Welcome to Gossyp!

As young parents we wrote this booklet to help find information easily, so that there was one book and not millions of pamphlets. This book is written for, by, and about young parents. We started writing the book three years ago and have finally finished. The “Gossypers” got together regularly to write about our personal experiences, gather information and research services that relate to young parents.

“I remember how alone and utterly clueless I felt when I had my baby. Reading other young mum’s stories would have reassured me I wasn’t the only one.”

Not knowing other people in your own age group when you’re pregnant is hard. You can feel like you are the only one. We hope this book helps you realise that there are people like you and you are not the only one.

These are our experiences.
We would like to thank the following people for contributing and making this book possible.


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Disclaimer:
This book was written by young parents from their own personal experiences and is not intended as advice from Adelaide Central Community Health or Child and Youth Health.
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So you think you may be pregnant?

If you think you might be pregnant, for example - you’ve missed a period, you’ve had unprotected sex or you’re feeling nauseous, the first thing to do is find out for sure. In the meantime a good idea would be to limit alcohol and caffeine, resist smoking and taking recreational drugs. If you’ve done a home pregnancy test (available from chemists) and it was negative, and you still think you are pregnant, check with your doctor or a community health centre. Many community health centres provide free confidential pregnancy tests and health care.

The day I found out I was pregnant I was worried yet overwhelmed with happiness. When I first told my mum, she seemed disappointed, but held me and told me she would support me no matter what decision I made. We went to a pregnancy advisory centre, where we spoke to a counsellor who gave me information on both abortion and keeping the baby. We discussed my concerns and what options I had and there was no pressure to decide either way. Both decisions are hard. You just need to do what you think is best.

Hayley

Once you have found out that you are pregnant you may be faced with a lot of options and decision-making. Don’t feel pressured by friends and family into making a decision.
Do what is right for you. It is very important to think things through before making any decision.
Basically, your choices are abortion, fostering, adoption or keeping the baby.

Abortion

There are all sorts of reasons why women experience unplanned pregnancy, including contraception failure. If you’re considering an abortion, it’s a good idea to speak to a health professional as soon as possible. These people will help you make a decision by providing the information you need, and answering any questions you have. It’s also sometimes easier talking with someone who isn’t emotionally involved with you and your decision.

Abortions are available at the Pregnancy Advisory Centre on 8347 4955 or 1800 672 966 or at public hospitals.

Fostering

Foster care is when someone else cares for your baby on a temporary basis. As it is not a permanent situation you can work towards having your baby in your care in the future if this is what you want. You are also able to see your baby while they are in foster care.

Adoption

Adoption is a permanent and legal arrangement between you and the adoptive parents. There are new laws around “open adoption” where you can still see your child.

The Adoption and Family Information Service 8207 0060 can tell you more about adoption or fostering.

If you’re happy with the situation it doesn’t matter what anybody else thinks.
Keeping the baby

I had been taking the pill for years when I began feeling ill. I decided to see a doctor whilst I was away on holiday and had a pregnancy test done which was positive. I remember bursting into tears because it was so unexpected. My young sister was the only one there at the time so she tried comforting me. We returned to where we were staying and I rang my partner. He guessed what was going on and was really upset and wanted me to get an abortion. I was really angry and refused to have it done. I next rang my dad. I was so scared of his reaction but, to my surprise, he was great. I told my mother the news and was expecting her to scream, but thankfully she was just as supportive. It was great having both their support, as I was very confused about what I should do, but I decided to continue with the pregnancy.

Kylie

Make your decision wisely and be happy with whatever you decide. Only you know what is best. If you ever need help don’t hesitate to contact a friend or counsellor. They are there to support you, and they won’t judge you.

For me, being a young mum isn’t all that glamorous. There is a lot to be considered before having a child, such as money, housing and a job. Babies are so cute with their irresistible smiles, it is hard to remember some of the realities that need to be thought about. You are probably thinking, “What could there possibly be that is negative”?

Lack of sleep is a major factor, as a newborn child will wake regularly throughout the day and night for a feed. Even at the age of two or even five some children still wake during the night. Then there’s the crying. Are you going to have the patience or tolerance for a continuously crying baby or child?

Once you have a baby it is with you for the rest of your life. Everywhere you go they go. They will follow you to the shower and toilet and if you ever try to sneak a quiet moment alone, you can guarantee that they will be there. Babysitting is a good solution but not always available, so then, what do you do?

You have to take the child with you. At times this may work out but it can be awkward, and if you’re at a party you may have to leave early. This can lead to you feeling lonely and resentful towards the child who isn’t at any fault. Partyng and nightclubbing will become rare occasions. A night out for dinner will be a hectic rush: even holidays will be few, if any. Can you imagine trying to catch a plane or bus with an active baby or child?

Don’t get me wrong, the positives do outweigh the negatives such as the first smile, laughing, kisses and cuddles, saying mummy and daddy etc. So make sure you are prepared to accept the whole package as a lifetime commitment.

Kylie

If you decide to continue the pregnancy there are plenty of supports out there to help you. See Useful Contacts at the back of the book.
BEFORE I WAS PREGNANT I was on the pill for a long time. It made me feel very sick in the mornings if I didn’t eat properly. So without thinking seriously I stopped taking it for a couple of months.

1 TO 2 MONTHS
I started working out the dates of my last periods, so I knew I was late. Then I felt sick all day and my mum and I went to the doctors. I was seven weeks pregnant. Everyone was happy and excited.

3 TO 4 MONTHS
I had my first appointment at the Women’s and Children’s Hospital. I had a blood test and they weighed me, checked my blood pressure and gave me a pregnancy bag full of information. My morning sickness had stopped.

4 TO 5 MONTHS
I had another appointment at four months at the hospital. I had a choice of whom I could have my checkups with. I chose shared care with my doctor.
By this time I started showing a little belly. I had my antenatal appointments with my doctor every month. She checked my blood pressure, felt my baby and measured my tummy. I had a blood test as well. When I was nineteen weeks I had my ultrasound at the hospital, which was very exciting, because I could find out what sex it was or if I was having twins or more. I was blessed with a healthy looking baby boy.

6 TO 7 MONTHS
I was showing very well at this stage. I started feeling very depressed and my skin and hair was drying out. My eczema came back and I had dreadful rashes. I started getting stretch marks, and I put on about twelve kilos. The good thing was my baby started moving from around twenty-two weeks.
8 TO 9 MONTHS
When I was thirty weeks my appointments were every two weeks. I felt a lot more movement, very heavy and stretched. Still getting bigger, it was very uncomfortable, hard to get up and very hard to bend over. At thirty-six weeks I had an appointment at the hospital. My baby was breech (feet down, head up). Luckily he turned. When I was thirty-eight weeks I had a stretched ligament. It felt like a sharp pain coming and going for hours. I had to go to hospital and it was all right in the end.

9 MONTHS
I felt like a whale, uncomfortable, sore back, and couldn’t sleep properly. I was waiting every night for something to happen. I was getting lots of red stretch marks. I was due on the twentieth; he arrived on the twenty-fifth at 4.35am.

Brooke’s story
I was 17 when I found out I was pregnant. I was in a relationship with the baby’s father. We had lived together for about 4 months but we were having problems. When I told him about the pregnancy he first said that ‘no matter what’ he would support me, even if we broke up. This changed and soon he was on his way out of my life, and out of the state! I am now 8 months pregnant and haven’t seen him for 6 months.

It has been hard being by myself, especially when my friends, who have either had children or are pregnant, have good relationships. I look at them and think how lucky they are to have someone around to help, financially and emotionally. I know that having a baby is going to be twice as hard as living by myself. I sometimes wish I had someone around to share this with, but at least I have my family. I am lucky that my mum is very supportive, and my dad is secretly really excited at becoming a grandad, even if he won’t say it. I’ve seen him looking at Bob the Builder every now and then…he can’t deny it. My extended family isn’t around, but my mum and I have a network of people who are my ‘new’ family. I am also lucky because I found support networks like the Young Parents Support Group at the Women’s and Children’s Hospital, and the Mum’s ‘R’ Us group at Second Story. I know that when my baby is born he will have lots of people around who will love him to bits. It took a while but I feel prepared and I know that there may well be someone who will come into my life in the future. I won’t be alone forever. In fact I’ll never be alone again!
Sarah’s story

I was sixteen when I first found out I was pregnant. I hadn’t yet started year 12 and I still lived with my parents. My boyfriend and I had only been seeing each other for three months, so one of my major concerns was whether or not he was going to stick around. My next thought was ‘how on earth do I tell my parents’. Once the initial shock was gone my parents were really supportive of my decision to continue the pregnancy. The rest of the family eventually became supportive. My boyfriend’s family were shocked and extremely concerned. Half of them told me I had ruined my life and to have an abortion.

