

## Success Story



### Monique Knapp Health Teacher

*"Most students think babies are like dolls, and that they are just going to play with them when they want and there is not real responsibility. That is so far from the truth," said Knapp. "When students return from their weekends with the Babies, they are always writing about how upset they are about not being able to play video games, go to friends' houses, etc."*

**Monique Knapp**  
Health Teacher  
Campbell-Savona Central  
School District  
Campbell, NY

## Program Highlights

### Goal:

- To educate high school health students about teen pregnancy prevention

### Topics Covered:

- Teen Pregnancy Prevention
- Lifespan Development

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## High School Health Classes Uses Infant Simulators for Teen Pregnancy Prevention

By Emily Kuhn

*Thanks to Realityworks' RealCare Baby infant simulators, ninth-grade students in New York's Campbell-Savona Central School District are experiencing firsthand what it is like to be a parent – and realizing what their lives might look like if they happen to become pregnant as teenagers.*

*"We live in a rural community where the median salary for a family is \$44,000," said Monique Knapp, who uses the infant simulators to address teen pregnancy prevention in her high school health classes. "We want these students to realize that a baby is not just a toy thing, but that there are real responsibilities – everything is not fun."*

*Knapp, who has been using the infant simulators in her health classes for three years, currently has 10 RealCare Baby II models and three RealCare*

*Baby 3 models. Both models cry for care throughout the day and night and require regular changing, feeding, burping and rocking. The RealCare Baby 3 models even monitor surrounding temperatures, track how long they sit unattended in car seats and how often their clothing is changed.*

*Knapp uses her simulators during a unit on sexuality, which features discussion of the human body and development, birth control options and speakers from local Planned Parenthood offices and a*

*(continued)*



Students at Campbell-Savona Jr./Sr. High School get ready to take home their RealCare Baby infant simulators.

teen pregnancy panel. To culminate the unit, Knapp's students must take a Baby home with them for 48 hours (typically over the weekend). She appreciates the fact that the Babies hold their student caregivers accountable by requiring them to figure out why it is crying, then tracking the care that is provided.

"Students come to my class excited about the baby project, but that excitement wears off after the first 24 hours," stated Knapp, whose students are graded based on their post-simulation reports. "If a report comes back indicating Shaken Baby Syndrome, the student takes a 0. I want them to realize how serious of a situation that is."

Like real parents, Knapp's students quickly learn that parenting is harder than it might seem.

"Most students think babies are like dolls, and that they are just going to play with them when they want and there is not real responsibility. That is so far from the truth," said Knapp. "When students return from their weekends with the Babies, they are always writing about how upset they are about not being able to play video games, go to friends' houses, etc."

To monitor the success of her teen pregnancy prevention program, Knapp hosts regular group discussions with her students. She also tracks the number of pregnant teens in her school district, and as of February 2014, there have not been any this school year. Due to the interactive nature of the infant simulators, Knapp has found that parents are as eager to enter into discussions with their teens as she is in the classroom.

"Many parents tell me that they want to see how their child reacts while trying to take care of a baby," said Knapp. "They want their child to experience the truths and responsibilities of having a

child... these Babies open up the lines of communication."

Knapp hopes to explore further ways her infant simulators can teach important parenting lessons to her students, like the finances required to raise children and the impact being born into a teenage family can have on a child. For now, however, she will continue her practice of culminating lessons on infant care by sending her students home with a simulator.

"This program is a great idea for students – it requires them to be a single parent for 48 hours, and the sole provider for a child," stated Knapp. "I like that the project goes from fun to serious and difficult all within 48 hours... Most of the students come back not wanting children right away!"

"We want these students to realize that a baby is not just a toy thing, but that there are real responsibilities – everything is not fun."

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Students experience being a single parent to their RealCare Babies for 48 hours.