

The Parenting Question

Chapter 33



WORDS FOR THOUGHT

"Children are our most valuable natural resource."
(Herbert Hoover)

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

In what sense are children a resource?

Examining Parenting

OBJECTIVES

After studying this section, you should be able to:

- Evaluate reasons for and against having children.
- Compare challenges and rewards of parenthood.
- Explain the options available to infertile couples.
- Give reasons why people choose adoption.
- Compare advantages and disadvantages of adoption procedures.

TERMS TO LEARN

parenting
genetic diseases
infertility
fertility
adoption
closed adoption
open adoption

Imagine you decide that you want to be a truck driver. Driving a truck looks exciting.

Besides, can it be much different from driving a car? You hop into the cab of a tractor-trailer, staring at the array of switches and gauges. You turn the ignition. The dashboard lights up and the cab vibrates as the motor rumbles powerfully. You frown uncertainly as your hand wavers over what looks like a gear-shift. What will the outcome be? You can probably think of some unpleasant possibilities.

Every day in the real world, countless people put themselves in the driver's seat of a family by becoming parents—without training. Raising a child looks exciting and not that difficult. This approach to parenting can also produce some painful results.

CHOOSING PARENTHOOD

For some people, parenthood just happens. They don't ask themselves whether having a child is the right thing to do, nor do they prepare themselves for the responsibilities.

Having a child isn't something you can walk away from—emotionally, legally, or morally. You can quit a job or end a friendship. Parenthood, however, can't be undone. It has a long-lasting impact on parents—and children. People who are not prepared to love and care for a child properly may make more mistakes. Whatever goes wrong, the child also pays a price, perhaps for a lifetime.





When a couple choose to have a child, they're usually better prepared to give the necessary love and care. Why do some people mistakenly *think* they are ready?

the role. Children born to parents who are ready and know how to raise them stand a better chance at becoming happy, productive individuals.

Pressures to Have Children

In many ways society promotes the idea of having children—and with good cause. A society can't continue without future generations. Society's approval of parenthood shows in everything from income tax deductions for children to half-price meals for children at restaurants.

Children, too, learn the expectation of parenthood as they grow up. Small children practice parenting by playing "house." Adults tell children, "When you have kids of your own..." Such comments imply that parenthood is automatic.

The high pregnancy rate among teens is evidence that parenthood is taken too lightly. However, anyone who has children without forethought risks the same difficult outcomes.

There is a better way to look at parenthood. People need to view **parenting**, the process of caring for children and helping them grow and learn, as a choice. Then they can make thoughtful decisions about whether, when, and how to parent. They can find and use the parenting information they need.

Consciously choosing parenthood in this way is a gift you give yourself and your child. As with any goal, you are more apt to succeed as a parent when you've chosen

bringing. Having a child for any other reason is a shaky start to parenting. Children are a source of joy and fulfillment to many people, but rarely to those who want them for the wrong reasons.

Pressures to Remain Childless

Because of the widespread opinion that people should have children, most pressure to remain childless comes from the couple to themselves. About ten percent of people of childbearing age choose not to have children. They make this choice for reasons like these:

- Some couples take a global view of the issue. They believe the world already has too many people competing for limited resources. They may worry about bringing a child into a world troubled by international conflict and environmental problems. Those who have such broad concerns tend to have few, if any, children.
- Some people simply don't enjoy children. Megan, for example, grew up in a big family. Years of caring for siblings taught her that parenting wasn't for her. Her mother warned that she would be lonely in her old age, but Megan said, "Children aren't insurance policies. You don't have them now to benefit from them later. Besides, suppose my child wants to travel or settle in a different part of the country?"

The image of a happy, settled family with children can make people want that for themselves. Why might having a child too soon actually prevent people from reaching such a goal?