Soon, being pregnant was kind of fun. I managed to skip morning sickness so I was pretty lucky. I remember my first ultrasound, I almost cried – the feeling is still fresh in my memory. Watching my baby do somersaults in my stomach was the most amazing feeling I have ever experienced. Then when she kicked for the first time I was overjoyed. I have never felt anything like it before. Sometimes I wish I could still feel her kicking inside me.

Planning the birth was hard. I had to make sure I had everything, which is difficult when you’re not sure what a baby needs. Lots of my baby things were hand-me-downs from cousins, sisters and friends.

In the last few weeks of my pregnancy I joined a young women’s antenatal group. This was really helpful because I was able to see I wasn’t the only one in this situation. It was good to talk to people who knew what I was going through.

Fear of losing my unborn child

At 19 weeks, I sat in the waiting room in the ultrasound clinic feeling so excited about seeing my baby for the first time. I had even brought a video to record it.

Lying on the bed, I watched as the sonographer scanned my belly. At the end of the ultrasound, the sonographer’s face dropped. A midwife came into the room and told me I had abnormally low amniotic fluid (the fluid surrounding the baby) and that I would need to come in for another scan the next day. As I left, I cried into my boyfriend’s arms.

I went for several scans after that and had antenatal visits every week. The doctors were condescending and rude. I was given no information or comforting advice and told to “look it up on the internet”. To my disbelief, I found out that it could be fatal and was associated with many life-threatening conditions. All the horrible possibilities hauntied me throughout my pregnancy. I never bought my baby anything for fear of losing her, but I prayed every night. Thankfully Year 11 helped me stay focused and I have a wonderful family who supported me. As time rolled by my body produced more amniotic fluid and there was a happy ending.

I now have a happy, healthy beautiful little girl who makes it all worthwhile.

Hayley
When I was around 16 weeks pregnant I was told I had a high risk of having a Down’s Syndrome baby. I had to wait two weeks to have an amniocentesis (a test where they take some of the amniotic fluid to find out whether there are any abnormalities in the baby) and face the option of having a termination. It was completely devastating. I had to wait ten days after having the amniocentesis to find out the result. It was terrible and I had morning sickness. I finally got a call early in the morning to say everything was fine. Thank God because I wasn’t going to have a Down’s Syndrome baby. It sounds horrible but I couldn’t do it.

Miscarriage
A miscarriage is when you lose your baby whilst being pregnant. It happens because the pregnancy isn’t functioning properly. If you’re bleeding it doesn’t necessarily mean you’re having a miscarriage, but it is important to see your doctor or midwife. It can be a traumatic experience and there may be feelings of grief or loss.

A useful contact if you need someone to talk to is Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Support (SANDS) on 8277 0304

Looking after yourself during pregnancy

Pregnancy care and birthing choices
Choosing care for you and your baby is an important decision. You can choose Antenatal Shared Care, which means you have most of your pregnancy checks with your doctor, and some visits to the hospital.

Another choice is to go to the hospital where you will regularly visit the Outpatient’s clinic and be seen by doctors and midwives. After your baby is born you are cared for by midwives on the postnatal ward, where the usual length of stay is about three days.

A Birthing Centre is another option. It is set up like a home and the birth is as natural as possible. Midwives help with the delivery and discharge is within 24 hours followed by postnatal visits at home, or you can also be transferred to the postnatal floor. By choosing this option you will get to know the midwives who will be there during your labour, but you need to book early because it’s really popular.

If your midwife or doctor believes you or your baby may be at risk during your pregnancy, they will refer you to the High Risk Perinatal Service. You will be cared for by obstetricians, paediatricians and midwives. High-risk pregnancies may include multiple births, pregnancy after a stillbirth, and other medical conditions.

Other options you may like to consider are homebirths with support from the community midwives at the Pregnancy and Birthing Service on 8252 3711 available in the Northern Suburbs of Adelaide. Whichever care option you choose you will have a range of tests (eg blood tests, ultra sound, urine tests). This is all normal and routine and will be explained to you on your first visit. If you’re unsure about anything ask your doctor or midwife.
Antenatal (before the birth) classes, yoga, water exercises

Some hospitals provide antenatal classes for young parents. Check with your hospital to see what they offer. Antenatal classes provide information about things like feeding your baby, managing labour, body image, and nutrition, and let you know what to expect. They teach you how to care for your baby. They give you plenty of information. It’s a good way to meet other young parents in similar situations. Don’t expect it to be what you see on TV, it’s not quite the same. For other classes such as aqua or yoga sessions contact your local hospital.

By going to antenatal classes:

I got to know the hospital
It got me out of the house
It encouraged my partner to be involved in the pregnancy
I met other pregnant young women
It helped me to understand what to expect during the rest of my pregnancy and labour, and what to expect during my hospital stay
I found out about pain relief, so I was pretty happy
I found out about services for after the baby was born

Healthy eating and pregnancy

If you’re pregnant you may want to think about what you are eating. This doesn’t mean eating for two. We’re talking quality not quantity.

To maintain a healthy diet for you and your baby:

- Choose food from each of the five food groups
- Avoid alcohol, drugs and fatty foods.
- Take folate before pregnancy and in the early stages of pregnancy to ensure healthy development of your child and reduce the risk of spina bifida. Folate is in some foods and also available as tablets at chemists, health food shops and supermarkets
- Eat foods high in calcium like cheese, milk, or yoghurt for healthy bones and teeth.
- Eat fish, lean red meat, and chicken. These foods are good sources of iron, which is important during pregnancy.

Remember these things are still important when you’re breastfeeding

Listeriosis

Listeria is bacteria found in certain foods including cold meats, pre prepared meals and salads, leftovers, pâté, soft cheeses, and raw seafood. These bacteria can cause a serious illness called Listeriosis that could harm your baby.

Some ways to prevent it are to:

- Wash hands before making meals
- Eat fresh food
- Make sure re heated food is really hot and meats are cooked well
- Wash kitchen utensils between different uses
- Avoid the foods mentioned above
I didn’t gain much weight until I was about six months pregnant, but when I did, I gained HEAPS! At first I had no stretch marks, but in the last couple of weeks they seemed to come out of nowhere. Along with the stretch marks, I got lots of cellulite because of all the weight I put on.

To this day I still have the weight and the stretch marks. Admittedly the stretch marks are a lot lighter. My daughter tells me I have lines on my tummy, I just have to laugh and think, oh well. There are more important things than what my body looks like.

Sarah

As your baby grows inside you, your body is changing to make room for the baby.

Being young I was very aware of body image - how I looked, and how other people thought I looked. This didn’t change when I become pregnant. Pregnancy can be better or worse for our self-image. Some people are very proud and happy with their pregnant body and want to show it off in all its glory. Others are ashamed or unhappy and want to hide it, which is sometimes because of public opinion. With a baby growing inside us we will all put on weight. You will get ‘fatter’ THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO GO ON A DIET. The pregnant body is beautiful and chances are you’re the only one who thinks you look horrible. It’s natural to feel unattractive and like a whale, but you are performing the most important job in the world, growing a little human. And you’re doing it perfectly. Of course there are stretch marks, sore feet and swollen ankles, but in nine months it’s over, and it is possible to lose the weight again. People do it all the time. Don’t expect to be like a supermodel and lose it all in a week. They have 100 personal trainers and stylists working for them. Everybody has a different body shape.

Any time you miss the body you used to have, just look at your beautiful baby (pick a time when they’re not crying!). Chances are you’ll agree it was worth it.

Don’t worry about people judging you if you’re happy hold your head up high

Brooke
Drugs and alcohol

It is very important to be honest and tell your doctor if you have been drinking alcohol and taking drugs (prescription or non-prescription) before you knew you were pregnant. If you choose to use alcohol, tobacco or any other drugs find out as much as you can about the drugs you are using and their effects on the unborn child and breastfed babies.

Inform yourself

  A very informative and easy to read booklet with information on different types of drugs and advice on how to reduce the risks associated with drug taking while breast feeding or pregnant.

- Women’s and Children’s Hospital – Drugs in Pregnancy and Lactation Phone (08) 8161 7222 Email: druginfocentre@mail.wch.sa.gov.au
  A free telephone and email service that provides advice on the effects of pharmacy medicines, and legal and illegal drugs and natural therapies.

- Alcohol and Drug Information and Referral Service (A.D.I.S) 1300 13 13 40

It is always safer to ask, and no question is silly!

Smoking

Did you know that smokers are around 27% more at risk of miscarriage than non-smokers? Smoking is not only dangerous to your own health but can put the life of your baby at risk too. Smoking increases the risk of your child/baby having asthma, respiratory problems and heart disease later in life.

Smoking can also:
  - cause learning difficulties
  - increase the risk of SIDS
  - cause low birth weight.

Passive smoking can be just as dangerous, so try to keep out of smoky areas, and ask people not to smoke in your home or around your baby. It reduces the amount of oxygen available to your baby, which can hinder the growth of almost every organ. Just think, you wouldn’t offer a baby a cigarette, so don’t do the same thing by smoking around your baby or while pregnant! You have the best incentive to quit…a beautiful healthy baby.

