

Who Does What?

For each item below, circle the answer that most closely matches your response.

1. Who changes your baby's diaper?
 - A. I am the only person in my family who changes the baby's diaper.
 - B. I change the baby's diaper most of the time.
 - C. The baby's father changes the diaper most of the time.
 - D. My mother or another family member changes the baby's diaper most of the time.
 - E. A child care provider changes the baby's diaper most of the time.

2. Who feeds your baby?
 - A. I am the only person in my family who feeds the baby.
 - B. I feed the baby most of the time.
 - C. The baby's father feeds the baby most of the time.
 - D. My mother or another family member feeds the baby most of the time.
 - E. A child care provider feeds the baby most of the time.

3. Who prepares your baby's food?
 - A. I am the only person in my family who prepares the baby's food.
 - B. I prepare the baby's food most of the time.
 - C. The baby's father prepares the baby's food most of the time.
 - D. My mother or another family member prepares the baby's food most of the time.
 - E. A child care provider prepares the baby's food most of the time.

4. Who bathes your baby?
 - A. I am the only person in my family who bathes the baby.
 - B. I bathe the baby most of the time.
 - C. The baby's father bathes the baby most of the time.
 - D. My mother or another family member bathes the baby most of the time.
 - E. A child care provider bathes the baby most of the time.

5. Who puts your baby to bed?
 - A. I am the only person in my family who puts the baby to bed.
 - B. I put the baby to bed most of the time.
 - C. The baby's father puts the baby to bed most of the time.
 - D. My mother or another family member puts the baby to bed most of the time.
 - E. A child care provider puts the baby to bed most of the time.

6. Who takes your baby to the doctor?
 - A. I am the only person in my family who takes the baby to the doctor.
 - B. I take the baby to the doctor most of the time.
 - C. The baby's father takes the baby to the doctor most of the time.
 - D. My mother or another family member takes the baby to the doctor most of the time.

7. Who does your baby's laundry?
 - A. I am the only person in my family who does the baby's laundry.
 - B. I do the baby's laundry most of the time.
 - C. The baby's father does the baby's laundry most of the time.
 - D. My mother or another family member does the baby's laundry most of the time.

8. Who shops for your baby's everyday needs like baby food, clothes, or diapers?
 - A. I am the only person in my family who shops for the baby's daily needs.
 - B. I shop for the baby's daily needs most of the time.
 - C. The baby's father shops for the baby's daily needs most of the time.
 - D. My mother or another family member shops for the baby's daily needs most of the time.

9. When you need or want to go out, who takes care of your baby?
 - A. I never go out.
 - B. I always take my baby with me when I go out.
 - C. The baby's father takes care of the baby when I go out.
 - D. My mother or another family member takes care of my baby when I go out.
 - E. I ask a friend to take care of my baby or I hire a sitter when I go out.

10. When I need someone in my family to watch my baby, I . . .
 - A. Never ask family members to babysit.
 - B. Ask in advance if they will be available.
 - C. Offer to pay them or do something for them in return for their taking care of my baby.
 - D. Know they will be glad to watch my baby, and that I don't need to ask.

Parent-to-Parent Role Plays

Each pair of participants receives a role play. One should take on the mother role or other family member role and the other will play the teen parent. After you have read your role-play, act out a conversation between the two family members for others in the class to see and hear.

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Role Play 1

Mother: Your teenaged daughter left her baby with you when she went out with friends. She did not ask you to keep the baby, but just assumed you were available. she said she would be back by 7:00 p.m. so that you could attend a meeting at 7:30. However, it is 7:30 and she has just walked in the door.

Daughter: When your mom got home from work at 5:30 p.m., you told her you were going out with friends for a little while. You just had to get out of the house. The baby had a bad day from cutting teeth, and she about drove you crazy. Your mom said she has a meeting at 7:30 p.m. so you promised to be home by 7:00 so she could get to her meeting. You left your friends in time to get home by 7:00 p.m., but you remembered you needed to pick up a prescription for the baby, and then you got stuck in traffic. You are just now coming in the door and it is 7:30 p.m.

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Role Play 2

Father: Your teenaged daughter Keri tries to take care of her baby, but she just doesn't know what she is doing. She should have the baby on a regular feeding schedule. You and her mother raised her that way, and it worked like a charm. Instead, she feeds the baby whenever she cries. If she would just make her wait a little while until feeding time, the baby would get used to the schedule and everything would be all right. Keri picks up the baby every time she cries, day or night. You believe Keri is spoiling the baby. You want Keri to get the baby on a schedule so that things won't be so crazy around the house.

