

The Parent-Infant Program (now called Nurturing Skills for Teen Parents or NSTP) began in 1978 by Mary Ann Walsh and a few devoted volunteers as one of the first educational outreach programs by the Greater Dayton Pro-Life Education Foundation. It was the hope of these caring volunteers to bring support and education to the youngest of parents at a time when little programming existed for teens.

The program was first held at area hospitals, such as St. Elizabeth's and Miami Valley Hospital. In 1999, Dayton Right to Life had a need for more space and moved to downtown Dayton in the Fidelity Building at 211 S. Main Street, where parenting classes could be held on-site. The Mary Ann Walsh for Parenting Education was a dream that became a reality. The room was adapted from a storage facility to a colorful and inviting space to teach young parents while allowing for children to be nearby in a fun and exciting playroom. The K12 Gallery was commissioned to paint a mural on the walls of the playroom. 14-year old artist Sarah Whitley created a vision of the room with children playing amongst whimsical animals. Sarah and her mother, along with a team of other teens from K12 Gallery, completed the project in one week.

The program has educated thousands of young parents on important infant care topics. The focus has always remained the same with strengthening the mother-infant bonding process and creating a loving relationship between the young mom and her baby. This program is still going strong today even with the addition of more parenting class choices for teens in our community. We offer a unique service for teen parents with a comprehensive program lasting 15-weeks. The class topics address issues for both the baby and the young parent. It is important to know how to feed a baby, but if the parent isn't in school or planning to continue their education then the child doesn't have much of a future. The program stresses "responsible" parenting whereas the child's needs come first, both in the short-term and the long-term.

In 1999, the Toddlers of Teens program was introduced so that clients could continue to learn and care for their children as they enter the toddler stage. The 10-week program focuses on clear expectations a mother needs to understand during her toddler's development from 12-36 months. Learning how to interact with a toddler and creating simple homemade toys is also a major theme. Experienced moms or mentors are utilized for additional and ongoing support once this program concludes.

June 8th, 2003 marked the 25th anniversary of the Parent-Infant Program. An Open House was held in the memory of Mary Ann Walsh who died just 5 days earlier due to complications from pneumonia. The Center, so fittingly named in her honor, is a lasting tribute to her dedication to the pro-life cause and will continue to educate young parents for many years to come.

In January 2004, a prenatal program for first-time moms, 21 and under became a reality. Promise Your Baby educates at-risk women during a series of five classes. The goal of these women is to "promise" to make healthy choices their baby, to decrease the incidence of prematurity and low birth weight.

In December 2005 our location moved to Elizabeth Place, the former St. Elizabeth Hospital. We had come full circle, as this was the original

location for the parenting classes. This location, conveniently located next to the Job Center, was positioned in a familiar territory for our client.

In July 2008 the parenting classes found a new home within the Life Enrichment Center at 425 N. Findlay Street. The 3rd floor classroom has an open area for more clients and spacious playroom. Thanks to Chaminade-Julienne's Lifeguard group mural creator, Sarah Shanks, the playground was transformed into a colorful jungle with whimsical animals. Through a collaboration with the Life Enrichment Center, we are able to easily refer our clients to the many services they offer include GED classes, bible study and food distribution.