

# Meet Sandra

## STORIES FROM THE adolescent family life program

### For This Young Mom, Education is Key

Like many moms, Sandra has become an expert juggler. She moves from school to job to swing set with ease. Son Jacob shares kisses and high fives each time he swings toward his mom. Sandra is working hard to achieve the education, career and parenting goals she has set for herself as a participant in California's Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP). AFLP serves pregnant and parenting youth up to 19 years of age. In the program, a supportive case manager meets with participants, like Sandra, to focus on the needs of the new parent. "I really think that I am the center of the program because these are MY goals. They just help me accomplish them," she says.

Having a program that is youth-centric is intentional. Explains Solano County's Project Manager Deb Espinoza, "We want to make sure that the youth feel engaged and have a voice because the philosophy of AFLP is that the young person is their own best expert, especially in their own lives." As soon as Sandra joined the program, she knew she wanted to set a few immediate goals for herself: To continue her education and to be the best mom she could be.

Sandra understands that getting an education is essential to her future success. As a young mom, she feels strongly that continuing her education is the path to a better paying job and the financial stability her family needs.

It was Sandra's case manager, Katie, who played a key role in transitioning Sandra back into Solano County's education system after she had attended school in Mexico. Katie ensured Sandra's transcripts were translated and evaluated, which allowed the

### Solano County, California



Sandra and her son, Jacob

new mom to continue her high school classes without the need to repeat courses taken in Mexico. Says Sandra's case manager Katie, "It makes me really proud of her because she didn't give up."

After returning to school, Sandra committed to finding a job so that she could financially provide for her family. She quickly landed a position in Napa at an orthotics company. While she has been at the job just a couple of months, she is already excelling and has proven herself capable of more challenging tasks. This young mom is driven to not only set goals, but to also make those goals a reality.

Once Sandra finishes high school, she plans to attend college with the ultimate goal of becoming a medical or court interpreter. Fluent in both English and Spanish, she thinks this will be a career she will enjoy and one that can comfortably support her family.

"If I didn't have this program I would not be in school or have any interest in going back to school." Knowing that she is goal-oriented and responsible helps Sandra feel proud and keeps her moving toward an even better future for herself, her son and her family.



Sandra (left) with her case manager, Katie

# Meet the Adolescent Family Life Program

The **Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP)** is a strengths-based case management program with integrated life planning. The program supports pregnant and parenting youth in building resilience strengths and skills to thrive. Case managers meet one-on-one with youth to establish a caring relationship, identify the youth's needs, and offer support accessing services, setting goals and building skills to manage life's challenges and to develop a plan for the future.

**PROGRAM GOALS:** Improve pregnancy planning and spacing and increase educational and vocational attainment, access to and utilization of needed services, and social and emotional support.

**WHO WE SERVE:** Expectant and parenting youth up to age 19 who have custody of their child or are co-parenting.

**SERVICE DELIVERY:** Services are provided by county health departments, hospitals and community-based organizations.



## Adolescent Childbearing in California

In 2015, over 24,000 California children were born to mothers aged 15-19.<sup>4</sup> The California adolescent birth rate (ABR) declined to a record low 17.6 births per 1,000 females aged 15-19, a 61 percent decline from the 2000 rate. Despite this success, there are many youth, families and communities in California impacted by early childbearing.

California birth rates vary greatly by race, ethnicity, age, geography and other factors. For example:

- Latinas make up nearly three out of four adolescent births in California.<sup>4</sup> In 2016-17, 73 percent of youth in AFLP were Latinas.
- The county with the highest adolescent birth rate (ABR)—Del Norte— has a rate 6.4 times greater than the county with the lowest ABR—Marin.<sup>4</sup>

*In recognition of the variations in birth rates across the state, CDPH/MCAH developed the [California Adolescent Sexual Health Needs Index \(CASHNI\)](#) to target programs to areas in the state with the greatest need. AFLP operates through 19 local agencies in high need counties across the state.*

### Data Sources:

1. 2016-17 data from the Adolescent Family Life Program, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Division, California Department of Public Health.
2. Postpartum contraceptive use among adolescent mothers in seven states. *J Adolesc Health*. 2013 Mar;52(3):278-83. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2012.05.004. Epub 2012 Jun 23.
3. CDC (MMWR) Vital Signs: Repeat Births Among Teens — United States, 2007–2010, April 5, 2013 / 62(13);249-255.
4. Adolescent Births in California, 2000-2015. California Department of Public Health, Center for Family Health, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division, Epidemiology, Assessment, and Program Development Branch. November 2017.

AFLP Storytelling—Volume 1.5

Maternal, Child and  
Adolescent Health  
Division  
[cdph.ca.gov/aflp](http://cdph.ca.gov/aflp)



## A Focus on Positive Youth Development (PYD)

All youth have strengths. All youth benefit from high expectations and supportive relationships. All youth are capable of making meaningful contributions in their lives, families and communities. The AFLP PYD program turns these values into meaningful activities for the youth to explore their strengths, values, resources, needs and vision for their life so that during and after the program they can:

- develop strengths to navigate life's challenges;
- build healthy and supportive connections with the important people in their lives;
- identify and work toward personal goals that will lead to healthier, happier lives for them and their children.

**84%** of AFLP participants are in school, graduated or received a diploma<sup>1</sup>

## Increased use of highly-effective, long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs):

- 37% for adolescents receiving AFLP services in California.<sup>1</sup>
- 12%-22% for adolescent mothers nationally.<sup>2,3</sup>

*This publication was made possible by Grant Number SP1AH000048-01-00 from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Adolescent Health and the Health Resources and Services Administration Title V MCH Block Grant. Contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Department of Health and Human Services, Human Resources and Service Administration or the Office of Adolescent Health.*