

Section I: Getting Ready for Parenting: Planning for Pregnancy

Parenthood Considerations

Preparing for parenthood is not just a matter of reading books and decorating the nursery. Here are two fun and simple exercises for you to take before making this important decision.

1. To discover how the nights will feel, walk around the living room from 5pm to 10pm carrying a wet bag weighing approximately 8-12 lbs. At 10pm put the bag down, set the alarm for midnight, and go to sleep. Get up at 12 and walk around the living room again with the bag until 1am. Put the alarm on for 3am. Since you cannot get back to sleep, get up at 2am and get a drink. Go to bed at 2:45am. Get up at 3am when the alarm goes off. Sing songs in the dark until 4am. Put the alarm on for 5am. Get up. Make breakfast. Keep this up for 5 years. Look cheerful.
2. Before you finally go ahead and have children, try to find other parents and berate them about their methods of discipline, lack of patience, appallingly low tolerance levels, and how they have allowed their children to run riot. Suggest ways in which they might improve their child's sleeping habits, toilet training, table manners and overall behaviour. Enjoy it - it'll be the last time in your life that you will have all the answers.

What are your reasons for wanting to start a family? What are your partner's (or support person's) reasons? Take a moment to consider these reasons, and record these thoughts below.

Your reasons for wanting to start a family:

1. _____

2. _____

Your partner's reasons for wanting to start a family:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

"To us, being a parent isn't a sacrifice. I love being a parent. But, I do feel you have to be ready for it."



We all have different ideas about what parenting will be like. Now is the time to talk with each other and share some of your hopes, doubts and expectations about becoming parents.

As a future mother, what do you believe will be the joys of parenting?

What are some of your concerns?

As a future father, what do you believe will be the joys of parenting?

What are your concerns?

"We didn't plan on becoming pregnant this early. We had hoped to have more time together as a couple, perhaps have a house and the option of me being able to stay at home to raise our daughter."

Becoming parents is a life-long decision. You probably feel there are many things to consider before taking the leap into parenthood, and rightly so. Along with your excitement, you may have some feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. This is a big decision and your mixed feelings are very natural.

Take some time to discuss the questions below with your partner (or support person). Be open with each other, even though it may be difficult at times.

- Why do I want a baby?
- Is our relationship strong?
- Do I respect and trust you?
- Do I accept your strengths and weaknesses?
- Do I have a sense of humour in our relationship?
- Do we share responsibilities and decision making?
- Am I willing to make a long-term commitment to you and raise our child in a loving and stable environment?
- How will the way I was raised affect my own parenting style?
- What kind of parent do I think I'll be?
- What changes do I expect in our relationship? In my relationships with my family? Friends? In my social life?
- Who can I depend on for help?
- How will having a baby affect my work or career goals?
- Who will take care of the baby after he or she is born? Will one or both of us return to work?
- How much does it cost to have a baby? Can we afford it?