

LIFE SKILLS

for teen parents

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

*volume 1:
Healthy Relationships*

*volume 2:
Building Your Future*



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Introduction

LIFE CAN BE OVERWHELMING FOR TEEN PARENTS. In addition to the regular teen responsibilities of work, school, and relationships, there is the duty of raising a child. That's where InJoy Videos' *Life Skills for Teen Parents* program comes in. As a main lesson or as supplementary material, this series helps teen parents learn the skills they need to make better decisions every day, including waiting before having another child, finishing school, creating and choosing healthy relationships, and setting achievable goals. They learn how their choices can create a brighter future for themselves and their children.

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LIFE SKILLS FOR TEEN PARENTS

Volume 1: Healthy Relationships

Intended Audience

This video is made specifically to help teen parents make good relationship choices. It can be shown to young mothers and fathers in high school teen parenting classes, relationship courses, life skills classes, and sex education classes. It is also valuable in places that teen parents frequent, such as teen-specific programs, community colleges, health clinics or offices, career centers, counseling offices, and day care centers.

Audience Objectives

- To raise awareness about the importance of good self-esteem
- To understand the different stages of romantic relationships
- To recognize the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships
- To learn ways to deal with anger and conflict
- To walk away from abuse
- To think about the consequences of marriage and co-habitation
- To maintain a strong support network
- To accept the other parent's healthy involvement in their child's life

Suggested Facilitator Presentation

- Review the video and facilitator's guide
- Decide if you would like to see the video in its entirety or spread out over several lessons
- Decide which activities you would like to do after viewing the program
- Gather materials for those activities
- Make copies of the handouts for viewers
- Open discussion by asking the questions provided on page 4
- Show the video
- Either pause at the end of each section and ask the corresponding questions, or wait until the end of the program before discussing
- Pass out the handouts and complete activities

Program Overview

1. Introduction
2. Start With Yourself – including self-esteem, making changes, waiting before getting pregnant again
3. Relationship Basics – including stages of relationships, how to break up respectfully
4. Fair Fighting – including signs of anger, resolving conflict, Speaker-Listener Technique, signs of an unhealthy relationship, partner abuse
5. Commitment – including marriage, living together
6. Your Support Network – including friends, family
7. Your Child's Other Parent – including shared parenting agreements, responsible fatherhood

Discussion Topics

Prior to Viewing “Healthy Relationships”

Ask participants the following questions. You can break them into smaller groups, ask them to list their answers on a piece of paper, or engage in a group discussion.

1. What is important to you in a romantic relationship?
2. When you get into an argument with your partner, friend, or parent, how does it start and how does it end?
3. What do you like about your friends? How do they help you and your child?
4. How is your child’s other parent involved in parenting?

After Viewing “Healthy Relationships”

Ask the following questions to assess how the program affected your participants:

1. Has this program helped you make a decision about a change you would like to make in your life?
2. What are the benefits to your child of not getting pregnant again right away?
3. What are some ways to say “no” to sex? (*use direct and firm words, don’t make excuses, ask them why they are pressuring you, change the subject, walk away*)
4. What are some activities you can do to get to know someone?
5. What are the signs of a deep and trusting relationship? (*honesty, consistency, respect, loyalty, when both people’s needs are important*)
6. What are the signs of an unhealthy relationship? (*yelling, threats, put-downs, violence, consistent lying, jealousy, controlling behavior, drug or alcohol abuse*)
7. What are the consequences to your child of moving from relationship to relationship or having an unhealthy relationship? (*more poverty, more abuse*)
8. No one can be a perfect parent all the time. What are some things you would change in how your parents raised you? How can you apply that to your own child?

Follow-Up Activities

1. Have participants collect images from the media that send messages about who they should be. Ask them to create a collage about how they are different from those messages. (*Supplies: media such as magazines, newspapers, comics; glue, scissors, crayons/markers/colored pencils, cardstock*)
2. Have separate groups design ads for the different stages in the Cycle of Love: Attraction, Connection, and Trust. (*Supplies: Cycle of Love handout, paper, markers/colored pencils/crayons, scissors, glue, images from different media*)
3. Divide participants into groups. Ask each group to choose a subject for a couple’s argument. Have them write a scene that includes the signs of anger, ways to calm down, when to talk, and how to talk about the problem calmly. Play can be performed, if desired. (*Supplies: “Signs of Anger”, “Cool Down”, and “Speaker-Listener” handout.*)
4. Have each participant write a list of what they need to discuss or agree on with their pretend (or actual) life-long partner before getting married or living together.

Cycle of Love

Attraction

How it Feels:

- “High” from body’s chemical reaction
- Like you are in a constant state of bliss

Green Light: Do . . .

- Spend time together talking about work, school, likes and dislikes, beliefs, dreams
- Have fun together going to movies, eating together, hanging out

Red Light: Don’t . . .

