Did you know?

Latino youth are the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States and will become a major part of our future leadership and workforce. In the last ten years, we have shown that we can accomplish many things even if others don’t believe we can. For example, in 2012, more Latino teens enrolled in college compared to White teens (70% vs. 67%, respectively) and the number of teen Latinas having babies in California dropped dramatically (from 61 to 42 per 100,000 Latina teens) as they received better information and access to effective birth control.

Latino youth want to have adults around who will provide support to do well in anything we choose to do and will be there for us when we need them - without judgments! Whether it’s learning how to have healthy relationship or how to get a good education, we want adults who motivate and encourage us to reach our goals. Meaningful connections with helpful adults are important to the lives of teens. Don’t get discouraged if you don’t have an adult who can be there for you, keep looking within your family, school, and community, they’re out there!

What our Study Did*

A total of 372 Latino youth participated in our study through interviews and surveys. We went to places where youth hang out like high schools and youth programs to ask them to be in our study. We asked Latino youth about what it is like being a teenager and the things they deal with including access to sex education, birth control, sexual health services and resources, their goals and aspirations and what helps them to succeed.

What Youth Had to Say

During the face-to-face interviews youth were asked to share the advice that they would like to give to other Latino teens and here is what they had to say!

**STRIVE FOR YOUR GOALS AND DREAMS:**

- Set goals and work towards them. You define what success means for you!
- No matter how big or small, your goals are important. Create a plan for how you will achieve your goals.

“We’re gonna be a majority pretty soon. I would just say [to other Latino youth], reach for the stars, have a dream or a goal set and just be ready to meet it. Because I think anything with willpower is possible.” - Latina girl, agricultural region
FOCUS ON YOUR EDUCATION:

• Getting an education is important and youth encourage teens to make school a priority.

9 out of 10 said they plan to go to college after high school.

• Find help with the college process. Mentors, teachers, family, and friends can all help give you the support you need to do well in school:

“The college advisors were really a big help. Um, they were there when we – when we needed, when we asked them questions they were there to assist us. If we needed anything like they were there. I spent a lot of time in the college and career center. And they helped –they helped me write my, um, my personal statement like they helped me correct it...” -Latina girl, urban city

EMBRACE YOUR CULTURE:

• Always embrace your Latino culture and be proud of who you are.

• Don’t let negative stereotypes bring you down or make you feel discouraged. You are capable of doing anything you want to do regardless of your race/ethnicity.

What you can do:

Don’t feel pressured to have to do it all on your own, there are resources available to guide and support you along the way. Here are some tips from youth themselves:

• Always remember that your voice matters and you have the power to create change.

• Have someone in your life that will help guide and support your decisions no matter what you choose to do for your future. Find supportive people (friends, family, teachers, and mentors) that will motivate you and help you plan out how to reach your goals and be successful.

• Become aware of programs and opportunities at your school and find ways to get involved and be active.

• Work hard and become successful in your life as a way to challenge the stereotypes people have of Latinos and show that all Latino youth can succeed!

AND REMEMBER:

“To never give up, you know...if they don’t have the support just keep fighting to find it, because there will always be at least one person out there that will always help ...” - Latino boy, agricultural region

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Who did we quote?


For more information visit: www.healthequityinstitute.org