

Teenage Pregnancy

The UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Western Europe: around 9000 girls under 16 become pregnant every year. A high percentage of them drop out of school (the British government admits it doesn't know how many), and some end up in special schools, such as the Riverside Young Mothers' Unit in North Shields. Built for nine young mothers or mothers-to-be, it now welcomes 18 although no one is ever turned away. As well as education, Riverside offers a nursery and transport: 2 buses, complete with baby seats, take mothers and babies to school.

Most of their pregnancies are unplanned. They take mothers with babies who are six months old but they'll take them earlier if there are exceptional circumstances. They try and encourage the girls to study maths, English and science, and they have to do child development. They get very good results. Holidays are when trouble starts. Sometimes the girls are alone and have very little support. These are probably the only girls in the country who can't wait for holidays to finish and to get back to school.

Colors, 48: February-March 2002, p. 5.

I. Answer the following questions using your own words (2 points: 1 point each)

- a. What is the Riverside Young Mothers' Unit?
- b. Why do these young mothers have problems during the holidays?

II. Are the following statements true (T) or false (F)? (1 point: 0.5 each)

- a. There are more pregnant teenagers in the UK than in Spain.
- b. All pregnant girls in the UK attend special schools.

III. Find a word or expression in the text which, in context, is similar in meaning to: (1 point: 0.5 each)

- a. The period of time during which a woman is developing her child in her uterus.
- b. To return.

IV. Choose a, b, or c, in each question below. Only one choice is correct (2 points: 0.5 each)

1. These pregnant teenagers...

- a. ... never abandon school.
- b. ... very often abandon school.
- c. ... rarely abandon school.

2. The Riverside Young Mothers' Unit was originally created for ...

- a. ... eighteen mothers.
- b. ... nine mothers.
- c. ... nine mothers and eighteen mothers-to-be.

3. The Riverside Young Mothers' Unit offers ...

- a. ... only education.

- b. ... free education and two buses.
- c. ... education, a nursery and transport.

4. The Riverside Young Mothers' Unit ...

- a. ... only accepts mothers with babies who are 6 months old.
- b. ... accepts mothers of all ages.
- c. ... usually accepts mothers with babies who are 6 months old.

Part B. Composition (100-150 words approximately). Choose one of the following topics (4 points)

1. Describe the problems teenage mothers may encounter.
2. Why do you think the teenage pregnancy rate is increasing in some European countries?

Have fun....and take care!