yes responses with reservations (doubts, nervousness, uneasiness).

Helpful Emotional Development

HAS INFORMATION HELPED YOU GAIN CONFIDENCE IN BECOMING A NEW PARENT?

Mary	Tina	June	Beth	Joanne
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, with reservation	Yes, with reservation

HAS INFORMATION MADE YOU FEEL LIKE A STRONGER PERSON?

Mary	Tina	June	Beth	Joanne
Yes	Yes	Yes, with reservation	Yes	Yes

Analysis for Part Three of Research Question: These are the trends about whether pregnant teens have felt more confident in becoming new mothers and stronger.

Emotional Development

Confidence in Being New Mothers: 5 out of 5 (100%), with 40% reservation

Feeling Like a Stronger Person: 5 out of 5 (100%), with 20% reservation

In reference to part three of my research question, which discusses whether receiving the information is helpful towards their emotional development, my data shows that the girls do gain higher emotional development. Although, they do gain higher emotional development, there are reservations about their confidence in becoming new mothers and less reservation about them feeling like strong women. Now that I have presented all my primary research evidence, I will now investigate the differences in the level of support in my secondary sources, which focuses on both pregnant and parenting adolescents. My secondary sources examines whether baby’s fathers provide adequate social and

economic support. My secondary sources also look at how the relationship between mother and daughter is negatively affected when the daughter becomes pregnant during adolescence. Also, they focus on whether religious involvement helps the emotional development of pregnant and parenting adolescents.

Secondary Sources:

Young Unwed Fathers of AFDC Children: Do They Provide Support?: In their article “Young Unwed Fathers of AFDC Children: Do They Provide Support?,” Anu Rangarajan and Philip Gleason focus on whether young unwed fathers provide social and economic assistance to their children who have mothers on Aid to Families with Dependent Children, or AFDC. To answer their question, Rangarajan and Gleason interview 3,867 mothers and use their interviews to make a data set of fathers of children born to teenage mothers in three inner-cities; Camden, New Jersey, Newark, New Jersey, and the south side of Chicago, Illinois. The data includes information provided by 3,867 mothers and the 3,867 fathers and mothers have made 6,009 children. The survey questions in the interview ask how involved the fathers are in providing social and economic assistance for each of these children. The authors look at the characteristics and behaviors of young unwed fathers by looking at the information that was provided by their baby’s mothers. The information about the baby’s fathers includes their educational attainment, their current employment status, whether they live with the mothers and children, and the amount of social and economic support they provide for their children. Because the authors want to know whether young unwed fathers are supporting their children socially and economically, they first focus on the characteristics of these fathers.

Although, all of the mothers did not know some of the information about their baby's fathers, such as their educational attainment and current employment status, the general trend shows that young unwed fathers seem to be disadvantaged economically based on their low levels of educational attainment. Based on the information the mothers knew about their baby's father, nearly one-third of the baby's fathers in the sample do not have a high school diploma or a GED and more than one-third of them were unemployed at the time of the interview. About ten percent of the fathers were in a position where they were unable to support their children socially or emotionally because eight percent of these fathers were in jail, one percent of them have died before the interview with the mother, and for the other one percent the baby's mothers either chose not to reveal the identity of the baby's father or did not know who their baby's father was. Not only did the mothers provide information about the educational attainment and current employment status of their baby's fathers, they also provided information about their level of social and economic support.

Rangarajan and Gleason define social support as any direct contact that the baby's father has with his child and the mother of the child. By implementing their definition of social support while looking at their sample of 5,348 children (it is seven percent less than the total of 6,009 children because seven percent of the children have fathers living with them and providing consistent social and economic support), the authors found that as a group, the baby's fathers (who do not have custody of their children) provide little social support for their children. The baby's fathers provide little social support to their children because only 31 percent had contact with their children at least once a week over the three month period before the interview while twenty percent of the baby's fathers

had contact with their children less than once a week during that three month period and 49 percent had no contact with their children. Another display of the lack of social support by the baby's fathers is that three-fourths of them did not spend the night with their children over the three month period and less than one-fourth of them had ever babysat their children. These trends show the low level of social support the baby's fathers have with their children. Rangarajan and Gleason have found that the low level of social support for the children by baby's fathers is also true for economic support.

The baby's fathers provide little economic support for their children as well because at the time of the interview, only 27 percent of them were providing some type of non-monetary economic support including food, child-care items, household items, clothing, toys, or medicine. While only 27 percent of these baby's fathers have provided some form of non-monetary economic support, only 15 percent of them have been doing so on a regular basis. The majority of the baby's fathers have never provided any kind of non-monetary economic support. Not only is the non-monetary economic support by baby's fathers low, but so is the monetary economic support.

Few of the baby's fathers provide monetary economic support to the mothers for their children because seventy percent of them do not provide any economic support while only 18 percent were currently providing economic support to the mothers for their children. Although 18 percent of the baby's fathers were providing monetary economic support to the mothers for their children, only 13 percent made monetary payments to the mothers in the month before the interview with an average payment of \$127. Although few baby's fathers are providing monetary economic support to the mother for their

children, more (but few) of them are providing monetary payments by paying child support agencies instead.

