

It's Not Just About the Due Date: How We Actually Break the Cycle for the Next Generation

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Here is a question worth sitting with: if the work we do for a pregnant or parenting teenager only had to succeed for nine months, what would we be willing to skip? And what changes the moment we admit it must work for the next eighteen years and for the child she's raising, too?

That question is the heart of the sixth and final pillar of the Architect Doula™ Framework: Legacy. It means creating generational change by breaking cycles of health disparity through education and empowerment with particular urgency for pregnant and parenting Black teens, who need more than prenatal information. They need help redesigning a future without abandoning their dreams.

What Research Actually Says

The evidence here should change how we talk about supporting teen parents.

- **Real programs, real results.** A rigorous systematic review of programs supporting expectant and parenting teens identified 14 programs with strong evidence of real, measurable results improving teens' educational outcomes, increasing consistent contraceptive use, and reducing repeat pregnancies, according to research published through *Mathematica* and summarized in *Maternal and Child Health Journal*.
- **School-based support works.** A quasi-experimental study of a school-based program called *New Heights* found real improvements in teen parents' educational outcomes when the support was structured, sustained, and built around the whole person — not just the pregnancy.
- **Culturally tailored programs work better.** Culturally tailored programs designed specifically for Black adolescents rather than generic, one-size-fits-all curricula have been shown to increase self-efficacy and strengthen teens' connections to trusted adults, according to research on programs like *Talking Matters* and *Love Notes*.

The throughline: support that treats a pregnant or parenting teen as someone with a whole future ahead of her not just a due date to manage produces measurably better results, for her and for her child.

What This Looks Like in Real Life

A legacy-focused approach to teen pregnancy support looks different from a purely clinical one:

- **Helping her stay in school,** not just stay healthy — because educational outcomes are one of the strongest predictors of long-term stability for both parent and child.

- **Teaching life skills alongside parenting skills** — budgeting, communication, self-advocacy — so she's building a foundation, not just surviving a season.
- **Connecting her to trusted adults** who stay in her life past the birth, not just through the pregnancy.
- **Treating her dreams as still valid** — college, a career, a business — instead of quietly assuming motherhood replaced them.

Why This Is the Pillar Everything Else Was Built Toward

Education, Advocacy, Preparation, Connection, and Leadership all matter enormously in the moment. Legacy is what determines whether the next generation starts from further ahead, or from the same place their parents did.

What a family learns in one generation becomes the baseline the next one starts from. That is, in the end, how disparities actually close not in a single delivery room, but across the years that follow it.

This is Pillar Six of the Architect Doula™ Framework the final pillar. If you've followed all six: Education, Advocacy, Preparation, Connection, Leadership, and Legacy you now have the whole blueprint.

“We don’t just prepare families for birth. We help them design a healthier future one blueprint, one family, and one generation at a time.”

Learn more or follow the work: [[**www.thearchitectdoula.org**](http://www.thearchitectdoula.org)**]**

Sources Referenced

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- “Supporting Expectant and Parenting Teens: New Evidence to Inform Future Programming and Research,” *PMC*
- “Feasibility, acceptability, and potential utility of an evidence-based pregnancy prevention program among Black/African American middle and high school students in Florida,” *ScienceDirect (Love Notes); Talking Matters program evaluation, ClinicalTrials.gov*