- Some people have values and goals that conflict with parenting. People with career ambitions may decide that children would interfere with their professional success. Many people enjoy travel and activities that are difficult to do with children.
- Some people avoid having children because of diseases that run in the family. Such **genetic diseases** are passed from parent to child, although not every child may be affected. Genetic diseases include diabetes, hemophilia, sickle cell anemia, cystic fibrosis, and Tay-Sachs disease. Through genetic testing or counseling, couples with a family history of such a disease can learn their chances of passing it to a child.

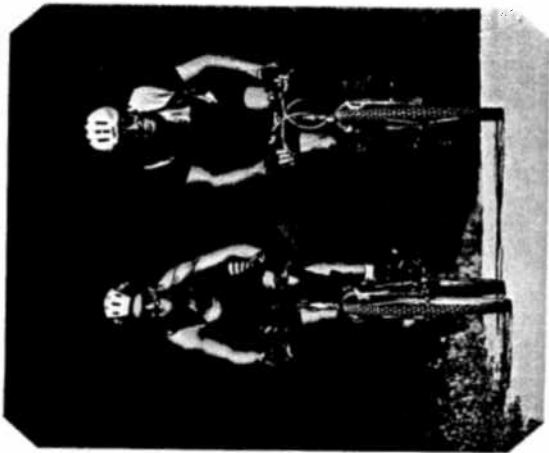


Thoughtful Decision Making

In the past, married couples were expected to have children unless they were physically unable to do so. Today, modern methods of planning births allow choices about if and when to have children. This ability to choose carries the responsibility to choose wisely.

As in all decision making, the best choices come when all the options and consequences are thoughtfully weighed. You need to recognize the values, circumstances, and pressures that influence your choice about whether to have a child. Sorting through all the facts and reasons can help you make decisions about parenting that are right for you.

Life without children can be a choice today, just as choosing to have them is. Do you think a teen can know for sure that he or she will never want to have children?



INFOLINK

Meeting Children's Needs

For more information on meeting children's needs, see Section 34-1.

Only you can decide whether you want to parent. Your choice, however, has broad implications for your future and that of your children. Making the right choice now helps ensure a happy, satisfying life for yourself and for any children you might have.

CHALLENGES OF PARENTING

As with any job, you need a job description to think intelligently about parenting. Raising healthy, well-adjusted children takes certain skills, plus lots of time, energy, patience, and understanding. Parents must supply *all* of a child's needs. They are responsible for making sure a child is safe, loved, educated, socially adjusted, and guided. Handling these duties well can challenge even the most dedicated and loving parent.

Financial Responsibilities

Raising a child is expensive. Conservative estimates set the cost of raising a child at two and one-half to three times the family's yearly income at the time the child is born.

Where does the money go? Food and clothing are two regular expenses that grow as the children do, and children grow rapidly. Costs for medical care, child care, education, and recreation cannot be overlooked either. Having a child may mean that a family needs a larger home, bringing higher utility bills and rent or mortgage payments. To

Building Character

Thinking Realistically: A Quality That Counts

"Be realistic." That advice has saved people from many a foolish action. Has it also discouraged people from achieving a dream? Having a realistic outlook means seeing life as it is—not as you'd like it to be nor as you fear it might be. When you're realistic, you base decisions on facts and make the facts work for you. A teen shows a realistic attitude when:

- Observing that babies are lovable but that caring for them takes work.
- Practicing patience now in order to be a better parent someday.
- Talking to a counselor about the education needed for a desired career.
- Saving money for unexpected expenses.
- Letting self-critical thoughts go after simple mistakes.

QUESTIONS

1. How can having a realistic attitude help prevent problems in life?
2. Which do you think is the greater danger when trying to be realistic: being too positive or too negative? Explain your answer.
3. Do you think you view life realistically or not? Give some examples to support your answer.

cover these costs, a couple may have to lower their standard of living—going out less, buying fewer and less expensive clothes, and finding inexpensive leisure activities.

