Partnering With Teen Parents

Knowledge Studio™

Powered by Parents as Teachers

Item 1318

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

Table of Contents

Vision, Mission and Core Values 3
Acknowledgments 4
Foreword 5
How to Use the Curriculum 6
Table of Contents 9

Introduction

Service Delivery

Teen Parent Curriculum Approach 17
Important Steps for Starting a Teen Parent Program 23
Partnership Planning With Teen Parents 28
Linking Neuroscience to the Care and Education of Young Children 32
Partnering With Teen Parents Through Personal Visits 40
A Multigenerational Approach to the Teen Personal Visit 45
Personal Visit Sample Plan: Child Care 49
Partnering With Teen Parents Through Group Connections 53
My Ideas for Group Topics 59
Group Connection Sample Plan: Stress 60
Group Connection Sample Plan: Making It Work 66
Group Connection Sample Plan: Child Care 71
Group Connection Sample Plan: Storytelling 76
Strengths: Preserving Teen Parents' Hope 80
The Strengthening Families™ Approach to Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect 85
Assessments 90
Recruitment and Retention: Making a Connection 95
Welcome to Parenting (PH) 100
Evaluating Your Teen Program 102
Logic Model Worksheet 107
Sample Logic Model 108

Journaling

Journaling 111
My Unborn Baby's Story (PH) 115
My Child's Story (PH) 116
My Parenting Story (PH) 117
I Am a Teenage Mother (PH) 118
Storytelling 119
Telling a Story (PH) 123

Growing Teen

Adolescent Development

Adolescence: A Time of Transition 127
Amazing Brains: Two Works in Progress 134
The Impacts of Teens' Thinking and Reasoning Skills on Developmental Topics 140
Your Teenage Brain: Still Under Construction (PH) 149

Skill Development

> Communication

Communication: A Two-Way Process 153
Practicing Effective Communication (PH) 160
Finding Words for My Feelings (PH) 161
Feelings Expression (PH) 162
Situations: Communicating Questions and Concerns (PH) 163
Supporting Assertiveness Skill Development 165
Being Assertive (PH) 169

> Planning

Goal Setting 173
Goal Setting: Begin With the End In Mind (PH) 178
Problem Solving 179
The Six-Step Problem-Solving Method (PH) 183
Teaching Children to Solve Problems 185
Helping Your Child Learn to Solve Problems (PH) 188
Dear Mother Goose/Father Goose (PH) 189

> Resourcing

Resources, Referrals, and Growth 193
Teens' Self-Advocacy Skills 197
Community Assets 201
We All Need Help Sometimes (PH) 204
The Value and Challenges of Social Support 206
My Circles of Support (PH) 211
My Child's Circles of Support (PH) 212
Circles of Support (PH) 213
Mutual Support 214
Dear Friend (PH) 217
Chat (PH) 218
Partnering With the Librarian 220
Picking Out Books (PH) 225
Books for Your Baby (PH) 227
Books for Your Toddler (PH) 228
Home Libraries 229
A Home for Books (PH) 234

> Self-Care

Teens and Sleep 239
Your Changing Sleep Needs (PH) 242
Postpartum Clinical Conditions in Teen Mothers 243
Understanding the Baby Blues (PH) 247
Screening and Early Intervention 248
Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) 253
How Am I Feeling? (PH) 254
Low Self-Esteem and Depression in Adolescents 255
Ways to 'Fill Your Cup' (PH) 259
Supporting Families Where Mental Illness Is Present 260

Substance Abuse in Families With Young Children ... 269
Developmental Effects of Substance Use ... 275
Substance Use During Pregnancy (PH) ... 282
Who Knew? Substance Abuse Facts (PH) ... 283
Family Planning ... 285
Why Wait: Healthy Choices Around Second Pregnancies (PH) ... 291

> Self-Discipline

Internal Language: The Benefits and Challenges of Positive Self-Talk ... 295
Virtues and Affirmations (PH) ... 301
Positive Self-Talk (PH) ... 303
The Power of Positive Thinking (PH) ... 305
Visualizing (PH) ... 306
The Gift of Feelings (PH) ... 307
Values ... 308
Values Auction (PH) ... 311
Auction Bucks (PH) ... 312
Live and Teach the Things You Value (PH) ... 313
Messages That Promote Development ... 314
Babies (PH) ... 317

> Resiliency Building

Managing Time ... 321
Slice of Time (PH) ... 325
Crystal Balls, Rubber Balls (PH) ... 326
Teen Stress and Resilience ... 327
Harmony in My Home (PH) ... 333
Dealing With Stress (PH) ... 334
Feeling Stress (PH) ... 338
Stress in Me (PH) ... 339
Fears (PH) ... 340
Traits: Past, Present, Future (PH) ... 342
Expectations Versus Realities (PH) ... 343
Pregnant and Parenting Teens in the News (PH) ... 345
Overview of Trauma ... 347
Effects of Trauma on Teens (PH) ... 351

Development-Centered Parenting

Developmental Topics

> Attachment

Understanding Prenatal Attachment in Teen Parents ... 355
Early Attachment ... 359
Building Attachment With Your Baby (PH) ... 363
Mommy and Me, Daddy and Me (PH) ... 364
Toddler Relationships ... 365
Reconnecting With Your Toddler (PH) ... 371
Crying ... 372
Calm My Cry (PH) ... 376
Reasons Babies Cry (PH) ... 377
Reasons Toddlers Cry (PH) ... 378
The Importance of Touch ... 379
Your Baby Needs Your Touch (PH) ... 382
My Baby's Signals (PH) ... 383
Sensory Overload in Infants ... 385
Infant States (PH) ... 388
Too Much Information: Sensory Overload (PH) ... 389

> Discipline

Understanding Discipline ... 393
Discipline Is Teaching (PH) ... 398
My Reflections on Discipline (PH) ... 399
Guidance on Positive Discipline ... 400
Understanding Your Child's Challenging Behaviors (PH) ... 406
Commands and Choices (PH) ... 407
Some Facts on Spanking ... 408
Before You Spank Your Child (PH) ... 412
Understanding Temper Tantrums ... 413
When Your Child Has a Temper Tantrum (PH) ... 417
Dealing With Challenging Behaviors ... 418
Helping Your Child With Appropriate Self-Expression (PH) ... 425
What You Can Do About Aggression (PH) ... 426
What You Can Do About Sadness (PH) ... 427
What You Can Do About Shyness (PH) ... 428
What You Can Do About Lying and Stealing (PH) ... 429

> Health

Prenatal Care for Teens ... 433
Top 10 Reasons to Get Regular Prenatal Care (PH) ... 438
Talking With Your Healthcare Provider About Your Pregnancy (PH) ... 439
Helping Teens Recognize Warning Signs in Pregnancy ... 440
Warning Signs in Pregnancy (PH) ... 443
Keep a Watchful Eye for Trouble Signs After Delivery (PH) ... 444
Empowered Healthcare Decision Making ... 445
Become Your Own Health Advocate (PH) ... 449
Immunizations Protect Your Child (PH) ... 450
Getting Ready for the Doctor (PH) ... 452
My Child's Medical Visit (PH) ... 453
When to Seek Medical Care (PH) ... 454
Talking With Your Healthcare Provider About Your Child (PH) ... 456
Emergency Room Tips (PH) ... 457
Exercise for Teens and Young Children ... 458
Exercise: It's Good for Your Baby (and You!) (PH) ... 463
Staying Active During Pregnancy (PH) ... 464

> Nutrition

Talking With Teen Parents About Nutrition ... 467
A Day in the Life of My Child's Stomach (PH) ... 471
Our Daily Food Choices (PH) ... 472

