

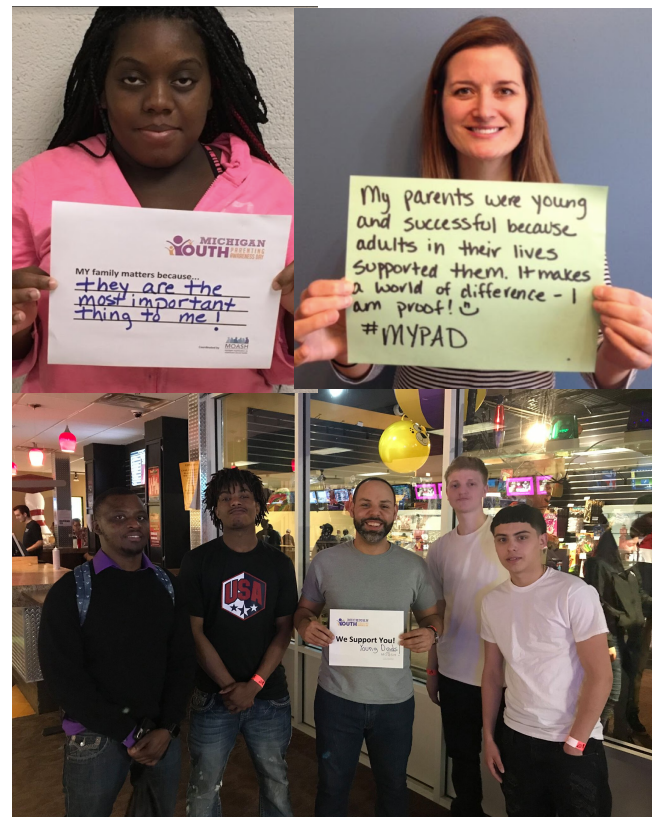
Michigan Young Parent Awareness Day Organizer's Toolkit

WWW.MOASH.ORG



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Michigan Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting Program (MI-APPP), Parenting Awareness Michigan and the Prevention Network, Young Women United, #NoTeenShame, Forward Together, Black Mamas Matter, Power to Decide, Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health

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Purpose of Toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to help you plan and implement an awareness day to celebrate and support the young parents in our state. These parents are working toward their personal goals while building happy, healthy, and thriving families. This toolkit is intended to provide support and materials that can be modified to meet the needs of your audience. If you have questions, please email info@moash.org.

What is Michigan Young Parent Awareness Day (MYPAD)?

The goal of MYPAD is to reduce the shame and stigma so often associated with teen parenthood. This can be done through raising awareness. MYPAD gives young parents a platform to 1) build community connections; 2) reflect on their experiences; 3) assess their needs regarding education, employment, interpersonal relationships, healthcare, finances, and housing; and 4) develop an awareness-raising plan for programs that will help themselves and their families thrive.

Why do we need MYPAD?

There are many programs to support expectant and parenting teens in the state of Michigan and the state has shown commitment with Parenting Awareness Month (March), but there is no Michigan-specific awareness day aiming to empower young parents and those who support them. There is a need for this in Michigan, as young parents are often feel shamed and isolated from their communities. MYPAD was created to recognize and honor the expectant and parenting teens in Michigan and provide them with an opportunity to share their lives and accomplishments.

When is MYPAD?

MYPAD is an annual awareness day held on the fourth Friday in March. March has been declared as Parenting Awareness Month in the State of Michigan. By hosting MYPAD during this month, we affirm the equal support, services, resources, and respect that young parents deserve along with other parents.

Where is MYPAD?

MYPAD is celebrated across the state of Michigan through different groups and communities. MYPAD can be held virtually or in-person. Events can take place anywhere there are young parents and young parent allies who wish to take part!

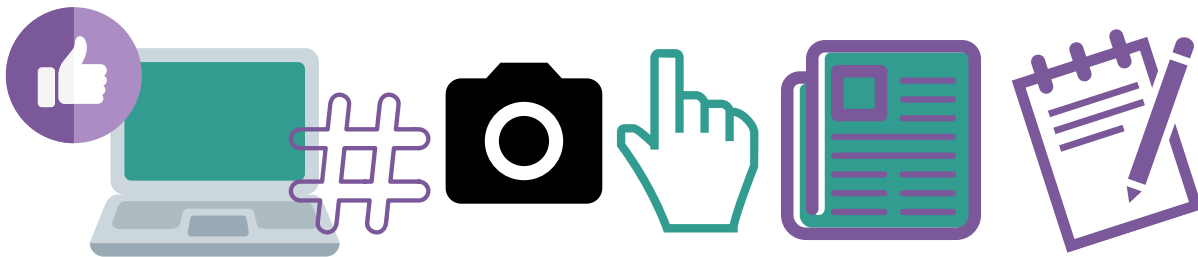
Please send information about your campaign to info@moash.org, so we can help promote!