Personal Costs

As substantial as the financial costs are, the personal costs of having children can be even greater. These include the time and energy it takes to provide all the care that babies and children need, as well as the personal sacrifices involved.

Women tend to take on more parenting duties than men do. They are more likely to

give up or modify career goals. Sharing parenting roles helps spread the personal costs of raising children more evenly between fathers and mothers.

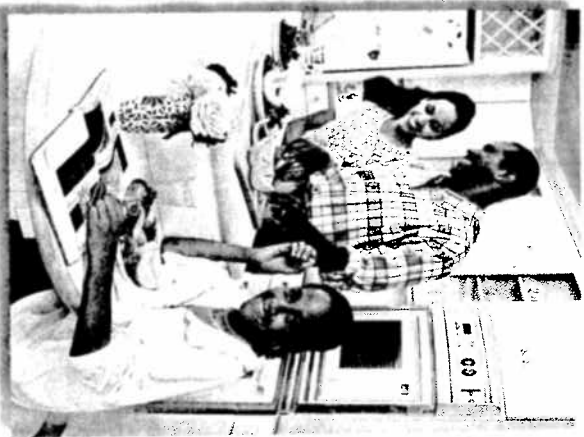
The combined drain on parents' time, energy, and finances often leads to feelings of lost freedom. Parents may notice they have less time and energy left for themselves and each other. As Traci said, "Whenever Wayne and I think about going someplace, we have to decide whether we can take the baby. Is getting everything ready to go worth the effort? If we pay for a babysitter, can we still afford to go out? It's never just a matter of getting up and going. Nothing is that simple anymore."

Often a fascination with babies inspires pregnancy. What people sometimes forget is that a baby very quickly becomes a child, and children come with long-term challenges and responsibilities.

REWARDS OF PARENTING

For many parents, of course, the rewards of having children make all the challenges worthwhile. To some couples, a family is not complete without a child to share in their love and affection.

Another reward of parenthood is the stimulation children provide. Playing with a child can be great fun, for both parent and child. Seeing the world through a child's eyes—whether



a tiny, scurrying insect or a bolt of lightning in the sky—can be a learning experience as well. Parents may find a renewed appreciation for all the wonders of the world and of life itself.

Parenthood can also bring a sense of fulfillment. Parents can take pride in caring for the needs of their children and watching them grow. Those who know the satisfaction of helping a child develop into a happy, well-adjusted, responsible adult often consider it to be a success equaled by no other.

Helping a child develop can bring joy and fulfillment to a parent's life. What interests would you possibly share with a child someday?



CHOICES AND INFERTILITY

Infertility, or the inability to have children, affects about one in five married couples. A couple is said to be infertile if pregnancy doesn't occur after a year of intercourse without using birth control.

Fertility, the ability to have children, peaks in a person's twenties. Thus, infertility is most common among couples in their thirties and forties.

Some couples who have fertility problems still have choices about whether to have a child. About half of these couples can have children with medical help. Complete medical histories and a series of special tests can reveal the exact reason for the couple's inability to conceive. Once the source of the problem is found, treatments can be started. Certain procedures are morally unacceptable to some couples, however.

Some couples who choose medical treatment find it a test of their commitment to having a child. They are asked to share details of the most private part of their life together with a number of medical professionals. Several years and several thousand dollars worth of treatments may yield no birth, one birth, or multiple births. A couple must be willing to take such risks and live with the results.

Adopted children are truly "chosen." The parental love and pride is no less than what a biological parent feels. When birth parents want to reclaim a child, what do you think the law should say?

CHOOSING ADOPTION

Adoption is the legal process of taking a child of other parents as one's own. The parents and child are bound in every legal way until the child reaches age eighteen. Birth parents give up all rights and duties of parenthood.