Reading Food Labels (PH) 473
Prenatal Nutrition for Teens 475
Vitamins and Nutrition During Pregnancy (PH) 479
Healthy Weight Gain During Pregnancy (PH) 480
Breastfeeding and Teens 481
Is Breastfeeding Right for You? (PH) 486
Breastfeeding Your Baby: You Can Do It! (PH) 488
Nutrition for Babies and Young Children 489
Nutritious No-Cook Snack Ideas (PH) 493
Healthy Meals in a Hurry (PH) 495
My Child's Plate (PH) 497
Beverage Choices (PH) 498
Teaching Eating Habits 499
Healthy Habits for Feeding Your Child (PH) 503
Let's Have a Picnic (PH) 505
Understanding Food Portions (PH) 506

> Safety

Safety at Home 509
Keeping Baby Safe (PH) 515
Home, Hazard-Free Home (PH) 516
Toy Safety Tips (PH) 518
Creating Safe Homemade Toys (PH) 520
Guard Against Choking (PH) 521
Get the Lead Out (PH) 522
Your Baby Is Too Young to Smoke (PH) 524
Environmental Risks During Pregnancy (PH) 525
Situations: Your Baby Depends on You (PH) 526
Safety Talk Show (PH) 528
Child Abuse and Neglect 529
Effects of Trauma on Young Children (PH) 536
Safety Net (PH) 537

> Sleep

Understanding and Establishing Healthy Sleep Patterns 541
Help Your Baby Sleep All Night Long (PH) 548
Help Your Child Sleep All Night Long (PH) 549
Naptime Snuggles and Struggles (PH) 550
Sleep Positioning, Bed Sharing, and Infant Deaths 551
Safe Sleeping for Your Baby (PH) 555
Sharing a Bed With Your Baby (PH) 556

> Transitions/Routines

Understanding Temperament 559
Your Baby's Temperament (PH) 566
Understanding Me, Understanding My Child (PH) 567
Rituals and Routines (PH) 569
Drop-Off Routines for Babies (PH) 570
Drop-Off Routines for Children (PH) 571
Diapering and Bathing Playtime (PH) 572
Rhyming Routines (PH) 573
Transition Rhymes (PH) 575
Learning Every Day (PH) 576
Causes and Effects of Stress in Children 577
Stress in Your Child (PH) 582
Helping Your Child Cope With Stressful Fears (PH) 584
Teaching Toilet Learning: Sensitive Support for Teens 585
Tips and Techniques for Toilet Time (PH) 591
Using the Potty: Easy Does It! (PH) 593

Child Development

> Prenatal

Teen Pregnancy: A Period of Adjustment 597
Healthy Growth of Babies During Pregnancy 601
Your Unborn Baby's Growth and Development: The First Two Months (PH) 606
Your Unborn Baby's Growth and Development: The Third Month (PH) 608
Your Unborn Baby's Growth and Development: The Fourth Month (PH) 610
Your Unborn Baby's Growth and Development: The Fifth Month (PH) 612
Your Unborn Baby's Growth and Development: The Sixth Month (PH) 614
Your Unborn Baby's Growth and Development: The Seventh Month (PH) 616
Your Unborn Baby's Growth and Development: The Eighth Month (PH) 618
Your Unborn Baby's Growth and Development: The Ninth Month (PH) 620
Your Unborn Baby's Brain: Conception to the Third Month 622
Your Unborn Baby's Brain: The Fourth to Sixth Months (PH) 624
Your Unborn Baby's Brain: The Seventh to Ninth Months (PH) 626
Baby Information to Your Cell Phone (PH) 628

> Language

Language Development 631
Speak Baby Language (PH) 635
Your Baby Understands Language (PH) 636
Child Chat (PH) 637
Rhyme, Repetition, and Rhythm 638
Songs and Rhymes (PH) 641
Reading to Babies 642
Books and Babies (PH) 645
Reading to Toddlers 646
Book Sharing With Your Toddler (PH) 649
Reading to Preschoolers 650
Book Some Reading Time With Your Preschooler (PH) 654
Books With Feelings (PH) 655

> Intellectual
Intellectual Development 659
Thinking Skills (PH) 662
Tips for Encouraging Curiosity (PH) 664
Let's Learn Colors (PH) 665
Exploring Letters (PH) 666
Beginning to Count (PH) 668
Matching, Sorting, and Classifying (PH) 669

> Social-Emotional
Social-Emotional Development: Babies and Toddlers 673
Social-Emotional Development: Ages 3, 4, and 5 Years 677
Supporting Children's Social-Emotional Competence 686
Feelings in Our Family (PH) 692
Empathy: Feeling With Others (PH) 693
Self-Esteem (PH) 694
Accepting Reality: Who's in Charge? (PH) 696
Stranger and Separation Anxiety 697
Understanding Stranger and Separation Anxiety (PH) 701
Creating Our Special Goodbye (PH) 702
Fears and Nightmares 703
Your Child's Fears and Nightmares (PH) 706
Negativism 708
Is "No!" Your Child's Favorite Word? (PH) 711
Emotion Coaching 712
Getting Along: School Skills for Your Child (PH) 716
The Importance of Self-Regulation 717
Helping Your Child Manage Behavior and Emotion (PH) 721
Culture and the Development of Self 723
Your Child's Developing Sense of Self 728
Helping Parents Foster Their Child's Character Development (PH) 730
Knowing What's Right, Doing What's Right (PH) 735
Values We All Share (PH) 737

> Motor
Motor Development 741
Baby's on the Move (PH) 745
Crawling (PH) 746
Cruising and Walking (PH) 747
Climbing (PH) 748
Using Hands and Fingers (PH) 749
Using Big Muscles: Fitness for Your Baby (PH) 750
Scribbling, Writing, and Reading 752
Scribbles to Script: Learning to Write (PH) 755
Scribble, Scribble (PH) 756

> Birth to 5 Years
Fine SMILE (PH) 759
Your Baby's Development: The First Month (PH) 760
Your Baby's Development: 1 to 3 Months (PH) 762
Your Baby's Development: 4 to 6 Months (PH) 764
Your Baby's Development: 7 to 9 Months (PH) 766
Your Baby's Development: 10 to 12 Months (PH) 768
Your Child's Development: 13 to 18 Months (PH) 770
Your Child's Development: 19 to 24 Months (PH) 772
Your Child's Development: 24 to 36 Months (PH) 774
Your Child's Development: 3 Years (PH) 776
Your Child's Development: 4 Years (PH) 778
Your Child's Development: 5 Years (PH) 780

> Special Needs
When Children Have Special Needs 785
Your Child's Special Needs (PH) 790
School Services for Delays or Differences in Development 791
Supporting Your Child's Special Learning Needs (PH) 796

Parent-Child Interaction

Parenting Behaviors
Parenting Behaviors 801
Parenting Makes a Difference (PH) 807
Interactions Between Teen Parents and Their Children 809
Interacting With Your Baby (PH) 817
Parenting: Tough But Worth It! (PH) 818
Teens Parenting Toddlers: Parallels in the Process 819

Play
Playful Moments 827
Face Patterns (PH) 835
Attached Play (PH) 837
Be Picky About Baby Toys (PH) 838
Be Picky About Toddler Toys (PH) 839
Be Picky About Preschool Toys (PH) 841
Choosing Age-Appropriate Toys (PH) 843
Playing All Day Activity Cards (PH) 844
Playing All Day Play Cards (PH) 846
The Importance of Pretend Play 848
Pretend Play With Your Child (PH) 853
Props for Make-Believe Play (PH) 854

