

Justice for Young Families: Uplifting the Experiences of Young Parents and Families

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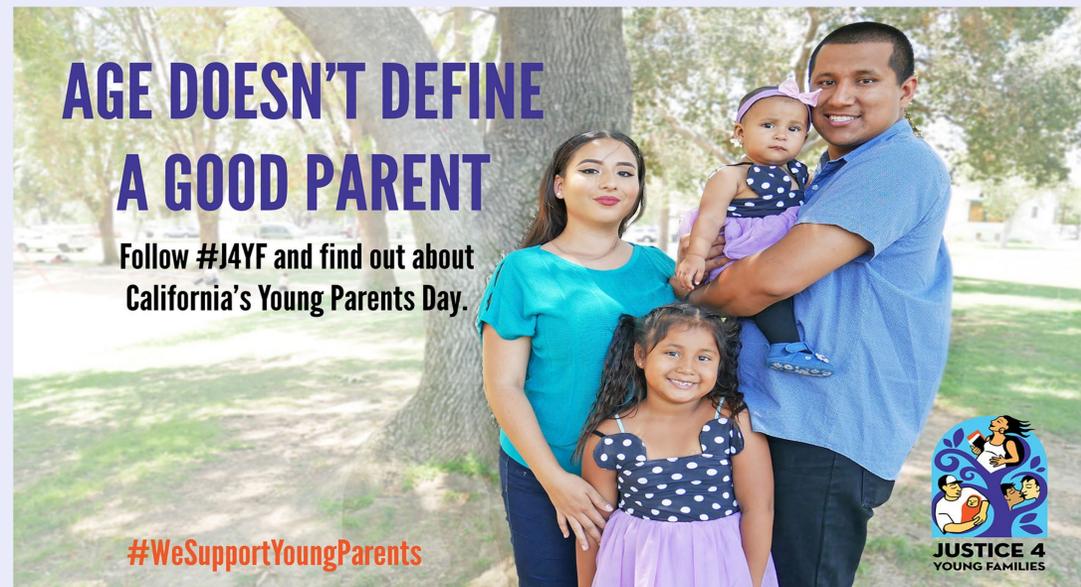


Abstract

- Young parents and their families experience significant challenges in accessing health care services and other basic needs
- The reproductive justice framework was created from a human-rights approach following the 1994 International Conference on Population Development¹
- The reproductive justice framework is a theoretical framework that recognizes the intersectionality between reproduction and other systems of oppression, such as racism, homophobia, ableism, and ageism
- California Latinas for Reproductive Justice (CLRJ) is the only Latine-led organization in California that adopts the reproductive justice framework²
- CLRJ's Justice for Young Families (J4YF) initiative champions young people's rights to self-determination and bodily autonomy³
- This target population of young parents are a historically marginalized group that experience higher health disparities compared to non-parenting young people
- CLRJ's strategies of community-informed research and engagement includes the formation of a Young Parent Leadership Council (YPLC)
- the YPLC are a cohort of young parents that gather monthly to build leadership skills, inform research and policy advocacy through listening sessions, and shift culture narratives about pregnancy and parenting youth
- During these listening sessions, the YPLC identified significant structural barriers including discrimination, when trying to navigate healthcare, social services, and other institutions

Objectives

- CLRJ and the most recent cohort of the YPLC sought to explore the experiences of other young parents in Los Angeles through a needs assessment survey
- The aim of this survey is to understand some of the most important issues impacting young parents and their families



Methods

- Because one of CLRJ's main strategies includes undertaking community-informed research, the YPLC were active stakeholders at every stage
- Three Community Researchers were hired from the YPLC to aid in the creation, planning, and development of our needs assessment, as their lived experience and expertise was valuable
- This needs assessment survey will be a cross-sectional study with a non-probability sample of 500 young parents selected through snowball sampling
- Because survey respondents will be receiving monetary compensation in the form of a gift card, the needs assessment survey will be sent to trusted networks to avoid individuals outside of the eligibility criteria to take the survey.
- The eligibility criteria includes being a young parent (age 12-24) living in Los Angeles County
- the survey will be offered in both English and Spanish
- Eligible participants will be administered a digital questionnaire that gathers data on six themes: demographics, housing, social support and relationships, school and education, childcare, and income/basic needs

- the needs assessment survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The survey will be taken digitally on Qualtrics and was tailored to be completed either on a web browser or on a mobile device
- The survey was piloted and approved by all the young parents in the YPLC
- The next phase of outreach and recruitment is currently making efforts to share the survey opportunity with their networks
- The needs assessment survey will help inform equitable policies, local advocacy efforts, and resources for current and future young parents and their families in Los Angeles County

Hypothesized Result

- At this stage, data collection is still ongoing. During the YPLC meetings, significant structural barriers including discrimination in healthcare, social services, and other institutions were identified
- CLRJ has completed other qualitative research on young parents through interviews that were published in the 2021 and 2023 "A Day in the Life of a Young Parent" – a digital archive intended to dismantle negative stigmas

Implications

- There is little data and research focused on identifying the needs of young parents and their families
- CLRJ has conducted a previous needs assessment survey in the city of Bell Gardens, and housing was identified as the most pressing issue⁴
- Martha Pineda, the Lead Community Organizer, partnered with the Unión de Vecinas, a community group of tenants in Bell Gardens affiliated with CLRJ
- Founded in 2019, the Unión de Vecinas is composed of working-class, immigrant Latine grandmothers, mothers, and parents⁴
- Through coalition building, civic engagement, and digital direct actions and press conferences, the Bell Gardens City Council unanimously passed a rent stabilization ordinance that limits annual rent increases to once a year and to not exceed a 4% ceiling in August 2022⁴
- Additionally, CLRJ and the Unión de Vecinas were able to establish just-cause evictions
- CLRJ will use the collected data to inform future policy advocacy for young parents

Acknowledgements

This project was supported by California Latinas for Reproductive Justice.



Presented at the UCLA First Annual Neal Halfon Public Health Trainee Symposium in association with the UCLA Maternal and Child Health Center of Excellence and UC-LEND Training Programs on June 7, 2024.



1. International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). United Nations Population Fund. Accessed May 20, 2024. <https://www.unfpa.org/events/international-conference-population-and-development-icpd>
2. California Latinas for Reproductive Justice. About us. <https://californialatinas.org/>
3. California Latinas for Reproductive Justice. Justice for Young Families. <https://californialatinas.org/our-work/justice-for-young-families/>
4. California Latinas for Reproductive Justice. Community Organizing. <https://californialatinas.org/community-organizing/>