



## Improving Outcomes for Expectant and Parenting Students and Their Children: The California School Age Families Education (Cal-SAFE) Program

### Special points of interest:

- **75% of teen parents enrolled in Cal-SAFE graduated from high school, compared with the national graduation rate of teen parents of 33%.**
- **Cal-SAFE students are less likely to have a second child than teen parents who aren't in the program.**
- **65% of Cal-SAFE students plan to go on to further their education after high school.**
- **Cal-SAFE programs provide early care and education for more than 5,000 children of teen parents every year.**
- **Over 94% of children of students in the Cal-SAFE program were up to date on their immunizations, whereas the overall rate for California was only 81%.**

### The Cal-SAFE Program

*In the United States, two-thirds of all school-age parents fail to graduate from high school.* The result is that most teen parents get stuck in low-paying jobs and struggle throughout their lives to support their children. The children of school-age parents suffer as well: Children born to children are more likely to suffer medical problems early in life, to have developmental problems, to struggle in school, and to get involved in risky activities such as delinquency and substance use. They're also more likely to become young parents themselves.

But these things don't have to happen. The California School Age Families Education program was established in 2000, to provide the support and resources that students and their children need. The program has served over 72,000 students and 42,000 children from 2000-2007 (duplicated count). It has been a model of success. The Cal-SAFE program offers early care and education at school sites, case management and counseling to help students succeed in school, child development classes for the parent and child development activities and programs for the children of student parents. The program not only helps the students complete school, but also prepares their children for pre-school, which research has shown is instrumental in the future success of all children.

Over 75 percent of Cal-SAFE students left the program having successfully completed their high school education, and over 65 percent of the exiting students indicated that they would pursue further education or employment. Most planned to enroll in a local community college. Ninety-four percent of the children enrolled in child care sponsored by the Cal-SAFE Program were up-to-date on their immunization schedules. This percentage substantially exceeds the immunization rates for children 19 to 35 months nationally (82 percent) and in California (81 percent). Over 75 percent of the children of Cal-SAFE students attended a child care center sponsored by the Cal-SAFE Program and received child development services based on their assessed developmental needs.



**A Successful Cal-SAFE Student and her Son at Graduation**

### Protect These Vital Services

In February 2009, the legislature created a grouping system of categorical programs within education in an effort to find solutions to the budget crisis. The Cal-SAFE program was put into tier 3, which means that school districts can shift the funds to other programs, threatening the very existence of Cal-SAFE, and the benefits it offers to a very vulnerable and high-risk population.

TeenNow California believes that the Cal-SAFE program is vital to the health of not only the student parents and their children, but school systems and communities throughout California. Since the Cal-SAFE program earns money for every student and child served, districts would be losing additional funds by diverting money away from the Cal-SAFE program and serving fewer students. In addition, the Cal-SAFE program is largely the only reason that many teen parents stay in school. If Cal-SAFE were eliminated or cut to serve fewer teens, school attendance would drop, and reimbursement rates for per pupil services would decrease. Taking money away from Cal-SAFE would hurt school districts as well as increasing the many barriers faced by teen parents and their young families. California can't afford the costs of having a higher drop-out rate, more unstable young families, and children who are not prepared for pre-school and kindergarten. We ask you to commit to the continued funding of Cal-SAFE programs.