Teenage Pregnancy – An Issue Needing More Awarenes Essay, Research Paper

Teenage Pregnancy Many families display forms of dysfunctionality. In one family the father may be a workaholic and the mother an alcoholic. In another, the father maybe an alcoholic and the mother an enabling codependent who never touches a drop. Regardless of the specific affliction, children being raised within dysfunctional families are deprived of what is needed to become happy, healthy, and well-adjusted adults. One of the most pervasive effects of this deprivation is teenage pregnancy. In the case of a family where one parent, the father, is an alcoholic, the affected parent turns to alcohol as a remedy for some personal shortcoming. This parent has little to offer a young girl seeking the approval and admiration of her father. More often than not, the child is viewed as a nuisance by the parent, and the resultant irritation is hard to disguise. The child learns to either accept the irritation as the price for that parents affection, or rejects the cost and seeks the attention of the other parent. The other parent, if healthy, is carrying the weight of the alcoholic partner’s disease and the tasks required to make a house a home. At best she has her hands full; at worst she is as mentally incapacitated as the father. Consequently, the young girl grows up under-nurtured, under-valued and lonely. Similar to craving carrots when the body needs vitamin A, the young woman’s mind will seek the means to fulfill the void left by the dysfunctional parent.! When the deprived young woman reaches puberty, she finds a seemingly endless well of attention, often mistaken as affection, in the young boys she has grown up with. Unbeknownst to her, the young men, dealing with the onslaught of pubescent hormones, are trying to fulfill a completely different set of needs. And thus, the groundwork has been set for a teenage pregnancy. The least complex enticement for an adolescent female to become pregnant is the fantasy that the expected child will fulfill her need for love and affection. As seen on

television, a baby can be as cute as a stuffed animal and as loyal to its mother as a Labrador retriever. What is not seen is that the baby is a life-long responsibility–one that a teenage mother has not expected and is completely unprepared to accept. Also the pregnancy itself can serve as a vehicle to receive the attention that was lacking in her family of origin. I remember talking to a pregnant woman in line at the grocery store. When I asked how long she had been pregnant, she replied six months and went on to state that her baby kicks almost continually. In disbelief as asked if I could feel the baby kick; she answered yes, and after 30 seconds the baby did kick. Later, in the parking lot, it occurred to me that I had handled the stomach of a complete stranger solely because she was pregnan! t. Another motivating factor is the hope that with the new child she will gain some of the praise and respect that she was denied throughout her childhood. The act of childbirth itself is a great accomplishment–an accomplishment which under normal circumstances should be honored. Many couples try for years to produce children without success. Some pregnancies require monumental efforts such artificial insemination or invitro-fertilization. In the worst cases couples are forced to adopt. Consequently, childbirth could be construed as an empowering experience by the adolescent, and that can be significant in the life of a child who has had little power. The childbirth may also be perceived by the adolescent as a passage into adulthood. In this, as in many of the teenage mother’s expectations, she is quite often disappointed. It is easy to see that the outcome desired by a pregnant teenager take several forms, but the underlying motivation is to receive the love and admiration the parents would not, or could not provide. The most devastating aspect of a teenage pregnancy is that little thought is given to the responsibilities required of the mother to support her new child. Consequently the likelihood is high that the next generation will not receive what it needs to become happy and healthy individuals.