



A Place to Call Home

A UBC Study has identified Housing as a serious issue among Young Parents in Greater Vancouver



Support

- Young parents on Youth Agreements need support to find adequate housing. Supports are especially important when young parents age out of foster care.
- Many reported being refused housing because they have children.
- Qualifying for a rental subsidy is an extremely complicated process.
- Long-term supportive housing for young families is rare in Greater Vancouver. There is a need for supportive housing options where young families can be united.
- Supports are needed to help young parents furnish their first homes and to learn how to manage a home of their own.

"The Ministry doesn't really help you look for a place. They're eager for you to find a place, but they're no help at all."

- Natalie, young mom



Safety

- Young parents need housing located in neighbourhoods where they feel safe.
- Harassment from landlords is a pressing safety issue for young parents.
- Concerns about violence, including intimate partner violence, are important.
- Fear of seeking assistance from Ministry of Children and Family Development can discourage young parents from reporting the safety concerns they are experiencing.

"I was living with a friend when I found out I was pregnant. I decided I wanted to live on my own 'cause she started using substances and using lots of alcohol. So I just moved out on my own. I wasn't eligible for [the Rental Assistance Program] until I actually had a dependent. Until my daughter was born, I wasn't able to receive anything."

- Tiffany, young mom



Affordability

- The lack of affordable housing for young parents has reached crisis levels in Greater Vancouver.
- Young parents need affordable housing within a reasonable distance of school, childcare, and workplaces.
- Housing located near public transit is a must. The high demand and low availability of affordable housing in central locations (e.g., by transit hubs) mean that young parents are often excluded from the rental market.

"It doesn't matter where you live in North Vancouver, you're gonna barely make it through anyways. It was really hard to find a place that fit a family and was affordable. The first place we moved into was actually \$1,300 a month and that was an apartment building as well."

- Riley, young mom



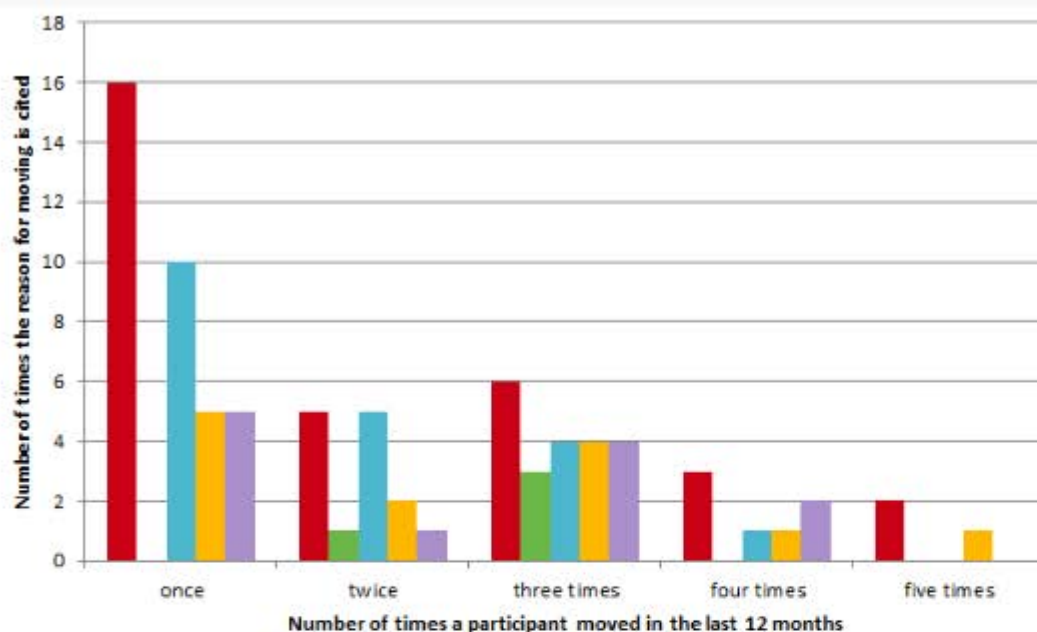
Quality

- Finding affordable, good quality rental housing in Greater Vancouver is a huge challenge.
- Black mold, pests, water damage, faulty plumbing, and non-functioning appliances are widespread concerns among young parents.
- Due to a lack of better quality options, young parents often get stuck in poor quality housing.

"Our rent is \$2,000 a month and it's a crappy house we live in. It's old. I don't know why it's so expensive. It's disgusting in there. There's rats in the attic and everything."

- Kristey, young mom

Searching for a Place to Call Home



Did You Know?

A single parent with one child receives \$1,045 per month through Income Assistance (incl. shelter allowance)

Right now, the average price for a 2 BR apartment in Greater Vancouver is...

\$1,450

The average price for a 2 BR apartment in the City of Vancouver is...