- Introduce your child yet
- Have sex — you could get stuck dealing with that person for the rest of your life
- Share all of your secrets since the relationship may not last

Move forward if:

- You have many things in common (especially values)
- You have fun together
- There are no signs of an unhealthy relationship, such as yelling, put-downs, threats, violence, lies, controlling behavior, jealousy, unkept promises, or a drug or alcohol problem

Connection

How it Feels:

- You continue to feel the attraction, but you also feel more connected to each other
- You appreciate each other’s feelings about work, hobbies, family, and the future
- You are good friends and have a lot to talk about

Green Light: Do . . .

- Meet each other’s friends and family
- Notice how they treat each other

Red Light: Don’t . . .

- Put up with the signs of an unhealthy relationship
- Let your partner keep you from your support network of friends and family

Move forward if:

- You respect each other’s boundaries around sex, money, drugs and alcohol
- You introduce your partner to your child and he/she shows interest but doesn’t take over
- You still want to be in the relationship

Trust

How it feels:

- Your partner’s needs are as important as yours and vice versa
- You can depend on your partner
- The physical fun is still there, but loyalty and trust are developing

Green Light: Do . . .

- Be truthful
- Learn and practice ways to communicate your needs and feelings without blaming the other person.

Red Light: Don’t . . .

- Put up with lying or deceit, especially when it happens consistently

Move forward if:

- You respect each other’s values about having children, finishing school, working
- You can resolve conflict and come to workable solutions together
- There are no signs of an unhealthy relationship

Breaking Up With Respect

1. Don’t wait! Break up as soon as you know that’s what you want to do.
2. Break up in person.
3. Allow some privacy and time for a response, but don’t beat around the bush. That makes it more painful for both of you.
4. Be direct, but respectful (“I’ve enjoyed getting to know you, but this relationship doesn’t work for me”).
5. Walk away if it gets ugly. It may be sad, but it shouldn’t be abusive.
6. Do it over the phone if you feel you are in danger.

Communication

Communication is the key to a good relationship. Learn to recognize when tempers are rising, take the time to cool down, and be committed to resolving conflict respectfully.

RECOGNIZING ANGER

If you experience these, you or your partner are probably getting angry:

- Loud, angry voice
- Rising heart beat
- You want to hit or throw something
- You want to cry or run away

WAYS TO COOL DOWN

Try to calm down before talking it out:

- Take a time out, saying when you'll return
- Exercise or clean
- Think soothing thoughts
- Write in a journal
- Take several deep breaths
- Pray or meditate

Speaker-Listener Technique

This exercise helps you uncover what's really going on underneath the drama of a fight. Remember to choose a good time to talk, after everyone's had a chance to cool down, but within 24 hours of an incident.

SPEAKER: Says why he or she is upset, keeping it short and sweet. Speak for yourself, using "I" statements . . . this way, you are taking responsibility for how you feel, not blaming the other person.

- E.G. I feel _____ (emotion such as sad, lonely, upset, frustrated, scared) when _____ (state a specific incident).

LISTENER: Try to listen and understand, without interrupting or disagreeing. When Speaker is finished, sum up what he/she said without criticizing. The idea is to understand the other's feelings, which is called empathy.

- E.G. So, you feel _____ (emotion) when _____ (incident)?

SPEAKER: If the listener misunderstands something, the Speaker explains what he/she means, calmly.

LISTENER BECOMES SPEAKER: The roles are switched. The listener now has a chance to speak.

FIND SOLUTIONS: After both of you have had a chance to speak and listen, work together to find some possible solutions that you can both agree to. It may take a few conversations to get to the underlying problem, but don't give up! Any steps you take to solve your problems together will pay off.

LIFE SKILLS FOR TEEN PARENTS

Volume 2: Building Your Future

Intended Audience

This video is made specifically to help teen parents set goals, finish school and think about the future. It can be shown to young mothers and fathers in high school teen parenting classes, relationship courses, life skills classes, and sex education classes. It is also valuable in places that teen parents frequent, such as teen-specific programs, community colleges, health clinics or offices, career centers, counseling offices and day care centers.

Audience Objectives

- To learn how to set goals and stick with them
- To understand that education equals earning power
- To find solutions to the problems of finishing school (time, childcare, money)
- To match individual interests and abilities with career options
- To consider non-traditional, better-paying work for women
- To know how to find a job and keep it
- To try different strategies to save money
- To locate the best living situation for their family

Suggested Facilitator Presentation

- Review the video and facilitator's guide
- Decide if you would like to see the video in its entirety or spread out over several lessons
- Decide which activities you would like to do after the viewing the program
- Gather materials for those activities
- Make copies of the handouts needed for viewers to take home
- Open discussion by asking the questions provided on page 8
- Show the video
- Either pause at the end of each section and ask the corresponding questions or wait until the end of the program before discussing
- Pass out the handouts and complete activities

Program Overview

1. Introduction
2. Setting Goals – *including how to set and stick to a goal, lifestyle choices*
3. School – *including time management, childcare, school attendance, financial assistance*
4. Jobs – *including career counselor, resume, interviewing, keeping a job*
5. Money – *including “Spend What You Make”, ways to save money, dealing with debt*
6. On Your Own – *including living with parents, safe and convenient housing, renting*

Discussion Topics

Prior to Viewing “Building Your Future”

Ask participants the following questions. You can break them into smaller groups, ask them to list their answers on a piece of paper, or engage in a group discussion.

