



## Division of Child Support Receives a Young Adult Outreach and Education Grant

**Richmond, VA (August 31, 2021)** – The [Virginia Department of Social Services](#)’ (VDSS) Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) was recently awarded a [Charting a Course for Economic Mobility and Responsible Parenting Grant](#) by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support youth and young adult parenting education and outreach efforts. Virginia is one of only eight other child support agencies in the country to receive the three-year grant. The grant-funded project seeks to develop and expand curricula and other outreach interventions to educate youth and young adults between the ages of 13-25 on the financial, legal, and emotional responsibilities of parenthood.

DCSE will adapt existing curricula to educate teens and young adults on responsible parenting strategies, in partnership with the VDSS Division of Family Services and Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice. The curriculum will include an interactive-game component that will be delivered as a mobile-friendly application. The app will walk users through a “choose your own path in parenting” adventure as they encounter simulated versions of real parenting scenarios. The project will also equip current young parents with access to parenting and relationship education, employment services, and the child support program to help achieve economic stability and successful co-parenting outcomes.

“In recognition of August as Child Support Awareness Month, we want to raise awareness about the various child support programs that are currently available and those that are in development,” said Barbara Lacina, director of the Division of Child Support Enforcement. “We know that children with economically stable and actively involved parents have better outcomes in school, health, behaviors, socialization, and life choices. This grant will support efforts to prevent the need for child support services through education and planning for young people.”

Drawing from data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) [2019 National Vital Statistics Report](#), the project will serve Virginia counties and cities that have trailed significantly behind the declining state and national teen parent rates. 2019 data shows that in Virginia the birth rate for females aged 15-19 was 13.6 live births per 1,000 births, while the United States average was 16.7 live births per 1,000 births. While the Commonwealth has followed the national decline, the south and southwestern regions of the Commonwealth and certain urban communities have not.

According to 2018 data from the [National Center for Health Statistics](#), 64 counties and cities in Virginia surpassed the national teen birth rate. The top ten include:

VA City or County	Birth Rate (per 1,000 females aged 15-19)
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Petersburg City	58.8
Martinsville City	50.2
Greensville	41
Hopewell City	41
Roanoke City	41
Wise	40.9
Lee	40.8
Tazewell	39.7
Waynesboro City	38

For more information on DCSE and the child support programs, visit the DCSE website at [www.dss.virginia.gov/family/dcse](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/dcse)

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**About the Virginia Department of Social Services**

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), one of the Commonwealth’s largest government agencies, is comprised of approximately 1,700 state staff who proudly serve alongside more than 10,000 employees of 120 local departments of social services and community action agencies to deliver critical social services to Virginia’s most vulnerable citizens. VDSS is committed to ensuring Virginians have access to the high-quality human services and resources needed to enhance their individual and collective well-being, and shape strong futures for themselves, their families and communities. The agency provides a wide range of services and resources in the areas of food and energy assistance, foster care and adoption, child support, and abuse and neglect prevention, among others. For more information, visit [dss.virginia.gov](http://dss.virginia.gov).