Communicating with Young Parents about Health and Parenting

Many people and organizations provide information to young parents, as part of efforts to support the well being of young parents and their children. We spent time in Young Parent Programs and interviewed young parents in Greater Vancouver, in order to learn from young parents themselves how they use health information and what kinds of information are most helpful to them.

We interviewed 39 young parents (37 mothers, 2 fathers). The average age of young mothers and young fathers was 18 years old.

**Ethnicity**
- White: 21
- Indigenous: 11
- Latino/a: 6
- Filipino/a: 4
- Black: 2
- Chinese: 2
- South Asian: 2

Note: 10 people identified with multiple ethnic groups

**Parenting Status**
- Expecting first child: 8
- One child: 28
- More than one child: 3

**Education Level**
- Some high school/currently completing high school: 30
- Graduated high school: 4
- Trades/college/university: 5

Key Findings

Access to health and parenting information is not a problem for most young parents, but deciding what information is useful or trustworthy is more challenging. Rather than assuming that they know what information is required or desired by young parents, service providers should work with young parents to help them find and assess information that is helpful for their individual situation. For example, some young parents may appreciate more visual presentation of information (e.g., videos and illustrations), while others may want more detailed, text-based resources (e.g., books about parenting).

Many young parents are sophisticated information seekers and use mobile phones to access information on a daily basis. Young parents told us that they like the privacy and anonymity of seeking information online or by phone. Being able to quickly and discretely obtain the information they want is highly valued by young parents. It helps them avoid or reduce stigmatizing or judgmental information providers (often experienced during face-to-face information-seeking encounters).

Young parents trust information sources that possess relevant expertise (e.g., doctors, teachers, other parents). They also trust information sources who demonstrate that they understand and do not judge young parents’ experiences. Culturally appropriate information sources by and for members of specific groups are especially appreciated.
For more information about how to communicate about health and parenting with young parents, please see:


Link to UBC Pre-print Publication: https://dx.doi.org/10.14288/1.0363387

The Young Parents Study

The Young Parents Study is a five-year research project that seeks to better understand the experiences of young parents (aged 15-24) with a variety of health, education, and social service interventions and policies. It involves interviews and fieldwork at young parent programs in Prince George and Greater Vancouver, British Columbia. The study aims to gather information that can be used to improve services and supports for young parents both locally and provincially.

This study is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and led by Dr. Jeannie Shoveller of UBC’s School of Population and Public Health.

For more information about the Young Parents Study, please visit our website:


Thank You.