\$1,757

CMHC, 2016

Making a Home of Their Own

"I want to live in my own house with my family. I just want a place that I could call ours. Sometimes it's hard to go home [to my own apartment] 'cause I don't want to put down my daughter. I just want to hold her. The other night [before leaving], I waited for three and a half hours for my daughter to wake up, just so I could hold her, and I just waited by the crib." - **Jonah, young dad**

"Living with my parents was kind of stressful. Like, when I told them what to do to take care of my son, they didn't really listen to me and did the opposite. So it's kinda stressing me out, I'm like, "Oh, well don't give him any candy or fries or whatever," but they don't listen." - **Caroline, young mom**

Searching for Affordable Housing

"On a Youth Agreement, you have to find a place on the money that they give you. For young mothers, it's \$750. That's the limit. It's kind of hard to find a two-bedroom that's \$750 with everything included." - **Rey, young mom**

Moving to Better Housing

"I've moved twice. 'Cause before our place was really small, like, a one bedroom, so I can only fit my son's crib and our clothes in there. My bed was in the living room, and the living room and kitchen was one room. But nothing was working. The toilet didn't work, the sinks leaked and, like, the landlord didn't do anything. And it was illegal too. And I was paying \$800, so I moved." - **Laura, young mom**

Seeking a Better Location

"I'm going to try getting housing somewhere in the Broadway and Commercial-ish area because it will be close to my school. It'll be close to the doctors, it'll be close to main transit. That's my biggest concern - transit, getting around. I go on buses everywhere. I bus everywhere in Vancouver." - **JBiebs, young mom**

Searching for Stable Housing

"I've been waiting for BC Housing since my daughter was born. I haven't heard anything. I lived with my sister for a while and then I lived with my daughter's dad when I was on the Adult Youth Agreement and then we broke up and I moved into a little basement suite. It didn't have an oven, it didn't have a bathtub so as my daughter got older, it just wasn't working out. Now I live with my dad here." - **Brooklynn, young mom**

Adriana's Story



Adriana learned she was pregnant when she was 16. She had been living on the streets off and on for two years with her boyfriend and had struggled with substance use.

This is her story of Searching for a Place to Call Home.

"I truly believe this child saved my life."

After learning she was pregnant, Adriana broke up with her boyfriend, who had become abusive. Her social worker helped her enroll in school, find a weekly prenatal care program for young parents, and get into a foster home before she gave birth at 17.

"There's only one place in Greater Vancouver that provides housing to young mothers, but there's so many young moms that it gets filled up so quickly. We're kind of left to go into foster care without our kids. I am so fortunate that my foster parents were willing to take me and my baby. My social worker hasn't seen that in the 16 years she's been working."

Adriana was grateful to have found foster parents who would accept a young parent with a baby.



Adriana believes in the importance of helping others and would like to study Social Work in university.

"I've been told by a lot of youth workers that I'd be really good at it because I'm the kind of person that I always want to help people. I've been through drug addiction. I've been through homelessness. I've been through teen pregnancy. So it's like, I'd be able to really relate to teenagers who are going through all this. So, I just want to help."



Adriana hopes to qualify for a Youth Agreement so she can live independently with her son. But, she is already worried about "aging out" of this support when she turns 19.

"I really want to try for a two-bedroom. I don't care if it's, like, a basement suite or anything like that. As long as my son has his own space. But it's kind of a matter of what's available and if it has everything included. But it's hard to find housing in Vancouver for, like, \$800 a month."

Adriana may be eligible for some financial support through MCFD's Agreement for Young Adults if she is enrolled in school. As a young single mom, she is worried about how she will be able to afford to pay her rent and study full-time.

Examples of Housing Programs for Young Parents

Distributed Site Housing



- Market rental homes
- Program provides monthly rent subsidy to young parents
- **Benefits:** Independence, flexibility, low barriers to implementation
- **Limitations:** Limited day-to-day support

Surrey, BC

Options Community Services Society, which operates a Young Parent Program (YPP) in Surrey, has a small number of subsidies from BC Housing that can be applied to any rental unit in Surrey. Options assists YPP students in finding housing, teaches them how a lease works and their rights as renters. Students can keep the subsidy provided they don't miss more than two months of school at a time, and subsidies can be retained into their post-secondary studies.

Co-op Housing



- Public or non-profit buildings
- Building and property co-owned and managed by the program and young parent clients
- **Benefits:** Community atmosphere, housing tenure
- **Limitations:** Co-op activities require significant time commitment

Toronto, ON

Lanther Place, run by Arrabon House, provides co-op housing to women (ages 16 to 24) offering residents the opportunity to prepare for fully independent living with the support of an on-site mentor. Lanther Place also has a small drop-in centre that offers a food, clothing and other household items and resources.



Residential Transitional Housing



- Public or non-profit buildings
- Program provides low-threshold housing to youth at risk
- **Benefits:** Provides stability, accessible health and social services
- **Limitations:** Time-limited supports

Niagara, ON

Hannah House offers supported transitional housing to young pregnant and parenting women under the age of 24. Women are encouraged to come to Hannah House at any time during their pregnancy and remain in residence for up to one year. Through their unique program offerings, 24-hour staff and linkage to community services, Hannah House equips its clients with the education, guidance, coaching and support required to thrive after the program ends.

Subsidized Supportive Housing



- Public or non-profit buildings
- Program provides long-term, low cost housing and supportive services to young parent clients
- **Benefits:** Onsite supportive services
- **Limitations:** Balancing supports and independence

Halifax, NS

Supportive Housing for Young Mothers (SHYM) is a non-profit, community-based supportive housing complex for young mothers who are currently or at risk of becoming homeless. SHYM provides young mothers with a safe and affordable place to live, while helping them develop life management/parenting skills, confidence, self-awareness, and social support networks.