



## **Deciding To Take Your Baby Home...**

After thinking about your pregnancy and talking it over with the father of the baby and your family, you may have come to the decision to raise the baby. Adoption STAR calls this a “parenting plan.” However it is only a plan once you truly ask yourself some challenging questions and implement the necessary steps to successfully provide your baby with the home he or she deserves.

Think carefully about all your choices and make your decision based on what's best for you, your baby and your family.

- Am I ready to help a child feel wanted and loved 24 hours a day for at least the next 18 years?
- Am I ready emotionally and financially to become a parent?
- Is the baby's father ready emotionally and financially to become a parent? Will he be there for me and the baby?

- Can I talk about my feelings and other important things with the father of the child, my partner, family, and friends? Will I have their support?
- Am I ready to accept full responsibility for parenting and do it alone, if it becomes necessary?
- Will I have enough money to support myself and a child?
- Am I mature enough to not harm the child physically or emotionally? (I won't tease, humiliate, slap, hit, or threaten my child no matter what happens, no matter how frustrated I get.)
- Am I ready to seek whatever counseling I need to become a better parent?
- Am I ready to give up my social life with my friends to take care of my baby?
- Am I ready to put my school or career plans on hold? How can I continue my education? Can I get a job?

If you have decided to take home your baby then you must be committed to the idea of “good parenting.” Our aim is to empower you to be the best parent possible for your child, whether you are married or single.

Sometimes, individuals do not have role models for good parenting. This needs to be changed. By improving your parenting skills and cooperating with the other parent, you can be a good role model. Parenting skills can be taught. If you feel you are in need of parenting support and skills training, there are several resources in your community. Feel free to contact Adoption STAR for referrals and resources that can assist you with your parenting plan.

Financial issues are also important. You must determine if you will receive financial support from the other parent of the child. Sometimes this is difficult especially if the other parent (usually the father) does not acknowledge paternity or is unwilling or unable to provide such support. But no matter how much financial child support is collected, there is often a constant complaint that non-custodial parents are not paying enough. Whether you are successful at receiving child support or not, you are obligated to support your child. When you bring a child into the world, you owe that child support ~ emotional as well as financial. There are resources in your community to assist you in exploring what resources may be available to you and your child.

## **Making Decisions Regarding Parenting**

*The following is a questionnaire to help you consider certain things prior to making the decision to parent a child or place a child for adoption. These questions are designed to raise ideas that you may not have thought about. There are no "right" answers and no "grades." Answers are "right" if they help you to decide whether or not you wish to parent your child. Because everyone changes, answers to the following questions may change as time goes on. It is important for you to know that you have a choice.*

### **DOES HAVING AND RAISING A CHILD FIT THE LIFESTYLE I WANT?**

1. What do I want out of life for myself? What do I think is important?
2. Could I handle this child and a job at the same time? Would I have time and energy for both?
3. Would I be ready to give up the freedom to do what I want to do, when I want to do it?
4. Would I be willing to cut back my social life and spend more time at home? Would I miss my freedom and privacy?
5. Can I afford to support this child? Do I know how much it takes to raise a child?
6. Do I want to raise this child in the neighborhood where I live now? Would I be willing and able to move?
7. How would this child interfere with my growth and development?
8. Would this child change my educational plans? Do I have the energy to go to school and raise this child at the same time?
9. Am I willing to give a great part of my life -- AT LEAST 18 YEARS -- to be responsible for this child and spend a larger portion of my life being concerned about my child's well being?



## WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

1. Do I like doing things with children? Do I enjoy spending full-time hours with children? Do I enjoy activities that children can do?
2. Would I want this child to be "like me"?
3. Would I want to try to pass on to my child my ideas and values? What if my child's ideas and values turn out to be different than mine?
4. Would I want my child to achieve the things I wish I had, but didn't?
5. Would I expect my child to keep me from being lonely in my old age? Do I, or will I, do that for my parents? Do my parents do that for my grandparents?
6. Do I want a boy or a girl? What if I don't get what I want?
7. Would having this child show others how mature I am?
8. Will I prove I am a woman (or a man) by having this child?
9. Do I expect my child to make my life happy?

## RAISING A CHILD? WHAT'S THERE TO KNOW?

1. Do I like children? When I'm around children for awhile, what do I think or feel about having one around all of the time?
2. Do I enjoy teaching others?
3. Is it easy for me to tell other people what I want or need, or what I expect of them?
4. Do I want to give this child the love (s)he needs? Is loving easy for me?
5. Am I patient enough to deal with the noise and confusion and the 24-hour a day responsibility? What kind of time and space do I need for myself?
6. What do I do when I get angry or upset? Would I take things out on a child if I lost my temper?
7. What does discipline mean to me? What does freedom, or setting limits, or giving space mean? What is being too strict or not strict enough? Would I want a perfect child?
8. How do I get along with my parent(s)? What will I do to avoid mistakes that my parent(s) made?
9. How will I care for this child's health? Safety? How do I take care of my own?
10. What if I keep this child and find out I made the wrong decision?



## HAVE MY PARTNER AND I REALLY TALKED ABOUT BECOMING PARENTS?

1. Does my partner want to have this child? Have we talked about our reasons?
2. Could we give this child a good home? Is our relationship a happy and strong one?
3. Are we both ready to give our time and energy to raising this child?
4. Could we share our love with this child without jealousy?
5. What would happen if we split after having the child, or if one of us should die?
6. Do my partner and I understand each other's feelings about religion, work, family, child raising, and future goals? Do we feel pretty much the same way? Will children fit into these feelings, hopes, and plans?
7. Suppose one of us wants this child and the other one doesn't? Who decides?
8. Can I raise this child as a single parent?

## OTHER IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Am I alone in this decision? Do my friends understand my feelings?
2. Am I already a parent and find myself pregnant again?
3. Am I happy or often depressed?
4. Which of the questions on this questionnaire do I really need to discuss and think about before making my decision?

