

For The Ladies

NNPA FEATURE

Child Watch

by Marian Wright Edelman



Life is Getting Grimmer for Unwed Teenage Mothers

Women who were unwed teenage mothers and school dropouts seldom have had an easy life. In today's world, however, they and their children are likely to find life far more difficult.

Between 1967 and 1972, one-quarter of black women who had been unwed teenage mothers and/or dropped out of high school were living in poverty by the time they turned age 25, according to a new study. In stark contrast, almost half of black women in the same situation between 1980 and 1985 lived in poverty.

The typical family income of young mothers dropped from \$14,300 in the 1967-1972 period to a meager \$8,300 in the 1980-1985 period, measured in 1985 dollars. The research was done by Greg Duncan, professor economics at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, and Saul Hoffman, economics professor at the University of Delaware.

This terrible increase in poverty among young black women and their children is a result of many factors. First, with the end of our manufacturing economy, the hope for a decent standard of living for school dropout—

male and female—has all but disappeared. Wages for entry-level positions for unskilled workers are falling, and full-time job. And women are still paid less and have a harder time finding full-time work than men.

Second, more and more young mothers are raising their children alone. The new study shows that between 1967 and 1972, half of the black women who were unwed teen mothers and/or dropouts had married by age 25. But between 1980 and 1985, only 23 percent had married by that age. Sociologists and economists tell us that young people are less likely to marry when young men can't earn living wage, and during the 1980s the earning power of young black men dropped an astounding 20 percent.

Third, welfare benefits have not come close to keeping up with inflation in recent years. According to Hoffman and Duncan, the combined value of benefits from the food stamp program and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) rose between 1968 and 1976, but declined through most of the 1980s, returning to the 1968 level of \$7,500 in 1986. This year a number of states including Michi-

SMART SUMMER SNACKING

School may be out for the summer, but smart snacking is a year-long proposition. Preparing several wholesome treats in advance makes it easier to satisfy the bicycle bunch or pool-side battalion when they're ready for a snack break.

For a cool, delicious summer treat try a "beary" fruity Teddy Fruit Toss, made with Teddy Grahams® Graham Snacks. Traveling? Convenient take-along Teddy Granola Snack Bars are perfect for trail blazing. When it comes to summer snacking, the goodness of graham gets an A+.

TEDDY FRUIT TOSS Makes 4 servings

- 1 (8-ounce) container lowfat vanilla yogurt
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 1 teaspoons grated orange peel
- 4 cups mixed fresh fruit pieces (melon, strawberries, bananas, apples)
- 1/2 cup dark seedless raisins
- 1 1/2 cups TEDDY GRAHAMS® Graham Snacks, any flavor

In small bowl, blend yogurt, honey, juice and orange peel; chill until serving time. Just before serving, mix fruit pieces, raisins and graham snacks. Spoon fruit mixture onto serving dishes; drizzle with yogurt dressing. Serve immediately.

Nutrition Information per serving: 351 calories, 249 mg sodium, 3 mg cholesterol, 6 gm total fat, 1 gm saturated fat, 4 gm dietary fiber



TEDDY GRANOLA SNACK BARS Makes 16 bars

- 9 HONEY MAID® Grahams
- 1 1/2 cups TEDDY GRAHAMS® Graham Snacks, any flavor
- 3/4 cup quick-cooking oats
- 1/2 cup peanuts, chopped
- 1/2 cup diced dried fruit mix
- 1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1/3 cup margarine, melted
- 2 eggs

Arrange 9 graham crackers in a greased 8 x 8 x 2-inch baking pan.

Layer 1 cup graham snacks, oats, peanuts and fruit mix over grahams; top with remaining graham snacks.

In small bowl, blend brown sugar, margarine and eggs until smooth; evenly pour over mixture in pan. Bake at 350°F for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden. Cool completely in pan on wire rack. Cut into bars.

Nutrition Information per bar: 169 calories, 150 mg sodium, 27 mg cholesterol, 8 gm total fat, 1 gm saturated fat, 1 gm dietary fiber

gan, Ohio, and California either already have cut welfare benefits or are proposing to do so.

All of this bad news adds up to just one message; our young people must stay in school and avoid having babies as teenagers.

The world has changed. Choices and behavior that used to work out, even if they weren't ideal, now lead to disastrous consequences for black families and children. We adults have to

wake up to that reality and make sure our children get the message.

All other prevention efforts will have a limited effect if we don't make it clear that irresponsible sexual behavior and teenage pregnancy are not acceptable options for our young people in today's complex world.

Moreover, no one sector of the black community by itself can make the necessary impact on the teen pregnancy and drop-

out problems. It will take the combined efforts of parents, churches, schools, health clinics, and youth organizations to give our boys and girls the motivation and the capacity to avoid pregnancy and stay in school.

To motivate teens to avoid pregnancy and stay in school, every neighborhood must be sure children have the academic supports they need to succeed in school, plenty of positive extracurricular activities, a close relationship with an adult who can help them set goals and

take concrete steps toward achieving them, and families that support their goals.

But teens also need the capacity to avoid pregnancy, and that means every neighborhood must make sure children have access to family life and sexuality education as well as reproductive health services, preferably through school health clinics.

Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children's Defense Fund, a national voice for children.

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