



Promoting the safety of young children, healthy and self-sufficient families, and strong communities.

Since 1974, Family Resource Center has been a leader in reducing child abuse and neglect, with services provided in St. Louis city and the counties of St. Louis, St. Charles, Franklin, Osage, Jefferson and Gasconade.

**Family Resource Center's mission is to prevent and treat all forms of child abuse and neglect and to strengthen families through family-centered therapeutic, educational, and support services.**

Family Resource Center helps thousands of client children and parents each year. As part of our mission, we:

- Develop programs and services to help at-risk children and families
- Raise awareness in the St. Louis community to increase support in breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect
- Create partnerships with local service providers that complement our programs and provide further assistance to our clients

Our success is measured by healthy children, confident parents and strong families.

Family Resource Center's four service groups provide a comprehensive spectrum of care:

**Children's Services:** Therapeutic Day Treatment Program

**Family Services:** Individual/Family Therapy; Intensive In-Home Services; Parent Partners; PathBuilders; Parent-Child Interaction Therapy; Parenting Wisely

**Foster Care Services:** Foster Care Case Management

**Youth Services:** Drug Court, Worksite, and Teen Parent Mentoring (provided as part of the Missouri Mentoring Partnership)



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**Missouri Mentoring Partnership (MMP)**

**St. Louis Volunteer Resource Parents**



## Program Overview

**The Need:** Families started by teenage parents face many problems: teenage mothers are more likely to live in poverty, have high single parenting rates, drop out of school, have children of low birth weight, have children with higher infant mortality rates, and have behavioral problems which impact the health and safety of their children. These young parents benefit greatly from the advice and support of a trained and experienced mentor as they adjust to the life of parenthood.

**The Program:** St. Louis Volunteer Resource Parents (SLVRP) is committed to promoting the safety of young children, healthy and self-sufficient families, and strong communities, through volunteer community mentors, parenting support and education, and referrals to community resources for pregnant and parenting teens. It matches pregnant/parenting young women with trained adult volunteer mentors to offer emotional support and parenting guidance both during and after pregnancy. It has great success at meeting goals of healthy babies and mothers, reduction of parental stress, and increased self-sufficiency.



## Eligibility

To be eligible for SLVRP, pregnant or parenting teens must meet these criteria:

- St. Louis City residents must be under the age of 22.
- St. Louis County residents must be under the age of 20.
- Have no more than two children (one must be under one year of age).
- Be geographically located within areas of St. Louis City and County, which allows a proximity for transportation provision to a site where the group meetings are held.

## Services Provided

### *Services for Parents*

- SLVRP provides training for the mentors and matches them with pregnant and/or parenting teens.
- Child care and transportation are provided for the monthly Parenting Update meetings.
- Incentive Program - every time a teen parent meets with her mentor, attends a Parenting Update, keeps a WIC appointment, takes her child to the doctor for immunizations or a well-baby visit, or goes to the doctor for a pre-natal visit, she receives "baby bucks" from SLVRP. She can use these to purchase baby items, such as diapers, wipes, and formula.
- SLVRP is always seeking disposable baby products and gently used baby items.

### *Expectations of Mentors*

Volunteer Mentors are expected to:

- Spend about two hours a week with their assigned pregnant/parenting teen.
- Participate in monthly fun and educational group meetings.
- Attend training orientation sessions.
- Maintain communication with the SLVRP staff.

Volunteer Resource Parents are not expected to:

- Act as a professional counselor or health care provider.
- Act as a babysitter.
- Do anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

As an empowering agent, a mentor:

- Is non-judgmental.
- Asks for help when help is needed.
- Allows the mentee to learn from mistakes.
- Models successful parenting and life skills.
- Advocates for the mentee in seeking community services.
- Celebrates the mentee's successes.

Mentors have an orientation training led by the Program Coordinator and staff of SLVRP. Staff also provides a range of other support and case management activities for the Mentor and the teen parent.



### *Process of Referral*

Referrals are received from many places, including the Missouri Children's Division, community social workers, informal support persons, Family Resource Center staff from other programs, teens' parents, and the teens themselves. A referral form must be completed, over the phone if necessary, and then the teen will be contacted to set up the initial interview.

### *Program Partners*

St. Louis Volunteer Resource Parents is a second component of the Missouri Mentoring Partnership. The program began at Family Resource Center in 1999 through a partnership with St. Louis Neighborhood Network (funded by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation), Parents as Teachers of Riverview Gardens School District, the Missouri Children's Division, the St. Louis County Children's Trust Fund, and the Missouri Department of Social Services. SLVRP is patterned upon a model known as Missouri Volunteer Resource Mothers, a research project created at the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1994.

For more information about participating as a young parent or mentor, contact the Program Coordinator at 314.877.2013.

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