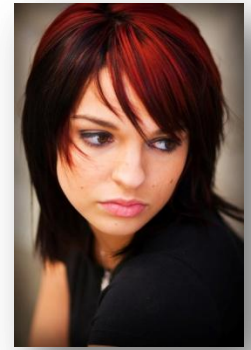


Teen Parents... You're Not Alone!



What's Happening:

Parenting can be a very rewarding experience, and sometimes it can feel overwhelming. Being a teen parent is especially difficult. Raising a child involves a major commitment in time and money, and teen parents have to make major sacrifices — many have to give up their social lives and postpone their educational and career goals.

Options for Teen Parents:

Every parent needs support sometimes. If you think stress may be affecting how you treat your baby, it's time to find some help. Here are some things to try:

- **Join a support group/mom's group.** A group for young or first time moms or dads could give you time with new friends who have lives similar to yours. Your children can play with other children, and you can talk about your problems with people who understand. Look on the internet or call your local Family Resource Center for information about support groups in your community.
- **Improve your parenting skills.** Don't be afraid to ask for advice from experienced parents. Classes for parents can also help you build on what you already know about raising a happy, healthy child.
- **Find ways to handle stress.** Take a break while someone reliable cares for your baby. Take a walk with the baby in a stroller, or rest while your baby naps. A social worker, nurse, or home visitor can help you learn other ways to manage stress.
- **Finish school.** Even though it may be difficult, finishing high school (or getting a GED) is one of the most important things you can do to help your baby and yourself. A diploma will help you get a better job or take the next step in your education (such as vocational training or college).
- **Call for support and resources.** Call a friend or family member. Call the 24 hour Parent Support Line at 1-888-281-3000.

Many Teen Parents feel:

- **Confused and Uncertain** – about their future or their skills as a parent
- **Overwhelmed** – they don't know where to begin or they feel like giving up
- **Angry** – at the baby's other parent, their friends, or even the baby
- **Lonely** – like they are the only person dealing with so many problems
- **Depressed** – sad and unable to face their problems

These feelings do not mean you are a bad parent!

Stay in contact with friends and family who support you and make you feel good about yourself. Remember, help is just a phone call away.