Parent-Child Activity Pages

> Planning
Tummy Time: Watching and Building Muscles 857
Baby's First Feely Book: Touching, Tasting, and Seeing 859
Feely Socks: Touching, Seeing, and Hearing 861
Reading Faces: Recognizing Emotions and Learning New Words 863
Zip-Top Bag Book: Reading Together 865
Rattle the Beat: Moving to Music and Singing Along 867

Painting in a Bag: Exploring Textures and Using Small Muscles ... 869
Bowling: Rolling, Aiming, and Making Rules ... 871

> Developmental Topics

You're Going to Be a Father: Thinking About Your Role ... 875
Play Routines and Touch Tag: Moving and Responding ... 877
Your Baby Can Hear: Listening and Anticipating ... 879
Looking at Faces: Looking and Loving ... 881
In Sync with Massage: Communicating and Responding ... 883
Talking About You and Me: Hearing and Imitating Sounds ... 885
People Pictures: Talking About Family and Feelings ... 887
Do What I Do and Say: Exercising Large Muscles and Practicing Self-Control ... 889
Breathe In, Breath Out: Relaxing and Releasing Stress ... 891
Doctor, Doctor: Getting Prenatal Care and Sharing Concerns ... 893
Seeing Patterns: Visual Tracking and Focusing ... 895
Outdoor Exploration: Discovering and Using Large Muscles ... 897
Getting Ready For the Doctor: Pretending and Talking About Worries ... 899
Tiny Taste Buds: Smelling and Tasting ... 901
Let's Go on a Picnic: Choosing Healthy Foods and Eating Together ... 903
Make Your Own Snacks: Measuring, Stirring, Talking, and Tasting ... 905
Are You Ready, Baby? Planning and Preparing ... 907
My Space: Gaining Body Awareness and Communicating ... 909
Playing Nighty-Night: Establishing Routines and Pretending ... 911
Bedtime Book: Setting Up a Routine and Calming Down ... 913
Roll Away Your Worries: Relaxing With a Stress Ball ... 915
Hi and Bye: Listening and Learning ... 917
Caregiving Routines: Talking and Playing ... 919
Let's Play Potty: Rehearsing Routines and Talking Together ... 921

> Child Development

Talk, Talk, Talk: Practicing Parentese and Describing Your Actions ... 925
Reading Routines: Getting Comfortable and Exploring Books ... 927
Praise Play: Communicating and Responding ... 929
See It, Name It, Show It: Saying Words and Recognizing Differences ... 931
Body Parts: Looking and Listening ... 933
Willaby, Wallaby, Woo: Learning Rhymes and Taking Turns ... 935
Tell Me a Story: Imagining and Communicating Ideas ... 937
Matching Game: Identifying Geometric Shapes and Learning New Words ... 939
Rhyming Fingers: Using Small Muscles and Learning Through Imitation ... 941
Unwrapping a Toy: Being Curious and Exploring ... 943
Hinging on Play: Using Small Muscles and Being Curious ... 945
Blanket Pull: Planning and Coordinating Movement ... 947
Counting: Learning Numbers and Understanding Small Quantities ... 949
Blocks, Bridges, and Ramps: Planning and Experimenting ... 951
Baby Games: Anticipating, Interacting, and Taking Turns ... 953
Ball Play: Social Turn-Taking and Rolling ... 955
Imitation Play: Leading and Following ... 957
Pretend Picnic: Imitating and Imagining ... 959
Rub It In: Responding to Touch and Using Small Muscles ... 961
Playing Memory: Taking Turns and Following Rules ... 963
Happy, Sad, Frustrated: Sharing Emotions and Using Small Muscles ... 965
Simple Stretches: Relaxing and Connecting ... 967
Pulling Up: Stooping and Cruising ... 969
Sensory Box: Filling, Sharing, Pouring, and Exploring ... 971
Ready to Write: Using Small Muscles and Making Marks ... 973
Art Is Awesome! Using Small Muscles and Being Creative ... 975
Touch Letters: Remembering and Writing ... 977

Family Well-Being

Fathering

Recognition and Empowerment of Teen Fathers ... 981
Roles! Get Them While They're Hot (PH) ... 987
What Teen Dads Should Know About Moms-to-Be (PH) ... 989
What Teen Moms Should Know About Teen Dads (PH) ... 990
What Teen Dads Should Know About Teen Moms (PH) ... 991
Don't Worry! Pick Me Up and Hold Me (PH) ... 992
Baby Burp (PH) ... 993
Pee-yew! Please Change My Diaper (PH) ... 995

Healthy Family Relationships

Relationships With Grandmothers: Handle With Care ... 999

Teamwork: Parenting and Grandparenting (PH)... 1004
Grandparent-to-Be (PH)... 1005
Your Child, Your Grandchild, and You (PH)... 1007
Your Parents, Your Child's Grandparents (PH)... 1008
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren... 1010
Raising Your Grandchild (PH)... 1013
Working with Families Caring for Foster Teens and Children... 1014
Pregnancy in Foster Care (PH)... 1021
Parenting as a Foster Parent (PH)... 1022
Parenting While My Child Is in Foster Care (PH)... 1023
Teen Dating Violence... 1024
Sexual Abuse: The Silent Factor in Teen Pregnancy... 1029
Safe Body Talk (PH)... 1036

Child Care

Care Provider-Teen Parent Relationships... 1041
Getting to Know Your Childcare Provider (PH)... 1046
All About My Child (PH)... 1047
Childcare Situations (PH)... 1048
Choosing and Keeping Quality Child Care... 1049
Kinds of Child Care (PH)... 1056
Our Care Plan (PH)... 1057
Choosing a Childcare Provider (PH)... 1059
Quality Child Care: What to Look For (PH)... 1060
Childcare Fit (PH)... 1062

Employment and Education

Education Opportunities for Teen Parents... 1067
Study Skills and Time Management (PH)... 1071
Getting a GED (PH)... 1073
Applying to Non-Traditional College Programs (PH)... 1074
Applying to College (PH)... 1075
Youth Employment... 1077
Employment Skills Checklist (PH)... 1084
Resume Template (PH)... 1086
Tips for Interviewing for a Job (PH)... 1088
Being Employee of the Month (PH)... 1090
Listening: A Key Part of On-the-Job Communication (PH)... 1092

Finances

It's All About the Money... 1095
Budget Busters: Money Traps to Avoid (PH)... 1100
Being Smart About My Money (PH)... 1102

Living Arrangements

Living Arrangements and Housing... 1107
Home, Sweet Home (PH)... 1110

Legal

Legal Matters: Paternity, Custody, Visitation, and Child Support... 1113
Child Support (PH)... 1118
Q&A: Establishing Paternity (PH)... 1119
Parenting Plans (PH)... 1120
Legal Terms to Know (PH)... 1121

Forms and Templates

Personal Visit Planning Guide... 1125
Activity Page... 1129
Group Connection Planner and Record... 1131
Group Connection Feedback Form... 1135
Goal Tracking Sheet... 1136
Staff Questionnaire... 1138
Parenting Agreement... 1140
Parent Satisfaction Survey... 1148
Taking Action for a Child... 1149

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

Playful Moments

"Let's go play" is probably the very favorite phrase a child could hear from her parents. Most children are as comfortable playing as birds are flying in the air. Parents, however, vary in their comfort with playing. This is often based on their past experiences and their culture.

A child's daily interactions are mainly in the form of play. In fact, learning and play go hand in hand for children. They learn the ability to love and trust through playful parental interactions.

Play can be initiated by the child or by teen parents. During each caretaking moment – diapering, feeding, going to bed – the child has an opportunity to responds to the parent's face, smiles, and nurturing touch, and the parents have the opportunity to respond to their child's.