Don’t use the excuse that if it’s a small baby the birth will be easier. The baby’s health can be severely put at risk if it is underweight. For help to quit smoking speak to your midwife or doctor, or call the Quit line on 131 848.
**Morning sickness**

Throwing up. Vomit. Up-chuck. Pukeing. As charming as this is, it’s the image most of us conjure up in our heads when we think of that most horrible pregnancy ail-ment…ah yes of course we’re talking about morning sickness! When most people think about morning sickness, they picture a woman hunched over the toilet bowl every morning throwing up before she goes off to work. But sometimes it lasts all day. And when you’re not throwing up, you’re actually feeling worse. There’s that debilitating nausea where you can barely stand up. Or the fact that you can’t be on anything that moves without all the windows down, a plastic bag/bucket and 20 stops along the way. And then there’s the ‘throwing up in embarrassing places problem’. You may be one of those lucky ones who barely had a flutter of nausea the whole nine months. There are people who have shocking morning sickness who don’t throw up once! But in all seriousness there are ways of combating the oh-my-god-where’s-the-nearest-toilet syndrome also known as morning sickness.

One suggestion is ginger. Candied, fresh, biscuits, tablets and powdered. Any way you take it; it’s supposed to be very good. Also vitamin B6. There’s actually now a morning sickness tablet, which is made of ginger and B6, which I found very helpful.

Be sure to check with your doctor or Drugs in Pregnancy & Lactation Service on 8161 7222 before taking anything.

Also

Eat small frequent meals as having an empty stomach makes you feel worse.

Eat a cracker or dry toast before getting up in the morning.

Steer well clear of anything fried, greasy or fatty, or anything with a lot of chilli or spices.

I actually found that chewing a chewable antacid tablet helped HEAPS.

Hopefully the sickness subsides around week 14. Some unlucky ones only score it at five months, some the whole time, others not at all. Everyone is different.

GOOD LUCK

Brooke

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**School and pregnancy**

It was Christmas school holidays when I became pregnant - just about to start year twelve and I was determined to finish.

Mum and I went to see my school counsellor and discussed my alternatives. I decided that I didn’t want to do home school because I still wanted to be able to see my friends, and hopefully have their support throughout my pregnancy.

During first semester I juggled full time school, hospital visits and antenatal classes. It was an experience and also very tiring. Most of my friends were really supportive but some of them decided that I wasn’t good enough for them anymore. Once I started to get bigger, a lot more people in the school realised what was going on. A lot of people that didn’t talk to me before were coming up asking me how things were going and all sorts of other stuff about the baby. But then, I remember once as I was walking through the school – or more like waddling – a girl called me a slut. I was so offended when she didn’t even know me.

When second semester rolled around I decided I needed a bit of a break. So I enrolled in Open Access College for half of my subjects. So now I was only half at school and the rest of the time I worked at home. When I was one week overdue I had to go in to do a biology test. Everyone looked at me as if I was going to burst.

I returned to school in fourth term – I was really lucky because my mum took holidays and looked after Chrissy while I was at school and while I had phone lessons. Mum was always amused at the sight of me at the kitchen table doing homework assignments and studying for exams while I had Chrissy by my feet in a rocker, rocking her as I wrote.

I completed my exams and my high school education. I didn’t get fantastic marks but I’m proud that I passed year twelve and had a baby at the same time – I think that’s an achievement I can live with.

Sarah
Becoming pregnant at a young age can be hard enough in itself without having to worry about your education. You may not feel comfortable returning to school after finding out that you are pregnant. The workload might be too much, or you may not want to finish school at all. Once your baby is born you may just want to spend time together and study later. But the fact is that education is a big thing in today’s society.

There are a number of places that provide opportunities for young pregnant women and young mums to study. See ‘useful contacts’ for a list of schools currently offering support for young pregnant and parenting students.

Student counsellors are available to talk about your needs and what kind of a workload and subjects you can manage. At T.A.F.E. there are a variety of courses to do if you want some kind of qualifications for a job. Grants and payment plans for your education fees are available.

Centrelink, ph 136 150, have a department called JET (Jobs Education Training). A JET officer can provide information about career choices, childcare and additional money for training and stationary. Speak to your local JET officer to find out current information.

Overall, you need to think of what’s best for you and your baby. How will you support yourself and your child? What will you do when your child goes to school? There’s a lot to think about and sometimes it can be really hard to make decisions like this. But no matter what decision you make it isn’t wrong because someone else doesn’t agree with it. The decision needs to be right for you. You can always change your mind later.

JPET (Job Placement Employment Training) offer assistance with a range of things to help you get back into the workforce or pursue training. Contact your nearest branch through Service to Youth Council on 8211 8466.

Relationships and feelings

Emotions

When you’re young you experience many different hormonal changes. Then when you become pregnant your hormones change again and you will experience different emotions and feelings.
My feelings were like a roller coaster ride with the constant ups and downs. I was scared at first and very unsure, but then I realized that having a baby might just be a good thing. I had an early ultrasound to determine how far along I was and saw my baby for the first time. I was ecstatic about it. She was so tiny and hardly developed, yet it was so amazing and wonderful to see. Watching my stomach grow and knowing it was my baby growing was exciting yet a little daunting. When I had my second ultrasound and saw my baby’s arms, fingers, legs and all the rest I was so content. I couldn’t wait to hold my baby. Soon I finally did hold her and it was magical. I’ll never forget it!

Kylie

Feelings of grief or even resentment can be very strong in the first few weeks of pregnancy. You may be feeling like you are going to miss out on your education, employment and relationships. It is important not to give up. You may be surprised to find out that some schools are quite well equipped to handle your situation. Talk to a counsellor to find out more. Applying for jobs can be quite frustrating. Some people look down on young mums but there are a lot of employers who would be happy to hire you. NEVER GIVE UP. As for friends, join a young mums group or a parenting group. This will mean that you are making new friends as well as giving your child a chance to interact with other children.

Hayley

Pregnancy can be a wonderful experience, but unfortunately some mothers experience depression after the baby is born (postnatal depression) and sometimes during the pregnancy (antenatal depression). For me, pregnancy was a roller coaster ride of emotions. I wanted my baby more than anything, but one thing after another seemed to go wrong. First it was morning sickness (catching a bus four times a day to and from school didn’t help). At nineteen weeks I was told I had low amniotic fluid (the fluid surrounding the baby), which could be life-threatening for my baby, and later I developed pre-eclampsia (when there is high blood pressure, you retain fluid and there is protein in the urine) from stress. I couldn’t enjoy my pregnancy. I didn’t allow myself to believe I was having the baby. I wanted to prepare myself for the worst. Fortunately, I had a healthy baby girl who is the sunshine in my life.

Hayley

Once your baby arrives, you may feel different emotions. Looking after your baby is very different to what your lifestyle was. It is important to remember that no matter how stressed you get, do not shake your baby. This can cause serious brain damage and even death. If you are feeling seriously stressed, place your baby in a safe environment i.e. cot or bassinet, and leave the room for a few minutes until you have calmed down. You may also want to call someone to talk to about your feelings. The Parent Helpline: 1300 364 100 is a 24hr line that may be helpful.
Tips for reducing and preventing stress

- Go out for coffee with a friend
- Get out of the house e.g. go to the park
- Accept offers of support
- Go to “Babe in Arms” session at the movies
- Join a parents group
- Buy yourself a treat
- Take a relaxing bath by yourself
- Do something just for yourself
- Ring a friend
- Join a playgroup
- Read a book
- Go to Child and Youth Health services

Relationships

The first five years of a child’s life are very important. This is when they are most impressionable. The people and attitudes around them shape the people they will grow to be. This is why it is so important to have stable relationships around them. These relationships could be with grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts or close friends. They need to know the people they can trust. Relationships are also important for parents. I would be lost without someone to confide in, baby sit and even just have coffee with.
A dad’s story

The day my daughter was born my life changed. From the moment I saw her I knew I would love her forever. When I first held her I had to wipe the tears from my eyes. I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw how beautiful she was.

The day we brought her home was the greatest day but also the hardest day, because she was all ours. You have no one but yourself and your partner and her. Every three hours she wakes up and feeds, then needs her nappy changed day after day, and hour after hour she needs your love and attention. When you have a baby you need to become responsible - over night. There are no more parties; your life changes forever but for me I didn’t care because I love her. All the special moments I have shared with my little Becky make up for the loss of my teenage freedom. I would not give up a moment I have shared with my daughter for anything.

Brett

Things I love about being a dad …

- I love it when she is bawling her eyes out and all that can make her better is a hug from dad.
- I love it when I wake up in the morning to be greeted by a tiny smiling face.
- I love being a parent when you are walking down Rundle Mall holding your baby, and all these girls and guys are checking you out, what a rush.
- I love it when you realise that you are doing a great job and bringing up a human being. It’s gotta make you feel special.
- I love having a partner and family to support.