Plan Your Own Michigan Young Parent Awareness Day Campaign

Plan for a campaign at school, at work, in your community, or elsewhere! There's no one place or way to raise awareness. Get creative!

Option 1: Raise Awareness Virtually

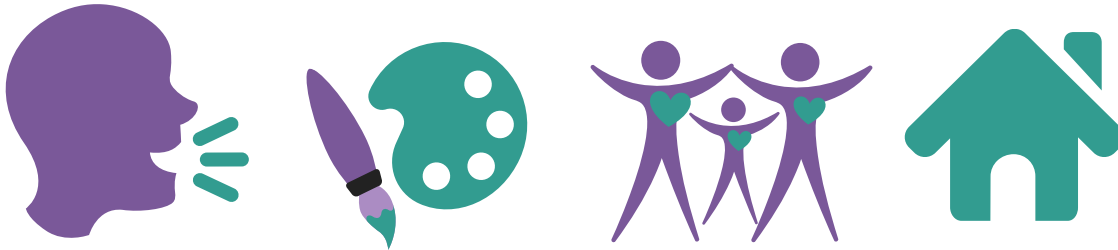
*A virtual campaign is an effective, efficient, and low-cost way to raise awareness beyond your physical space and in many places at once. A virtual awareness day can be done alone or with an in-person event. Virtual awareness-raising efforts can be longer and may reach more people than an in-person event. Use one or more of the following virtual awareness raising activities/strategies: *Please note: these tools can be used year-round as part of a broader conversation, not just for the purpose of MYPAD.*



- **Photo campaign (PAGES 13-21):** Print it. Write it. Take a photo with it. Post it on social media. Share it with @InfoMoash, #MYPAD, and/or e-mail to info@moash.org.
- **Spread awareness through social media:** post regularly on Facebook, host a Twitter chat, and promote through other social media platforms with #MYPAD. See PAGE 12 for sample posts!
- **Check out the mihealthyfamily.org website,** as well as www.moash.org/resources-expectant-and-parenting-youth, for info about young parents' rights and resources.
- **Send a press release (see PAGE 7)** about MYPAD or your campaign to local news outlets.
- **Ask local governing bodies to sponsor a local resolution** declaring the fourth Friday in March as Michigan Young Parent Awareness Day in your community (see PAGE 8 for a template).
- **Write/e-mail decision-makers** about issues that are important for you and your family. Read about awareness-raising tips on PAGES 5-6.

Option 2: Raise Awareness in Your Physical Space

*An in-person awareness day can make a significant impact on those who attend. Depending on the specific goals and objectives of your event, this may be the best way to reach your intended audience. *Please note: these tools can be used year-round as part of a broader conversation, not just for the purpose of MYPAD.*



Organize an event or activities in your area - there are so many possibilities! To get you started, we're including a list of examples. Tailor your event to the needs and interests of your group/event!

- **Plan a family fair or festival** that allows young parent families to have fun and be themselves!
- **Host an appreciation breakfast, lunch, or dinner** for young parents and other caretakers
- **Invite guest speakers** to share their expertise and experiences
- **Host a panel** of young parents, organizers, and supportive community members to facilitate conversations about young parenting
- **Create a MYPAD poster/display** and spread it around your community to raise awareness - at schools, libraries, health care offices, day care facilities, community centers, places of worship, city hall, etc.
- **Connect with local media outlets** like radio stations, newspapers, etc. to spread the word about MYPAD and the importance of supporting young parents in Michigan
- **Hold a resource fair** with organizations who serve young parents so that other young parents can gain awareness of, and connect to, community resources
- **Set up a photo booth** for young parents and families to share images of their family
- Invite young parents and young parent-serving organizations to contribute to an **art/media exhibit** highlighting young families
- **Collect written and recorded stories** from young parents to help inform and promote awareness-raising in the state of Michigan

What Matters to Expectant and Parenting Youth?

To learn what things matter most to young parents - their biggest issues, triumphs, challenges, and joys - the best thing to do is, ask! You'll find some sample listening session questions and guidelines for collecting stories on PAGES 9-11. However, to get you started thinking, we've compiled a list of things to consider when organizing and mobilizing others around your MYPAD event.

