

Meet Evelyn

STORIES FROM THE adolescent family life program

Young Mom Paves the Path to Higher Education

People walk by, waving and saying hi to Evelyn as she stands out in the courtyard of **El Nido Family Centers** in Pacoima, California. Beaming, she smiles back at them before going back to work as a case manager in the family resource center. Evelyn knows what it's like to receive resources from El Nido, and has gone from a participant in their Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP) to working for the agency that changed her life. Says Evelyn, "The agency has provided me with the tools and resources necessary to reach my goals and dreams. My biggest dream while being in the program was to graduate college, and I did. Now I work for the agency and have a stable job, which allows me to not only support myself and my daughter, but to also give back to our community and the organization that supported me."

At the end of 10th grade, Evelyn found herself pregnant and scared. Her partner at the time was not supportive or interested in becoming a parent, resulting in her having to tell her parents she was pregnant on her own. She knew they wouldn't be happy with the news. Seeking outside guidance, Evelyn enrolled in El Nido's Adolescent Family Life Program, which connected her to case manager Lilia, a supportive adult in whom Evelyn could confide. "The goals I had set for myself while in the program were to gain guidance in regards to becoming a parent at such a young age. I also wanted support with my academics and to gain access to additional resources, such as child care," says Evelyn. What she didn't know at the time was just how much joining the program would change her life.

Before getting pregnant, Evelyn had little interest in school and no aspirations to attend college. "However, I told myself I could do



Evelyn with El Nido scholarship recipient, Jesse

Los Angeles County, California



Evelyn at her desk at El Nido's Family Resource Center

better for my daughter. I worked hard academically to ensure I graduated high school," says Evelyn. And while her guidance counselor wanted her to graduate high school, they didn't discuss the possibility of Evelyn seeking higher education. But case manager Lilia did. "She empowered me to aim higher. UCLA became my dream school because of her," says Evelyn.

Evelyn attended UCLA and completed her bachelor's degree in Sociology. Says Evelyn, "What I am most proud of is completing higher education. When I became pregnant, I was behind on school credits, had a lot of absences. My daughter changed my life for the better. I have become a good role model for her as she now wants to attend UCLA, like me."

As a case manager for El Nido's Family Resource Center, Evelyn is now encouraging other youth to pursue the goals that are important to them, including going to college. Evelyn also works with the El Nido Alumni Association to award scholarships to current clients who are attending two-year and four-year schools. In this role, she meets with youth to provide help applying to college, filling out student loan paperwork and answering any questions they might have about attending university. Last year the agency provided scholarships to 34 young people seeking higher education.

Since her time in AFLP, Evelyn has transformed from a young mom with low self-esteem, to a confident and empowered woman. Evelyn credits AFLP and her own strengths for the person she has become. Evelyn even has her own motto: "Don't let obstacles get in the way of pursuing your dreams."

Meet the Adolescent Family Life Program

The Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP) is a strengths-based case management program with integrated life planning. The program supports pregnant and parenting youth in building resilience strengths and skills to thrive. Case managers meet one-on-one with youth to establish a caring relationship, identify the youth's needs, and offer support accessing services, setting goals and building skills to manage life's challenges and plan for the future.

PROGRAM GOALS: Improve pregnancy planning and spacing and increase educational and vocational attainment, access to and utilization of needed services, and social and emotional support.

WHO WE SERVE: Expectant and parenting youth up to age 19 who have custody of their child or are co-parenting.

SERVICE DELIVERY: Services are provided by county health departments, hospitals and community-based organizations.



Adolescent Childbearing in California

In 2015, over 24,000 California children were born to mothers aged 15-19.⁴ The California adolescent birth rate (ABR) declined to a record low 17.6 births per 1,000 females aged 15-19 – a 61 percent decline from the 2000 rate. Despite this success, the number of youth, families and communities impacted by early childbearing remains high.

California birth rates vary greatly by race, ethnicity, age, geography and other factors. For example:

- Latinas make up nearly three out of four adolescent births in California.⁴ In 2016-17, 73 percent of youth in AFLP were Latinas.
- The county with the highest adolescent birth rate (ABR) —Del Norte— has a rate 6.4 times greater than the county with the lowest ABR—Marin.⁴

In recognition of the variations in birth rates across the state, CDPH/MCAH developed the [California Adolescent Sexual Health Needs Index \(CASHNI\)](#) to target programs to areas in the state with the greatest need. AFLP operates through 20 local agencies in high need counties across the state.

Data Sources:

1. 2016-17 data from the Adolescent Family Life Program, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Division, California Department of Public Health.
2. Postpartum contraceptive use among adolescent mothers in seven states. *J Adolesc Health*. 2013 Mar;52(3):278-83. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2012.05.004. Epub 2012 Jun 23.
3. CDC (MMWR) Vital Signs: Repeat Births Among Teens — United States, 2007–2010, April 5, 2013 / 62(13);249-255.
4. Adolescent Births in California, 2000-2015. California Department of Public Health, Center for Family Health, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division, Epidemiology, Assessment, and Program Development Branch. November 2017.

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A Focus on Positive Youth Development (PYD)

All youth have strengths. All youth benefit from high expectations and supportive relationships. All youth are capable of making meaningful contributions in their lives, families and communities. The AFLP PYD program turns these values into meaningful activities for the youth to explore their strengths, values, resources, needs and vision for their life so that during and after the program they can:

- develop strengths and call on them to navigate life's challenges;
- build healthy and supportive connections with the important people in their lives;
- identify and work toward personal goals that will lead to healthier, happier lives for them and their children.

84% of AFLP participants are in school, graduated or received a diploma¹

Increased use of highly-effective, long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs):

- 37% for adolescents receiving AFLP services.¹
- 12%-22% for adolescent mothers nationally.^{2,3}

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