People adopt for many reasons. Infertile couples may not have success with medical treatment or may be opposed to its use. Some adoptive parents fear passing on serious genetic diseases to biological offspring. Sometimes people who can safely have children of their own prefer to adopt. They may be concerned with overpopulation or want to help a child who might otherwise not have a home. Such couples often adopt not have a home. Such couples often adopt children considered "hard to place"—those who are older or have health problems or disabilities. Some single people who strongly wish to parent also choose adoption.



Focus On ...

Open and Closed Adoptions

The issue of identity is a sensitive one in adoptions. Birth and adoptive parents who believe in privacy choose **closed adoption**, where identities are not revealed. Closing adoption records, however, can make it difficult to obtain vital personal and medical information. In addition, the uncertainty can create anxiety. Adopted children with few facts about their birth parents may be bothered later by questions. Birth parents worry whether the child is happy, healthy, and loved.

Open adoption, in which identities are known, is becoming more popular. In open adoption, personal information may be contained in files. The birth mother and adoptive parents may meet and remain in contact over time. Open adoption removes some of

the doubt and uncertainty. It can provide the child with a sense of continuity and identity. However, involving several parents in raising a child can cause problems and confusion.

USING YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Michael and Juanita adopted their son in a closed adoption due to the birth mother's wishes. Jared, now ten years old, is asking questions about his birth parents and background. The couple feel threatened and worried about violating the birth mother's privacy. What should they do?

Adopting an Infant

Many couples adopt infants in order to enjoy the experience of raising a child almost from birth. The supply of infants available for adoption, however, cannot meet the demand. The wait for a healthy infant or toddler averages five years and can stretch as long as ten years.

Some couples who are determined to have a baby turn to international adoption. They give a home to an orphaned or abandoned child from another country. International adoptions are very expensive.

They require patience and perseverance. Many risks are associated with this type of adoption.

Adopting an Older Child

Because the demand is higher for infants and toddlers, the wait to adopt an older child is usually shorter. The adoptive parents, however, must be prepared for special challenges. An older child may have emotional scars from losing birth parents or from lack of a stable, loving home life. A child who has a disability may require

added patience, new skills, and other adjustments for the couple. For parents who see both the limitations and the possibilities, however, raising a "hard to place" child can be a great joy. LaLean recalled when she and her husband Abe adopted four-year-old Craig: "He reminded me of a stray puppy. Craig was malnourished and he'd been abused. He'd scream and thrash around if you tried to hold him. It took a year, but gradually Craig started to smile and trust people again. To see him learn to love and be loved gave us the greatest feeling in the world."



Whether through birth or adoption, children are a cherished addition to a family.

Arranging Adoptions

About three-fourths of all adoptions take place through public, state-approved agencies. These agencies are concerned with serving the child, the birth parents, and the adoptive parents.

Placing a child for adoption is usually a difficult decision, but a loving one, for the birth parents. These parents, often teens, realize that they cannot provide the kind of home and upbringing a child needs. They want their child to have a better chance at a healthy, happy life than they can offer. Adoption agencies help with this decision by counseling birth parents to make sure they understand all their options. Medical records and other information about them and the child are collected for the adoptive parents.

Meanwhile, prospective parents are screened and counseled to confirm that they are ready and able to care for a child.

Once parents are approved, the agency tries to match them with a suitable child. That child is given to the parents for a trial period. At the end of this time, if both the parents and agency are satisfied that the match is successful, a court awards permanent custody.

Private Adoptions

Adoptions can also take place privately. Clergy, doctors, and lawyers arrange these adoptions, often more quickly than a public agency can. The adopting couple typically pays the medical, hospital, and legal fees, and in some cases, the birth mother's living expenses. "Buying" the child is illegal.

Private adoption carries certain risks. Steve and Becky's physician arranged their adoption of baby Rachel. When Rachel was

SECTION 33-2

Preparing for Parenthood

OBJECTIVES

After studying this section, you should be able to:

- Assess your personal readiness for parenthood.
- Predict what might happen to mothers, fathers, and infants who aren't ready for parenting.
- Suggest ways to learn about children and parenting in preparation for parenthood.
- Distinguish measures that contribute to a healthy pregnancy.

