

PARENTHOOD: Are You Prepared?

DVD Version

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PARENTHOOD: ARE YOU PREPARED?

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TEACHER'S RESOURCE BOOK

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PARENTHOOD: ARE YOU PREPARED?

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MAIN MENU

PLAY

CHAPTER SELECTION

From here you can access many different paths of the DVD, beginning with the introduction and ending with the credits.

1. Introduction
2. Emotional Preparation
3. Physical Preparation
4. Financial Preparation
5. Social Preparation
6. Conclusion

TEACHER'S RESOURCE GUIDE

A file of the accompanying Teacher's Resource Guide is available on the DVD. To open the file you need to load the DVD onto a computer that has a DVD-ROM and Adobe Acrobat Reader. Right click on the DVD icon and then double click on the file titled "Teacher's Resource Book."

Young people today have more responsibilities, more career opportunities and more choices than ever before. One of these choices is when or whether to become parents. Raising children requires sacrifice, and saying yes to parenting means saying no to other options. Parenting is said to be the hardest job any person will ever have and yet it is the job we are often the least prepared to begin.

Becoming a parent means both partners must be willing to make a lifetime commitment to the child and must understand what this commitment means in terms of time, energy, financial resources and love. After all, if you don't like your job, you can change it. If you don't like your course of study, you can change it. If you don't like your friends, you can change them. But once you become a parent, it is an irreversible decision. You can't take the child back when it is not fun anymore.

Parenting can be the most rewarding experience in life when individuals prepare themselves for the new challenges that a child brings. However, parenthood can be extremely stressful and isolating if a strong support system isn't in place. The lifestyle and social network that one enjoys before becoming a parent may be dramatically altered.

In terms of finances, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that a typical family will spend more than \$165,000 raising one child to the age of 18. That figure does not include fertility treatments if needed, adoption costs, private schools, after-school lessons or college, which can increase the cost by \$100,000 to \$300,000. Even before your child arrives, prenatal care, labor and delivery may cost upwards of \$10,000. Add another \$8,000 to \$10,000 for first-year expenses like baby furniture, clothes, diapers, doctor's visits and daycare, and you'll have shelled out nearly \$20,000 by baby's first birthday.

What does it take to be an effective parent? Making sure it is the right time of one's life to take on the all-consuming responsibility of a new life is key. Becoming a parent involves assuming a new role that the person has never played on the stage of life before. What will it be like? How will it differ from being in the role of spouse, partner, friend, daughter, son, student or employee? Taking the time to comprehend the changes that will occur in one's life can ease the stresses that come with being a parent. An understanding of past experiences, personal strengths and helpful resources is also valuable.

Being well prepared for parenting can also reduce factors that contribute to child abuse and neglect. Child abuse is often linked to an inability to cope with the stresses of life. Contributing factors may include poor emotional control, money problems, social isolation, relationship problems with one's partner, substance abuse, depression and lack of parenting skills. Shaken Baby Syndrome is an especially dangerous form of child abuse, which can result when a frustrated caregiver shakes a baby to get it to stop crying, causing the baby serious injury or even death.

Conversely, research has shown that having emotionally satisfying relationships with a network of relatives or friends can help minimize the risk of child abuse, especially during stressful life events. Having an intact, stable and supportive relationship with a partner provides a foundation for successful parenting. In addition, marriage and parenting education programs also strengthen families and thus protect against child abuse.

The video *Parenthood: Are You Prepared?* helps students realize how drastically life-changing parenthood is. Through interviews with real parents, viewers will understand the importance of preparing themselves emotionally and financially to provide a stable and loving home before they consider becoming parents in the future. Viewers will be prompted to consider how a child would fit into their goals for career and marriage, what they would like to accomplish before having a family, and what parenting roles they see themselves assuming. This Teacher's Resource Book underscores critical concepts introduced in the video by providing further opportunity for discussion through guided activities.

After watching the video *Parenthood: Are You Prepared?* and participating in the class activities included in this Teacher's Resource Book, your students will be able to:

- assess the roles and responsibilities involved in being an effective parent
- describe some of the ways that parenting responsibilities are shared in families today
- identify many of the factors involved in the decision to become parents
- describe the myths and realities of parenthood
- analyze the positive and negative reasons for becoming parents
- evaluate the financial impact of rearing children
- describe characteristics of a nurturing and protective environment for children
- determine the attitudes and characteristics that would indicate their own personal readiness for parenthood
- identify many of the risk factors for child abuse and neglect
- make more informed choices about their future and goals

PROGRAM SUMMARY

As the video opens, a young mother-to-be, Tanisha, is looking at baby clothes. The narrator explains that Tanisha is an unmarried teen living in a small apartment with her mother, sisters and her sisters' babies. Before long, Tanisha will be a parent herself. The narrator asks, "Will she be ready for the challenges and responsibilities of parenthood?"

Next, married couple Steve and Lalani are introduced. They share their views: "You can't be selfish, you really have to say, *It's not all about me anymore*. One of the worst things that we can do is to engage in parenting when we still want to be a child ourselves."

The scene changes to a young man named Derek, who had to give up dreams of a basketball career at 22, when he learned that he was going to be a father. Derek says, "I didn't realize the sacrifices you'd have to make."

The narrator describes parenthood as rewarding, frustrating, exhilarating, exhausting, humbling and much more. "Being as prepared as you can be emotionally, as well as financially, and having an adequate support system can help you make that critical decision and make it a successful one." At this point, the title appears: ***Parenthood: Are You Prepared?***

As the chapter on **EMOTIONAL PREPARATION** begins, viewers hear from Jeremy and Kerry, who had been married two years before starting a family. Jeremy says, "It was a daunting task to think about having to have somebody who is completely dependent on you. You know you're completely responsible for them." The narrator interjects, "But because they were ready for parenthood, raising Austin is a joy." Kerry admits, "It met my expectations in terms of how much work it would be and how time-consuming and how much love and affection I would feel for him."