Play is:

- Natural. It is just what children do.
- A form of work. It is a function children must do every day to learn about how to make the most of their day, how to live in their world and with their family, and how to safely explore.
- Instructive for parents. When parents play with their child, they are not teaching their child how to play. They are learning how to match their child's interests, build relationship bonds, pass on cultural rules, and promote the playful experience.
- There from the start. From the very beginning of a child's life, she is playing with her parents, whether watching her parents' faces while being fed or mimicking her parents' voices during diaper changes.
- Essential for healthy emotional life. It helps children manage their feelings and cope with unexpected frustrations. Play also provides relaxation and fun.

Play and development

What and how a child plays reflect what skills that child is developing. If an infant is reaching and grasping at objects, her parents can tell she is practicing using her hands. Parents can also tell what is interesting for their child. A baby who moves vigorously with rhythm to country music but not so vigorously with rock has given her parents a clue to her personality.

The body of research on the synergy between play and development is extensive. All humans – and, in fact, all mammals – feel a strong drive to play, especially during their early development. Mammals' brains are so wired for play that when animals are deprived of it for a time and then allowed to play again, they go through a "rebound" stage to make up for lost playtime (Brown, 2009).

When children play, they form neural connections that are added to the stored "maps" in their brains. These interconnected, dynamic maps involve many brain centers and millions of fibers – and the more a child draws on the maps, the fewer connections will be lost to pruning (Brown, 2009).

Social skill development

- Regular parent-child play promotes secure attachment. Securely attached children are self-confident and secure enough to enjoy play with peers and develop social skills.

Parents are their child's first and favorite playmates.

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

- Through play with others, young children develop skills in cooperation (e.g., building a block structure together), perspective taking (e.g., learning how another child plays a role), sharing (e.g., taking turns on a wheeled toy), and helping (e.g., assisting in puzzle completion).
- Children learn to decode others' emotions, feel empathy, and respond appropriately to other participants in group games, skills that are especially valuable to children with disabilities such as autism spectrum disorders.
- As children play together, conflicts are inevitable. As young children learn to resolve conflicts, they learn to become aware of the perspectives of others and the need for give and take in social relations.

Emotional development

- Babies can work through separation anxiety by playing peekaboo or chase with their parent or caregiver.
- As young children initiate their own play activities, they experience pleasure and success. This play promotes their sense of competence and positive self-concept.
- As young children express themselves creatively, such as when making pictures or engaging in role play, this expressive process enhances their sense of self-worth.
- Through role play, young children gain control and mastery over feelings associated with real-life events that they often cannot put into words. Make-believe play offers the young child opportunities to reenact both positive and negative feelings (e.g., washing a doll's hair, rocking a doll to sleep), thereby gaining control over these feelings.
- Open-ended play activities (e.g., water and sand play, play dough sculpting) offer opportunities for young children to express and release their feelings.

Physical development

- From birth on, children learn through their sensorimotor actions about their world: their own bodies, their caregivers, and the objects around them.
- As children use their bodies to explore, they are developing essential motor skills necessary for later learning, like neck and shoulder strength during tummy time or eye-hand coordination and hand dexterity while building a block tower.
- Throughout the early years, young children construct knowledge through their physical actions with objects. As Piaget stated, for the young child "to know is to invent" (Piaget, 1962, as cited in Zigler, Singer, & Bishop-Josef, 2004). A large portion of knowing during the first three years happens through the young child's sensorimotor actions.
- It is through various types of physical play that the young child develops a body image and an understanding of her body in space.

Intellectual development

- Play offers opportunities for the young child to understand relationships and how things work (e.g., balancing blocks of different sizes).
- In play, children experiment and learn about cause and effect (e.g., sinking and floating objects in the bathtub or swimming pool).
- Pretend play often enables young children to make sense of their everyday experiences.
- Play can involve problem solving (e.g., mastering a shape sorter or puzzle) and sequences (putting one interlocking block on top of another). Pretend play involves thinking at a symbolic level. Experiences are re-created and one thing represents another, such as a small block being a doll's bottle or a car. This play is important practice for the symbolic learning via numbers and letters required in school. Just as the block represents a bottle or car, the child will later learn that words represent meaningful ideas.
- Through play, children develop persistence, attention span, memory, and the ability to focus – skills essential for success in school.
- Some play stimulates convergent thinking skills. Convergent thinking involves discovering the single correct solution according to the child's ideas (e.g., sorting buttons according to size or correctly putting puzzle pieces into a form board).

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

- Some play stimulates divergent thinking skills. Divergent thinking involves discovering multiple solutions, such as constructing buildings or vehicles with blocks.
- Planning and decision making are always being practiced during constructive and pretend play.
- When parents or caregivers help a child extend play, it can lengthen her attention span.
- Children are able to test out unfamiliar items or actions in a safe environment to determine whether or not they like them.

Language and literacy development

- Babies babbling syllables in their crib are practicing the mouth movements and coordination that will enable them to speak words.
- With the very early reciprocal parent-infant games such as mirroring facial expressions, initiating vocal sounds, and playing peek-a boo, children are learning turn taking, which is basic to communication.
- In pretend play, words are used to represent objects, people, and events.
- By definition, cooperative play between parent and child or peer and child involves communication (e.g., discussion of rules or roles).
- Early scribbling and drawing are intrinsically pleasurable and are initial forms of constructing meaning through writing.
- Story reading, storytelling, finger plays, and songs enrich the young child's oral language skills and help him to learn that print has meaning.

Types of play

It's hard to define "play" because it's a complex mix of behaviors. Sometimes it's even hard to recognize it when you see it! Some characteristics of play include enjoyment, active engagement, intrinsic motivation, freedom to modify external rules, attention to process rather than product, and nonliteral experiences (Klein, Wirth, & Linas, 2003).

When parents can identify different types of play, they may value their importance more and be more likely to support their child's interests (Hurwitz, 2002/03; Piaget, 1962, as cited in Zigler, Singer, & Bishop-Josef, 2004). Play can be broadly categorized into three types (Sutton-Smith & Roberts, 1981, as cited in Klein & Chen, 2001):

- Play that centers around physical self-testing such as jumping, throwing objects, developing strength, and manipulating small objects.
- Play that imitates games and activities specifically modeled by older siblings or adults.
- Symbolic play activities that are highly verbal and creative. This category of play is open-ended rather than rule-based or routinized.

Most children enjoy a mix of approaches to their play. The mix of the play types depends on the child's age, temperament, learning motivation, needs, and environment. A common theme throughout stages or types of play is that there is no "right" way to play. There is no predetermined outcome, no final product. Instead, children are engaged in a process of self-discovery. Their own initiative tells them when to start and stop the play and their own imagination and sense of wonder fuels their actions.

During play, children are imaging the possibilities and testing out what they can do. The result is a better understanding of how their world works. Awareness of variations or characteristics of play offers teen parents openings for syncing up with their child's play in the moment.

Onlooker play – This involves watching other children but not becoming directly involved with these other children. Parents can take these opportunities to offer a description of what they see the other children doing. Older children may even hold a conversation with their parents about what they see other children doing during their play.

Solitary play – This play involves voluntarily playing with one's own toys near other children. A child may be in a room full of other children but play alone without paying attention to anyone. Playing alone practices the skills of concentration, thinking by oneself, coming up with creative ideas, and regulating emotions. It is an important and normal part of life. Parents can support this play by instituting the number one rule of a child's play environment, or any environment: safety. It is never

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

too early to childproof. This makes for a more relaxed parent while their child plays.