TERMS TO LEARN

parenting readiness
child development
conception
sperm
ovum
prenatal



Raising a child has many rewards for those who are ready. A close bond between parent and child builds when people wait until the time is right.

six months old, the couple learned that her birth father was seeking custody. The father had never given written consent, but Becky and Steve hadn't realized this was significant.

Without consent from both parents when a baby is adopted, the adoption decree isn't final. Although Steve and Becky were the only family Rachel had ever known, her birth father's rights took precedence over theirs. In their joy at becoming parents, they hadn't obtained legal advice to protect their interests. Rachel's father had.

However a person becomes a parent—whether “naturally,” with medical aid, or by adoption—the basic truth of parenting is the same: Raising a child involves risks and rewards, sacrifice and satisfaction. Are the pleasures worth the challenges? For those who see the reality of parenting and who love children enough to choose it, the answer is a definite yes.

SECTION 33-1 REVIEW

Check Your Understanding

1. What is the difference between parenthood and parenting?
2. Describe some pressures to have children.
3. What financial costs are associated with having children?
4. What are some of the rewards of parenting?
5. What options are available to an infertile couple who wish to become parents?
6. How do adoption agencies help ensure the success of their matches?
7. **Thinking Critically.** Are parents who go through a lengthy adoption process or expensive medical treatments to have a child apt to be better parents? Explain.
8. **Problem Solving.** Amber and William have learned that Amber is unable to have children without lengthy, expensive medical treatments. Amber is willing to try this course in order to have a child of her own. William thinks they should put the time and money toward adopting a child. What do you think they should do?

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much impact as the event itself. Losing your job is almost always a negative event, for instance, but it's apt to make a bigger impact if you're a forty-year-old parent and spouse than if you're sixteen and in high school.

Likewise, having a child is a life-changing event, since responsibilities increase and some sacrifices may have to be made. These demands are best handled when the stage of life you've reached allows you to meet them.

Fortunately, success in daily life rarely takes such precise timing. Nonetheless, as you've probably learned from experience—when you just miss catching the bus or when you're the right caller in a radio listener contest—sometimes timing is everything.

LOOKING AT READINESS

Studies in life-span development show that when an event occurs in life has as

How can a couple decide whether they'll be able to handle the changes and responsibilities that come with parenting? They need to examine their parenting readiness, their degree of preparation for parenting. Here's some of what they need to consider:



A baby doesn't cry to cause trouble. Crying is the infant's only way of communicating discomfort. How does emotional maturity help a parent cope with crying?

goals. Children can cause their plans to change. Deciding when to have children is the best insurance against having to give up something important.

- **Age.** In a sense, age is the best indicator for judging parenting readiness. Age affects the other factors. Older parents tend to be more emotionally and financially stable. They have had more time to reach their goals. The experience and wisdom they have gained are resources for dealing with the many challenges of parenthood. As you will read, the impact of age is far-reaching.

Looking at the elements of readiness is more than just helpful when thinking about parenthood. It can also prevent serious lifelong effects on the mother, father, and child.

- **Emotional maturity.** Emotional maturity brings the patience, confidence, sense of responsibility, and other traits that good parents need. Since teens are still developing, these qualities may not be in place yet. Since they're still learning to take care of themselves, they may not be ready to assume total responsibility for another person.

- **Financial readiness.** Would-be parents need to look ahead to future expenses and income. No one wants to feel financial burdens and stress. Careful planning before children enter the picture can make a difference.

- **Goals and expectations.** Couples should think about what will happen to their

Tips & TECHNIQUES

Examining Readiness. Pilots in training use computer flight simulators to practice flying skills before taking a real plane up. You can use the same principle to practice your parenting skills and interests before you commit to raising a child. Which of the following "trial runs" are most feasible for you?

