

Supporting Your Pregnant and Parenting Teen

Finding out that your child is pregnant or made someone pregnant can cause you to feel a wide range of emotions. If your teen has made the decision to become a parent, the following tips raise considerations to help you and your family through the challenges that lie ahead.

- **It is normal to feel angry, disappointed and overwhelmed.** Just remember that your teenager needs you now more than ever. Being able to communicate with each other – especially when emotions are running high – is essential to the health of your teen.
- **Explore resources available to your son or daughter and your family.**
- **Stay involved with the pregnant teen’s medical treatment.** The earlier your teen gets prenatal care, the better her chances are for a healthy pregnancy.
- **When the baby is born, remember you are the grandparent to that child, not the parent.** This may be especially difficult if they live with you, but it is important to support your son or daughter in parenting the newborn.
- **Help financially if you are able to, but also remember that as a parent, you are not financially responsible for the child.** Encourage your son or daughter to find a part-time job and be as financially responsible for the child as possible. This is sometimes very difficult for a full-time student and parent, but in the long run it will be best for the new family.
- **Communicate with your other children early about sexuality, pregnancy and STIs.** Sisters of teenage parents are more likely to become pregnant at a young age.
- **Find someone outside the situation that you can talk to.** This is a difficult situation, and you will be a better parent and grandparent if you have your own support system for handling the issues involved.



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SUPPORTING YOUR TEEN DAUGHTER

- ▶ Keep in mind that this is the pregnant teen’s decision. Do your best to respect the decisions that she makes.
- ▶ Encourage the involvement of the baby’s father and his family.
- ▶ If your daughter decides to continue the pregnancy, encourage and help her to stay in school so that she can secure a better job and create a better life for herself and the baby. Go to the school and assist your daughter if there are school related issues. Explore school and community programs that offer special services for teen mothers, such as child care, rides, or tutoring.

SUPPORTING YOUR TEEN SON

- ▶ Support him in taking responsibility for his actions, both financially and emotionally.
- ▶ Encourage your son to take interest in the pregnancy. Encourage your son to be available for appointments and read about pregnancy. Encourage him to also set aside time for the weeks leading up to the birth.
- ▶ Encourage your son to understand his legal rights and responsibilities surrounding fatherhood.