Viewers hear next from Lalani. "We were happy we had accomplished some of the things that we wanted to do as a couple in order to become stronger. We were absolutely ready." As the scene shifts to Derek and his son, the narrator says, "But not all young people are." Viewers learn that Derek was a senior in college when his now ex-wife told him she was pregnant. Derek says, "Emotionally, I was not prepared to be a father. I wanted to be at a certain point in my life where I can say I would be financially stable, where I'd have a place and have everything that I needed in order to provide for my son."

In the next scene, a young woman named Katie says, "I think maturity-wise you have to have life experiences and you have to have goals for yourself, and at that time I really didn't. It's very tough." Katie became a parent at 16 and had a second baby at 19. She admits that she didn't know enough about raising a baby. "I was just starting to figure out who I was and trying to have fun with my friends. You have to give it all up. Definitely at a younger age than most kids, I had to figure out how I was going to provide for my family." Tanisha adds that it is hard not knowing what to do.

The narrator stresses, “To be ready to be a parent, you have to be emotionally mature—able to put the child’s needs ahead of your own and do whatever it takes to meet those needs.” As part of that, it’s best to be able to offer a stable home life. Steve and Lalani reflect, “We wanted to make sure that if we were going to have children, that we had them in a stable family. Before we brought children into this world, we wanted to make sure that we were going to stay together. Kids want to be a part of a stable, loving environment with their parents who are there for them.”

In contrast, Katie says, “I would say 99 percent of the girls I know—and I know quite a few teenage mothers—they’re not with the father and the father is not there for the kids. When it all comes down to it, you’re the one who has to give up your whole life to take care of these kids.” Derek appears on camera again and says, “Some guys pretty much don’t care, they just have kids and just go about their lives and pretty much don’t know the damage that they’re causing to the kid by not being around.” The camera cuts to shots of Tanisha preparing for her child’s birth: “I know this baby’s going to change my life. I’m going to be out there dealing with a lot of rough things.” A graphic reads: **EMOTIONAL PREPARATION: Maturity, Preparedness, Stability and Responsibility.** The narrator says, “It’s important to understand the sacrifices that will be required and that great responsibilities await you for many years. Would you be ready?”

The narrator introduces the next segment, **PHYSICAL PREPARATION.** Tanisha says that she started taking vitamins to keep herself and her baby healthy. Katie adds, “You have to go to the doctor’s every month. At the end of the pregnancy, you have to go every single week. It’s invasive.”

The narrator asks, “Once the baby comes, where will he sleep? Where will he grow up? How will he stay safe and healthy?” Katie responds, “You have to make sure everything is in order and also have a structured environment. If everything is the same for them, it’s less chaotic and they feel more secure.” She adds that she had the option of living in a less expensive neighborhood, “but the schools are really bad and I chose to stay here. It’s more sacrifices, but you want your kids to have a good education to get a better step [up] in life.”

The topic turns to health and safety, which the narrator calls “two of a parent’s biggest concerns.” The parents share their concerns about keeping their children safe. Derek says, “He’s allergic to eggs and peanuts. One time we gave him a small portion of an egg, not knowing, and he ended up having to get rushed to the hospital.” Katie says, “My son has asthma; he has it really bad in the wintertime. He was hospitalized this year for a week at the children’s hospital because he caught pneumonia.” Lalani shares that her son had colic. “I honestly didn’t know what I was going to do to make him stop crying. There is nothing you can do but just go through it.”

Jeremy and Kerry add, “It’s exhausting to follow him around and make sure that he doesn’t stick his finger in a light socket or that he doesn’t pull a lamp over. When you’re a parent, you kind of always have to be on top of your game or your child gets injured.” Lalani adds, “I’m always on in terms of looking for things that could pose potential danger to my son. It’s 24/7. And that’s something that you don’t see on TV.”

The narrator states that these issues can be easier to handle if someone can stay home with the child. Kerry says that she and her husband talked “very long and hard about whether or not I should go back to work. He’s working extremely hard to make the money so that I can stay home, and that’s huge. Without him, Austin would be in the care of somebody else.” In contrast, Katie shares that she has to be at the hospital at 7 a.m. for an internship, but her local daycare center does not open until 7:30. “So I have to actually find someone to come here at 6 o’clock in the morning and get the kids ready for school.”

The camera cuts to Tanisha walking down the street. She says, “You have a job and you have to go to school and you have to take care of your baby at the same time but it’s going to be hard because you can’t do three things at the same time.”

A graphic reads **PHYSICAL PREPARATION: Housing, Safety, Special Needs and Physical and Emotional Strength**. The narrator says, “Safety is of utmost importance for a child to be happy and healthy. If your child is born with special needs, the physical accommodations can be extensive, not to mention the emotional toll that can take. Taking care of a child requires physical and emotional strength. Too many young parents can’t handle the pressure—and in some cases the result can be child abuse and neglect. Would you be physically prepared to be a parent?”

As the next chapter, **FINANCIAL PREPARATION**, opens, Lalani is paying bills. “I don’t think people really understand how much it costs to raise a child.” Tanisha adds, “Money is going to be a problem.” Katie says, “You have to buy clothes, stroller and crib—very expensive things.” Words flash on screen related to expenses: **Housing, Healthcare, Clothing, Furnishings, Daycare, Entertainment and Food: \$200,000**. The narrator says, “Raising a child for 18 years can cost more than \$200,000. It could be double that if you figure in the cost of education after high school.” The words **Post Secondary Education, Up to \$400,000** appear on screen.