- Shadowing a relative or neighbor with young children to learn about routine parenting situations.
- Leading a children's story hour at the public library.
- Helping at various children's holiday activities.
- Inviting children into your classroom for a play school experience.
- Helping supervise children in an after-school program at an elementary school.
- Reaching out to a youngster in your neighborhood.

Try It Out. Survey your community and create a list of opportunities to work with young children. Arrange to take part in one that seems interesting to you and begin learning about your readiness to be a parent.

The money and reached some goals, she can usually accept the restrictions of child raising more easily.

The earlier a woman has a baby, the more apt she is to have other children soon after. The baby's and mother's health suffer for this. Also, supporting and caring for several children increase the pressure of an already demanding role. Teen mothers

have been found to have very high levels of stress compared to their nonparenting peers.

Lastly is the frustration factor. A younger mother may feel frustrated when she skips right from being taken care of to taking care of someone else. Missing that period of independence, growth, and socializing that young single people enjoy can be disappointing. If a woman has already managed her own

Every mother wants to have a healthy baby. What impact does her age have on her baby's health?





More and more fathers are realizing that their children need them—emotionally as well as financially. How can a father benefit from a close relationship with his child?

Effects on Fathers

Physically, fathers can walk away from parenthood more easily than mothers, but the law holds them equally responsible. A father is legally bound to support his child until the child turns eighteen—regardless of the father's age or whether he is married to the child's mother or whether he ever sees his child. Fathers as young as fourteen have been sued for child support.

As with mothers, young fathers may have to interrupt their education, sometimes dropping out of school, to meet their financial obligation. Some are able to resume their education later, but usually under a double burden of work and study.

Also like mothers, teen marriage and fatherhood tend to lead to low-paying, unskilled jobs that offer less security and chance for advancement. Earning money becomes a life-long worry.

Teens who are also fathers often find that they don't quite fit into either the teen world or the adult one. Their responsibilities isolate them from their more carefree peers, yet they can't fully relate to adults. They may feel lonely and confused about their roles.

Effects on Infants

When sixteen-year-old Annalea learned she was pregnant, she did what many teen

mothers do: she denied it. She told no one. She went on a diet, trying to hide her pregnancy from family and friends. She finally saw the doctor when she started to "show," about five months into her pregnancy.

By then, Annalea's poor eating habits had harmed her unborn child's health. The baby was born seven weeks early and weighed only three pounds. Annalea thought she could face pregnancy alone but didn't have the maturity to handle it.

As Annalea's experience shows, infants are also affected by a parent's lack of readiness. Babies born to teens face greater health hazards than those born to older mothers. They are likely to be premature, with low birth weight. Even full-term infants tend to be smaller and weaker. The younger a mother is, the more likely her baby is to die before celebrating a first birthday.

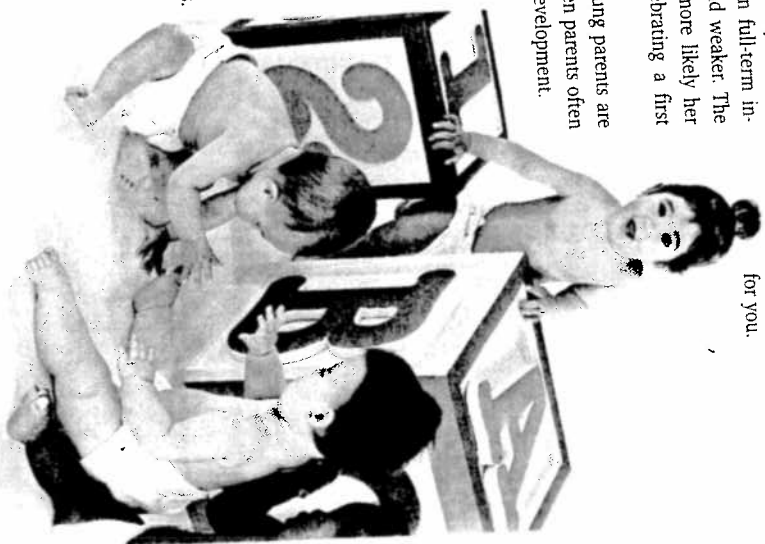
Sadly, infants born to young parents are at greater risk of abuse. Teen parents often don't understand infant development.