1. What are your biggest obstacles to finishing school?
2. What kind of lifestyle do you want to have? (*house, car, vacations, spending money*)
3. What kind of child care are you using or plan to use?
4. What is your living situation? What about it works or doesn't work for your family?

After Viewing “Building Your Future”

Ask the following questions to assess how the program affected your participants:

1. Why is it important to find high-quality childcare? (*your child's healthy development, enables you to finish school, your child is safer when a facility follows state regulations*)
2. How can you get back on track if you've been absent from class often? (*let teacher know when you have to miss school, take summer/night classes, independent study, GED classes*)
3. What are some reasons to finish high school as soon as possible? (*it's free until you are 21, better jobs available to HS graduates, to be a model for your child*)
4. What are some examples of non-traditional work for women? (*law enforcement, computer programming, construction, plumbing/electrical/welding, lab technician*)
5. What are some ways to prepare for an interview? (*well-written resume, dress conservatively, practice answering interview questions*)

Follow-Up Activities

1. **Setting Goals** – Have each student fill out the “Setting Goals” handout.
 - DAY 1: Ask them to research three options or ideas about how they can reach their goal. Suggest that they talk to a teacher, social worker or parent, go to a library, or do some online research.
 - DAY 2: Based on their research, have each student write in their journal, calendar, or planner three small actions they will take and when they will do them.
 - DAY 3: Check in with your students to acknowledge any actions that were completed and have them choose another date to complete unfinished actions. Encourage them to choose a new goal at the end of this exercise.
2. **Job Interview** – Bring in copies of a job application from a nearby retail store. Practice filling them out using very neat handwriting. Have each student write the necessary information on an index card that they can keep. Ask students to brainstorm with you about questions that may be asked at a job interview. Write them down on a board, adding others that may have been missed. Coach them about smiling and being honest. Pair up the students and have them practice answering the sample questions. (*supplies: job applications, index cards*)
3. **Live Within Your Means** – Make copies of the Budget Exercise. Have students fill it out to the best of their abilities. Afterwards, discuss the difference between necessary (“Do you need it to survive”) and unnecessary spending (“Can you wait to buy it another day or use what you already have?”). Discuss other ways to curb your spending.

Setting Goals

1

Set a specific, realistic goal.

✎ What is it? _____

✎ When will I achieve it? _____

2

Research your goal.

✎ Where can I find out more information?

Person: _____

Website: _____

Phonebook: _____

Book: _____

✎ When will I be finished with my research? _____

✎ When will I achieve my original goal? (you can change your Step 1 timeframe based on your research) _____

3

Break your goal into small, doable actions.

✎ Action 1:

What? _____

By When? _____

✎ Action 2:

What? _____

By When? _____

✎ Action 3:

What? _____

By When? _____

4

What is my next goal? _____

Childcare Survey

Compare three childcare facilities to find the best one

Name of Facility: _____

Phone number: _____

Amount of time it takes to get there: From home: _____ minutes From school: _____ minutes

What ages of children do they care for? _____

What is the weekly rate for your child's age? \$ _____ /week

How many teachers are there for how many children? _____ Teachers for _____ Children

Do they offer a reduced rate for TANF families? Yes No

Are they licensed? Yes No

Can you drop by unannounced? Yes No

Do they have an emergency plan? Yes No

Is someone trained in Infant/Child CPR and first aid? Yes No

Budget Exercise

Budgeting will give you an idea of where all that money goes so you can curb your expenses to meet your needs

MONTHLY INCOME	DOLLARS
Job income	
Child support	
Public assistance	
Other income (from: _____)	
TOTAL INCOME	

MONTHLY EXPENSES	WANT IT?	NEED IT?	AMOUNT
Rent/mortgage			
Utilities (electricity, heat, water, trash)			
Phone			
Cable/Satellite TV			
Groceries (including formula, diapers)			
Dining out (fast food, snacks, etc.)			
Child support			
Childcare			
Health insurance, doctor, dental			
Transportation (bus, car insurance, gas, maintenance)			
Tuition			
Union dues			
Clothing/uniforms			
Credit cards/other loans			
Personal (toiletries, allowance, etc.)			
Entertainment (music, movies, etc.)			
Pet care			
Other			
Savings (try to save a certain amount for emergencies and long-term goals)			
TOTAL EXPENSES			