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# Press Release

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## **Parenting Programs Can Help Prepare Teens for Parenthood** Prevent Child Abuse – NJ Promotes Healthy Families

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ – July 21, 2004 – The tragic injuries suffered by a Camden infant at the hands of her teenaged parents is indeed heartbreaking. This incident provided a harsh reminder that many parents, particularly teen mothers and fathers, are unprepared to handle the challenges of parenthood. Prevent Child Abuse – New Jersey wants all New Jersey citizens and parents to know that support and educational services are available to assist parents of any age; special resources exist for teen parents.

Camden teen parents enrolled in the Woodrow Wilson and Camden High Schools are active participants in PCA-NJ's Parent Linking Project (PLP) Program; there are 14 other sites throughout the State. The PLP program provides child-care services, individual counseling, group meetings, peer support groups, and in-school parenting skill development sessions for teen parents. As a result of involvement with PLP, teen parents are better prepared to complete high school and develop appropriate parenting skills. "Teen parents involved with PLP experience a dramatically higher rate of high school graduation than their peers. Our results also show an increased knowledge of child development and parenting. This preparation reduces the potential of experiencing the level of desperation and frustration that can lead to abuse and neglect of their children," said Janet Rosenzweig, the Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse – NJ.

Statewide and in Camden, at-risk parents also participate in the Healthy Families (HF) Home Visiting Program. Healthy Families is a strength-based program targeted at assisting overburdened families. HF provides trained Family Support Workers to provide in-home, confidential parenting assistance to families at-risk of abusive or neglectful behaviors towards children.

"Recognizing that a crying baby can try the patience of even the most experienced parent," Rosenzweig said, "Prevent Child Abuse - NJ offers materials, resources, public education, and professional training in preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome. Our *"Rock A Baby Gently"* materials are available in both English and Spanish."

PCA-NJ provides child abuse and neglect presentations throughout New Jersey. These presentations, available upon request, cover topics including the prevention of child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse prevention, keeping children safe, single parenting, and others. Community groups are encouraged to contact the PCA-NJ State Headquarters at 1-800-CHILDREN to schedule a presentation.

Prevent Child Abuse - New Jersey is a statewide, non-profit agency dedicated to the mission of working to eliminate the abuse and neglect of children in all forms. 2004 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> year of service to New Jersey.

For more information, please call 1-800-CHILDREN or 732-246-8060 or visit us on the web at [www.PreventChildAbuseNJ.org](http://www.PreventChildAbuseNJ.org)

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