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Do Adolescent Pregnancy and Childbearing Affect Younger Siblings?

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To understand the consequences of adolescent pregnancy and childbearing on siblings, a study compares 309 younger brothers and sisters of pregnant, parenting and never-pregnant teenagers. Compared with the younger siblings of never-pregnant teenagers, the younger sisters of pregnant teenagers see school and career as less important, are more accepting of adolescent childbearing, perceive younger ages as appropriate for first intercourse, marriage and childbearing and engage in more problem behavior. The younger sisters of parenting teenagers are more accepting of teenage childbearing than are younger sisters of never-pregnant teenagers and have more definite intentions of having a child at a young age. Compared with boys who have a never-pregnant older sister, younger brothers of pregnant and parenting teenagers are more accepting of nonmarital childbearing, ascribe more importance to childbearing, perceive fewer problems related to early childbearing, have lower self-esteem and report engaging in more drug use and partying behavior.

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