Parallel play – This play involves independent play in close proximity to peers. A child might be in a room full of other children and play alongside another child but with his own toys. This play is a bit deceptive; if teen parents watch carefully, they will notice that there is no formal interaction, but often their child is playing with the same toy as another child and is engaged in a similar action. Parallel play supports a child's peer regulation, observation skills, and ability to work independently.

Associative play – This play involves the engagement of a group of children in a mutual activity, although there is not a common goal and the activity may be very loosely organized. It happens most often when children are beginning to interact with others. Some moments of cooperation between peers will occur. Friendships and the preference for playing with some but not all children are developing during this play. Children practice social interactions, turn-taking, peer regulation, and getting along with others. It is beneficial for parents to provide play environments where opportunities for associative play can occur with mixed-sex groups.

Cooperative play – This play involves a division of labor among children in order to reach a common goal. Two or more children might work together to make an art project or put on a skit. The role of the leader and follower are often visible. Children are learning how to compromise, seek parents' help in resolving conflicts, practice alternatives to aggression, and better manage their emotions.

Rough-and-tumble play – This play involves children engaging in activities with intensity and energy. It incorporates physical behaviors that range from rolling, jumping, and running to tagging and wrestling. This type of play is a change of pace; it includes the unexpected. Children learn the give and take of appropriate social interactions. Successful play requires being adept at both signaling and detecting signals. During this play, when a child detects a signal, he is learning to read and understand body language signifying whether play should come to an end. Parents can help children develop body language or a body code that will help them communicate with their playmates if the play is getting uncomfortable (Carlson, 2009).

Dramatic play – Taking on the role of another person or object or pretending to do something (like drink juice from an empty cup) usually appears when are children transition from sensorimotor play at around 18 months. Children may imitate older siblings or parents, or use household objects in new ways.

Games with rules – This form of play when everyone participates all the time is fun for toddlers (as in circle games like Ring Around the Rosy, where the "rules" are that everyone holds hands and everyone falls down). Following more detailed rules should not be expected of children until they are able to understand the concepts of taking turns and cooperating, usually starting around 2½ years of age.

Your role

Playfulness is a skill that some parents may be reluctant to display. However, to effectively support their child's play on their child's terms, parents will need to pick up the blocks, dip a brush in the paint, get down on the floor, or put on the silly hat. At first they may feel awkward, but with practice they can become comfortable doing it (just as they practiced talking to their baby before he could respond).

Reflecting on their play history may help parents recall playful times from their own childhood and help them anticipate sharing similarly happy experiences with their own child. Reflective prompts could include:

- Who played with you when you were young?
- What is the adult's role during play? What is the child's responsibility?
- What's your earliest play memory?
- What was your favorite toy or game?

Use the parent handout *Attached Play* to guide parents in giving their child room to explore and learn when their parents are with them during play. The parents' behaviors can help their child get the most out of playful moments.

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

Play can occur during any daily routine. Making a point to set up play routines will help toddlers feel like they have had plenty of time with their parents. Use the parent handout *Rituals and Routines* to talk about setting parenting behaviors that will help make everyday activities fun. Use the parent handout *Diapering and Bathing Playtime* to discuss how to make these specific routine moments playful.

Teen parents can take an active role in designing an environment that promotes play. Checking out their space beforehand can prevent a tantrum, an accident, or a broken lamp. When choosing a play space, teen parents should consider:

- Is the area child-friendly and child-safe?
- What small or breakable objects can be moved out of reach?
- Can some of the toys be used in a variety of ways?
- What household items can be used as toys?
- Is there too much noise? Are there other distractions?
- Is this a good place for the activity you've chosen, such as running, throwing balls, or painting?

The toys they choose for their child should reflect the child's interests (not the interests of the teen parents!) and the child's developmental level. The handout *Face Patterns* offers cut-outs that teen parents can use to create very simple toys to stimulate their baby's developing vision. Four additional handouts include guidance on toys for engaging children's growing intellectual, motor, language, and social-emotional skills at various ages:

- *Be Picky About Baby Toys*
- *Be Picky About Toddler Toys*
- *Be Picky About Preschool Toys*
- *Choosing Age-Appropriate Toys*

These handouts are supplemented by a wide variety of activity pages that encourage parents to make their own toys – feely books, feely socks, bowling pins, balls, and more.

It may be tempting for teen parents to offer their child toys that they themselves enjoy (like video games) but that may not be age-appropriate in terms of content or skill level.

Teen parents may find playing with their child boring. But repeating a game or playing with the same toy over and over helps their child learn. It may be helpful for teen parents to know that the more their child plays with that annoying toy, the more she practices and master new skills, the more likely she is to take on new challenges that ensure her learning continues.

Help teen parents appreciate their child's pace. Children often have to follow their parents' schedules, and play sometimes takes quite a bit of time. The handout *Slice of Time* can help parents balance time for play with their other responsibilities.

Studies of play show that children's play is different in different cultures (Klein & Chen, 2001). While one family may view social behaviors as skills, another family may view the same behaviors as totally inappropriate. This is played out in settings such as school meetings or religious services where one family brings toys and activities for their young toddler to play during services another family sitting very close is encouraging the child to be quiet, listen, and look toward the speaker.

Families also vary in how they interact with children during play. Some parents leave their child to play independently without much adult guidance. Others focus more on laughter and humor throughout their interactions. Keep these differences in mind as you choose activity pages and gauge parent-child interactions.

'Invisible string' activity

One of the hardest things for parents to do is to allow their child to lead play. Frequently teen parents join in to play with their child and wind up taking over the play – especially if their interests are different from their child's interests. Teen parents need to recognize that play is the creation of the child. Their role is to add expertise and enrich the play experience.

The invisible string is when a child shows awareness of her parent's presence during her play, as the handout *Attached Play* explains. Use moments during parent-child interaction to point out the invisible string in action. For example, ask the teen parent to provide an object, toy, or activity for her baby or toddler and then see what the child does with it.

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

Have the teen parent notice what the child does, then ask them to reflect on how their child showed awareness of the parent. Point out to the teen parents this is the invisible string in action. Then have the teen parents reflect on how they would play with the toy. Explain that it is OK if their child is not playing the same way they would – what they might think of as the "right" way – and encourage them to let their child show them a "new" way.

When a teen parent has so many areas in their life they do not know about, being the expert for their child is tempting. Support teen parents' awareness that there will be rewards from showing their child how a toy works, then holding off from doing it for him every time.

A way to continue this activity is to encourage the teen parent to begin something, such as stacking one block on top of another, and then have the child give it a try. Providing just enough help to keep frustration at bay helps teen parents motivate their child to learn new skills. Noticing moments when their child is seeking. Noticing moments when their child is seeking acknowledgment or support during play helps teen parents respond with actions that meet their child's need for encouragement.

'Reading cues' activity

Reading cues is an essential parenting role during play with children. Teen parents may find themselves confused about their baby's responses as they play. It's not uncommon to wonder, "We were having so much fun a minute ago, and now he's crying. What happened?"

Remind teen parents that their baby has limits for stimulation. It may be that his behavior was telling the parents that he needed a break. Babies have their own individual ways of responding to stimulation like light, sound, touch, and activity. Some can take in a lot of stimulation before they top out and become distressed. Other babies get overwhelmed very quickly by what may seem to be just a small amount of stimulation (like brightening the lights in the room.)

Some common "I need a break" signals include:

> Turning the head away.
> Arching the back.
> Closing eyes or falling asleep.
> Crying.
> Fussing or making "fussy" sounds.
> Hiccupping.

When a baby shows these kinds of signals, teen parents first need to ask what this behavior is saying to them. If the parent does not seem to respond, suggest giving their baby a rest for a little bit and comforting their baby. This gives him time to calm down, re-group, and pull himself together.

