

Reaching adolescents through their parents

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Parents are defined as those who provide primary or significant care for adolescents over a significant period without being paid. They include biological parents, foster parents, adoptive parents, grandparents and other relatives.

Key statement 1

We all recognize the crucial role that parents play in ensuring the survival, health & development of infants and children.



Key statement 2

**Adolescents depend on their parents.
Parents continue have a crucial role to play in
the health and development of their
adolescent sons and daughters.**



Key statement 3

Parents have five complementary roles to play, each of which has specific influences on adolescent health outcomes:

- 1. connection – *love***
- 2. behaviour control – *limit***
- 3. respect for individuality – *respect***
- 4. modelling of appropriate behaviour – *model***
- 5. provision and protection – *provide.***

Helping parents in developing countries improve adolescents' health



Key statement 4



A parent who plays these roles effectively is a powerful positive force in an adolescent's life.

Key statement 5



Many parents find it hard to deal with their adolescents, and do not play these crucial roles in their lives effectively.

One area that many studies highlight is the inability of parents to communicate with their adolescents about sexuality and reproduction.

Key statement 6



"Findings from a small number of intervention studies suggest that if parents are given support to develop the attributes of parental responsiveness, they can and will communicate with their children about sexuality".

Source: J Svanemyr, A Amin, O Robles, M E Greene. Creating an enabling environment for adolescent sexual and reproductive health: A framework and promising approaches. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 56 2015. S7-S14.

Key statement 7

There are many initiatives in developing countries – often led by non government organizations - to help parents support their adolescents. But most of them are small scale and time limited.



World Health Organization

Summaries of projects in developing countries assisting the parents of adolescents

USAID
World Health Organization
fhi Family Health International
YouthNet

Key statement 8

There are some efforts under way to help large numbers of parents with the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to help their adolescents.