Things I find hard about being a dad …

- I hate it when my child is upset for seemingly no reason and I can’t communicate with him to know exactly what’s going on.
- I sometimes get scared to hold my baby because she’s so small and I’m afraid I’ll drop her or hurt her.
- I’m not always confident that I know what to do.

Interview with Chris

Chris is 23 years old and became a stepfather at 20. In September last year he and his partner had a child of their own. He loves both his girls equally and wouldn’t change the way things have worked out for anything.

How did you find entering a relationship with a person who already had a child?

Hard at first to be with a person who already had a child who I had to accept as well. But then I realised it was a blessing – I got two for the price of one. I had to consider if I really wanted her, because it’s a lot to take on a family and I’m not just dealing with one person’s feelings.
Did you have any thoughts about young mothers before you met your partner?

No, just that they have made a big mistake and that most of the relationships with the father, have not worked out.

Have your thoughts changed since meeting Sarah?

Yes, the person is still the same – maybe a bit more mature. I don’t believe it’s a mistake, just a learning curve. I have come across a lot of young mothers since meeting her and they are really decent people who would give their children the world.

Is being a father to your own child any different from being a stepfather?

I would be lying if I said no, because even though I love them dearly, my daughter is my blood and I see myself in her. With my stepdaughter I see the things she picks up from me – traits. I get to see Jaimee grow up and I was there for her birth but with Chrissy I missed out on the first two years of her life.

How does your stepdaughter relate to you

We get along really well. She calls me dad and she loves it when we do stuff with just the two of us. I spoil her, so it’s no wonder we get along. I can’t help but spoil both my girls: I love them.

What do you love most about being a father?

I have something to show off - the unconditional love you get from a child.

What’s the hardest thing about being a dad?

The tests that children give you. The way they push your limits, but you love them anyway so you can’t hate them. You have to be more patient and understanding.

What advice would you give to others entering a relationship with a young mum or becoming a father?

Think carefully about getting into a relationship with someone who has a child, you’re dealing with two people’s emotions, not one. If you’re going to be a father, good luck, sit tight and enjoy the ride (remember most of the time mood swings only last for nine months!).

As a single father’s perspective

When my son was born I was 19 years old. The birth was the best day of my life.

I had no idea how different my life was going to be. His mother and I had been together for a couple of years and the relationship was never really stable. My son was born in Darwin hospital and straight away we moved back to Adelaide. Things were okay for about a month, everyone still being happy about the new member of the family.

My partner and I were together on and off till my son was 2 years old. I then didn’t see him for about 2 years. At first it really upset me but I tried to get on with my life. I heard bits and pieces of information through friends, but that made me more upset.

Then one day after work my mum told me that the mother of my son had contacted her and wanted her to look after him and I started to get to see him every fortnight. Then, about ten months later, I went round to where his mother was staying and spoke to someone she was staying with. They said, "If you love your son, take him because his mum’s not able to take care of him!" So that day I took him, rang his mother and told her I had taken him and his stuff and he was coming to live with me and she agreed.

I now have had my son for about 12 months and he has settled in really well. My new partner and my mum help me on the mothering side and, while I’m not perfect, he is doing well. He doesn’t see his mother very often but at this point it’s for the best. I love my son with all my heart and I hope I raise him to be a good honest person.

If you want more help with being a dad see Support Services for Dads in Useful Contacts at the back of the book.
Grandma’s story

I knew Sarah was late. I also knew that her relationship with her boyfriend was pretty intense. Put the two together and I figured she could be pregnant. I was stunned, and went through hell until we knew for sure. The doctor’s visit confirmed ‘yes’ she’s pregnant and I felt a million emotions at once, but overall I kept thinking we’ll be okay. Once we knew, we told everyone so that they all had a long time to get used to the idea. Sarah wanted to continue her year 12 and we were all pretty busy until she was about 6 months. We had to fit in hospital visits between lessons and scans and spent time turning Sarah’s walk-in wardrobe into a nursery. Her boyfriend moved in and life was hectic.

The day Christina was born was one I’ll never forget. We were all nervous and excited and wanted it to be all over. Watching my daughter strain so hard to give birth was a very weird feeling, but I was very proud and she did a great job. Christina looked alien at first, purple, slanted eyes, cone head, cord wrapped around her neck. Three minutes later she looked like a little angel, pink and beautiful. Hearing her cry for the first time was the most beautiful sound, like hearing her say ‘hello’.

The following months were a roller coaster of emotions and activities for everyone. Baths, nappies, breast feeds, before and after school lessons. Noisy nights and heaps of assignments. Everyone pitched in and although Sarah made all the decisions, we all lent a hand. Christina was a happy baby and this helped to make our job easier. Once Sarah passed year 12, things seemed to run a little smoother and she was able to take over more. Life without our two girls would be pretty awful.

Ann
When I was 16 I became pregnant. After we found out, my relationship with my boyfriend deteriorated and he started abusing me. I wanted to have an abortion but he told me that if I did that he would murder my family and me.

I stopped seeing my friends and family. He ‘borrowed’ my money and spent it on drugs. He would lose the plot every couple of days and hit me, burn me, tie me up and hold knives at my pregnant belly and threaten to kill me. I had morning sickness 24 hours a day and lost over 10 kilos in my first three months of pregnancy. This went on until I was about seven months pregnant and he tried to push me down the stairs. After this incident I knew if I stayed any longer both the baby and I would be killed.

A few days later, I moved into emergency accommodation. Some problems continued, but he eventually got a new girlfriend and left me alone. I tried to reconcile at this point because I thought having a father was important for the baby. On the night of the birth he turned up at the hospital with his new girlfriend. After I gave birth we had an argument and he threatened to kill us.

I moved out of the shelter eight weeks later into my own place. I went through the family court to get custody so that if he ever found us he couldn’t take away my beautiful baby. He didn’t even turn up to the court. My baby is now a toddler and we have found a nice person to share our lives with. I haven’t heard from the ‘sperm donor’ (as I call him) but I’m still afraid of him.
Domestic violence does not just happen to married couples, it can happen in any relationship. An abusive relationship can involve any or all of the following:

**Physical violence**
- Physical abuse - pushing, shaking, punching, using weapons
- Object damage - breaking furniture, household goods, damaging doors and walls

**Sexual violence**
- Forcing someone to do sexual things against their will
- Demanding sex – even when you’re in a relationship

**Emotional violence**
- Threats and intimidation - making threats, using looks or actions, or speaking in a way which may be frightening or threatening

**Financial violence**
- Controlling the money

If you need immediate assistance with a violent situation call the police on 131 444 or 000.

If you want to find out more about domestic violence support look under Domestic Violence in Useful Contacts at the back of the book.
Here are some of our birthing stories. Everyone’s experience is different. Yours will be too.

How did I know I was in labour?

‘Most of the pain was in my back, only a little in my stomach.’

‘The first thing for me was the mucous plug… I didn’t have any pain I just went and had a shower and it was there.’

‘Mine started, and straight away I woke up in pain. I just thought it was the way I slept.’

‘I didn’t even know I was in labour I was just rolling around the bed in pain.’

‘When I went to the loo I got a real shock because all this slimy stuff came away – it was the ‘show’… then I had little contractions during the day.’

‘It’s definitely a weird experience.’

‘My waters popped when I had a bath.’

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**Kylie’s Story**

Finally my 40 weeks long of being pregnant was over and the contractions began. At 7.00 pm I was rolling in bed in pain. My partner and I phoned my parents and they told us to call back when the contractions were five minutes apart. By midnight they were, so we rang them and they drove us to the hospital.

I remember doctors and midwives doing tests and then being admitted to my room. My whole family and partner were in the room with me for quite some time, which made great company. The pain was intense so I tried the gas. This made me feel ill so finally I decided to have an epidural. At about 4 am everyone left so my partner and I fell asleep. My mother came in at 8 am and put a face washer on my head. Finally by 11 a.m I was pushing my daughter out. Just my partner and I were there. I requested a mirror to see, which was fascinating – but gross.

By 11.15 I had had her. The midwives checked her out and then I held her. I was exhausted and could barely move. She looked gross yet cute all mixed into one. After that I had to have stitches. This hurt until they refilled the epidural. I remember a lot of phone calls and a lot of people in my room not long after I’d had her. They transferred us to another room and I breastfed her.

I had a fair bit of trouble breast-feeding her so I received a lot of help from the midwives. She wasn’t suckling or getting on properly so I was in a lot of pain with dry cracked nipples. I didn’t give up though and I breast fed her until she was 14 months.

I’ve had a lot of help along the way from different sources such as Torrens House because she wasn’t sleeping, Child and Youth Health for her eating, Second Story mums group just to escape and have a break, Women’s and Children’s Hospital for her dermatitis and eczema. Everyone has helped us in different ways, which has been great.