There's no right or wrong way to be. A baby's ability to manage stimulation is based on his unique wiring. It's all about trial and error.

Offer reflective questions about how the teen parents will know when their child is ready to play again. If the teen parent does not respond, point out readiness signs and describe what you see.

Some common "I'm ready to play" signals include:

> Looking around with a calm, clear-eyed expression.
> Meeting his parents' gaze
> Moving his arms or legs
> Turning toward his parents
> Making sounds.

Watching their baby to see how she reacts to, manages, and responds to stimulation gives teen parents very useful information. They can begin to understand what and how much play their baby enjoys, how to recognize when she needs a break, and how to comfort her when she is distressed. This is in-sync play (Zero to Three, 2012).

Group connection facilitation

The first years of life are a time of amazing growth and change in the brain. Children will learn more during this time than at any other period in their life. Encourage teen parents to be open for opportunities to play by getting them excited about parenting during this fun, dynamic time. Your goal is to help teen parents see that what they do every day makes a difference.

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

'Playing all day' activity

Set up a grab bag of prizes for this game, and stack a pile of *Playing All Day Play Cards* alongside a pile of *Playing All Day Activity Cards* (both found on parent handouts). Invite the first person to take a turn and draw one card from each stack. Give them a few minutes to think of a way to make the activity into a playful experience using the play cards they drew.

Bring all the groups together to share and act out the ideas. For example, the Play card might say "Rhyme" and the Activity card might say "Getting dressed." The teen with the card would make a rhyme for getting dressed such as "A shirt of red goes over your head." If the teen is stumped, encourage the group to share ideas.

Playing to Learn resource

The Playing to Learn brochure set available in the Parents as Teacher e-store contains information to guide teen parents' involvement in play. The content includes developmental goals and milestones as well as simple activities and toys parents can make.

There are brochures for ages birth to 6 months, 6 to 12 months, 1 to 3 years, and 3 to 5 years. Tips are organized into the categories of:

1. Growing strong – Play that builds muscles.
2. Learning to play – Play using hands and eyes.
3. Learning to talk – Play that helps with talking and listening.
4. Becoming a person – Play to learn about their world.

'Everyday fun' activity

Prompt the teens to consider "What are the ways to encourage development by using different areas in your home and the things in them?" Encourage them to think about experiences that help with language and listening, memory, counting and sorting, or the five senses.

Use a creative way to assign each person or each small group an age range. Have someone in the group pick an area in a home (for example, kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, living room, or outside). Let them brainstorm, keeping in mind that the activities need to be age-appropriate and safe.

When the group is ready to share, invite someone to write the ideas on a large paper. Give a small treat for each idea.

Conclude by sharing these key points:

- Children are born learners. From the moment they open their eyes, they are taking in their world and making sense of it.
- Parents can ignite their child's imagination through child-driven activities.
- Children learn through interactions with parents, other family members, and caring adults like childcare providers.

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

Related topics

Adolescent Development
Attachment
Birth to 5 Years Development
Fathering
Intellectual Development
Language Development
Motor Development
Resiliency Building
Social-Emotional Development
Transitions/Routines

References

Brown, S. (2009). *Play: How it shapes the brain, opens the imagination, and invigorates the soul.* New York: Avery/Penguin.

Carlson, F. (2009). Rough and tumble play 101. *Child Care Exchange,* July/August, 70-72. Retrieved May 24, 2012, from www.ccie.com/library/5018870.pdf.

Hurwitz, S. C. (2002/03). To be successful – let them play! *Childhood Education, 79*(2), 101-102.

Klein M. D., & Chen, D. (2001). *Working with children from culturally diverse backgrounds.* Clifton Park, NY: Delmar/Thomson Learning.

Klein, T. P., Wirth, D., & Linas, K. (2003). Play: Children's context for development. *Young Children, 58*(3), 38-45.

Parents as Teachers National Center. (2012). *Play* [Training packet]. St. Louis, MO: Author.

Parents as Teachers National Center. (2011). *Foundational curriculum.* St. Louis, MO: Author.

Stages of play. (2007). *Childhood Community News, 16*(3), 1-2. Retrieved April 25, 2012, from www.childcare.org/ccr/newsletter/ccr-news-summer-2007.pdf.

Zero to Three. (2012). *Playing with babies.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved April 24, 2012, from www.zerotothree.org/child-development/play/playing-with-babies.html.

Zigler, E. F., Singer, D. G., & Bishop-Josef, S. J. (Eds.). (2004). *Children's play: The roots of reading.* Washington, DC: Zero to Three.

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

Resources, Referrals, and Growth

Asking for help in a way that brings up a need is an important milestone in teen parents' partnership with professionals. The ball is then in the professional's court, and bridging the gap between resources available and support needed – while still empowering the teen parent – takes preparation and skill.

We all need help sometimes. Whether we are working in a job for the first time, attending a new class, or taking care of someone else, there can be a lot to learn. Feeling unsure of what to do or unwilling to ask for help are common reactions. For teens these feelings may prevent them from obtaining needed services.

Getting the most out of resources available within their social and community supports can boost teen parents' educational and economic potential. However, often teen parents are unaccustomed to practicing self-advocacy. "Growing resources" means learning how to advocate for one's own needs. When teens learn this skill, it helps both their family and the professional.

Professionals often take on the role of suggesting options that will grow resources for teen parents. This may happen because families are not aware of all the services available in their community, so professionals may be "hired" to fill the role of broker of services on behalf of a family or child. On the other hand, a family may be aware of services but may not know how to navigate the complex application process. In such cases, the professional's role may be to help the family fully access support from those services. Learning about the unique circumstance of each family, then sharing information about community-based services, is practicing a partnership that grows resources.

Professionals' role as a broker of services does not end when the family enrolls in a program or begins receiving benefits. Teen parents may struggle to maintain eligibility, drop out, or find that a program isn't meeting their needs. Checking in on progress and assessing the fit of services is an ongoing responsibility.

Barriers to advocacy and resources

Feelings of fear, weakness, or helplessness can compete with the confidence teen parents need to become skilled in self advocacy. In addition, teens often have weak communication skills which can also contribute to poor follow through with a referral intended to support a need.

Other factors that may interfere with teen parents getting the support their family needs include (Center for Law and Social Policy, 2005):

- Reluctance to have their child diagnosed with a developmental delay or disability.
- Expenses related to accessing services.
- Negative connotations based on their own childhood situation.
- Special needs or disabilities.
- Legal ambiguities related to the teen parent's age.
- A perception of disrespect from healthcare professionals, educators, social workers, or other service providers.
- Mental health issues.
- Aging out of the system or graduation from high school.
- A lack of awareness on the part of service agencies about how to reach teen parents.
- Homelessness.
- Inflexible school or work schedules.

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

Your role

Clearly requesting information or help shows teen parents have good decision-making abilities and a grasp of what is known and what is unknown. It also usually saves time, money, frustration, and disappointment! However, practicing self-advocacy skills with unfamiliar agencies is intimidating for teen parents. Even adults who are in stressful situations tend to experience stranger anxiety. You can lessen these feelings by using some of the following strategies.

Do your homework before a need arises. Locate a resource directory, perhaps through your local library, or create your own. Get connected with other helping professionals. Get answers from www.211.org, a national United Way collaborative referral resource which offers information about food, housing, employment, childcare, transportation, health services, and more.

Be a matchmaker. Create opportunities for teen parents and community providers to get to know one another. Possibilities include conducting a personal visit at a library, where you can introduce the teen parent to the help desk librarian, or inviting service providers to a group connection.

