

When your teenager is having a baby

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If your teen is about to become a parent the best thing you, as a parent, can do for them is be supportive. This is an overwhelming time for all family members, try to stay calm and talk about decisions to be made in a rational manner. Sometimes it's best to take some time to think and then resume the conversation after there has been some time to calm down.

Most teens do not plan the pregnancy and they are terrified. Their world has just turned upside down. They used to worry about weekend plans, clothes and friends and now they must learn about prenatal care, diapers, formula and childbirth. Teens that have family support are more likely to have a healthier pregnancy and to stay in school.

Some tips for talking with your teen about the pregnancy:

- Stay calm
- Remember it is their decision
- Discuss what support you're willing and/or able to give them
- Keep in mind how scared they are
- Be supportive and informative but not judgmental
- Listen to what they have to say
- Help them make the right decision for them even if you don't agree

The McHenry County Youth Service Bureau offers T.A.M.I., a support groups for pregnant and parenting teens in Woodstock and in Crystal Lake. We help with community referrals, parenting education, peer support and have quarterly meetings for the families of teen parents.