Derek says a child is “definitely expensive. I pay child support, food, clothing, you know, basics.” Kerry agrees. “Financially, babies are extremely expensive. Diapers alone are extremely costly.” Lalani describes how shocked she is by the cost of her son’s formula. Katie offers, “It’s not cheap because every season you have to buy new clothes, they grow out of it.”

The next section introduces **Check-ups, Vaccinations, Medicine, Insurance**. Jeremy says, “There [are] doctor visits and co-pays. He’s got to get his vaccinations and his check-ups, so the finances add up. There’s no question, it is expensive.”

The camera cuts to shots of Steve and Lalani’s son playing piano. The narrator says, “While taking care of babies is expensive, the expenses keep rising as children get older.” Lalani says, “He takes piano. They were doing swimming lessons, they were doing this other program, and all of these things cost that you don’t even really think about.” Katie adds, “I try to save as much as I can to set a little college fund aside.” Jeremy is shown with Austin. “We set up a savings plan for him. Unfortunately, the way our economy is going right now, what it costs for a kid to go to college right now is going to be laughable by the time Austin gets to college.”

According to the narrator, the odds are stacked against the children of unwed teen mothers. “Those children spend more of their lives in poverty than any other group, continuing a downward spiral.” Katie says, “You want your children to get a better education to get that step up in life so the poverty circle isn’t repeated.” Steve shares that his mother gave birth to him on her sixteenth birthday. “She struggled mightily to get me whatever it was I had, whether it was clothes or a place to stay. I didn’t want that life for my children.” Next, Tanisha’s mother, Elizabeth, tells viewers that she has been a single mom since she was 16. “I’m struggling. Tanisha’s pregnant. My other daughter just gave birth to her second child.” Tanisha says that she doesn’t want her little sister to make the same mistake she did.

Graphics appear: **FINANCIAL PREPARATION: Food, Housing, Furniture, Clothes, Education, Healthcare, Dental Care and Entertainment**. The narrator comments, “Future parents need to figure out what these costs will be—and how much income they’ll need to cover them. How would you prepare yourself financially for parenthood?”

Next, the topic turns to **SOCIAL PREPARATION**. Kerry says, “I do not have a social life anymore.” Derek agrees. “You’re not allowed to go out anymore.” Jeremy echoes these thoughts. “Social life? What are you talking about?” Lalani says, “The movies that we watch, they’re all kid-related.” Steve says, “Good parents are home with their children.” Katie shares, “One of the biggest challenges is not doing what all your other friends are doing. You have to stay home, you can’t go out and have fun anymore. I do wish that I could go out with my friends and just be a kid again, but I can’t.”

The narrator confirms, “Once you’re a parent, parties and trips to the mall with your friends are a thing of the past.” Tanisha addresses viewers. “I couldn’t go out to parties, I couldn’t go out to the mall, go shopping with my friends. I had to stay home and take care of myself and the baby that I’m carrying.” Katie adds, “I have not been to a concert since before I was pregnant with my first. Movies, never. I never get to talk on the phone because either one wants something, the other wants something and you can’t really have a conversation.” The narrator clarifies: “Parents do have a social life, but most of it revolves around their children, especially when they are young.”

The narrator stresses the importance of having a network of friends and family. Depression and isolation can be problems for new parents if they don't have adequate support. Kerry says, "Stability is so important with a baby." The narrator adds, "A good support network can be very helpful right after the baby is born when some women go through postpartum depression." Kerry echoes, "You have to be able to know that there are chances that you're going to have the baby blues."

Derek agrees. "It's pretty tough when you don't have the support that you need. It just makes it that much harder." About Tanisha, the narrator says, "Tanisha has some support, but will it be enough?" Tanisha's mother offers, "The best thing I could tell my daughter is to keep her head up, do the things that she's doing now and finish school. I will be there for her."

Shots of the parents are shown as graphics announce **SOCIAL PREPARATION: Child Comes First, Stable Relationship, Support Network**. The narrator tells viewers, "If you're going to be a parent, you need to put your child ahead of everyone else. It's vital that you be in a stable relationship and/or have a support network in order to raise a child successfully. Would you be socially prepared to become a parent?"

A montage is shown of the young parents in the video. The narrator poses the question: "There's so much to being a good parent. How do you really know if you're ready?" The parents weigh in. Lalani says, "You can't be selfish, you really have to say, *It's not all about me*. It's about my kids and about making sure that they're the best people." Kerry says, "You need to be sure that you've fulfilled a lot of your dreams." Jeremy adds, "You need to make sure that you're ready to take on that extra financial responsibility." Steve says, "There's nothing wrong with not being ready. It doesn't make you a bad person." Lalani says, "Children are definitely a gift but in order to treat them like a gift, you have to be ready, because if not, you'll resent them."

The parents share their final comments. Katie offers her advice to viewers. "I would say definitely use your head and actually think about the consequences before you do things." Derek says, "If I could do it all over again, I would definitely have waited until I was at a different point in my life." Tanisha says, "It's better off following your goals and staying in school and doing the right thing. I got pregnant when I was 16 and now I'm struggling."

Steve concludes, "The most important thing is knowing when you're ready. If you're not ready to put the needs of another person before yours every single day for the rest of your natural life, then you're not ready to be a parent."

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Name: _____

Pre/Post Test

Decide whether the following statements are true or false.

1. TRUE or FALSE: Men rarely have to make sacrifices when they become fathers. _____
2. TRUE or FALSE: As long as a child has a mother, it does not matter if the father is not around. _____
3. TRUE or FALSE: Medical visits during pregnancy can be invasive. _____
4. TRUE or FALSE: When parents are not able to handle the physical and emotional pressures of parenthood, child abuse and neglect may result. _____
5. TRUE or FALSE: Raising a child for 18 years costs approximately \$40,000. _____
6. TRUE or FALSE: The cost of raising children decreases as children get older. _____
7. TRUE or FALSE: Children of unwed teen mothers spend more of their lives in poverty than any other group. _____
8. TRUE or FALSE: Most parents manage to maintain a full social life after having children. _____
9. TRUE or FALSE: Depression and isolation can be a problem for new parents who do not have adequate support. _____
10. TRUE or FALSE: If you are not ready to put the needs of another person before yours, then you are not ready to be a parent. _____

The Answer Key to this activity appears on the next page.