Community programs often appreciate forming partnerships with parents before a family is in need. These early relationships can promote teen parents' personal growth, prevent unhealthy behaviors, and make it easier for families who may be at risk to receive timely assistance.

Focus on strengths. Instead of concentrating on teen parents' fear or concern about admitting the unknown, think about how they can use their assets to get the needed answers and build their social network, including resource providers. Ask the teens to contribute their thoughts as well, and encourage them to try their ideas out. Avoid pre-judging them. For example, it sounds like a cliché, but mentioning a friend's need for help may be easier than admitting one's own need.

Participate in community resource fairs. These events have a dual purpose: helping families connect and helping professionals discover what is offered for their families. Attending collaborative events also increases your frequency of contact with other providers who work with families.

Start small. Encourage teen parents to practice the skill of accessing resources where the stakes are low and there is no stigma. For example, the library is a place where asking for help is expected. However, even there teenagers in general seem to hesitate, hold back, and avoid standing in the help desk line (Elizabeth Roberts, personal communication, Feb. 29, 2012).

Share practical tips. These include observations and courteous behaviors that can predispose someone to give a favorable response to the teen parent's request for help. For example:

- Greeting someone first lets you build rapport and, most importantly, gain their interest. This can be as simple as saying, "Hello, my name is ____, can you help me?"
- Start with a question that is as specific as possible. A specific question would be, "Do you have any information about how to pick a good child care for my child while I'm attending classes weekdays in XYZ neighborhood?" as opposed to the general question, "Do you have information about babysitters?"
- Before asking, observe. If the person appears to be doing something else, wait a moment until they are available, or say, "Excuse me, but you look busy – is there someone else who can help me?"
- A respectful attitude, a smile, and a calm tone will get you closer to getting your request. Using a demanding attitude, an overly firm tone of voice, or disrespectful body language – big sighs, rolled eyes, stares, or tense posture – can cause people to stop listening.

Refer to the professional resource *Communication: A Two-Way Process* for more professional techniques and communication skills the teen parent can rehearse before contacting a referred resource.

Emphasize persistence. If at first the teen parent does not succeed, it's important that they try someone else. Anyone can have a bad day or bad moment. The lack of a positive response may not

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

be a reflection on the teen, but rather on the service provider. On the other hand, the teen may need to hone her approach.

Recognize procrastination. We all have a tendency to put off an unpleasant task, but in many cases involving family well-being, waiting makes a need or problem worse.

Ask reflective questions. These conversation starters may help teen parents visualize other experiences in their lives that can help them handle the current problem or need.

- Do you know someone who did not ask for help when they need it? What happened?
- What did you learn about asking for help from your family?
- Have you ever helped someone else? What did you think about them when they asked for help? What were you thinking about yourself when you helped them?
- Have you asked for help in the past? What happened? Did you get the help you needed?
- When is the last time you successfully got help from a stranger? How did it happen?
- Who do you know who is great at getting help?

The parent handout *Circle of Support* can help teen parents to reflect on and identify informal and formal social supports by encouraging them to think about people they know who may be accessing a particular resource.

Common challenges for professionals

Maintaining a rapport when problems arise can be hard. Professionals often use conversations about goal setting, problem-solving discussion, screening results, or family needs assessments with teen parents both as an opportunity to inform them of resource options and as an opportunity to bring up positive observations. A common approach for sharing a referral is the "sandwich" technique: state a parenting strength, follow up with an observation that causes you concern, discuss a possible referral, and end with another strength.

It is very important to set the family's expectations of your abilities and be clear about your capabilities and professional limitations ahead of time. Ask empowering questions about your role during the referral process such as, "What do you need from me?" or "How can I support you while I am here today?" This opens a dialogue for discussing expectations and the reality of what can happen.

Help parents advocate for themselves or their child once referrals are made or in process. Avoid doing the work for them. Resist the temptation to "fix" everything or to jump into action. Instead, focus on trying to understand the family, the perspective of its members, and some of the peripheral things that might be helpful to them. The professional resource *Teens' Self-Advocacy Skills* and the parent handout *We All Need Help Sometimes* address this in more detail.

Make sure that you follow up on any referrals or activities you told the family you would carry out. This way, the family learns to trust you and have confidence in your word when you commit to something. Teen parents can easily feel that others are not trustworthy and they cannot count on people, so failure to follow through can be destructive to your relationship as well as the modeling that you are doing for them.

Staying objective when a family is in crisis

Professionals become exposed to unexpected, intense family situations. Some of these interactions create strong reactions and feeling, often unconscious, in the professional. This is called countertransference.

It is important to be honest with yourself and engage in frank self-reflections when you find that you are having strong reactions to a family. Be sure to discuss these concerns with your supervisor and your other colleagues.

By speaking about your questions and concerns, you will be able to look at them more objectively and determine actions steps to resolve them.

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

Group connection facilitation

Refer to the professional resource *Community Assets* for a group activity that empowers teen parents in finding resources in their community.

Encourage teen parents to share resources, needs, and experiences with the group. For example, let's say a participant were to say she needed child care for Wednesday nights. She checked the cost from a 24-hour center. It is more than she can pay. Ask whether the group members know of other child care available on Wednesday nights? Do they have ideas about who might know?

Related topics

Communication
Health
Living Arrangements and Housing
Planning
Resiliency Building

References

40 development assets for adolescents. (n.d.). Search Institute. Retrieved May 3, 2012, from www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18.

Center for Law and Social Policy. (2005). *Early Head Start and teen parent families: Partnerships for success* [Issue brief]. Retrieved from www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications_archive/files/0210.pdf.

Parents as Teachers National Center. (2011). *Foundational curriculum.* St. Louis, MO: Author.

Kalinowski, B. (2011, Dec. 11). For newly poor, seek help before it's too late. *CitizensVoice.com.* Retrieved from http://citizensvoice.com.

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

Your Baby's Development: 1 to 3 Months

All about me: My sleep patterns are changing. I may sleep four to eight hours at night with several naps during the day. **Remember: Back to sleep, tummy to play.** Avoid long periods in car seats, swings, and stationary jumpers.

	I am communicating.	How you can help:	What we did:
Language	> I look at you when you talk.	> Talk about what you are doing. Read to me and sing to me.	
	> I make sounds with saliva. I begin cooing using vowel sounds – aah, ooo.	> Be playful and imitate the sounds I make.	
	> I take turns imitating sounds with someone I know.	> Talk to me face to face. Be sure to wait as I take my turn.	
	I am learning to learn.	**How you can help:**	**What we did:**
Intellectual	> I look at my hands.	> Sit by my side and watch me. Talk about what I am doing.	
	> I bat at objects hanging within my reach.	> Hold an interesting toy near me. See if I will reach for it.	
	> I visually follow people and things. I like to look around when I am awake.	> Slowly move a bright-colored toy from side to side so I can follow it with my eyes. Move me from place to place and change my position.	
	> I combine two actions – for example, sucking and looking around.	> Hang a mobile where I can safely watch it move.	

Please don't give me milk or juice in a bottle to fall asleep. It's not good for my teeth (coming soon!). Right now I don't need cereal in my bottle, either. Milk or formula is enough to fill my tummy.

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

Motor	I am moving my body.	How you can help:	What we did:
	> I lift my head when lying on my tummy and turn it from side to side. I hold my head steady when I'm against your shoulder.	> Put me on a blanket on the floor to exercise my muscles. Put interesting things on the blanket where I can see them.	
	> My arms and legs move with more purpose.	> Let me kick objects that make noise.	
	> I like to push my legs against a firm surface.	> Put your hands below my feet and let me push against them.	
	> I open my hands to hold a rattle. I bring my hands together and sometimes to my mouth.	> Offer safe toys for me to hold and mouth.	