It has all been a wonderful experience, but for me an experience I’ll only do once.
Sarah’s Story

I was two weeks overdue when they decided to induce me. I still remember the disappointment, when my due date came and went without me having my baby. I thought it was much scarier than going into labour naturally – I knew that within the day I was going to have a baby. I found out that I was going to be induced only a few hours before I went to hospital. After my family left the doctor came to check on me, he did an internal and then gave me the gel to get labour started. That night I cried myself to sleep – I was scared, nervous and excited all at once – it was extremely confusing.

The next morning after a restless night’s sleep, the baby still didn’t want to arrive, so the doctor broke my waters – that hurt. My mum, dad and the baby’s father came in – still no sign of the baby. Another doctor came in and decided it was time to put in a drip – this finally worked. I wasn’t happy about the drip. I had a spa and I couldn’t use it. I went for a long time without any drugs. I started at 6:30 am and it wasn’t until about 1:30 pm that I decided to have some Pethidine (pain reliever) to help me relax and rest. This helped just enough to make the contractions less intense so I could sleep a little bit.

By about 3:00 pm my contractions were so intense and irregular that I decided to have an epidural. That worked wonders. I was able to relax a bit more and prepare to push her out. About 5:30 pm it was time to push. After about an hour they decided to use forceps. I felt like there was an entire football team in the room with me. After a top up of epidural they managed to get her out, not without an episiotomy (surgical cut to make the vagina bigger) – ouch. I remember the feeling of relief when my beautiful baby girl was born. She was eight pounds six ounces and very healthy.

My labour did not go how I would have liked but after a while I decided that when it all came down to it my baby arrived safe and healthy, and has grown into a healthy little girl and that’s all that counts.

Birth plan

Before your labour and birth it is a great idea to have a birth plan written out, on what you may want or not want to happen. Be sure to show your midwife. If things aren’t going the way you want, say something. You need to be comfortable.

Everyone’s experiences are different always remember that. Let your birthing partner know what you want so that he/she can let the doctors and midwives know.
**My story**

When I first found out I was pregnant

First Month

Second Month

Third Month

Fourth Month

Fifth Month

Sixth Month

Seventh Month

Eight Month

Ninth Month

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**My birth plan**

Who do I want to be there?

Pain Relief?

Music I want to play?

Massage?

Aromatherapy Oils?
After the birth

On the day he was born I had lots of visitors. William was asleep all day. Then at night he started crying. DURING THE NIGHT A LOVELY MIDWIFE took him to the nursery for a while so I could sleep. The next day he slept all day when the visitors came, then when they left he cried for food. That night he slept for a while so I felt good the next day. I wanted to go home, but because he had lost a lot of weight they wanted me to stay for the last night. I’m glad I did because that night I was having a huge amount of trouble breastfeeding. He was getting so upset because he wasn’t latching on properly. The next day we had a nice sleep during the day.

When I was getting ready to go home, I was getting the third day blues. I just felt like crying. When I got home I couldn’t clean my house. I didn’t eat hardly anything. I felt tired and fed up and sad. After a while it got better, I felt a lot more confident.

When you first bring your baby home they’re so fragile, but the older they get, even in the first month, they become more settled and happier.

When I was pregnant I was terrified of looking after him at home, but you learn incredibly fast all the things you need to do. When my baby was five weeks he started smiling and that makes it lovely. My baby is just over two months and he smiles a lot, talks and he kicks me like mad. I love having my baby; he gives me a tingly, warm, loving feeling inside. I do get fed up when he whinges or is wide-awake when I’m exhausted, but to me he is the best thing that has ever happened in my life.

If you do have troubles with your bub, there’s lots of help and good advice, such as Child and Youth Health and Torrens House. Having a baby is a wonderful experience, but it is a huge responsibility. Your life revolves around your baby every minute in your day. So prepare yourself for a new life.

Liz

William is Cool
Take it as it comes

Check with your hospital before you leave about the supports available in your area or see Useful Contacts.
Sex after baby

Once your baby is born you may be feeling sore and tender, so sex could be the last thing on your mind. Take it at your own pace. Although your body is physically ready it doesn’t mean that you are emotionally ready. You now have to get up to your new baby and look after them during the day; this can get quite tiring. This could be a very emotional time for you. If you don’t feel like having sex you could try just cuddling with your partner. Keep in mind though sometimes you may just not feel like it, so just say so and talk to your partner about it.

After I had my daughter I was tired and didn’t want to do anything but relax and enjoy her. I was constantly cleaning, washing, tidying, and looking after my baby. I felt so drained. My partner expected everything to go back to normal especially our sex life, but I just didn’t want to. He constantly hassled me about it until it got to the point where we kept fighting. He thought it was something against him but it really wasn’t, I just didn’t feel like it. I ended up taking him with me to the doctor, where our doctor reassured him that it was a natural thing and not to pressure me. It took a long time and patience but it’s all back to normal now.

**Contraception**

Remember you can get pregnant again at any time after the baby is born. There are many safe forms of contraception you can use after you have a baby and when you are breastfeeding – the mini pill, condoms, Implanon, Depo Provera, diaphragms, intra uterine devices (IUD), and female condoms.

Talk to the midwives at the hospital, your doctor, or contact your local community health service, Youth Health Service or Shine SA clinic about what will suit you and your situation.

Remember
- Breastfeeding will not stop you getting pregnant
- The only form of contraception that protects you against STIs (sexually transmitted infections) is the condom

If you have had unprotected sex and don’t want a pregnancy you can use the Emergency Contraceptive Pill (morning after pill), which works best in the first 24 hours but can be taken up to five days after unprotected sex. They are available without a prescription at some chemists, at Shine SA, Youth Health Services and Community Health Services.

For more info see Sexual Health section of Useful Contacts at the back of the book
Postnatal depression

You may have heard of the ‘baby blues’ that many mothers get after having their babies. The ‘baby blues’ hits many new mums around the third day postpartum (after the birth). It can last for a few hours or a few days. It can make you teary and you might feel helpless and get upset about silly things. This is often mistakenly referred to as postnatal depression. Postnatal Depression (PND) is a much more serious, longer lasting feeling, and affects up to one in five women after the birth of their baby.

It can be very distressing for a mother to find she has mixed feelings about her new baby. This may include not loving him/her the way she thought she would. In some cases, the mother may get so upset or angry that she hurts or neglects the baby. If a new mum can’t see that she is depressed, she can easily miss out on the most wonderful times with her new baby.

Signs to look for are:
- Crying for no reason
- Becoming very frustrated very easily (practically tearing your hair out) especially at your baby
- Feeling like there’s no point
- Yelling at people who try to help
- Feelings of anger or dislike toward your baby
- Feeling like you can’t cope
- When getting out of bed is very difficult (I know, with a new baby its hard anyway!!!)
- When you feel like everything is too hard

BUT WAIT...

There are ways to cope with PND.

The first thing to do is tell yourself “I am a good mother and I love my baby. This too will pass”.

The next and most important thing to do is to talk to someone - your doctor or a counsellor. This is a vital step in feeling better. Even if they are not specialists in mental health they can refer you to someone who is. There are medications you can take and plenty of people willing to help if you just ask them.

You may not believe it, but you can feel better. Being a mum can be fun! Just think, who’d want to miss enjoying a second of these little miracles of life? Get help and feel better!

For help or more information phone:
- Helen Mayo House 8303 1183, 8303 1425 or 1800 182 232 for country callers
- Assessment and Crisis Intervention Service (ACIS) 13 14 65
- Parent Helpline 1300 364 100
Feeding your baby

Making the decision – breast or bottle
It’s one of the tough decisions you have to make. There are pros and cons about both, but everybody has their own opinion. The only advice I can give you is to listen to what they have to say and make the decision for yourself. Don’t be bullied into something you don’t want to do. I was made to feel bad about my decision, to bottle feed, but I had a better relationship with my child because it was best for my baby and me. You are the only one who knows how you are feeling.

Kristina

Breastfeeding
My daughter and I had a lot of difficulty working out what to do. When my milk started coming in, the pressure was too fast then too slow. It was awful. My daughter had given me love bites on my breasts and they were cracked and quite painful. I was ready to give up. I persisted and put up with the pain. Eventually everything settled down and I breastfed her until she was about thirteen months old. I am really glad that I did keep doing it, as I felt a special closeness to her in doing so.

Kylie

Breastfeeding helps to protect your baby against illness, infections, allergies and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

Sarah

At first I had trouble with breastfeeding. I was determined to get it right so that I could be home in time for my mum’s and brother’s birthdays. I had a really nice midwife come in and spend most of her shift with me – helping me out. Finally I was able to go home. Breastfeeding came more and more easily. I found that once cracked nipples and all soreness went, I really enjoyed it – for me it was a time for relaxation and bonding with my daughter. It was also a great excuse to get out of the dishes and have people wait on me hand and foot!

