

TIPS FOR PARENTS: DEALING WITH TEENAGE PREGNANCY

Finding out that your child is pregnant can cause you to feel a wide range of emotions. The following tips raise considerations to help you and your family through the challenges that lie ahead.



- 1 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.
- 2 Keep in mind that** this is the pregnant teen's decision. Do your best to respect the decisions that she makes.
- 3 It may help to find a counselor** to speak to your son or daughter. Sometimes it's easier to make decisions with the help of someone who is removed from the situation.
- 4 If you are the parent of the young woman,** encourage the involvement of the baby's father and his family. If you are the parent of the young man, support him in taking responsibility for his actions, both financially and emotionally.
- 5 Explore resources available** to your son or daughter and your family.
- 6 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.
- 7 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.
- 8 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.
- 9 Help financially if you are able to,** but also 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.
- 10 Communicate with your other children early** about sexuality, pregnancy and STDs. Sisters of teenage parents are more likely to become pregnant at a young age.
- 11 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.

Adapted from: <http://www.raisingadaughter.com/sidestreets/26.shtml> and http://www.kidshhealth.org/parent/positive/talk/teen_pregnancy.html

WEB RESOURCES:

- 🌐 <http://teenagerstoday.com/resources/articles/pregnant.htm>
Do's and don'ts if your daughter is pregnant.
- 🌐 <http://www.fosterparents.com/jaw9c.html>
If you're the foster parent of a pregnant teen.
- 🌐 <http://www.ferre.org/workbook/index.html>
The Ferre Institute's *Pregnant? Need Help? Workbook*

NUMBERS TO CALL:

- 🌐 **CA Youth Crisis Line...800-843-5200**
24 hour, confidential phone line available to young people, primarily between the ages of 12-24, and those who are concerned about them.

- 🌐 **California School-Age Families Education Program... 916-319-0917**
Provides information designed to increase the availability of support services necessary for enrolled expectant/parenting students to improve academic achievement and parenting skills and to provide a quality child care/development program for their children.
- 🌐 **San Francisco Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Project Planned Parenthood Hotline.....1-800-230-PLAN-**
Planned Parenthood provides pregnancy counseling, family planning, and healthcare services for pregnant teens. Call this number to find the Planned Parenthood in your county/area.