

## TREND/ISSUE TEAM STATEMENT

**ISSUE TEAM: Risky Behaviors**    **DESIRED OUTCOME –Oklahoma children and youth will reduce their likelihood to engage in high-risk behaviors which lead to negative life outcomes**

**TREND:** Why is it an issue in Oklahoma?

In Oklahoma every year on average: 5,000 youth under age 19 drop out of high school; 24,000 arrests involve children or adolescents; 6,400 babies are born to school-age teens; and more teens engage in smoking, alcohol use, sexual activity, violence and weapon carrying than the national average (OK Institute for Child Advocacy; OK Youth Risk Behavior Survey). According to the Oklahoma State Department of Health, approximately 19 million new sexually transmitted infections occur every year in the United States. About 1 in 2 sexually active young people will get an STD by age 25 – and most won't know they have it. In Oklahoma, STDs mirror the national epidemic, with those in the 15 to 24 age group having the highest rates of infection (OSDH). From 2006-2008, 746 juveniles were arrested for violent crimes (Oklahoma Kids Count). The Oklahoma Department of Public Safety reported in 2009 that teens represent 6.0% of the licensed drivers in Oklahoma and 13.0% of all drivers involved in crashes; 8.2% of those accidents involved an alcohol-related driver condition. Substance abuse services funded by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services were provided to 1,550 youth ages 13-17 in 2009 (DMHSAS).

### **INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES [Value to Participants]:**

Participants in extension programs will have potential to change behaviors in these areas:

- Increase positive parent-child interactions and parenting skills
- Increase positive peer associations
- Increase life skills
- Decrease incidence of alcohol and other drug use
- Decrease intent to have sex or use drugs within the next six months
- Decrease rates of bullying behavior
- Increase academic performance/youth going to college

### **SOCIETAL OUTCOMES [Public Value]:**

Positive child and youth behavior changes related to peer and parental involvement, school performance and graduation, and health and safety practices will result in decreased taxpayer burden due to reduced prison population, improved health of newborns and infants due to decreased number of babies born to teen mothers. Investing now in the children and youth of Oklahoma will result in countless future benefits to the state.