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6th grade 2.08 Investigate and analyze the responsibilities of parenthood through observation and discussion with parents/caregivers or trusted adults.

7th grade 3.09 Analyze the risk of premarital sexual activity.

Materials Needed:

Flip chart, dry erase board, or transparencies and markers

Appendix 1 – copies of Teens Tell All About...The Reality of Being a Teen Parent

Appendix 2 – copies of Challenges of Being a Teen Parent (five pages)

Appendix 3 – copies of Challenges of Being a Teen Parent – Answer Guide

Appendix 4 – copies of Elements of Healthy, Stable Relationships

Appendix 5 – copies of What If . . . ?

Review:

In this activity, teachers will assess students' knowledge about what is needed for survival and specifically what babies need from parents and other caregivers to thrive. Brainstorming is used to generate ideas about the physical, social, and emotional needs of children.

Using the board, flip chart, or transparency, pose the open-ended questions, *What is needed to survive?* and *What is needed to thrive?* You may wish to ask first which of your students have had experience taking care of younger brothers or sisters or have babysat for young children.

To answer, *What is needed to survive?*, try to elicit basic survival needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and water. To answer, *What is needed to thrive?*, ask the students for higher-level needs such as love, emotional support, intellectual stimulation, self-esteem enhancement, education, discipline and boundaries, and stability.

Conclude the following concepts with students:

- The family is the basic unit of society and provides these necessities for children.
- Parents have a responsibility, along with other institutions such as schools and government, to make certain children are cared for.

Focus:

In this activity, pass out copies of Appendix 1, Teens Tell All about...The Reality of Being a Teen Parent. Go around the room and have the students read the different bullets written by teens who have experienced a pregnancy at such a young age. Have the students process how difficult it was for these individuals to have a baby as a teenager. What were some of the problems these young people faced? Did most of them wish they had waited until they were older to engage in sexual intercourse?

Statement of Objectives:

Today we are going to discuss the advantages children experience if they are raised in a home which is loving and stable and the challenges a teenager may endure as a teen parent.

Teacher Input:

Put the students in groups of 4 or 5 and pass out to each group a handout, (Appendix 2) Challenges of Being a Teen Parent. Have the students work in their groups and list some challenges of having a baby at such a young age. Each handout will have a different aspect for the students to brainstorm. Make sure to tell the students to read the top of their paper because each group will be covering a different aspect of challenges that may go along with an unplanned pregnancy. The different aspects are: financial problems which may be an issue for a teen parent, emotional problems, physical issues, social aspects, and legal situations which may arise for a young person. After the groups have had enough time to write down several problems, go over this as a class. Have each of the groups tell the class their answers. Write their answers on the board and have the students in the group tell why they came up with those answers. Add any other answers the students did not think of to the list. (Some suggestions are listed on Appendix 3, Challenges of Being a Teen Parent Answer Guide). Conclude *that becoming a parent at such a young age would be very difficult and it would be harder on the individual to achieve his/her goals and dreams.* Also emphasize, *there are many good teen parents that do achieve their goals but being a parent is a great deal of responsibility so it was probably more difficult on these individuals and/or they may have had to postpone their goals until a later date.*

Guided Practice:

Provide students with a copy of Healthy, Stable Relationships (Appendix 4). Have the students rank the characteristics listed below and have them write out an example of each of the characteristics within a stable relationship. Ask the students these processing questions:

- *Why did you rank the relationship elements in the order you did?*
- *How did you define each term?*
- *How does having these characteristics develop and maintain a healthy, stable marriage?*
- *How does having a healthy, stable relationship impact children?*
- *What are the advantages for children raised in stable and loving families?*

Healthy, stable relationship elements:

Similarity
Safety
Mutual Respect and Balance
Nurturing Behaviors
Commitment

Independent Practice:

Have the students write down ways their lives would change if he or she became a parent right now, using copies of Appendix 5, What If . . . ? How would this affect their parents? Ask the students to consider and write down possible effects this could have within society. Have the students write down how becoming a teen parent would affect the five different aspects of their lives.

Closure:

Today we have discussed how parenting at a young age can be very difficult and can make it challenging on a young person to achieve his/her goals. We have also discussed the advantages for children to be raised in a stable loving home.

Challenges of Being a Teen Parent

Financial Problems a Teen Parent May Experience



Challenges of Being a Teen Parent

Emotional Problems a Teen Parent May Experience



Challenges of Being a Teen Parent

Social Issues a Teen Parent May Experience



Challenges of Being a Teen Parent

Legal Issues a Teen Parent May Experience



Challenges of Being a Teen Parent

Physical Issues a Teen Parent May Experience



Challenges of Being a Teen Parent ANSWER GUIDE

Financial Problems a Teen Parent May Experience

- A teenager does not have enough money to pay for everything a baby needs.
- A teenager is not financially ready to support themselves so it would be hard for them to pay for housing, formula, diapers, and doctor bills.
- A teenager may have to drop out of school to work. Without an education, it is hard to get a good paying job.
- Parents or tax paying citizens usually end up helping out with the costs of the child. Families born to teen moms are more likely to live in poverty.

Emotional Problems a Teen Parent May Experience

- A teen may become depressed because plans for the future may be altered by having a child.
- The teen may not have supportive friends or family.
- The teen may end up being a single parent.
- They have to grow up too fast. A teen parent has a lot to worry about.
- Teens often have the pressure of differing points of view about the pregnancy. (Raise the child? Adoption? Abortion?)

Social Issues a Teen Parent May Experience

- The teen may lose all their friends.
- Teens don't get to go out and do things as they once did.
- The teen may feel as though she is looked down upon by others.

Legal Issues a Teen Parent May Experience

- There could be concerns about statutory rape issues if one partner is older and the other is not above the age of consent.
- The parents of the mother or father may try to get the child because they may feel their child is not old enough or mature enough to handle having a child.
- Adoption may be encouraged by the parents or partner.


Physical Issues a Teen Parent May Experience

- Young mothers have an increased chance for their babies to be born prematurely.
- The body of a teen mother isn't developed completely so there is an increased chance of complications or birth defects.

- **Being a parent is exhausting.**

Elements of Healthy, Stable Relationships

For each element listed below, write a definition and examples of why it is needed for healthy, stable relationships. Then rank-order the qualities by placing a number 1 through 5 in the far left column, with #1 being the most important. You will be asked to share your results with the class.

			
	<p>Similarity</p>		
	<p>Safety</p>		
	<p>Mutual Respect and Balance</p>		
	<p>Nurturing Behaviors</p>		
	<p>Commitment</p>		

WHAT IF . . . ?

On this page, write down ways your life would change if you had a baby right now. How would this affect your parents? Think about and write down possible effects this could have within your community. Write down how becoming a teen parent would affect the five aspects of your life: financial, emotional, social, legal, and physical.