Liz

Bottle feeding
When I was pregnant with my second baby I was all for breastfeeding because I breastfed my first baby. But when I attached my baby girl it killed! It was the most painful uncomfortable feeling I’ve ever had. In the same week some major things happened in my life and I already had a vigorous toddler. The midwife talked to me about bottle feeding. She said I wasn’t attaching the baby properly which is why it was hurting. I was in so much pain I couldn’t stand feeding her. I do feel like a failure bottle feeding, but its probably only because of all the pressure to breastfeed. After all my baby girl is healthy and growing properly. She’s perfect, so it can’t be that bad.
Preparing bottles
I started feeding my baby formula at five months. What you will need is a big tin of formula. There are many different brands, for different ages and for babies who have special needs. Make sure you read the label carefully. Bottles come in different shapes, and there are lots of types of teats. If you’re bottle-feeding all the time you’ll need about five bottles. Sterilising is very important. There are different ways of sterilising, using sterilising solutions, or in boiling water on the stove. Make sure you wash all the old milk out before boiling. I used to boil, until I accidentally forgot I was boiling and burnt the bottles and the pan! Then I bought a microwave steriliser. Make sure your microwave steriliser fits your microwave. I found bottle feeding easier, because my baby wasn’t on me all the time, and other people could feed him. You’ll have to think about your budget, because bottle feeding is costly.

Liz

I gave it my best shot
For the first four weeks of Jessica’s life breastfeeding came relatively simply, with her feeding four hourly almost on the dot. But on her first month birthday I found out she had thrush in her mouth, gut and bottom, which she quickly passed on to my breasts. This was really painful for both of us and I had to stop feeding her for about a week. I tried to express as often as possible, but still my milk ‘dried up’ quite a lot. When I went back to feeding Jess my milk supply was halved. My doctor put me on a series of tablets, all of which did little to help. I continued to try feeding until she was five months, but would always need to ‘top her up’ with formula, as my breast milk was not enough for her. By the time she was five months my milk supply was almost non-existent (except when Jess wasn’t hungry, when it would leak! Ha, ha) and Jess used me as a dummy and the bottle to feed from. This was when my Child and Youth Health (CYH) nurse put her foot down and said I was causing myself too much anxiety and sleep deprivation (as Jess wanted to be on the boob the entire night to sleep). The nurse said I needed to stop, so I agreed and gave it up. I believe that I did the best I could and that’s all us mums can do. Good Luck!

Bec

Mastitis
Mastitis is basically infected blocked milk ducts. It doesn’t sound like much but believe me it is. Your breasts go lumpy and are bright red (like a sunburn) and are extremely sore. Then to top it off you have a temperature and feel like you’re coming down with the flu. Yuck!

When I breastfed my first daughter, I had mastitis about three times. The first time was the most memorable. She was only ten days old at the time when I woke up in the morning with the world’s most painful breasts.

The doctors put me on antibiotics and told me the best cure was to keep feeding my baby with her bottom jaw at the worst section of mastitis. The baby’s bottom jaw works the hardest when they drink. Eventually I got better and only managed to keep feeding because I was extremely determined. I managed to feed her for about eight months but without escaping another two minor cases of mastitis.

I am currently breastfeeding my second daughter, who is six and a half months old and I haven’t had any problems with mastitis. I can’t think of anything that I might be doing differently to prevent it. I might have been able to prevent the first case if I’d had a little awareness about mastitis and seen a doctor earlier.

I hope everyone reading this understands a little more than I did at the time and that you manage to have a successful and enjoyable time feeding your baby. Good Luck Everyone!

Sarah
Introducing solids

I introduced rice cereal to my son at 6 months. For his first feed I made up one teaspoon mixed with boiled water. It will take a few times before they can eat properly. Each day I made more and made it thicker by adding less water. After a week I tried a jar of baby food.

I introduced new tastes slowly - like with rice cereal, I gave him the same taste for a week so he got used to it. I know buying jars is easy but one jar is one dollar, so that’s one dollar per feed or more. There are lots of foods you can make. A mashed banana or avocado is quick and easy and stewed fruit or veggies can be cooked on the stove or microwave. If you want to thin the food out add formula, breast milk or boiled water. If you’re making dinner like meat, veggies, spaghetti or casserole, you can mash up a little for your baby. Finger foods are good from six to nine months, like toast cut up, crusts, rusks and cut up soft fruit.

Watch your baby when he/she’s eating and make sure they are upright so that they don’t choke. This includes eating whilst in the car. If your baby doesn’t like meat, try adding stewed apple so it makes a sweeter taste. A good way to keep food is to make something, then freeze it in an ice cube tray. In the library they have good recipe baby books for all ages. It’s a good way to teach them how to eat real food with different textures.

If your baby gets a rash after eating something, he or she could have an allergy. See a doctor.

Liz

For support in feeding your baby see Useful Contacts at the back of the book.

Highs and lows of parenting

Being a parent can be a time of mixed emotions

The best thing anyone said to me ...

You’re doing a great job. She’s beautiful.
She’s so smart. Well done.

My sister is doing a PhD; she finished high school and has always been the successful one while I was the black sheep. I left school in year 9. She said to me once that she doesn’t know how I do it and that my job as a parent is way more of an achievement than anything she has ever done and that I am doing a great job as a mum.

It would have to be when people tell me what a gorgeous son I have and when I get told I’m a good mum and I work really well with children.

My best friend said ‘Wow, you are doing so well, I couldn’t have a baby and still keep up my school work. I think it’s great how when she cries, you just pick her up and keep trying, it would drive me insane.’

At the moment my daughter is in her room screaming her lungs out. Why? Because we’ve been asking her for the last hour to eat her dinner and now we’ve given up! I hate having to repeat myself. Unfortunately I feel like I’m constantly saying things about 10 times over, and quite often I still get no response.

Sometimes, the hardest thing about being a parent is the fact that you can’t drop everything and go out to have fun. If I want to go over to my friend’s house and have a few drinks it can sometimes take weeks of organising – then when it finally happens – I’m often too tired from the daily life of parenting, and I have an early night anyway.

I was very young when I had my daughter, so I used to feel resentment about the fact that I had to grow up so quickly. My old school friends are at uni, TAFE, working full time or out having a good time and partying. I am at home vacuuming, washing dishes and clothes, cooking, and doing even more cleaning than any of them can even imagine.
Pregnancy process

I feel lost at sea
Swaying this way and that
It's this thing inside of me
That makes me feel crap

The feeling subsides
And I seem to glow
I feel radiant and happy
As I feel it kick and grow

My belly is rounding
Just like a melon
As it grows bigger
So does our connection

Time's coming to an end
My ring no longer fits
And I feel tired and anxious
About what lies at the bend

Time is on a standstill
I'm as hot as the sun
Pain is all I feel
At every beat of the drum

It's all over now
And also the start
It's love at first sight
And I hope we never part

Tammy
My baby

I feel all alone
Like nobody’s here
But I know that they are
So I have nothing to fear

I now have another
From whom I will not part
She’s tiny and helpless
Relies on love from my heart

She’s somebody special
Who’s now here to stay
She’s with me forever, day after day

I can never leave her
No matter how I try
We’re bonded together
Until the day I die

I feel all alone
Like I cannot get by
Just me and my baby
We’ll give it a try

We’ll cope on our own
Help one another
I have no choice now
Because I’m her mother

I have no regrets
Happy I had her
My princess Amelia
I will love her forever

By Kylie
Nothing can describe the feelings I have for my daughter and nothing can take them away. I now have a purpose in life and a reason to go on.

Even after a day of her screaming, biting, pinching and hitting. Even after having to chase her little bum around and around the room to put her nappy on. Even though my head is pounding so much that I can hardly see and even though I feel so tired I could fall asleep standing up. At the end of the day I know it is all worth it because when I see her look up at me with those big beautiful blue eyes, I can see how much love she has for me and it feels amazing.

Nothing can describe the feelings I have for my daughter and nothing can take them away. I now have a purpose in life and a reason to go on.

Jana
Stories from the country

Being a young parent in the country is pretty much the same as being a young parent anywhere! We experience all the great things about being a parent and face many of the difficulties too. Some of the problems in rural areas include: lack of health and social services, lack of transport and feeling like everyone knows your business - and has an opinion on it! In Whyalla, there is a lack of childcare services available and limited suitable employment, especially jobs for single parents with limited resources. Being a young parent can be difficult sometimes but the good stuff overrides the bad, and you get to test and challenge yourself in ways you never have before. As one young mum put it, 'it's like an exciting adventure that lasts a long time!'

My story – a country experience

When my son was only a few weeks old, I suffered from extreme Postnatal Depression (P.N.D.). I virtually had a nervous breakdown. At the time I didn't even realise anything was wrong, but people around me did. I ended up spending some time in Adelaide at the Helen Mayo Clinic. It's a place where mums, who need treatment, can stay with their children and be there for them whilst being cared for themselves. I was required to go on medication for a while, which meant that I couldn't breastfeed. I was heartbroken by this at the time, but looking back I realise it was for the best. I am grateful for the help I received while I was there, because I would never have become the mum I am now!