They underestimate the baby's needs and oversimplify the baby's abilities. Some teens, unrealistically, expect an infant to love them very much and to cry very little. When

heaped upon parents who are not yet adults themselves, these disappointments and other strains of parenthood can lead to child abuse.

PREPARING YOURSELF

Some parents will tell you that trying to learn about parenting by reading books is like trying to learn to swim on dry land. It's true: there is no substitute for experience. By the same token, however, you don't learn to swim by diving into the pool. First, you get used to the water temperature; then you learn to float. Along the way, you decide whether swimming is for you.



Babies are happy and healthy for good reasons. What are some of those reasons?

Learning About Children

People who have prepared themselves by learning about children assume the parental role most easily. Future parents need to know about **child development**, or how children grow and change at each stage from birth through the teen years.

Understanding what children can typically do at different ages helps parents respond to them in the best way. Parents can be more patient and realistic. They can feel more confident about providing what the child needs. Parenting produces less stress and greater satisfaction.

Gaining Experience

One of the best and simplest ways to learn about children is to spend time with them. For people from large families, that's easy. The trend toward smaller families, however, means that people may need to find other ways to be around children. Many teens babysit to earn money. The practice they get in caring for children may be more valuable than the pay.

Some people do volunteer work with children. Loy helped supervise a play park at a community center. Watching children play together taught him a lot about their physical, emotional, and social skills. Teaching a Sunday school class, coaching a sports team, and getting involved with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program once you turn twenty-one can also give insights about children.

A Healthy Pregnancy

A woman who is healthy and physically fit before pregnancy will likely experience an easier **prenatal** period, the time from conception to birth. Her body will be able to nourish the baby and cope with the stress of pregnancy and childbirth. Her baby will probably be healthier, too.

Good medical care during the prenatal period is vital to the health of mother and child. Teresa saw Dr. Sanjo often during her pregnancy. Dr. Sanjo monitored the baby's growth and development and Teresa's weight gain and overall health. She urged Teresa to eat healthfully, exercise regularly, and get enough rest. When Teresa developed high blood pressure, as many pregnant women do, Dr. Sanjo prescribed a treatment that was safe for both her and the baby.

Pregnant women should avoid substances that can be harmful to a developing child. Tobacco, caffeine, and drugs, including alcohol, are all potential dangers.

Learning About Reproduction

Learning about pregnancy and childbirth can help people prepare to be parents. The more a woman understands the physical changes taking place in her body, the more comfortable she will be with them. The father can be a supportive partner.

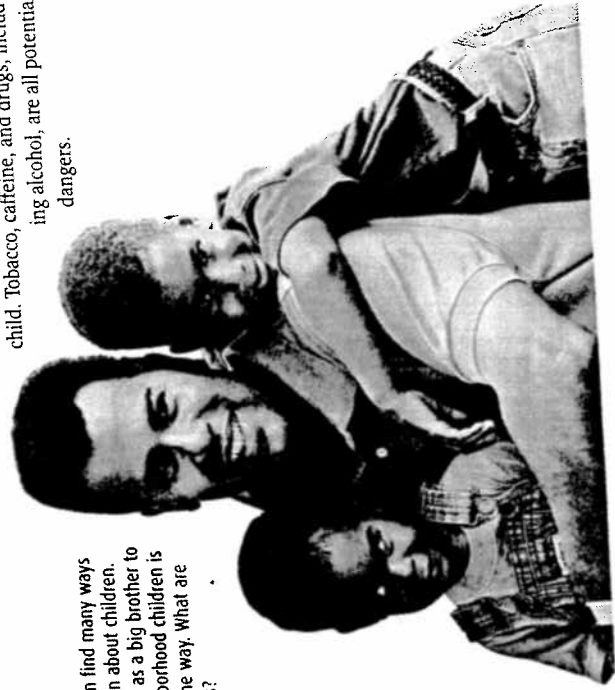
Pregnancy begins with **conception**, the union of the male and female reproductive cells. The male cell, called the **sperm**, and the female cell, the **ovum**, each contain half the genetic information needed to create a new human being. During pregnancy, the cells divide, grow, and develop.