Daughter: Your parents are making things hard for you. The baby's doctor recommended that you feed her on demand (whenever she is hungry). You have been trying to do that and to go to her when she cries. The nurse at the Health Department says you can't spoil a baby. Your parents sure don't agree with that. They want you to put the baby on a strict eating and sleeping schedule. They say she will get used to it. The nurse says that babies become attached to their mothers when their mothers respond to their needs. Your parents seem upset, especially dad, that you are not doing what they recommend. Here comes Dad, and he has that look that says he is ready to give you some more advice.

Role Play 3

Younger Sister: Your older sister, Natasha, had a baby four months ago. Now, your mom spends all her time taking care of the baby or working. She never seems to have time for you. Natasha eats it up, too. She thinks she's grown up because she is a mother. She has started bossing you around. You're beginning to think that the only way to get some attention around here is to get pregnant, and you just might do that.

Natasha: You used to be close to your younger sister, Cicily. But, now you don't have as much time to spend with her since you had a baby four months ago. You try to warn her not to get in trouble herself, but she seems resentful. She whines a lot and acts jealous of the baby. She never acts like she wants to help with the baby, even when you ask. You think she might decide not to have a baby while she is young if she actually spends some time taking care of your baby. You decide to talk with her again this evening.

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Role Play 4

Mother: You were very upset when you found out your teenaged daughter was going to have a baby. You didn't bring her up that way. You certainly don't want her to marry the guy who got her pregnant. In fact, you don't want him around this baby at all. He is not the kind of role model this baby needs. Now that the baby is here, you have fallen in love with him. You always wanted a son. You think the best thing for you to do will be to take over as the baby's mother and let your daughter be his "older sister." That way he will get to be raised by two parents, and your daughter can continue on with her life as if this never happened. Then, when your daughter is older and married she can have a baby that she will raise. That will be best for everyone.

Daughter: You sure did dread telling your parents that you were pregnant. You knew they would hit the roof. Of course you were right. But they got over it. In fact, since the baby has been born, your mother hardly lets you around him. She wants to be the mother and let you pretend to be the older sister. She says you are not ready to be a mother and his father is not ready either. When you are older and married she says you can have another baby that will be yours to take care of. Maybe she is right, but it sure does hurt not to be able to be the mother to your baby that you want to be. Sometimes you think you just might take the baby and leave. But, then what would you do? You don't have anywhere to go and you don't have any way to support the baby and yourself. You would lose your TANF benefits if you leave your parents' home. You decide to talk to your mother about this situation.

Role Play 5

Teen Father: You got her pregnant by accident. Everybody said it could not happen the first time you had sex. Well, they were wrong. Now you are a father. The baby is beautiful, but you never get to see her. You thought about getting married to the mother and trying to support your family, but your parents said “No way—you’re way too young.” Your girlfriend’s mother doesn’t want you coming around. She blames you for messing up her daughter’s life. She says “You’re no good, just like all men. All men want to do is get the girl pregnant and then leave.” You want your daughter to get to know you and to know that you love her. You want to spend time with her, but you can’t get past your girlfriend’s mother.

Mother of Teen Mom: Men are nothing but scum. You learned your lesson the hard way when your husband beat you, then walked off and left you with three kids and a bunch of bills to pay. Now your oldest daughter got pregnant and had a baby girl. She wants to marry the baby’s father. You say absolutely not. That is one thing you can agree with his parents about. You raised your three kids by yourself. You and your daughter can raise your granddaughter, too. You don’t want your daughter marrying this teen boy. He is too irresponsible. If he had been responsible, he would have used a condom, and none of this would have happened. You don’t want him to hurt your daughter and your granddaughter the way your husband hurt you. It will be best never to let him get involved in your granddaughter’s life. He called again, and left a message asking if he could come over to see the baby. You need to give him an answer that will put him off for good.

Parent-to-Parent Role Play Discussion Guide

Role Play 1

Issues:

- Teen is assuming that mother will take care of the baby whenever needed.
- Teen is not considering mother's commitments when she makes plans.
- Teen needs time away from the baby.

What might help?

The teen and her mother need to talk about expectations for child care from the grandmother. Is the baby's grandmother willing to babysit from time-to-time? How often is she willing to babysit? How much advance notice does she need? What will she expect in return from the baby's mother? What are other possibilities for child care when the teen mother needs to get out for a little while? Is the baby's father involved at all? Could he keep the baby sometimes? Are there other family members or friends who would be willing to babysit from time-to-time? What can the teen mother provide in return if she can't pay for their services? Setting up regular family meetings where the teen mother and her mother share their schedules for the week and plan when child care will be needed will help to avoid these problems in the future. The teen mother will need to recognize that sometimes she won't be able to leave her baby, even if she is about to go crazy. She will have to figure out some other ways to relieve stress at those times.