Name: _____

Answer Key

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. TRUE or FALSE: Men rarely have to make sacrifices when they become fathers. | FALSE |
| 2. TRUE or FALSE: As long as a child has a mother, it does not matter if the father is not around. | FALSE |
| 3. TRUE or FALSE: Medical visits during pregnancy can be invasive. | TRUE |
| 4. TRUE or FALSE: When parents are not able to handle the physical and emotional pressures of parenthood, child abuse and neglect may result. | TRUE |
| 5. TRUE or FALSE: Raising a child for 18 years costs approximately \$40,000. | FALSE |
| 6. TRUE or FALSE: The cost of raising children decreases as children get older. | FALSE |
| 7. TRUE or FALSE: Children of unwed teen mothers spend more of their lives in poverty than any other group. | TRUE |
| 8. TRUE or FALSE: Most parents manage to maintain a full social life after having children. | FALSE |
| 9. TRUE or FALSE: Depression and isolation can be a problem for new parents who do not have adequate support. | TRUE |
| 10. TRUE or FALSE: If you are not ready to put the needs of another person before yours, then you are not ready to be a parent. | TRUE |

Name: _____

In order to get some real experience taking care of a baby or toddler, each member of the class should arrange to babysit for a younger brother, sister or a child in the neighborhood for at least two hours when the child is not sleeping. The child should be less than 18 months old, if possible.

When you have completed your two hours of babysitting, answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Did you change the baby's diapers? What was that like?
2. Did you feed the baby? What was that like?
3. Did the baby cry much? Were you able to comfort him or her? What did you do to try to cheer him/her up?
4. How much hands-on time did the baby/toddler require from you? Did you get anything else done while you were watching the child?
5. What activities did you do with the child?
6. How did you feel after it was all over?
7. How do you think you would feel if that was your life 24 hours a day, seven days a week?
8. What was the hardest part of taking care of a baby?
9. What was the best part of taking care of a baby?
10. What did this experience teach you about being a parent?

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 3A
JOB DESCRIPTION

PART ONE: Taking care of a baby and being a good parent is a lot of work. In the space below, make a list of the duties that are involved in taking care of a baby. Write down as many tasks as you can think of.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

Compare your list with those developed by your classmates. Did you leave out any major tasks? Are these jobs things you can see yourself doing, day in and day out, year after year? Are you ready to take on this kind of responsibility? Explain.

This activity is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

PART TWO: It has been said that parenting is the hardest job any person will ever have. It is also the job we are usually the least prepared to begin. What skills do you think are needed to face the challenges of parenting? Work in groups to fill out the job description below.

1. What skills do you need to be an effective parent?

Example: Ability to create and maintain a budget.

2. What personal traits contribute to being a good parent?

Example: Willingness to put others' needs ahead of my own.

3. What other personal strengths and abilities can help you in parenting?

Example: Ability to reach out to others when you need information.

4. What tasks will you do as a parent?

Example: Wake up every two to three hours each night to feed the baby during its first few months after birth.

5. What past experiences have prepared you for parenting?

Example: Taking care of a pet and providing it with regular care.

6. What can you do to enhance your parenting skills?

Example: Take a parenting class.

Name: _____

Pretend that you are an advice columnist for a magazine. These are the letters that you received in this week's bag of mail. Choose two of the following letters and write your responses on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Dear Answer Guy/Gal,
My boyfriend and I think it would be pretty romantic to have a baby together. I'm graduating high school next year and hope to go to college. My boyfriend says that he'll help me take care of the baby if we do this. Should we go ahead?
Incurable Romantic

2. Dear Answer Guy/Gal,
Before we got married, my husband and I agreed not to have children. We both like the freedom of having a carefree life. The problem is that my mother keeps insisting that she wants to be a grandmother. She says that I am being selfish and that everyone should be a parent. Should we reconsider?
Cheerfully Child-Free

3. Dear Answer Guy/Gal,
My husband and I would like to adopt a child. We don't care about the baby's race or ethnic origin. We are confident that we could provide a nurturing environment for any child. The problem is that our parents think we're crazy. They are so set against it that I fear they would not be involved in their grandchild's life if we pursue this adoption. I always pictured my future children having warm and caring grandparents, but now I see this probably wouldn't happen if we adopted a child. Do you have any advice?
Having Second Thoughts

4. Dear Answer Guy/Gal,
I am dating a man I care very much about. He has a child from a previous relationship and says he doesn't want more kids. We both agree I should decide if I want children before our relationship gets more serious. He seems like Mr. Right and I would hate to lose him, but I always imagined myself having children. Should I go ahead and pursue the relationship and hope his feelings will change about having children?
Wishy-Washy in Wisconsin

Name: _____

As a class, choose one of the following debate topics. Half the students should argue “Yes” to the topic, and the other half should argue “No.”

1

Before beginning a family, should both partners be required to sign a statement agreeing that they are both committed to wanting a child and being able to provide a loving and secure home? Why or why not?

2

Should men and women be required to get a “parenting license” (like a driver’s license) before they can begin a family? Why or why not?

3

Are teenagers capable of being good parents? Why or why not?

4

Should people be able to select the sex of a future child? Why or why not? Consider the consequences if all firstborn children were boys or if all were girls. Consider the impact on business, politics, education, marriage, families, etc. if gender selection were possible.

5

Some sociologists have proposed that family size be controlled by the government. Should people have to apply to the government if they decide to have more than one child? Why or why not?

