

Moving Science-Based Approaches Forward: Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting's *It's That Easy!* Initiative



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The Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP) is Minnesota's leader in promoting adolescent sexual health, preventing adolescent pregnancy and gaining support for adolescent parents. Since its inception, MOAPPP has heard a common question from the field: How do we encourage parents to talk with their children about sexual health?

MOAPPP believes that honest, accurate information about sex, particularly from parents, is the first step toward raising healthy children who make responsible decisions about sex. Although most parents want to provide their children with the knowledge and skills they need, many feel unprepared and uncomfortable when it comes to topics related to sexuality.

With partners from a variety of fields (clinics, schools, health educators, parent educators, academia, nonprofits and public health organizations), MOAPPP led a workgroup in building an initiative to address these concerns. After four years of research review, program planning, and evaluation, MOAPPP has launched *It's That Easy! A Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Children*,¹ parent-focused initiative.

It's That Easy! equips parent educators with practical tools and techniques for use with groups and individuals. It provides guidance on a variety of important parent/child conversations—from how to respond to straightforward questions about body

parts, to how to broach more complex issues such as media influences and personal values. In short, *It's That Easy!* tackles tough questions and empowers parents to connect with their children, share their family's values and engage in meaningful conversations about sex.

It's That Easy! trainings have been offered throughout Minnesota, reaching hundreds of professionals who work with parents. Response to the training has been very positive: participants say they've gained valuable knowledge and resources and they feel more confident in their ability to support parents in their role as sexuality educators. Culturally specific trainings were designed for professionals serving Minnesota's Hmong and Somali communities. Evaluation of the initiative is underway with the University of Minnesota Healthy Youth Development Prevention Research Center.

As a means of keeping *It's That Easy!* participants connected, MOAPPP leads quarterly in-person meetings to share updates and developments. The initiative has also gone viral, with its own website and Facebook page for parents and professionals.

MOAPPP and the *It's That Easy!* initiative partners are confident that this important project is playing a critical role in bringing about a shift in cultural norms around parent-child communication about sexual health.

About the Putting What Works to Work Project

Putting What Works to Work (PWWTW) is a project of The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy funded, in part, by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Through PWWTW, The National Campaign is translating research on teen pregnancy prevention and related issues into user-friendly materials for practitioners, policymakers, and advocates.

Author Information

This research brief was written by National Campaign staff member Corinna Sloup.

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¹For more information on *It's That Easy! A Guide to Raising Sexually Health Children* please check out: www.itsthateasy.org. *It's That Easy!* was developed by the Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP) in collaboration with the following organizations: Health Start/West Side Community Health Services; Healthy Youth Development–Prevention Research Center-U of Minnesota; Minnesota International Health Volunteers; Planned Parenthood Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota; Saint Paul-Ramsey County Department of Public Health; Sexual Violence Prevention Program-Minnesota Department of Health; Teen Age Medical Service; and West Suburban Teen Clinic. Current funding to support *It's That Easy!* is generously provided by The Otto Bremer Foundation and the Minnesota Department of Education. Please note that *It's That Easy!* has not yet been rigorously evaluated.



About The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization supported largely by private donations. The National Campaign's mission is to improve the lives and future prospects of children and families and, in particular, to help ensure that children are born into stable, two-parent families who are committed to and ready for the demanding task of raising the next generation. Our specific strategy is to prevent teen pregnancy and unplanned pregnancy among single, young adults. We support a combination of responsible values and behavior by both men and women and responsible policies in both the public and private sectors.