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Role Play 2

Issues:

- Parents and teen disagree on how to parent the infant.
- The baby is disrupting the rest of the family's schedule.

What might help?

Keri might ask her parents to go to doctor with her for the baby's next appointment so they can hear for themselves what the doctor says about feeding the baby. On the other hand, if the baby is disrupting the schedule for the rest of the family, it might help for Keri to begin to move toward a more regular feeding schedule. There are experts who recommend regular schedules as well as those that recommend feeding on demand. Keri can talk to her doctor about this. As the baby gets older, she will need less frequent meals, especially at night. Keri's parents might feel better about Keri's parenting if she asks their opinions or asks for their help every once in awhile. Even though Keri is trying very hard to be the responsible parent, she is still living in her parents' home and still has some responsibility to them.

Role Play 3

Issues:

The younger sister feels neglected since her older sister had a baby.

The younger sister is jealous of the attention her sister and the baby are receiving.

The younger sister resents that Natasha has taken on the role of parent to her by bossing her around and trying to get her to take care of the baby.

The younger sister sees getting pregnant as a way of getting the attention she craves.

Natasha doesn't want her younger sister to become a teen parent because she sees how difficult it is.

What might help?

Natasha needs to be the primary parent to her baby. She needs to avoid acting like a parent to her younger sister. She needs to talk with her sister about how hard it is to be a teen parent. She needs to pay some attention to her younger sister to help relieve her feelings of jealousy. She might emphasize the importance to the baby of having a loving aunt in her life.

Natasha's mother needs to recognize that she has not been giving her younger daughter the attention she needs. If Natasha sees that her sister needs more attention, she can talk to her mother about her concern for her younger sister. A family meeting with all family members present would give everyone a chance to talk about their needs, to share schedules, and to plan some family time together.

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Role Play 4

Issues:

Grandmother is taking over the role of parent from her daughter.

Grandmother may be in denial that she is a grandmother and thinks that becoming the mother and pretending her daughter never was pregnant will make everything okay.

Teen parent feels inadequate as a parent and thinks it might be best to let her mother take over.

Teen parent feels powerless to stop her mother and considers running away with the baby.

Teen parent has few resources to draw on if she decides to leave.

What might help?

The teen parent needs to build some skills as a parent and some educational or work skills to boost her self-confidence. She might enroll in a parenting class such as PACE to learn parenting and financial management skills. It would be helpful to get some family counseling that would include her parents. The Family Services Counselor may be able to help or to provide some referrals. If the teen mother is involved in church, she might seek advice from a minister or other trusted adult in the church. She may need to investigate possibilities for moving out of her parents' home if she wants to be the primary parent for her baby. Could she move in with her boyfriend's family until she reaches age 18 or finishes high school? The father of the baby needs to take some responsibility too. He needs to work on his education and job skills. He needs to provide support for the baby. This would help to reinforce that the baby is the responsibility of the teens, not of the grandparents. The teen parent needs to tell her mother how she feels about being left out of her own child's life. She needs to admit to her parents that the baby is the responsibility of her boyfriend and herself.

Role Play 5**Issues:**

- Teen father wants to have a role in his child's life.
- Grandparents do not want the teen parents to marry.
- Maternal grandmother blames the teen father for getting her daughter pregnant.
- Maternal grandmother does not want the teen father involved in the baby's life at all because she does not trust men.

What might help?

The teen fathers will have to prove himself responsible to his parents and to his girlfriend's parents. He can do this by providing financial support for his child as much as possible. He can work hard at school and find ways to get job training that will help him to get a good job when he graduates from high school. If the grandmother continues to keep him from seeing the baby, he needs to think of other ways to keep in touch with his child. He can write letters for the teen mother to read to their baby. He can make a tape of him reading a child's book to the baby. He can get her birthday presents and Christmas presents. He can keep trying to visit the baby. He can petition the courts for visitation rights.

He may be able to help the grandmother accept him by showing he understands why she is afraid to let him get involved with the baby. He can say he knows about his girlfriend's father and how badly he treated the family. The teen father can say, "I don't want to be like him. I want to be a good father to my child." He can find some research about the importance of fathers in children's lives and share that with the grandmother. He can offer to help the grandmother with things around her house. He can be kind to his girlfriend.