6

In cases of adoption, should there be contact between the birthparents and the child after he or she has been placed in an adoptive home? Why or why not?

Name: _____

ACTIVITY 6
WHERE DO BABIES FIT?

What would you like to accomplish over the next five years? Check “Yes” or “No” for each of the suggested categories below. You may also add other categories that are not on the list.

Over the next five years, I would like to:

		Yes	No		Yes	No
<u>Education</u>				<u>Career</u>		
Graduate from high school		_____	_____	Work part-time	_____	_____
Get my GED		_____	_____	Work full-time	_____	_____
Attend college		_____	_____	Launch a career	_____	_____
Attend graduate school		_____	_____	Start a business	_____	_____
 <u>Income</u>				 <u>Purchases</u>		
Become self-supporting		_____	_____	Buy a car	_____	_____
Be earning at least \$		_____	_____	Buy:	_____	_____
Save each month at least \$		_____	_____	Buy:	_____	_____
 <u>Living Space</u>				 <u>Creative Pursuits</u>		
Rent an apartment		_____	_____	Learn an instrument	_____	_____
Rent a house		_____	_____	Play in a band	_____	_____
Buy a house		_____	_____	Pursue acting/dancing	_____	_____
Live with my parents		_____	_____	Pursue an art form	_____	_____
 <u>Recreation</u>				 <u>Social</u>		
Travel		_____	_____	Make new friends	_____	_____
Take up a sport or hobby		_____	_____	Have a relationship	_____	_____
Become active in a charity		_____	_____	Get married	_____	_____

My other goals include:

Use the back of this page to write a paragraph about how having a baby would (or would not) fit in with the goals you’ve identified. Would having a child help you or hinder you? Looking at the personal goals you’ve chosen, what do you think might be the ideal age for you to start a family?

Name: _____

Alternative family structures may include:

- two-career parent families
- married parents who have children by adoption or surrogacy
- parents who never marry but live under the same roof and have children together
- single-parent families
- single parents who raise children without a partner and who have children biologically, by adoption or by surrogacy
- homosexual couples who adopt or who have children who are biologically related to one of the partners
- married partners with part-time or full-time stepchildren
- blended families where children are not related to each other by blood
- children who are half-siblings (related to one parent by blood)
- children raised by an aunt, grandmother or other extended family
- childless couples

To arrive at a definition of family, you may consider:

- Does a family have to live under one roof?
- Does a family have to share resources and function as a unit?
- Must family members be related by blood, marriage or adoption?
- Do the members of the family need to be of the same ethnicity or religion?
- Is a family a group of people who love and support one another?

Name: _____

REASONS TO BECOME A PARENT

Look at the list of reasons below that people may have for becoming parents. Draw a line through any that are not good reasons to bring a new life into the world. Put a star next to reasons that you find especially true or valid.

1. Having a child will make my partner happy. _____
2. I think children will expand my life. _____
3. My mother wants to be a grandmother. _____
4. Having children will be a true expression of our love. _____
5. I want someone to play with. _____
6. Having a child will make my relationship with my partner stronger. _____
7. Having a child will help me learn to be responsible. _____
8. My religion encourages having children. _____
9. I want to share my beliefs and traditions with a child. _____
10. It would be fun to dress a baby in all those cute little clothes. _____
11. Having a child will make me feel like a “real man” or a “real woman.” _____
12. I want the warmth and closeness of a family. _____
13. People will respect me more if I am a parent. _____
14. I want to experience the joy and wonder that children provide. _____
15. I want someone to love me so I can love myself. _____
16. I feel my life would not be complete without having a child. _____
17. I want to teach and nurture a child. _____
18. I’m bored. Having a child would give me something to do. _____
19. All my friends are having babies. _____
20. My partner won’t think of leaving me if we have a baby together. _____

Discuss your answers with the class. Do your classmates agree on which are the most and least valid reasons for becoming a parent?

Name: _____

Choose one of the quotations below and write one-page paper in which you explain why you agree (or disagree) with the quote you have selected.

Parents are the bones on which children cut their teeth.

~ *Peter Ustinov*

Your children need your presence more than your presents.

~ *Jesse Jackson*

We are apt to forget that children watch examples better than they listen to preaching.

~ *Roy L. Smith*

Raising kids is part joy and part guerilla warfare.

~ *Ed Asner*

Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.

~ *Proverbs 22:6*

There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots, the other, wings.

~ *Hodding Carter*

It takes a village to raise a child.

~ *African proverb*

You can learn many things from children. How much patience you have, for instance.

~ *Franklin P. Jones*

Each day of our lives we make deposits in the memory banks of our children.

~ *Charles R. Swindoll*

Simply having children does not make mothers.

~ *John A. Shedd*

Although there are many trial marriages... there is no such thing as a trial child.

~ *Gail Sheehy*

Name: _____

WHOSE JOB IS IT, ANYWAY?

Imagine yourself further along the road of life. You and your partner are ready to start a family. What do you see as each person's role and responsibility? For each responsibility below, indicate whose job it is as follows:

- M = I see myself as being primarily responsible for this.
- P = I see my partner as being primarily responsible for this.
- S = I see this responsibility as being shared equally by my partner and me.
- O = I see some other person (neither my partner nor myself) as being primarily responsible for this.
- N/A = This is not something we need to concern ourselves with.

