

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Service engagement for infants and their young mothers

**Associate Professor Virginia Schmied, Associate Professor Hannah Dahlen and Dr Christine Taylor from the Family and Community Health Research Group, together with Ms Jenni Hutchins from The Benevolent Society, has been awarded a UWS Research Partnership grant to investigate the characteristics of young mothers who seek support from services and who fare well and those who are at risk for poorer outcomes.**

'Teenage pregnancy and parenthood can lead to poor health and psychosocial outcomes for children, their mothers and families' says Associate Professor Schmied. 'Addressing the needs of teenage parents and their infants has been identified as a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) priority. In early 2009 The Benevolent Society introduced a new program for young parents in the Campbelltown local government area. This study aims to investigate the strategies used to engage young women (16 to 20 years of age) in the Foundations for Young Parents (FFYP) program and to describe the outcomes for mothers and their infants.'

The research team will conduct face-to-face and telephone interviews with young mothers. Focus group discussions will also be conducted with women who attend group activities offered by the FFYP program, and with Benevolent Society staff. Qualitative data from face to face interviews with young mothers will be transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. Outcomes for infants (e.g. health and development) and their young mothers (e.g. parenting confidence and practices) together with service characteristics (e.g. assessment of reach of young mothers, worker / young mother relationship) will be examined.



The findings from this study will ultimately enhance the well-being of infants of young mothers by way of healthy parenting practices. It will also inform current health policy and government research priorities, including early intervention strategies at a local and national level.

**Project Title:** A study of service engagement and outcomes for infants and their young mothers

**Funding has been set at:** \$5,000

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**March 2010**

**For more information on UWS Research Partnership Program, check:**

[http://www.uws.edu.au/research/researchers/funding\\_opportunities/internal\\_research\\_grants](http://www.uws.edu.au/research/researchers/funding_opportunities/internal_research_grants)