You can find many ways to learn about children. Acting as a big brother to neighborhood children is just one way. What are others?



Some parents learn only through experience. Although preparation doesn't provide all the answers, parents can gain information and confidence for dealing with the lively, challenging energy of a child—or two.

Likewise, there are ways to prepare yourself for parenting before you have a child. Getting a truer picture of parenting now allows you to develop realistic expectations about what's involved. You'll be better equipped to handle parenting problems and to really appreciate the joy and wonder that raising a child should be—if you decide to parent someday.



Career Success Stories

Eugene Norris: Parent Educator



“I may be employed by a school district, but as a parent educator, I actually work with parents. My job is to plan and implement ways for them to help their children. Recently, we set up an informational Web site, and now we’re planning an online homework help site. That’s just part of the job.

“Some parents want to help at school but think they don’t have the necessary knowledge or skills. Through our Parents as Teachers program, I prepare volunteer parents to serve as teacher assistants, tutors, and speakers. Recruiting busy parents to talk to classes about their work is part of my job. Kids need to see how school links to the work world. When a carpenter tells about using geometry on the job or a sales representative describes the written reports to be done, students start to see how important education is.

“As another part of this program, I help parents develop the skills to teach their own children. Since reading is so critical, we emphasize that. When parents tell me that reading to their children has become a special part of the evening routine, I know those children will benefit. Their ability to read fuels success in every subject area. I’m lucky because my work is varied, interesting, and rewarding. A career doesn’t get much better than that.”

CAREER PROFILE

Education and training: bachelor’s degree minimum; masters’ degree preferred

Starting salary range: \$22-25,000

Job prospects: school districts

Important qualities: able to instruct others; organizational skills; good communication skills; problem-solving skills

Plan Ahead

For whatever career you choose, you’ll need many of the skills you’re learning today. With your class, list familiar careers. Share ideas about how what you study in school links to these careers.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

People who want to learn more about parenthood have many resources. Courses on parenting and child development are a good place to start. You can find them offered by high schools, community colleges, social and mental health agencies, religious organizations, and hospitals.

Many couples take childbirth classes during pregnancy. There, expectant parents learn what occurs during pregnancy and birth. They practice breathing and relaxation exercises to ease the pain and stress of the birth process. Hospitals and clinics usually sponsor these classes.

Parenting books and magazines are other sources of information. Reliable Web sites of parenting and child development organizations may also be useful. The card catalog at the library or an Internet search will, no doubt, supply more references than you can read. If you choose to become a parent someday, these and many other resources can help you prepare for the job.



Where can you learn to be a parent? Libraries have books and magazines to get you started, at no cost to you.

SECTION 33-2 REVIEW

Check Your Understanding

1. Why is emotional maturity necessary for parenting readiness?
2. What physical risks do teen mothers face?
3. Why are infants of teen parents more likely to experience abuse?
4. Why is knowledge of child development helpful to parents?
5. Why is prenatal care important for a healthy pregnancy?
6. What are some sources of information on parenting and related topics?
7. **Thinking Critically.** Imagine you volunteered to help with an arts program for children. What might this experience teach you about children?
8. **Problem Solving.** At seventeen, Charlie left school to work full-time to help support his child. He rarely sees his friends from high school, and the older men he works with don’t accept him as an equal. He is feeling increasingly alone. What should Charlie do?