

Teen Parents... You're Not Alone!

What's Happening

Being a parent is a 24-hour-a-day job, and sometimes it can feel overwhelming. You may be juggling the demands of a baby, your family, school, and work. Chances are you're not able to do all of the things you enjoyed before your baby was born.

Many Teen Parents Sometimes 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 their baby
- **Lonely**—as though they are the only person dealing with so many problems
- **Depressed**—sad and unable to manage their problems

These feelings do not mean you are a bad parent!

What You Can Do

Every parent needs support sometimes. If you think stress may be affecting how you treat your baby, it's time to find some help. Try the following:

- **Join a support group.** A group for young 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 (e.g., Meetup.com, Yahoo! groups) or call your local social services agency for information about support groups in your community.



- **Find ways to reduce 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 or nurse can help you learn other ways to manage stress.
- **Become a regular at baby-friendly places in your community.** The playground and story time at the local library are great places to bond with your baby while getting to know other parents.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Call a help line.** Most States have help lines for parents. Childhelp® runs a national 24-hour hotline (1.800.4.A.CHILD) for parents who need help or parenting advice.

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