- _____ working to support the family
- _____ keeping the house clean
- _____ shopping for groceries
- _____ doing laundry
- _____ planning and cooking meals for the family
- _____ being the primary caregiver for the child
- _____ changing diapers
- _____ feeding the baby
- _____ getting up in the middle of the night when the baby is hungry/crying
- _____ taking the child to medical appointments
- _____ staying home with the child when he/she is sick
- _____ giving the child religious instruction
- _____ doing activities with the child (reading books, singing songs, doing art projects, taking the child on play-dates, etc.)
- _____ working an extra job when there is not enough money to raise a child
- _____ using birth control in order to plan for pregnancy
- _____ house maintenance and repair

When all students have decided on the roles above, it's time for the class to discuss their answers. Divide the class into males and females. Are the guys' answers much different from the girls' answers? On a separate sheet, write a paragraph to describe how you think parental responsibilities should be divided fairly by both partners.

Name: _____

INTERVIEW A TEEN PARENT

For this assignment, you must interview someone who is or has been a teen parent. You can interview an older person, as long as he/she was a parent during the teen years. Take careful notes during your interview. You will use these notes later to write a report on your interview. Here are some questions to get you started:

1. How did you become a teen parent? Was it planned? If so, why did you want to be a parent then?
2. Did the reality of being a teen parent turn out to be what you expected? If not, what was different?
3. What is the hardest part about being a teen parent?
4. If you had a teenage sister or brother who was about to become sexually active, what advice would you have?
5. Was your partner “there” for you during the pregnancy? After your child’s birth, did your partner keep the promises that were made before the baby arrived?
6. How did having a baby as a teenager affect your education? Did it affect your ability to make a living? If so, how?
7. How did having a baby as a teenager affect you financially? What kinds of things did you have to buy for the baby that you hadn’t anticipated? What kinds of things did you have to refrain from buying because you needed to watch your budget?
8. How did having a baby as a teenager affect your social life?
9. Looking back, do you think that you were ready to become a parent? Why or why not?
10. Knowing what you know now, what do you think is the ideal age to start a family?

Using your notes, write a report in which you explain what you have learned from your investigation.

Name: _____

For this activity, you and your classmates will be assigned to one of six research teams. These are your research team choices:

1. Interview a lawyer to learn about the legal obligations of parenthood.

2. Interview a banker to learn about savings plans and the best way to prepare for a child's future expenses (*i.e.*, college).

3. Interview a doctor to learn about the health concerns for infants and toddlers: how often visits are necessary, what common childhood illnesses can be expected, how much vaccinations cost.

4. Interview an employment agency worker to learn about available jobs in your area, what training or education is required, and whether or not your employer will provide health insurance.

5. Interview a daycare center worker to learn about what it costs to keep a child in daycare, and how the daycare system is organized to help single parents.

6. Interview an insurance agent to find out what types of insurance are recommended for families. What do the various policies cover? What is the typical cost of a basic insurance policy of each type?

Once your class has been divided into teams, your team must generate five questions for your interview before conducting your research. When your interviews are completed, your team will present its findings to the class.

Name: _____

IS THIS ABUSE?

Decide whether you think each of the situations below is a case of child abuse or not. Circle either “Abuse” or “Not Abuse.” On the back of this page, explain your answers and be prepared to discuss your reasoning with the class.

A girl is slapped on the arm for having a tantrum. The slap stings, but leaves no lasting mark or pain.	Abuse Not Abuse
A boy spills his chocolate milk all over. His caregiver says, “Oink oink, you pig.”	Abuse Not Abuse
A father burns his daughter’s palms with a lighted cigarette when he finds her smoking.	Abuse Not Abuse
A mother is careless and spills scalding coffee on her daughter, who is seriously burned.	Abuse Not Abuse
A boy’s arm is broken while play wrestling with his father.	Abuse Not Abuse
A babysitter shakes a baby to get her to stop crying.	Abuse Not Abuse
A boy is grounded for a week for coming home ten minutes after his curfew.	Abuse Not Abuse
Parents take away their child’s driver’s license for getting a parking ticket.	Abuse Not Abuse
A girl is spanked so hard that she is bruised, but her father says he didn’t mean to hurt her.	Abuse Not Abuse

Name: _____

PERSONAL READINESS QUIZ

Circle “A” (agree) or “D” (disagree) for each of the following statements.

Most of the time, I believe that...

1.	Having a lot of free time is important to me.	A	D
2.	I get frustrated easily when things don't go my way.	A	D
3.	Sleeping late is very important to me.	A	D
4.	Routines are boring.	A	D
5.	I need more time to reach my educational and career goals.	A	D
6.	I don't have much confidence in myself.	A	D
7.	It would really bother me to spend most of my money on someone else for the next 18 years.	A	D
8.	I would want my child to be just like me.	A	D
9.	I still have years to go before I am fully mature.	A	D
10.	Going out when I feel like it is my right as a teen.	A	D
11.	I sometimes have trouble controlling my temper.	A	D
12.	Children get on my nerves.	A	D
13.	I feel unprepared to take care of a baby or a toddler.	A	D
14.	I need someone to love me before I can love myself.	A	D
15.	I find it difficult to be flexible and compromise.	A	D
16.	I am easily upset when my plans change.	A	D
17.	Household chores are really boring.	A	D
18.	I want to be rich and famous someday.	A	D
19.	I'd need to clean up my act before I could be a good role model for a child.	A	D
20.	It's not my job to take care of all kinds of financial details.	A	D

If you agreed with most of the statements above, you are not ready to become a parent. Spend some time setting goals and thinking about how you see your future self as you mature.

Derived from Just Say Know: An Educator's Guide to Helping Young People Make Informed Decisions. Planned Parenthood Association of Utah, 1988.

FACT SHEETS

Name: _____

Points to consider:

- Parenting is said to be the world's wildest roller coaster ride. It's fun, rewarding, distressing, joyful and fulfilling.
- Children need a stable home environment. Having children puts more stress on an already weak relationship.
- Becoming a parent is an irreversible decision. You can't take the child back when it is not fun anymore.
- Being ready is key, making sure it's the right time in your life to take on the all-consuming responsibility of a new life.
- If both partners have careers, they should discuss how they feel about raising children in a dual career family.
- Having a child must be a mutual decision. If one partner is not ready for parenthood, it is wise to delay or forgo having a child.
- Children require unconditional love.
- Children require sacrifice. If you say *yes* to parenting, you will be saying *no* to other options.
- Children require a lot of direct, hands-on time.
- Children cost money. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that a typical family will spend more than \$165,000 raising one child to the age of 18.

