A. Consciously Conceiving

• Encourage Prospective Parents to Carefully Consider Their Readiness to Assume the Roles and Responsibilities of Becoming a Parent

A.1. Determining whether having and raising a child fits with the parents' desired lifestyle.

Marshall, E., Alexander, J., Cull, V., Buckner, E., Jackson, K., & Powell, K. (1994). Parenting and childrearing attitudes among high school students. *Journal of Community Health Nursing*, 11(4), 239-248.

Premise: If parenting could be assessed during high school, health education classes could be set up based on the findings, and intervention could be initiated with students with poor parenting attitudes.

Research Question: What is the parenting attitude among high school students, and to what degree does their attitude affect their parenting skills?

Subjects: Five hundred two high school students from three different schools in a large metropolitan area in the Southwest.

Study Design: Two instruments were administered: one with a demographic profile such as age, sex, race, etc., and another that employed a 32-item questionnaire on a 5-point attitudinal scale called the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI).

Findings: Seventy-five percent or more of students indicated average to high understanding of expectations for child, empathy for child, low value of physical punishment, and the absence of role reversal on the study instrument. Ten percent had low average scores and it was suggested that follow up for these students prior to becoming parents would be beneficial.

Research reviewed by Eliane Petros, RN, while a student at Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Nursing, in Richmond, VA.

A.3. Considering potential parents' present ability to love and nurture a child.

Stier, D., Leventhal, J., Berg, A., Johnson, L., & Mezger, J. (1993). Are children born to young mothers at increased risk of maltreatment? *Pediatrics*, 91, 642-648.

Premise: The risk of maltreatment to children of young mothers can be documented through careful study design.

Research Question: Are children of young mothers at increased risk of child maltreatment, poor growth, and foster placement?

Subjects: Two hundred nineteen children born to women 16 years old or younger, and 219 children born to women 19 years and older. Both groups were sociodemographically similar.

Study Design: Initial data was obtained perinatally from the mother's chart. Subsequent data were collected from the children's medical records up to their fifth birthday. This was the first longitudinal, carefully designed study on this topic in which past studies have had methodological flaws. Outcome measures were carefully predefined and rated blindly.

Findings: Maltreatment occurred in children of adolescents 12.5% of the time compared to 6.4% for the other children. Poor growth rate was 6.6% and 4.1%, respectively. Foster care or mother leaving the home was 12.8% and 3.2%, respectively. The relative risk values for these variables were 2.0, 1.67, and 4.0.

Research reviewed by Eliane Petros, RN, while a student at Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Nursing, in Richmond, VA.

A.5. Conceiving a baby with loving intention and full awareness.

Adams, M., Bruce, C., Shulman, H., Kendricks, J., Brogan, D., & The Prams Working Group. (1993). Pregnancy planning and preconception counseling. *Obstetric Gynecology*, 82, 955-959.

Premise: Many women who plan their pregnancies have indication for preconception counseling. Women who do not plan their pregnancies could benefit from family planning service.

Research Question: Does preconception education affect and influence pregnancy outcome?

Subjects: A total of 12,452 new mothers from four states at 3-6 months postdelivery.

Study Design: Population-based survey. The study included subjects from a total of four states. The mothers were questioned about the planning status of their recent pregnancies.

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Findings: A high percentage of women could have profited from preconception education in regard to smoking, drinking, being underweight, and delaying prenatal care. Sixty percent of pregnancies were planned and 38% of them had one or more indications for preconception counseling. The

need for preconceptual counseling was higher among those with unintentional pregnancies (66%).

Research reviewed by Eliane Petros, RN, while a student at Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Nursing, in Richmond, VA.