Some of the baby's fathers may not be paying money directly to the mothers for their children because they have a legal obligation to pay child-support agencies. Rangarajan and Gleason have found that 37 percent of the mothers had a legally mandated obligation that said the baby's father has to pay child support according to administrative records from state child-support enforcement agencies. Among the 37 percent of mothers who had legal rights to receive child support from their baby's father, 71 percent of the fathers had ever made a payment to the child-support enforcement agency in their state. Most of the mothers have not received child support with or without a legally mandated obligation because about 73 percent of the mothers have not received formal child-support payments from the baby's father either because they had no legal rights to child support or the baby's father has not paid any money towards child support even with a legally mandated obligation to do so.

Overall Results: The baby's fathers in the sample provide little social and economic support for the mothers on AFDC and the children, which is happening partly because of the low educational attainment and low levels of employment of the baby's fathers. Most of the baby's fathers do not live with the mother and children, which causes less social and economic support going towards to the mother and children. The lack of mothers having legal child support rights against the baby's fathers is another reason for low levels of social and economic support. The results from Rangarajan and Gleason partly support the findings in my own research because none of the girls explicitly said that their baby's father was helping them with social and economic

support. However, a general trend in my research shows that family members in the baby father's family do provide economic and social support, which is not discussed by Rangarajan and Gleason. Rangarajan and Gleason also mention that as the child get older, the social and economic support from baby's fathers decreases, which may also happen with members of the baby father's family. The girls I interviewed are getting social and economic support from the baby father's family, but these types of support may decrease later. The lack of support shown by Rangarajan and Gleason cannot be helpful for the emotional development of these parenting adolescents and the support from the family members of the baby's father is helpful in gaining emotional development for the girls I interviewed.

Black Teenage Mothers and Their Mothers: The Impact of Adolescent Childbearing on Daughters'

Relations With Mothers: This article by Elaine Bell Kaplan discusses how Black daughters felt as if their mothers did not support them emotionally when they became pregnant, which has caused long-term conflict in family relations and family structure and worsened emotional development (Kaplan 427). Kaplan discusses how the relationship between Black mothers and daughters becomes conflicting when the daughter becomes pregnant and gives birth to a child, which goes against the popular myth of Black mothers condoning teenage motherhood (Kaplan 427). She uses a sample of 22 teen mothers and nine adult mothers of the teen mothers from either Oakland, California or Richmond, California between 1986 and 1989 to discuss how family relationships clash when a daughter becomes pregnant and is raising her child after pregnancy.

There was a clash between a 37 year-old mother named Janet and a 16-year old daughter named Susan who was a mother who dropped out of high school after the ninth

grade. According to Susan, Janet was resentful towards Susan and complained how Susan's baby was an additional financial burden to the family (Kaplan 432). The burden in the family increases and because Janet makes \$11,000 annually, she was ineligible for welfare benefits. Janet is now supporting Susan and her baby and her two other daughters without any welfare assistance and a slimmer income distribution. Janet felt shocked that her daughter was pregnant at such a young age and felt that Susan was not responsible enough to be a good mother (Kaplan 432). Janet and Susan were not the only mother and daughter in conflict because Mary and De Vonya also had a troubling mother-daughter relationship after De Vonya became pregnant.

De Vonya became pregnant when she was 16 years old and left home when she had an argument with her mother after telling her she was pregnant. At first De Vonya lived with friends, just like other younger teen mothers (Kaplan 432). Like other younger teen mothers, De Vonya stayed for a short time (not longer than one week) before looking for new living arrangements (Kaplan 432). Eventually, De Vonya found her own apartment in a housing complex where many drug dealers hung out, but after two weeks of living on her own, she could not afford to stay in the housing complex and moved out without leaving a forwarding address or telephone number for her mother to contact her. De Vonya did not only lose support from her mother because her father stopped speaking to her for several months after he learned about his daughter's pregnancy. De Vonya's baby's father discontinued his relationship with De Vonya shortly after her pregnancy. Mary was upset with De Vonya because she was repeating the same cycle of teenage pregnancy that started when Mary's mother gave birth to Mary at age 16. The relationships between Janet and Susan and Mary and De Vonya are not unique in

Kaplan's study because other daughters expressed similar downhill relationships with their mothers and similar feelings of not being accepted by family, which hurts their emotional development.

Overall Results: Kaplan has found that many of mothers and daughters she interviewed told stories where the daughter felt abandoned and the mothers felt betrayed. The mothers felt that they would be seen as bad mothers and that her daughter having a baby represents undesirable low class ideals. The teens wanted their mothers support because like, all children, they felt their mothers were obligated to care for them regardless of the ill feelings or problems the mothers have (Kaplan 433). The research from Kaplan shows that mothers and other family members may choose not to show support towards pregnant and parenting adolescents, which is different than what I have found in my primary research because family members, including mothers, were helpful in providing the pregnant teens with information about social and economic assistance. My research shows that pregnant teens are receiving support from family members while Kaplan's research shows the opposite. There is an opposing effect in emotional development between the girls I interviewed and those in Kaplan's study because Susan and De Vonya felt rejected, which hurt their emotional development.