Questions to consider:

- Do you really want to have children? Do you like children?
What can you do help yourself become a good parent?
- Will one parent stay home to raise the child? How would a child fit into your goals for career and marriage?
- What would you like to accomplish before you have kids?
- Will you be able to meet a child's physical, social and emotional needs while attending to your own needs?
- How would your life change if you had a special-needs child?

Name: _____

Taking responsibility for a new life is awesome. It is a decision that will affect you for the rest of your life.

How to prepare:

- If you're married, focus on maintaining a mutually positive relationship with your partner and decrease any hostility.
- Work on developing positive traits such as confidence, patience and cheerfulness. Practice focusing on the positive.
- Think about your career and personal goals and the ways in which those goals would be affected by parenthood.
- Learn about child development so you can approach parenting your child with realistic expectations.
- Increase your social support network that can help you as a new parent. Learn who you can look to for help, understanding and advice.
- If you are prone to depression, seek medical help and get support for dealing with the challenges of parenting.
- Learn more about parenting by reading books, magazines and reputable online resources on the topic.
- Check to see if your local health agency, hospital or other program offers courses or has materials that discuss specific aspects of becoming a parent.

Name: _____

Adoption is the legal act of permanently placing a child with a parent or parents other than the birth (or “biological”, or “natural”) mother or father. An adoption order has the effect of severing the parental responsibilities and rights of the birth parent(s) and transferring those responsibilities and rights to the adoptive parent(s). After the finalization of an adoption, there is no legal difference between adopted children and those born to the parents.

—Wikipedia <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adoption>>

Why Adopt? A single woman who is pregnant and feels unable to care for a child may wish to have her baby adopted by a couple who cannot have children on their own. An estimated 11 to 24 percent of Americans who cannot conceive or carry a child to term attempt to adopt. Some people choose to adopt because they wish to avoid passing on genetic diseases, they have health concerns relating to pregnancy and childbirth, they are not in a family structure set up to produce biological children (perhaps they are single or homosexual), or they feel it is more responsible to care for otherwise parentless children than to reproduce.

Agency Adoption: The birthparents place their child for adoption through an agency that has been licensed by the government.

Benefits: An agency provides counseling, handles legal matters, makes arrangements for the birth and selects a home for the child.

Independent Adoption: The adoption is generally arranged through a doctor, lawyer or some other third party who knows of someone who wishes to adopt a child. Custody is transferred directly between parents rather than through an agency.

Benefits: For a specified period of time, both the birthparents and the adoptive parents are allowed to change their minds. Independently arranged adoptions are usually open adoptions. The adoptive parents generally agree to pay many of the birthmother’s prenatal and delivery expenses. It is possible to keep the child within the family if he or she is adopted by a relative.

Closed Adoption: The birthparents and adoptive parents have no contact with each other. The birthparents never see or hear about their child once it is born. All communication is handled by an attorney or adoption agency.

Benefits: The birthparent has no financial responsibility to the child. Potential conflicts between the birthparents and adoptive parents are avoided.

This fact sheet is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

Open Adoption: There is contact between the birthparents and adoptive parents. Arrangements regarding contact are typically informal. Even in an open adoption, legal rights of guardianship are terminated, and the adoptive parents become the legal parents.

Benefits: Open adoptions allow adoptive parents and children to interact directly with biological kin. Communication may include correspondence, telephone calls or visits. Questions about the adopted children's history are more easily answered ("Who do I look like?" etc.) and fantasies/idealizations are kept in check.

Disadvantages: The ongoing relationship in an open adoption does not provide a clean break for assimilation into a family, there are potential feelings of rejection if contact stops, and there is a potential for resentment between birth and adoptive families or the possibility of the families being played against each other.

Degrees of Openness: The degree of relationship in an open adoption is determined by all parties before the birth of the child.

Totally open: Birthparents have a relationship with child, perhaps meeting several times per year.

Semi-open: Birthparents and adoptive parents may meet once or several times and then may not have further physical contact. Letters and pictures may be exchanged directly or through a third party throughout the years.

Barely open: Birthparents and adoptive parents know each other's first names only. All communication is done through letters and photographs. Birthparents do not meet with the child.

Unrelated vs. Related Adoption: An *intra-family* or *related* adoption occurs when a child is adopted by a family member, such as when a step-parent legally adopts the child of the new spouse or when a child cannot otherwise be cared for and a family member agrees to take over.

International Adoption: Laws of different countries vary in allowing a child to be placed for adoption outside that child's country of birth. Some countries, such as China, have relatively well-established procedures for foreign adopters to follow, while others, such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), forbid international adoptions.

Safe Haven Laws: Many states have laws that allow birthparents to leave unharmed infants at hospitals, police stations, firehouses and other "safe havens" without facing criminal charges of abandonment.

Name: _____

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines *child abuse* as “any act of commission or omission by a caregiver that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child.” In over 80 percent of child abuse cases, a parent is the perpetrator of the abuse.

Types of child abuse:

- Neglect can be physical, educational and/or emotional. It includes the failure to provide supervision or adequate food, clothing or hygiene, the failure to enroll a child in school, the failure to provide adequate nurturing or affection or exposing the child to a violent environment.
- Physical abuse can include striking, burning, shaking, pinching, hair- or ear-pulling or cutting off a child’s air supply.
- Sexual abuse involves inappropriate touching or fondling, penetration, violation of privacy, exposing children to adult sexuality and exploitation.
- Psychological or emotional abuse includes verbal abuse, withholding affection, extreme punishment, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, terrorizing and isolating. Emotional/psychological abuse is probably the least understood of all forms of child abuse because there are no visible marks, but it can be the cruelest and most destructive of all types of abuse.