My son is nearly three years old now and I am hoping to have a second child in the near future. I would hate to go through the same experience again. I know if I did, however, that there is no help like this for mums in regional areas, like Whyalla. I know this because when I was at the Helen Mayo Clinic I met two women, one who had come from Broken Hill and one from Pt Pirie. Reflecting on this, I would like to see a similar service in Whyalla to prevent P.N.D., educate about it and treat those suffering from it.

Services and supports that are useful

GPs, Child and Youth Health, Parent Helpline, Community Health Centres.

In the country, contact your local council office to find your community health service or support. Ask your health worker about travel assistance if you need help to get to appointments.

Our thoughts on what young parents in rural areas need...

Young parents drop in centre, support for young women and their choices regarding pregnancy, young people's health service-similar to The Second Story in Adelaide, more frequent family court proceedings (to sort out custody issues), a 24 hour chemist, more available transport and more childcare facilities.
Brooke

Baby safety

Keeping your baby safe is very important. Buying new furniture and other things can be exciting but before buying it because it looks good, always make sure that it is safe.

Make sure the product you’ve selected meets the Australian Standards Guidelines. Most stuff you buy brand new will have this on the tag. If you are buying second-hand be sure to check it fits guidelines.

See "Keeping Baby Safe" a booklet available from community health centres and Child and Youth Health clinics.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

This is when the baby dies suddenly for no obvious reason.

To help prevent SIDS:

- Make sure your baby’s head remains uncovered whilst they are sleeping. Tuck them in securely.
- Always check your cot is safe. Make it a regular routine.
- Babies who sleep on their backs are much less likely to die from SIDS.
- No pillow unless absolutely necessary (recommended by your doctor).
- Reduce smoking around your baby. While this may be hard to do it is best for your child/ren. Keep your house smoke-free and ask people to smoke outside.
- Position baby’s feet at the bottom of the cot with the blankets down that end too. This makes it difficult for the baby to end up under the covers and if they do happen to move up the cot there is nothing there to harm them.
- Don’t have toys in the cot with baby.
Ambulance cover
I bet you have never considered ambulance cover. Well now might just be a
good time to start. You more than likely think you will never need to use it, but
believe me, if you need an ambulance and don’t have any cover you will be
wishing that you had. You can’t predict the future. It is not very expensive and
it covers your family for a year. If you call an ambulance, without cover, it will
cost you around $500 per trip, while ambulance cover for a year for a family on
a pension will cost around $52. Add it up and what makes more sense to you?
You never know when an emergency may occur. ‘Better to be safe than sorry’
as the saying goes.

Application forms for ambulance cover are available at your local post office,
chemists and doctor’s surgery or contact SA Ambulance on 1300 881 700.

Home safety
Trying to keep your house as safe as possible can be difficult. You may like to
use a checklist as a starting point for making your child’s environment safer.

- Put poisonous materials as high as possible
  and never put them into old drink containers.
- Have childproof locks fitted to cupboards.
- Keep cords tucked away and use safety plugs
  on unused power points.
- Have an electrical safety switch installed.
- Place hot foods in the centre of the table.
- Store medicines in a locked cupboard and/or
  as high as possible.
- Try to dress children in non-flammable clothing.
- Never leave a child alone in a car and always
  use properly fitted child restraints.
- ALWAYS STAY WITH YOUR CHILD WHILE BATHING THEM.
- Never leave buckets of water or paddle pools full of water.
  Be sure to empty them to prevent drowning.
- Check for things that a baby can pull down on themselves e.g. tall fans
  or a TV on a stand.

Car seats
It is an important and legal requirement that you have an approved car seat that
is fitted properly to keep your baby safe.

Baby capsules, suitable for babies up to six months
can be hired from the Red Cross, or you may
choose to buy a car seat that can be used from birth
to 18 kg. The capsule is good, as you can take your
baby in the car and not disturb them when getting in
and out, although one car seat all the way through
may be more economical.

Bear in mind that any objects left in the car
can become potential flying objects in
an accident.

My dreadful car accident
Whatever you do, don’t think it will
be okay, because you don’t know
when or where it will happen. Please
put your baby in a safe car seat. I sat
in the back of a car with my 15 month
old son on my lap. We were in the car
for about ten minutes, then suddenly
bang, crash, shock. My son flew out
of my arms, and smashed into the
back of the driver’s seat. He started
screaming. I picked him up hoping he
hadn’t broken anything. Vomit went
everywhere and he was crying. I was
just thinking, my poor baby, I love you
so much, I am so sorry. We were
very lucky we were uninjured. It was
the car in front that suddenly stopped
in the middle of a busy round-about,
so you can’t just think the driver is
safe, when there are other drivers on
the road that aren’t safe. Trust me it
isn’t worth it. My son is the most
important thing to me, and if anything
happened to him I would not be able
to live with myself. It’s better to be
safe than sorry.
Immunisation

Immunisation protects children against harmful infections by using the body’s natural defence – the immune response – to build resistance to infections. They are available free at your doctor, Child and Youth Health Clinic, hospital and your local council. Some children may have a reaction to the immunisation, so speak to your health worker about what to look out for and seek medical advice if this happens. Many childcare centres will not accept children who have not been immunised. When you have your baby you will receive a Child and Youth Health Blue Book. This is a health record for your child and includes the immunisation schedule.

Fevers

Fevers can occur in any age group for many different reasons such as infections, reactions to immunisations or illnesses like the flu.

When your child’s temperature is above 37.5 they have a fever and should be seen by a doctor. To help reduce the fever, sponge the child or baby with luke-warm water and then dress lightly. Do not bathe the child in cold water, as the shivering will cause the temperature to rise. Offer clear fluids regularly in small sips and try to make sure the child’s intake is the same amount as normal – no less. Don’t force the child to eat, as more than likely they feel too unwell to eat.

Administering paracetamol should help reduce the fever. Be sure to use correct amounts for their age and weight. Do not ever give more than directed.

Tantrums

Almost every child throws a tantrum at some point. This is their way of expressing anger or frustration. Maybe it is because they are not getting something they want, or they are frustrated at not being understood or they are simply overtired. They are not being deliberately naughty, but it seems to them to be the only way to get what they want. They do not understand any other way of expressing themselves. As the child gets older they learn different ways of coping and tantrums occur less often.

When your child throws a tantrum, first make sure the area is safe. Children often throw themselves to the ground and kick their legs. Try not to interfere, unless they start banging their head or deliberately hurting themselves. Don’t smack them as this can prolong the tantrum and inflame the situation. Some children hold their breath as a way of getting attention. It isn’t easy, but try to ignore them. Stay calm and wait until it’s over. Give your child a little cuddle then go on with what you were doing. Sometimes you can see a tantrum coming. If you do sense a tantrum, try to distract the child if possible with another situation. Tantrums can be embarrassing for you as a parent, but try to remember that children do grow out of it. Most parents go through it and you more than likely did it to your own parents!

Keep calm, everything will work itself out.

Take every day as it comes and only take in the information you want to.
Teething
Teething can be a very stressful time in a baby's life and even for the parent/s. Babies generally get their first tooth at around six months. Some of the main signs to watch for in teething babies or children may include: rosy red cheeks, dribbling, biting and chewing on things, poor appetite, diarrhoea or a sore red rash on their bottom.

To help relieve your baby's pain, several different things may help.
- Try rubbing teething gel on the baby's gums.
- Give the baby a refrigerated teething ring to chew and suck, never a frozen one as this can burn the mouth. Cold food often can help an older child.
- If the baby is really distressed and unable to settle, administer paracetamol. Be absolutely sure to follow the CORRECT directions for their age and weight.

Toilet training
We all wish we didn't have to go through it with our children but sorry to have to say we do. Many children will begin knowing they are ready at eighteen months others may be two or three years old. They often realise they need to go or have just wet their nappy and will stand there holding their nappy or possibly try taking the nappy off. These are usually good signs that the toddler is ready for toilet training.

Many children can take until the age of three to gain the control of their bladder and sometimes to the age of five or six before they have total bladder control at night. The easiest time to start is in the summer as there are fewer clothes to remove if they get wet. Encourage your child to come with you to the toilet when you go and explain to them what you are doing. While this may seem very gross it helps the child to understand what to do. Have things ready such as a potty, steps to the toilet, removable toddler training seat and training pants, and a waterproof sheet for the bed. Don't give up because you can't be bothered any more, as this will often discourage the child. If you are going to begin, be consistent.

Praise the child if they take any positive steps. Stay calm. Accidents will happen quite frequently so be prepared and reassure the child that you are not angry with them.
The importance of play

I have two children ages 18 months and 3. I have read books to my children since they were babies and still do. Children learn a lot from visual and verbal stimulation. I think it’s important to read to your children. Even if you get their attention for 30 seconds and they get something from that page (like an apple is red), it’s worth it. You need to make the most it, when you have their attention. It will get longer as they get older. (Well that’s what they say anyway). If you do that every day and night you are helping them to learn new things.

