



JUSTICE FOR YOUNG FAMILIES
PRINCIPLES & PRAXIS

ABOUT JUSTICE FOR YOUNG FAMILIES



Justice for Young Families (J4YF) is an initiative that champions young people’s rights to self-determination and bodily autonomy. This includes their decisions about whether or not to become parents and their right to parent their children within a supportive environment.

In collaboration with our partners, California Latinas for Reproductive Justice (CLRJ) is spearheading J4YF

to address the inequality in resources that too many young people face in their lives. All young people need safe, affordable and accessible resources, especially when facing decisions regarding if and how to parent. These resources must include quality and culturally appropriate health care, comprehensive sexual health education, access to a livable income, and support to complete educational goals.

J4YF acknowledges that young people’s ability to determine how they parent and sustain their families is directly linked to other oppressive conditions they face in our communities – racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, classism and xenophobia, among others. These conditions require transformation through long-term systemic change. J4YF calls for a shift in our culture, communities and society to uplift and improve the lives of all youth.

By working alongside parenting, pregnant, and non-parenting youth, J4YF works towards policies that promote the health, equity and dignity of young families.

In order to create the kind of culture shift J4YF calls for, we call upon ourselves as organizations, providers, families, policymakers, and as society as a whole to adhere to the following J4YF Principles.

JUSTICE FOR YOUNG FAMILIES (J4YF) PRINCIPLES

We call on each other, our communities, our representatives and our decision makers in particular, as well as our society at large, to uphold and apply the following principles to ensure Justice for Young Families:

- 1.** We uphold the self-determination and dignity of young people and respect their decision-making, including their decision about whether or not to become parents.
- 2.** We claim pregnant and parenting youth as vital members of our communities and society at large – members whose health, rights and dignity are to be defended.

- 3.** Pregnant and parenting youth have the right, as do all youth, to receive support to successfully continue with, and achieve, their educational and career goals. Support for pregnant and parenting youth includes child-care, health care, housing assistance, job training and other economic opportunities.

- 4.** Pregnant, parenting and non-parenting youth must have access to culturally relevant and gender-sensitive health services and educational, material, economic and emotional support.

5. All young people deserve respectful and loving acknowledgement of their whole-selves – including their intellect, body, sexual orientation, gender expression and sexuality – as part of their right to develop healthy identities.
6. Young people of all genders, sexualities, abilities, and immigration statuses have the right to parent the children they have.
7. All young people deserve the right to comprehensive sexual health education and access to quality sexual and reproductive health services
8. We understand that the health and wellness of young parents and their children is our shared responsibility, and as such, must be reflected in our organizational policies as well as in the public policies we support.

9. We hold our government and society accountable for ensuring that pregnant, parenting and non-parenting youth, including those most disenfranchised – homeless, currently and formerly incarcerated, immigrant and foster youth – are provided equitable means to access social supports.
10. In order to ensure adequate support for pregnant and parenting youth, we will hold our government representatives responsible for expanding, creating, or reinstating public programs that successfully impact their lives.

We will hold ourselves and our communities, leaders, policymakers and society accountable for advancing these principles and improving the lives of all young people – whether they be pregnant, parenting, or non-parenting youth.

JUSTICE FOR YOUNG FAMILIES (J4YF) PRAXIS

As organizations, providers, families, policymakers, and as society as a whole, we commit to using a Reproductive Justice approach and taking the following steps to uphold Justice for Young Families:

Be Accountable for our Language and Messaging

We commit to stop using all language that blames and denigrates young people for the conditions they find themselves in, both within and



outside of our communities, families, organizations, and institutions. Furthermore, since pregnant and parenting youth do not create poverty, we commit to stop using “teen pregnancy” outcomes and statistics in a manner that further portrays young parents as burdens or societal costs.

We commit to work actively with young people to eliminate all deficit-based language and messaging when



writing or talking about young people and their parenting decisions.

Acknowledge the Human Sexuality of Young People

We support and commit to implementing curriculums and practices that destigmatize sex, and that acknowledge and respect young people’s sexuality. We commit to supporting young people’s healthy relationship to their own sexuality, including their gender identities, expressions, sexual orientations and abilities. We commit to working against employing shame as a tool to control young people’s experiences and decisions around their sexuality – including parenting.

Ensure Decision-Making Opportunities For Young People

We commit to actively including young people in decision-making roles. We commit to working alongside youth, in a continual and reciprocal process, to identify emerging issues.

We commit to working with youth in their communities towards the goals of closing educational, economic and social service gaps for all pregnant, parenting, and non-parenting youth.

Provide Resources and Create Youth Led and Driven Spaces

We commit to providing resources and creating spaces through youth-centered programs that help increase availability of and access to health care and education, as well as to economic and skills-building opportunities, to ensure a safer and more prosperous future for young people and their families.

Use Community Informed Research To Improve the Lives of Young People

We support and are committed to community-informed research (CIR) that is conducted alongside youth, to better reflect the real life experiences, sexual, reproductive, and overall

health needs and capacities of young people. We commit to using CIR as a tool to improve sexual and reproductive health approaches that acknowledge, respect and uplift young people's sexuality.

Support Youth Centered Policies

We commit to supporting and including young people in advancing youth-centered policies that improve the lives of all young people – whether they are pregnant, parenting, or non-parenting youth. We commit to serving as youth allies and to promoting policies that create environments where all young people can foster and achieve their educational, economic and personal goals.

We commit to holding our policymakers accountable to improving the lives of all young people – whether they are pregnant, parenting, or non-parenting youth.



Justice for Young Families (J4YF) is an initiative of California Latinas for Reproductive Justice in collaboration with our partners: ACT for Women and Girls, California Adolescent Health Collaborative, California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, Frente Indígena de Organizaciones Binacionales, Fresno Barrios Unidos, National Latino Fatherhood Initiative, Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, Project NATEEN/Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Southern California Library, and The L.A. Trust for Children's Health.

For more information about J4YF visit: www.clrj.org.
To join the J4YF initiative contact us at: info@clrj.org.



California Latinas for Reproductive Justice

(CLRJ) is a statewide organization committed to honoring the experiences of Latinas to uphold our dignity, our bodies, sexuality, and families. We build Latinas' power and cultivate leadership through community education, policy advocacy, and community-informed research to achieve reproductive justice.

California Latinas for Reproductive Justice

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