

Parenting Network

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Mission Statement:

“To improve the quality of life for children, including those with special needs, by providing culturally appropriate support and information to all families and to the professionals who serve them.”

Success Story:

Alicia and her boyfriend Angel, were more interested in partying with friends than anything else. “There was a negative energy around us – we just didn’t care.” Everything changed when she discovered she was pregnant. Tulare County’s rate of births to teens has been relatively stable over recent years; however, it remains nearly twice above the state rate.* “I don’t remember much about it” Alicia responds when asked about the time prior to her pregnancy. At first, you may think she is daydreaming, judging by the distant look in her eyes. She is in fact organizing the scattered memories she has about her life before Alekaye, her first son now 16 months old. That thoughtfulness adds to her calm and silent demeanor. The unexpected pregnancy came with significant personal growth and maturity; it has been challenging for Alicia to reconcile the teenager she used to be with the mother she choose to become. Having a limited support system in town, Alicia and Angel knew their options were scarce. They approached an acquaintance of Angel who is now working with Parenting Network, and were assigned a case manager, Christina. Alicia is outspoken about how Christina’s support and encouragement has played a critical role in her family’s current success. During her pregnancy, Alicia was linked with Tulare County Perinatal Wellness Program, which helps pregnant women and new mothers overcome symptoms of depression and anxiety. She was also connected to counseling services at *** to develop communication skills and strategies. She continues to utilize the skills she has acquired to overcome daily stressors, and she’s glad she no longer bottles up her emotions. At the same time, Angel was struggling to find a place to live, and received housing assistance through the Turning Point One Stop. Furthermore, Alicia is grateful for the CalSAFE program through Visalia Unified School District which provides support services for enrolled expectant/parenting students to improve academic achievement and parenting skills, and to provide a quality child care/development program for their children. Children born to teen mothers are more likely to have academic, cognitive, and behavioral difficulties.* Alicia wanted the best possible future for Alekaye – her unborn child – and knew she needed to complete her education. Her teachers saw her newfound strength and desire to turn things around. In recent years, Tulare County teens have had a higher risk for drop-out than teens statewide.* Despite adversities, shortly after Alekaye’s birth, Alicia graduated. Her active engagement in a variety of resources was pivotal in changing the course her family was on. Alicia was referred to Community Services and Employment Training (CSET), and earned an opportunity to work. Christina assisted Alicia with the application process, references, and transportation. During her job interview, Alicia conveyed a strong sense of personal initiative and responsibility, which helped her secure a position. She enjoys working, as it provides financial security and camaraderie with other young moms. Recently, Alicia completed her application to College of the Sequoias, where she will join Angel in furthering their education. Once enrolled in college, Alicia plans to pursue a career in social work or special education. She wants to give back to other teens that may experience similar situations. Alicia found an interest in special education when she volunteered at the Special Olympics. “I loved supporting and encouraging the athletes – the smiles on their faces made an impression.” However, the short term goal is to become more independent. Currently, Alicia and Alekaye are living with her sister; however, she is looking for a family-friendly apartment for just the three of them. Alicia is also focused on being a role model, so Alekaye will know he can dream and achieve any goal he sets for himself. On a warm, sunny day, Alicia, Angel and Alekaye enjoy riding bikes together. “Alekaye usually falls asleep while in his bike seat. It must be comfortable... or it makes him sleepy.” When Angel arrives, Alekaye often cheers “Dad, dad, dad” with enthusiasm which brings a smile to both of their faces. Following the first glimpse at dad, Angel scoops up Alekaye and tosses him in the air playfully. Alicia feels the positive energy surrounding them, when they are all together.

Programs and Services:

- 0-3 Early Start Family Resource Center
- FRC Special Needs Case Management
- FRC Case Management
- Respite Care Program
- Differential Response
- CPR/First Aid Program
- Mommy’s World Support Group
- Certified Medical/Healthy Families
- Application Assistants
- “We Care” Meals
- Parenting Wisely
- Safe Care
- After Care

- Postpartum Depression Program
- “Welcome Baby” Blankets
- Resource and Referral
- Parent to Parent Support
- Phone Contacts
- Home & Hospital Visits
- Information Packets
- Washer/Dryer
- Parenting Classes
- Food Pantry
- Clothes Closet
- Support Groups
- Showers
- Lending Library