Mental health support

Stress management, access to affordable counseling and therapy services, post-partum depression support, coping skills, sleep improvement

Educational support

Excused absences, breastfeeding and changing spaces in schools, tutoring options, inclusivity in classrooms and school activities, GED program access, affordable college options, application and financial aid support

Employment opportunities

Application and resume support, entry-level full- and part-time work opportunities, sufficient hourly wages, flexible scheduling, family insurance coverage, parental leave

Health care access

Prenatal and post-partum care, affordable services for young parents and their children, excused school or work absences for child medical appointments, child vaccinations, contraception and family planning support, preventative health care check-ups and "well woman" visits

Healthy relationships

Co-parenting skills, healthy communication, conflict resolution, safe dating, violence prevention resources

Quality child care

Child care assistance programs, affordable options during school/work hours, quality certified care providers

Plan It Out: Tactics for a Successful Awareness Day

1. Define your goal(s) and objective(s)

- Think about what kind of impact you want to make in the short, medium, and long-term
- Goals are more broad, and objectives are the smaller steps that will need to happen in order to achieve your goal(s)
- Set SMART objectives: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely

2. Determine your intended audience

- Who do you want to speak to? Who do you want to connect with?

3. Identify resources and people that will help you achieve your goals

- What kind of influential people/organizations do you have access to? Who else would be interested in your goal(s) and might like to join you?
- Contact MY Parenting Awareness Day at info@moash.org if you would like to collaborate with us!
- Look for funding sources - these could be from other organizations, or you might organize in-person fundraising events (bakesales, raffles, auctions, etc.) or online fundraisers (crowdfunding, kickstarter campaigns, etc.)

4. Develop your message

- Tailor your message to your specific audience, and be memorable!
- Think about the political environment and the context of your message
- Make a clear "ask" or call to action by telling the audience exactly what you'd like them to do - be specific!
- Support your message with research/expert sources when appropriate

5. Develop a strategy to communicate your message effectively

- Depending on the audience and message, you may want to communicate through one, several, or all of the following channels: in-person meetings, testimony at public meetings/hearings, letters, e-mails, news outlets, and social media

6. Go out and SHARE!

- Be clear, engaging, and respectful - and don't forget the call to action!

7. Follow-up

- Make sure you plan out how to monitor and evaluate your efforts
- Thank those who helped you and maintain the relationships that you have built throughout the process!

Press Release Template:

Annual Michigan Young Parent Awareness Day Challenges Teen Parent Stigma

[Date]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

[Name, Title]

[Email, Phone]

(Michigan) – The Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH) will be celebrating the annual Young Parent Awareness Day (MYPAD) on [DATE]. MYPAD was created with the recognition that many young parents feel shamed, stigmatized, or isolated from their own communities. This often leads to poorer health and social outcomes for themselves and their families. When given support, young parents are more likely to finish their school or GED programs, gain employment, maintain stable finances and housing, and better care for their health and the health of their children.

To support this annual event, MOASH has released the MYPAD Organizer's Toolkit. The toolkit will be widely distributed to expectant and parenting teens, schools, organizations, and programs across the state to aid the coordination and implementation of awareness day campaigns.

The toolkit will encompass materials that help young parents and the community that supports them raise awareness for programs that meet specific needs for success in education, employment, health care, child care, housing, and financial stability. Everything provided within the toolkit can be tailored to meet the needs of each site-specific awareness day across the state. “We are thrilled to be a leader in the development and implementation of MYPAD,” said Taryn Gal, MOASH’s Executive Director. “We want to help amplify the voices of expectant and parenting teens, who are too often overlooked in policy and programming.”

For further information or to become an active participant in MYPAD, visit www.moash.org/mypad for more information or email info@moash.org.

ABOUT MYPAD:

MYPAD was established to celebrate, support, and raise awareness for the young parents in the state of Michigan, as they work toward their personal goals while building happy, healthy, and thriving families. MYPAD will be held on the fourth Friday in March during Michigan's Parenting Awareness Month, coordinated by the Prevention Network, in an effort to underscore that young parents deserve the same respect and assistance as other parents in ensuring the wellbeing of themselves and their children.

Sample MYPAD Resolution

A Michigan Young Parent Awareness Day can be proclaimed by local governing boards and school boards: Ask a city council member, county commissioner, or school board member to sponsor a local resolution declaring the fourth Friday in March as Michigan Young Parent Awareness Day in your community, county, or school district.

A resolution to declare [DATE], as Michigan Young Parent Awareness Day (MYPAD) in [Community/County/District].