If you suspect abuse...

You cannot always tell if a child is being abused, but if you suspect that an acquaintance, neighbor, friend or relative is abusing a child, it is your duty to report it and let the professionals decide if they need to intervene.

Call the **National Child Abuse Hotline** at **1-800-4-A-CHILD** for 24-hour crisis counseling and referral to local child protection agencies. Call 911 if there is an emergency.

What is Shaken Baby Syndrome?

- Shaken Baby Syndrome can occur when a frustrated caregiver loses patience and emotional control with a crying baby. It is considered a serious form of child abuse.
- Each year in the U.S. medical treatment is sought for an estimated 1,400 to 1,600 babies due to damage done by shaking.
- Shaken Baby Syndrome is preventable.
- About 25 to 30 percent of infant victims of Shaken Baby Syndrome die from their injuries.
- Up to 50 percent of child abuse deaths are caused by shaking.
- Shaken Baby Syndrome, even when not fatal, can produce lifelong disability from neurological damage, resulting in visual impairment or blindness, motor impairment and cognitive impairments.
- Babies cry for many reasons or for no reason. Crying is perfectly healthy and normal in babies—it's their only means of communication! But for parents and caregivers, it can become stressful at times.

What can you do if a baby is crying and won't stop?

- Feed and/or burp the baby.
- Change the baby's diaper.
- Check the baby's temperature—he or she may be sick.
- Check the room temperature—he or she might be hot or cold.
- Check to see if the baby's clothing is too tight.
- Take the baby for a walk or a ride for a change the scenery, or even to a different room—he or she might be bored.
- Lean over the baby and talk, sing or hum to him or her in a soothing voice.
- Give the baby a hug, kiss and hold him or her close.
- Offer a pacifier or a clean finger for the baby to suck on.
- Swaddle the baby in a blanket (especially for newborns).
- Gently rock the baby in your arms or swing with him or her.

This fact sheet is continued on the next page.

Name: _____

- Gently massage the baby.
- Call the pediatrician if you think something is wrong.
- Let the baby listen to a repeating sound, such as a low thumping noise or an electric shaver.
- Rock the baby gently in your arms or walk with the baby against your shoulder.
- Change the position of the baby: Lay the baby on his or her stomach across your lap.

If nothing works, remember that sometimes babies just need to cry! The average newborn cries for two to three hours each day. If you feel stressed out when a baby in your care is crying, call someone to help you. If no one can come over, put the baby down in a safe place and walk away. No baby has ever died from crying too much, but too many have died from being shaken!

NEVER shake a baby
or a small child—
just walk away!

Sources:

Stop Shaken Baby Syndrome, Inc.
<<http://stopsbs.net>>

The Shaken Baby Alliance
<www.shakenbaby.org>

The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome
<www.dontshake.com>

“Shaken Baby Syndrome,” *Wikipedia*.
Accessed 8/17/08 <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baby-shaking>>

Name: _____

For information about parenting and more, please consult these websites. Keep in mind that web URLs may change.

Adopting
<www.adopting.org>

AdoptioNetwork
<www.adoption.org>

Birth Psychology
<www.birthpsychology.com>

Childhelp: Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuser
<www.childhelp.org>

National Center for Fathering
<www.fathers.com>

The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome
<www.dontshake.com>

The National Parenting Center
<www.tnpc.com>

Parenting Newsletters at the
University of Wisconsin Extension Service
<www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/parenting>

Stop Shaken Baby Syndrome, Inc.
<www.stopsbs.net>

The Shaken Baby Alliance
<www.shakenbaby.org>

iVillage Pregnancy and Parenting
<www.parenting.ivillage.com>

Name: _____

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Name: _____

OTHER HEALTH PROGRAMS FOR GRADES 7-12 FROM HUMAN RELATIONS MEDIA

<i>Understanding HIV and AIDS</i>	Video/print or DVD/print
<i>Avoiding the Teen Pregnancy Trap</i>	Video/print or DVD/print
<i>Lifestyle Diseases and How to Avoid Them</i>	Video/print or DVD/print
<i>Nutrition Myths and Facts</i>	Video/print or DVD/print
<i>Do I Have an Eating Disorder?</i>	Video/print or DVD/print
<i>Human Reproduction and Childbirth</i>	Video/print or DVD/print
<i>Straight Talk: The Truth about STDs</i>	Video/print or DVD/print
<i>STDs: Just the Facts</i>	PowerPoint presentation
<i>Preparing for Marriage</i>	PowerPoint presentation
<i>Contraception Options</i>	PowerPoint presentation
<i>Understanding Fetal Alcohol Syndrome</i>	Video/print or DVD/print
<i>No Safe Amount: Women, Alcohol and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome</i>	Video/print or DVD/print
<i>Diabetes: Why Many Teens Are at Risk</i>	Video/print or DVD/print
<i>Curriculum in a Box: Human Sexuality and Responsibility</i>	Video/DVD/print curriculum
<i>Curriculum in a Box: Gateway Drugs and Beyond</i>	Video/DVD/print curriculum
<i>Drugged Driving: The Road to Disaster</i>	Video/print or DVD/print
<i>This Is Your Brain on Tobacco: A Research Update</i>	Video/print or DVD/print
<i>Pharm Parties: A Lethal Mix</i>	Video/print or DVD/print
<i>Teen Depression: Signs, Symptoms and Getting Help</i>	Video/print or DVD/print
<i>The Five Essential Habits of Healthy Teens</i>	Video/print or DVD/print

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