

GRADS: A How-To

Can My School District Start a GRADS Program?

School districts and schools can start GRADS programs to meet the needs of their students. Pregnant and parenting students face many challenges and are at risk of dropping out of school. GRADS programs can dramatically improve the outcomes for two generations of Washingtonians.

GRADS programs include:

- A Family and Consumer Sciences Education (FACSE) certified teacher, who has also completed GRADS training;
- GRADS curriculum developed at the local level using standards from the Work and Family Foundation areas of study in the National Standards for FACSE;
- Child Care for the students' children;
- GRADS Advisory Board.

FACSE Teachers

GRADS teachers are Family and Consumer Sciences Education (FACSE) certified. They must complete the comprehensive OSPI GRADS Training once every five years, attend two OSPI updating sessions during those five years, and attend one other locally-determined conference. Content examples for additional conferences include Connecting with community resources, early brain development, updates on human development in the early years, parenting strategies, working with at risk students, factors affecting families such as poverty.

Locally-determined curriculum

Students enrolled in GRADS programs will earn credits in a locally determined series of courses. Those courses can be included in a complete sequence just as they would for a student who earns credits in the courses when offered "outside" a GRADS program. The Work and Family Foundation areas of study in the National Standards for FACSE include:

- Nutrition and Wellness
- Human Development
- Career, Community, and Family Connections
- Family Systems
- Interpersonal Relationships
- Parenting
- Consumer and Family Resources

Child Care

On-site child care or child care in easy access to the school is available to teen parents. This includes infant care. Child care should be licensed or meeting licensing requirements. GRADS students should be involved in regular lab experiences as part of their parenting education program..

GRADS Advisory Board

The GRADS Advisory Board members are key elements in a successful GRADS program. Community, government agency, faith based, school district, families and private resources must all work together to insure success for these students. Advisory Board members can help with case management strategies from the social services perspective, coordinate community and agency support, promote the program, identify funding sources outside the school district, provide student recognition, and other activities, as identified at the local level.