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FACT SHEET

The Five Promises from America's Promise Alliance The Link to School Completion, Dropout Prevention, and Pregnancy

Over 1.2 million students drop out of school each year. These individuals can expect to make less than their peers who achieve higher levels of education, be less healthy, and have a greater chance of being incarcerated. Teen pregnancy is a related issue, as seven out of ten teenagers who become young mothers do not graduate from high school, and their children are less likely to graduate as well.

America's Promise Alliance has outlined five developmental resources, the Five Promises, which help to ensure the healthy development of adolescents. When youth and adolescents receive at least four of the Five Promises in their lives, they are more likely to succeed academically, and avoid teen pregnancy.

1) Caring Adults

- The most important developmental resource in a child's life is caring adults.
- Adolescents who receive guidance and encouragement from adults in many aspects of their life are more likely to stay in school and avoid risky sexual behavior.
- Parental support is most important, but students should also have teachers and other mentors available for them at school and in their community.

2) Safe Places

- Safe school environments are necessary for students to remain focused on academics.
- Developing children must also feel safe at home and in their community, where the experience of violence or sexual abuse can negatively impact their behavior.

- Constructive activities for students' free time are essential to preventing them from engaging in problem behaviors.

3) Healthy Start

- Regular doctor visits, health insurance, good nutrition, physical activity, comprehensive health education, and positive adult role models are necessary for adolescent development.
- Medicaid is available for families with limited income.
- Effective health education in school has been proven to limit sexual risk taking among teens.

4) Effective Education

- An engaging academic environment with relevant lessons is necessary to prepare youth for today's increasingly competitive global economy.
- Adequately challenging students is an effective method for pushing them to achieve.
- Exposing youth to professionals in their areas of interest can also provide motivation.
- Comprehensive sexual health education is proven to limit risky sexual behavior among teens.

5) Opportunities to Help Others

- Adolescents need a chance to feel as if they can affect change in their environment.
- Service learning is effective in this regard, and students who participate in service learning courses tend to attend class more regularly, and put more effort into their work.
- Service learning is also proven to be surprisingly effective at reducing teen pregnancy.

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