



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

GREG ABBOTT

OFFICE OF FAMILY INITIATIVES

p.a.p.a.: Parenting and Paternity Awareness Curriculum

The p.a.p.a. Program is a public education project for youth sponsored by the Office of the Texas Attorney General (OAG). Its goal is to promote responsible parenthood, basic understanding of paternity and child support laws, encourage the involvement of non-custodial parents, and the formation of strong, stable families. The current version of the PAPA Curriculum was published in June 2003 – since that date, the OAG has trained over 2000 Texas educators and community professionals in using the curriculum. A 2007 edition of the curriculum will be released in the fall of 2007.

What p.a.p.a Teaches Teens:

Rights and Responsibilities of Parenthood: p.a.p.a. answers the following questions: What does it mean to be a parent? What is the difference between a biological parent and a legal parent? What does it mean to establish paternity? What particular responsibilities do fathers have? How much child support does a parent have to pay? How does being married before having children impact child support and paternity issues? The key message is that becoming a parent is more than just giving birth, the responsibilities of parenting impact all areas of an individual's life – regardless of how old they are when they become a parent.

Realities of Parenting: What's it really like to be a parent? What can you expect from children at different ages and stages? What's the difference between discipline and abuse? What are the challenges/benefits of parenting within marriage or as a single parent? What special roles do fathers play in their children's lives? How does conflict between parents impact a child's life? The key message is that being a parent is exciting, demanding, rewarding, expensive, and difficult. Young people need to have attained a certain level of maturity and independence before they become parents.

Your Future as a Parent: Do you expect to be a parent someday? At what point in your life do you want to take that step? What kind of relationship do you want to be in before becoming a parent? What are the characteristics of a healthy relationship? What kind of father or mother do you think you'll be? How does marriage fit into becoming a parent? The key message here is that students need to evaluate their own readiness for parenthood and plan ahead to make realistic decisions based on a solid understanding of the legal and practical consequences of becoming a parent.

Relationship Violence Prevention: The p.a.p.a. curriculum includes information on characteristics and skills for healthy relationships and healthy marriages. In addition, p.a.p.a. contains one session that is solely focused on relationship violence prevention and strategies for both identifying danger signs in relationships and skills for dealing with intimate partner violence.

p.a.p.a. and House Bill 2176

The 80th session of the Texas Legislature passed HB 2176 directing the State Board of Education to work with the OAG to develop a parenting and paternity awareness program that a school district shall use in the district's high school health curriculum effective for school year 2008-2009. The OAG has committed resources to provide curriculum and training to all high school health teachers in the use of the p.a.p.a. program to ensure full compliance with the statute.



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The p.a.p.a Curriculum:

The curriculum consists of 14 sessions of approximately one hour each. Each session includes a video segment of approximately 2-3 minutes and a lesson supported by group activities, handouts, and exercises in a workbook.

The Sessions:

Introducing p.a.p.a.

What is a parent?

Establishing paternity

Benefits of legal fatherhood

What can you expect?

What it takes to be a parent

Single parenting

Parenting as a team

Parents who don't pay

Love, marriage and a baby carriage?

Choosing healthy relationships

Marriage and families

Looking at relationship violence

Building strong families

The p.a.p.a. Video features short, powerful interviews with young parents who tell their own stories in their own words about the hardships, the joy, and the challenges they have experienced first-hand. The short segments set the stage for each sessions' learning objectives and activities.

The teacher's guide provides detailed lesson plans, background information, session learning objectives and alignment with current Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), classroom activities, notes, discussion questions, homework and extra-learning volunteer projects.

A **student workbook** full of introspective, self-directed exercises helps students apply the lessons to their own lives. Students engage in a variety of activities including: writing a short essay on the benefits of father involvement, developing a budget that includes paying for child related expenses, and analyzing the impact of parental conflict on a child's life.

What do teachers who use p.a.p.a say?

The LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas conducted an implementation assessment with a sample of teachers trained in using the p.a.p.a. Curriculum and found that the overwhelming majority thought the curriculum was easy to use, successful at teaching students the rights and responsibilities of parenthood, helped students think about their own future as a parent, and that the curriculum should be mandatory for students.

"Excellent program – usable", "I would love some more – it was great!", "We touched on real situations", "Teaches students what the consequences are", "Helpful and much needed"

What do students learn?

Knowledge and attitude changes linked to the p.a.p.a. Curriculum have been evaluated by both the Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI) at Texas A&M University and the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas. The studies identified significant gains in knowledge about the rights and responsibilities of parenting, awareness of the legal and financial consequences of parenting, and understanding the characteristics of healthy relationships.

Student answers to an open-ended question about what they'd learned from p.a.p.a. included: *"it's not easy being a parent, and it takes commitment," "a non-custodial parent has to help,"* and *"you have a better life if you finish school before having kids."*

For more information or to schedule training, contact:

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