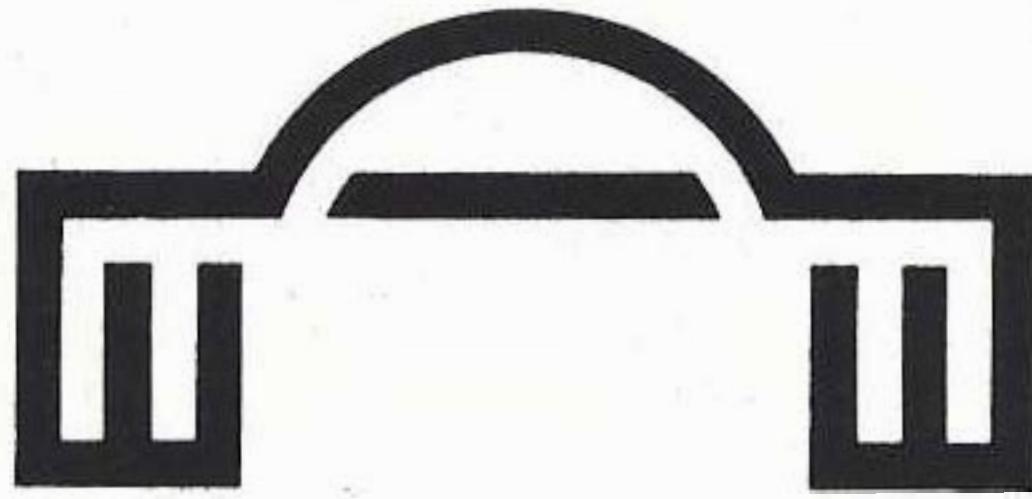




NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH INC.

PRESS RELEASE

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CENTER SAYS PREGNANT TEENAGERS NEED SERVICES

Pregnant teenagers are not getting services to which they are legally entitled says the N. C. Center for Public Policy Research. This finding was published as the lead article in the latest issue of the Center's magazine, N.C. Insight.

Ran Coble, Executive Director of the Center, said that only 10 per cent of the students who were pregnant received special educational services. According to data from the reports of school principals, there were 4417 pregnancies in North Carolina schools. Of that total, only 462 students received special services. This is in spite of a state law which requires special services for all "children with special needs," and pregnant teenagers are included within the law's definition.

The article's authors, Susan Presti and Dr. Blanche Glimps, were critical of an official within the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Ted Drain, the Director of DPI's Division of Exceptional Children is quoted as saying "A child must be handicapped as well as pregnant in order to qualify for special services under the legislation." The Center disagreed with that contention, as did an opinion by the Attorney General's Office and Bonnie Davis, Assistant Director of the Institute of Government. All three maintained that pregnancy alone qualified a child for educational services under state law.

The Center cited some school districts in North Carolina that have developed alternate school programs to better meet the needs of pregnant students. Teenage Parent Services (TAPS) operates a program for pregnant students in Mecklenburg County, as does Agnes Fullilove Community School in Greenville.

In a 1981 survey conducted by the Bush Institute for Child and Family Policy at UNC-Chapel Hill, 59 per cent of the state's local school administrators indicated that they would like to have state guidelines available to assist local schools in developing services for pregnant students. Forty-four per cent indicated there were no written policy guidelines from their local school boards for providing services to pregnant teens. The Center article includes such guidelines and recommendations that could be adopted by the Department of Public Instruction to address the problem.