Social-emotional	I am feeling emotions.	How you can help:	What we did:
	> I smile to show pleasure; I smile at people.	> Look into my eyes and smile back at me.	
	> I show my excitement when I see or hear my parents. I recognize your faces and voices.	> Show that you are happy to see me too! Ask yourself, "What would she say if she could talk?"	
	> I cry to signal a need – I might be hungry, wet, or tired.	> Try to come to me and meet my needs as soon as possible. I am building trust in you, and soon I will cry less often.	
	> I have a way to comfort myself – I suck my fingers or a pacifier.	> Allow me to suck what ever it is that comforts me. Holding and rocking are also good to do when I cry.	
	> I imitate some of your facial movements.	> Play copy cat with me. Imitate my mouth movements and sounds.	

If you have trouble comforting me, put me in a safe place while you calm down. Never shake me.

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

Pee-yew! Please Change My Diaper

On average, newborns go through 10 diapers a day. A typical baby uses more than 5,000 diaper changes by the time he uses the potty. At rate of five minutes per diaper change, that's 400 hours!

Diapering can be a special time for you and your baby. Your face is a perfect arm's length away for eye contact and communication. Your nurturing, gentle touches teach your baby that he is respected and important to you.

Ten steps to changing a diaper

1. Wash your hands.
2. Lay your baby in the changing area and start talking! Tell him what you are doing at each step. Smile and make eye contact.
3. Undress your baby down to his diaper. Place a clean diaper under him.
4. Undo the old diaper. (If you are changing a boy, place a cloth over his genitals. Cold air can cause your baby to urinate unexpectedly.)
5. Remove the old diaper.
6. Clean your baby using a wet baby wipe or washcloth. Wash from front to back to prevent germs from being spread from his backside.
7. Dry your baby's skin with a clean towel or let him air dry. Apply ointment if you notice any signs of a rash.
8. Fasten the new diaper and dress your baby.
9. Pick up your baby and give him a hug and kiss.
10. Wipe your baby's hands with a clean cloth. Wash your hands with soap and water.

Setting up a diapering station

A diapering station should be in an easy-to-access, comfortable location where your baby is safe from falls.

Stock it with:

- A good supply of diapers
- Wet wipes or washcloths
- Diaper rash cream or ointment
- A change of clothes in case of accidents
- Toys or books (for older babies)

Avoid baby powder or cornstarch. Babies can inhale the powder, and cornstarch could start a yeast rash (a diaper rash infected with yeast).

It's a good idea to gather all your supplies before you start. That way you can keep one hand on your baby at all times so he doesn't roll off the changing table.

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

Top 10 Reasons to Get Regular Prenatal Care

You are the expert on keeping yourself and your baby healthy. Prenatal care helps you learn how to make the best decisions for you both.

Reasons to get prenatal care

10. You will get tips for keeping your body healthy.

9. Your baby will be healthier.

8. You can listen to the baby's heartbeat and see an ultrasound picture.

7. Someone special to you can come along to hear the baby's heartbeat and see an ultrasound picture.

6. You can get information about good nutrition.

5. You will learn what labor and birth will be like.

4. Your healthcare provider will identify and treat any problems that might affect you or your baby.

3. You can find out about the kind of health care that is right for you and your baby.

2. You can meet the people who will be on the team when your baby is born.

1. You can get answers to all your questions about pregnancy.

Reflection

The best thing about my pregnancy so far is:

The scariest thing is:

Text4baby

Pregnant moms have a lot to remember! From prenatal nutrition to labor and delivery, you are always learning something new. And once your baby arrives, you will have even more to learn. Reminders from www.text4baby.org can help.

The free messages are matched to your baby's due date. During pregnancy, you get updates three times a week about topics like prenatal care, stress, fetal development, and birth defects.

After your baby is born, messages will be about developmental milestones, immunizations, breastfeeding, safe sleep, family violence, car seat safety, dad's role, and more.

1. To sign up, text BABY to 511411 (or text BEBE for Spanish).
2. To change your baby's due date or to send in your baby's actual birth date, text UPDATE to 511411. Follow the prompts on the message that comes back.
3. To stop receiving messages, text STOP to 511411. (The texts automatically stop when your baby turns 1 year old.)

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

activity page

24-36 months

Let's Play Potty: Rehearsing Routines and Talking Together

WHAT DO WE HAVE?

- Toilet, potty chair, or child-size chair placed in the bathroom
- Doll or stuffed animal wearing pants
- Wet wipe or cloth (optional)
- *Using the Potty: Easy Does It* handout
- Preschool book, preferably one about using the toilet or body parts

How do we do it? *Watch, wait, and wonder, then respond.*

1. Start playing with your child's doll or stuffed animal.
2. Pretend the doll or stuffed animal tells you she needs to go pee in the potty.
3. Take the doll to the bathroom. Invite your child to pull down or take off the doll's pants. Talk about each step in the potty routine.
4. Place the doll in a sitting position on the potty.
5. Start a pretend one-minute conversation with the doll. Talk about how eating and drinking makes us pee and poop. Talk about what happens when we use the potty.
6. Remove the doll from the potty and pretend to wipe her bottom with toilet paper. Encourage your child to dress the doll in the pants.
7. Hand your child a wet cloth to wipe the seat (if this would normally be part of your family's routine).
8. Invite your child to wash her hands while you wash yours. Pretend to wash the doll's hands too.
9. Watch for signs that your child will want to repeat the pretend game with the doll or wants to pretend to use the potty herself. Make sure to follow the same steps each time you play.

What's in it for us?

- For your child to be successful using the potty, she needs to be able to control her bladder. It also helps if she can pull her pants up and down by herself and get on and off the potty chair or toilet.
- Your child enjoys practicing conversation skills during make-believe play. You may hear new words when your child talks to the doll.
- **Nurturing:** Your child enjoys imitating the things you do, especially if she thinks you are having fun. Celebrate your child's steps toward learning to use the toilet. If she sits on the potty, even with her clothes on, that is progress!
- Rehearsing with the doll – and using the same steps each time – helps your child remember the potty routine.
- _____

_____

(child skill or parent skill defined by the parent/early childhood professional)

Story time

Encourage your baby to touch and explore her books. There are many types of books for babies: "chubby books," vinyl books that can go in the bath, cloth books, and board books. They all hold interesting pictures and are fun for her to feel.

Offer your child books with touch-and-feel pages. You can check out a variety of these books from the library.

Play it safe

While your child learns to use the toilet, she will make mistakes. Stay calm, even if you are frustrated. Don't punish her or yell. It will be harder for her to learn if she is afraid that you will be angry or disappointed.

Knowledge Studio™
Powered by Parents as Teachers

CONTINUED LEARNING

Name body parts while your child gets dressed. Talk about how she is growing. If you still have her baby clothes, compare them to what she wears now. Show her the underwear she will wear when she is out of diapers.

During bath time, make up songs about body parts. Here is one example, to the tune of *Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush*:

Rub-A-Dub-Dub Song
This is the way we scrub our arms, scrub our arms, scrub our arms.
This is the way we scrub our arms, when we take a bath.
Repeat with legs, tummy, feet, and so on.

MAKING IT A ROUTINE

When your child wakes up from a nap, or 45 minutes after eating or drinking, invite her to practice potty sitting for 2 or 3 minutes. Use the handout *Using the Potty: Easy Does It* for tips.

If she goes potty, say in a pleased but mild voice, "Oh, you peed. Good job. Let's clean it up and flush, and then we'll read a book." Your child is becoming independent but can easily get embarrassed or worry about disappointing you.

During this activity, my child …

During this activity, I …