Sponsored by: [Name of Person]

- WHEREAS, in Michigan in 2017 (the most recent year for which there is data), there were 5,307 births to teen mothers which accounted for 4.8% of all births in the state; and
- WHEREAS, in Michigan in 2015, 17% of births to teens ages 15-19 were repeat births; and
- WHEREAS, the state has shown commitment to supporting all individuals in their parenting responsibilities with the prior enactment of Parenting Awareness Month in March, yet there is no Michigan-specific youth parenting awareness day aiming to empower young parents and those who work with and support them; and
- WHEREAS, young parents deserve equal support, services, and resources as other parents to ensure the health and well-being of their children; and
- WHEREAS, parenting is a choice, and all individuals who elect to become parents should be respected in their choice; and
- WHEREAS, young parents often face additional hardships in the areas of educational achievement, employment opportunities, financial stability ; dating, interpersonal, and sexual violence ; mental health concerns, accessing housing, child care services ; and maternal and infant health; and
- WHEREAS, with support, young parents are more likely to finish high school, get their GED, pursue higher level education, achieve and maintain employment, and maintain stable housing; and
- WHEREAS, supporting young parents leads to better health and social outcomes for the children of young parents; and
- WHEREAS, there are many young parents and families which are happy, healthy, and thriving; and
- WHEREAS, young parents are important contributing members within their communities across the state of Michigan; now, therefore, be it
- RESOLVED, that [Sponsoring Group] declares [DATE], as Michigan Young Parent Awareness Day in [Community/County/District]; and be it further
- RESOLVED, that [Community/County/District] supports all efforts, and resources, particularly local, that promote, encourage, support and educate the community on youth parenting issues.

Adopted [Month/Day/Year]

[Signature of Lead Member of Sponsoring Group]

Collecting Stories: A Powerful Tool

Personal stories can be very impactful in raising awareness - they're memorable and meaningful. They refocus on the human element that can get lost among numbers, statistics, and debates. Check out some suggestions from our friends at the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health on how to collect and use stories:

PLACES TO COLLECT STORIES

- At meetings, workshops, or trainings for your group or organization
- Online through social media or your group's e-mail list serves
- At events that your group or organization hosts in the community

HOW TO COLLECT STORIES

- Distribute written prompt sheets in-person or online so that participants can write or e-mail their stories
- Record stories with a video camera or tape recorder
- Always explain to participants why you are collecting stories, how they will be used, and what you expect their impact will be, and ask their consent to share their stories
- Help participants feel comfortable by choosing a comfortable location to record their story, being patient with them, practicing the interview questions, keeping the recording simple and straightforward, and thanking them for their time and contribution at the end
- Determine an approximate time limit for the stories depending on how you plan to use them

HOW TO USE THE STORIES

- The stories can be used by your group or organization and/or by MOASH to help determine strategies and inform programming for young parents
- Use the stories to raise awareness about young parenting by sharing them in newsletters, with allies, and at events
- Make sure you collect the contact information of your participants for any follow-up
- Transcribe, upload, and save the stories in a responsible manner

SAMPLE STORY PROMPTS

- Tell us the story about how you found out you or your partner were pregnant, and how you came to the decision to be a parent.
- How did your life change after becoming a parent?
- What support systems did you wish you had (at school, work, community, family, etc.)? What kind of things would have helped you during this transition/change in your life?
- Tell us about how becoming a parent has been a positive experience for you.
- What would you like people to know about you and your child(ren) and family?

Facilitated Discussion Questions

Focus groups or discussion sessions with young parents can give them an opportunity to reflect on their experiences. Use these questions to guide your discussion and help develop a strategy to support young parents' needs!

EDUCATION

- What has your experience as a young parent been like at your school or in your GED program [think about excused absences, participating in school/extracurricular activities, making up missed assignments, etc.]?
- What people or programs have been helpful/supportive to you as a youth parent?
- What people or programs have made it difficult for you as a youth parent?
- What are some programs that would help you as you work to complete your academic program while supporting your children and family?

HEALTHCARE

- What has your experience as a young parent been like seeking health and medical care for you and/or your child[ren] [thinking about your interactions with medical staff, confidentiality and disclosure of medical records/health information, making health decisions for you and your child, transportation to/from health services, accessing healthcare services, paying for healthcare services, etc.]?
- What health professionals or programs have been helpful/supportive to you as a young parent?
- What health professionals or programs have made it difficult for you as a young parent?
- What are some health programs that would help you and your family access and afford the healthcare you need?

CHILD CARE

- What has your experience as a young parent been like caring for, or arranging child care, for your child[ren]?
- What caretakers and/or childcare programs have been helpful/supportive to you as a youth parent?
- What caretakers and/or childcare programs have made it difficult for you as a young parent?
- What are some childcare programs that would help you as you pursue education or work?