Religious Involvement Among Unmarried Adolescent Mothers: A Source of Emotional Support?: Ann Marie Sorenson, Carl F. Grindstaff, and R. Jay Turner discuss whether religious involvement provides emotional support for unmarried parenting adolescents. They completed a longitudinal study of pregnant adolescents, who then became recent parenting adolescents, in Southwestern Ontario and had 261 respondents. The dependent

variable in their study is the emotional well-being of young mothers in the first weeks after their babies were born. Sorenson, Grindstaff, and Turner looked at marital and socioeconomic statuses as factors that affect the emotional well-being of young mothers. They found that young mothers who have not experienced their parents getting separated or divorced had higher emotional well-being and that young mothers who grew up in a household of a higher socioeconomic background had higher emotional well-being. They used marital status and socioeconomic status to get an idea of the emotional well-being before pregnancy and parenting and then looked to see if the independent variables improved emotional well-being or made it worse. The independent variables in their study were measured while the young mothers were pregnant and included religious preference, participation in church-related activities, and self-described religiosity. Religious preference was put into four categories: Protestant (which include Anglican, United Church, or Presbyterian), Catholic, Other (which include Pentecostal, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other Christian denominations), and No Religious Preference. Involvement in religious activities is measured in categories ranging from "never" to "more than once a week" (Sorenson, Grindstaff, and Turner 73). Self-described religiosity is measured in categories ranging from "not at all" to "very religious" (Sorenson, Grindstaff, and Turner 74). By focusing on their independent and dependent variables, Sorenson, Grindstaff, and Turner were able to make results about whether religious involvement provides emotional support for unmarried parenting adolescents.

Overall Results: Sorenson, Grindstaff, and Turner found that young new mothers who were either Protestant or had no particular faith appear to have experienced the lowest levels of depression. Catholics and young mothers who were involved with

other religions had higher levels of depression, which shows that religious involvement does not always help the emotional well-being of parenting adolescents. Not only do religious preferences play a role in emotional well-being but so does the level of participation in religious activities. Participating in religious activities during pregnancy is actually associated with greater misery, with the clearest distinction between those who almost never or never attended and those who did (Sorenson, Grindstaff, and Turner 75). A higher level of self-described religiosity (Ex: very religious is higher than not at all religious) does not show a positive religious influence on emotional well-being. On the contrary, there is modest evidence that shows religious involvement hindering the emotional well-being of very young mothers. While this article challenges the popular notion of religious affiliation providing a supportive environment that helps young mother during pregnancy and parenting (Sorenson, Grindstaff, and Turner 71), it does not challenge my primary research findings. I wanted to examine if the pregnant teens seek and receive social and economic assistance from ministers and found that none of the girls mentioned ministers, other religious figures, or any religious subjects in any part of the interview. Because none of the girls I interviewed mention ministers or any other religious figure, religious involvement does not seem to play a role in providing social and economic support or providing greater emotional development.

Conclusion: My primary research shows that learning about social and economic assistance is helpful for the emotional development in pregnant adolescents because learning about these forms of assistance helps them gain confidence in becoming new mothers and helps them feel stronger, even though there are some reservations in confidence and feeling strong because they are nervous about being new mothers.

Pregnant teens learn about social assistance by seeking it from teachers and receiving it from social workers. They both seek and receive social assistance from either their own families or the baby father's family. Pregnant teens receive information about economic assistance from teachers and family, including the baby father's family. None of the girls mention receiving or seeking information from ministers or other people involved in religion and rarely mention receiving or seeking information from peers.

My secondary sources not only focus on pregnant teens who will be first-time mothers like my primary source interviews, but also focuses on parenting teens. My secondary sources show a contrasting view of family involvement for pregnant and parenting teens. While the pregnant teens I interviewed mentioned how involved their mothers or other family members were in helping them learn about social and economic assistance, Kaplan shows how mothers abandon their daughters when they become pregnant and parenting adolescents. Kaplan shows that the rejection from the mothers hinders the emotional development of the parenting daughters because the daughter had so many arguments with her mother and wanted to leave home and the mother and other family members isolated themselves from the daughter. While the girls I interviewed felt they lacked either confidence or strength because they were nervous about having a child, the girls in Kaplan's study are lacking confidence or strength because of the lack of support and rejection by their mothers and other family members. The girls I interviewed also mentioned gaining support from members of the baby father's family, but did not mention explicitly gaining support from the baby's father, which is why Rangarajan and Gleason's research only partly supports my findings. Rangarajan and Gleason discuss how uninvolved young unwed fathers are in providing social and economic support for

their children, but do not mention whether members of the baby father's family are involved. Because the girls I interviewed are seeking and receiving social and economic support from members of the baby father's family, there is a stronger possibility of the baby's father helping them and a lower likelihood of feeling unconfident and weak because of his lack of social and economic support. Sorenson, Grindstaff, and Turner support my findings by showing how religious involvement does not help unmarried parenting adolescents gain emotional support, but their research goes further by saying how religious involvement can actually hurt the emotional well-being of pregnant and newly parenting adolescents.

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