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

- What has your experience as a young parent been like applying for and/or receiving public assistance?
- What people or programs have been helpful/supportive to you as a young parent?
- What people or programs have made it difficult for you as a young parent?
- What are some programs that would help you access and/or receive public assistance?

Facilitated Discussion Questions cont'd.

CUSTODY AND CHILD SUPPORT

- What has your experience as a young parent been like in establishing paternity for your child[ren]?
- What has your experience been like establishing custody for your child[ren]?
- What has your experience been like setting up a visitation/parenting time schedule for your child[ren]?
- What has your experience been like in making child support arrangements and making and/or receiving child support payments?
- What people or programs have been helpful/supportive in establishing paternity and custody/visitation/child support arrangements?
- What people or programs have made it difficult?
- What are some programs that would help you and your family arrange these matters?

HOUSING

- What has your experience as a parenting teen been like finding and/or maintaining stable and affordable housing for you and your family?
- What people or programs have been helpful/supportive to you as a youth parent?
- What people or programs have made it difficult for you as a youth parent?
- What are some programs that would help you access and/or afford housing?

FAMILY PLANNING

- What are your thoughts about having more children in both the near and distant future?
- What people or programs have been helpful to you regarding family planning?
- What people or programs have made it difficult for you regarding family planning?

FAMILY SUPPORTS & OTHER SUPPORTIVE ADULTS

- What has been your experience as an expectant and/or parenting teen with familial supports and other supportive adults? Where do you get most of your support from?
- What people have been helpful/supportive to you as a young parent?
- In what ways has this person/people been supportive and how do they provide help?
- What kind of support would you like from someone you trust?

Sample Social Media Posts:

- Show #SupportNotStigma for young parents in our state by celebrating Michigan Young Parent Awareness Day! #MYPAD
- Celebrate the annual Michigan Young Parent Awareness Day on [DATE]! #MYPAD
- All families, including young parent families, deserve support and respect. Get involved with #MYPAD
- MYPAD is a day to celebrate, support, and raise awareness for the young parents in our state as they work toward their personal goals while building happy, healthy, and thriving families #TeenParents
- #DailyParenting? Join our Twitter chat at #MYPAD to share your experiences and opinions on how programs and institutions can best support you and your family! #MomLife #DadLife
- Through #MYPAD, MOASH supports #noteenshame initiatives for the young parents in our state.
- Young parents, learn about your rights and resources at mihealthyfamily.org! #MYPAD #TeenParentsFacts
- #DailyParenting can be a challenge, especially when you're young! Share your support for those living the #ExhaustedTeenParent life with #MYPAD!

Hosting a Twitter Chat:

- Tell participants to join the chat by searching #MYPAD
- Include the hashtag #MYPAD in all tweets
- Designate a moderator to tweet out numbered questions, and then have participants respond by including the number in their answer/response (for example, tell participants to respond to "Q1" with "A1")
- Create a safer space for respondents by 1) assuring participants that they can skip any questions, 2) reminding them to respect others and 3) reminding them to take care of themselves
- Encourage participants to include the twitter handles of any organizations/groups they'd like to mention; add other hashtags like #noteenshame, #supportnotstigma, or #respectyoungfams; and include photos, graphics, and links



We Support You!

Coordinated by



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Check out MY Parenting!

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I ❤️ MY Parents!

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My family matters because...

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I support young parents because...

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MYTH: Teens who have babies have ruined their lives

REALITY: Many young parents report feeling more motivated to finish school after they become pregnant or begin parenting, while others express that having children has been a great incentive to become more responsible and focused.

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Source: <https://youngwomenunited.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ywu-dismantlingppp-DEC2016-digital-interactive.pdf>



Supporting young parents leads to better health and social outcomes for the parents of young children.

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With support, young parents are more likely to finish school, pursue higher level education, gain employment, have greater financial earnings, and maintain stable housing.

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Source: <https://youngwomenunited.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ywu-dismantlingpp-DEC2016-digital-interactive.pdf>

MYTH: Children of teen parents have poor outcomes

REALITY: Many young families are happy, healthy, and thriving. Data consistently shows that the age someone becomes a parent does not predict their or their children's future.

Coordinated by



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adolescent sexual health

Source: <https://youngwomenunited.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ywu-dismantlingpp-DEC2016-digital-interactive.pdf>

Let Us Hear It!

Thank you for taking part in the Michigan Young Parent Awareness Day. Please take a moment to let us know about your awareness day, as well as how we can improve this important annual awareness day in the future.

You can e-mail feedback to:
info@moash.org

or mail to:
PO Box 1386 East Lansing, MI 48826

Thank you!