Learning through play is also important for children. You don’t need to buy expensive toys. My two boys have their own cupboard and drawer in the kitchen with cooking utensils. They also love playing with cardboard boxes pretending it’s a car or bus.

Kristina

I am a single mother trying to juggle TAFE and parenthood. When I have time alone with my 2 year old daughter I want to make the most of it. I believe that one of the best ways to do that is by playing with her. It is a great way for us to bond and also a fun way for her to learn. By reading picture books she can identify objects by name and playing with her building blocks helps her to increase her fine motor skills. When we are playing I am giving her individual attention, which shows her that she is important and loved.

Hayley

Every child is different. If you need help with your child’s behaviour, or development contact Child and Youth Health 8303 1500 or Parent Helpline 1300 364 100

For further information regarding car safety regulations and child safety see Useful Contacts at the back of the book.

Animal actions

She’s as playful as a puppy
As curious as a cat
Gets everything she wants
She’s such a spoiled brat

She has an appetite like a horse
Eats everything in sight
Gets angry like a lion
Always tries to bite
She runs around in circles
Like a little mouse
Messes things like a pig
All that’s in the house

She gets as scared as a rabbit
Trying to hide away
She acts like an animal
Every single day
But that does not matter
She’s as human as can be
Every action that she does
Means the world to me

By Kylie
Getting out and about

Groups, playgroups and kindergym

I have been to a number of Young Mums Groups in the past twelve months and have found them to be interesting, educational and fun. I have met other young mums, and some of them have become very good friends. I found coming to the groups a real help in the sense of finding out that my daughter and I are normal and that the things we do and feel are normal.

Bec

After I had my daughter my life changed. I had to leave my traineeship, no more clubbing. A lot of my friends deserted me because I now had a new baby. Even my boyfriend hardly wanted to be around. I felt so alone. I finally decided that it was time to go out and meet new friends. I began going to a young mothers’ group where I first felt out of place. After persisting for a few weeks I began to fit in and met some really great friends. Months later new girls joined and some of the old left and we all became friends. I also began another parent group for mixed ages, which was also a lot of fun.

Kylie

When I was pregnant I knew other pregnant women, but I felt depressed and thought “shit... what are you doing” – reality check. When I had my baby I felt lonely and it was Christmas holidays, and every day I went to my parent’s house because I didn’t want to be alone. My boyfriend went out to his friend’s house. I resented being stuck in my house alone, with no money. Going out to groups and meeting people was very good and now I don’t feel isolated at all.

Liz

When I became pregnant I was trying to continue school and worry about having a baby. I really didn’t see many of my friends, as I tended to stay at home. Our interests were different because I didn’t want to stay out very late or drink alcohol or spend all of my money. I attended young parents antenatal classes at the Women’s and Children’s Hospital which I found really good, as I was able to meet other people in the same situation as me. When I had my son I attended Mums R Us group at The Second Story where I also met other young mothers like me. Being isolated can be depressing at times, but the only way out of it is to be optimistic and just get out and about, even if it’s just for a walk down the street to the shops.

Tammy

I’ve been going to Play Group since my son was nine months. Child and Youth Health suggested Play Group. I rang the Play Group Association and they told me where the closest playgroup was. The first couple of times were scary, especially as the mothers were all thirty plus. But the more I got to know them, the nicer they were. Now my son is eighteen months and he is very comfortable. He loves it.

There are about ten or more mums, and they usually have two children. It only cost two dollars, and they provide morning tea. My playgroup is set out in a church hall. It has various activities, like play dough, painting, cutting and drawing, a sandpit, and an area for babies with toys. Then at the end a lady comes in and she plays the piano, and has instruments and puppets, and the children dance and join in. It goes for an hour and a half. It’s really good.

Kindergym is good to burn a bit of energy off toddlers. It costs under ten dollars per session, and it goes for an hour. They have play equipment for climbing and jumping, have singing and a parachute. If you have time I really do advise you do something. It’s really good to get out of the house and do something new.

Liz

If you want to know more about groups in your area see Getting Out and About in Useful Contacts at the back of the book.
Legal rights and responsibilities

Sorting out the arrangements for the care of your child with the other parent or family members may be something you can agree on, or you may need to go through the family court. Your options are:

- **Mediation** (when a counsellor helps both parties come to an agreement)
- **Parenting Plan** (when you work out your child’s care yourselves and submit this to the court)
- **Family Court** (this is the time to speak to a lawyer, there may be many trips in and out of court which may go on for months or years).

Family Courts look out for what’s best for the child. It is not ideal to move a child from familiar surroundings ie school, family, although if a child is being harmed he/she will be removed from a home that’s familiar to them. It is rare for a second parent to have no access (the amount of contact the non custodial parent has with the child) even in domestic violence cases.

While decisions are being made in the court interim orders will be set in place which are binding and have to be followed, and there are penalties if they are broken.

Then the final orders are set in place. Although they are final, when circumstances and ages of children change it may go back to court to be adjusted.

There is childcare available at the courts. Contact the courts regarding ages allowed, opening times and bookings.

Going through court is a scary thing. When I was going through it all, I felt like I kept having to defend myself as a mother. I knew I was a good mother but because my daughter’s dad put in the application I was the one who had to prove myself even though he was the one who couldn’t be bothered with his own daughter. My daughter has lived with me since the day she was born and the thought that she might be taken away from me scared me more than death itself. Deep in my heart, I knew that the courts would be stupid to take her out of the stable and safe environment that I had given her – but it was still scary.

Now it’s all over and my daughter is still living with me and we are as happy as ever – she sees her dad once a fortnight and I’m glad that he’s now able to see what a wonderful daughter he really does have.

My ex put in the application (the paperwork needed when applying for residence – where the child will stay most of the time) so during the whole court process I felt I was always defending myself and trying to prove that I was a good mum. And as anyone that’s ever had a child knows, you don’t always feel like the best parent, so at times I felt like I was lying to the courts. It wasn’t so! Now I look back and I was, and I am, the best parent I can be and home is where my daughter is and should be.

For me Family Court felt like the dirtiest, most horrible court of all. Try to keep positive. All rights discussed are the child’s rights, therefore each decision made by the courts is supposed to be in the best interests of the child.

If you disagree with decisions made in court don’t sign anything, speak to your lawyer. Always tell your lawyer exactly what you want and that you want them to fight for you. That’s their job!

If you need legal information or advice there are services that may be able to help you and may be free depending on your income. See Legal Services under Useful Contacts at the back of the book.
When you’re pregnant you’ll probably need to think about where you will live when the baby’s born. This may be somewhere close to family, transport, support services and where you feel safe.

**Public housing**
If you are on a low income, and have other special circumstances such as health or family problems you may be eligible for housing through the South Australian Housing Trust.

I was on the list for Housing Trust and I was waiting for a while so I broadened the area I was prepared to go to. I organised an appointment early in the morning – you need an application form, some I.D. and evidence of your income. If you have no money you can’t apply. It’s good to have support letters from a health worker, and I had someone who came along to the interview with me.

**Private rental**
- Can be difficult if you’re under eighteen because you can’t legally sign a lease.
- You need an income.
- You can apply to the Housing Trust for money to cover the bond which they will get back at the end of your rental time.
- Housing Trust don’t give references for landlords.
- Rent Assistance is available from Centrelink based on your income.

Be careful with inspection forms; make sure you agree with the inspection before you sign anything. Your parents might sign the lease for you if you’re under eighteen.

Remember – there are setting up costs involved in renting — two weeks rent, gas, phone, electricity connection fee, household goods and bond. Consider organising direct debit from your bank account or through Centrelink for bills and rent so you don’t get caught short.

**Housing Co-ops**
- Are organised through South Australian Community Housing Authority (SACHA).
- You work as part of a community and are expected to contribute to the running of the co-op.
- You pay 25% of your income to the co-op.

**Supported accommodation and emergency housing**
- Is available for pregnant young women, and young mothers and their children who are homeless. Homelessness is when you’ve got nowhere to live or you’re staying on a friend’s couch, or the place where you are is unsafe, emotionally or physically.

If you need help finding somewhere to live see Housing under Useful Contacts at the back of the book.
Living on a budget

Budgeting
There is a lot more than just food, bills, accommodation and clothes to consider when writing up a budget. Getting into debt is very stressful and you don’t really have the time and energy for it when you are a parent.

So, first things first. You need to write a list of everything that you will need and want to afford within the next 12 months. Below is a list of things to consider.

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<td>Savings</td>
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Remember to think of birthday presents and other things that you may need. Then consider what needs to be paid within the next 12 months, how often, and how much? If you have to pay more than you’ve got coming in then you might need to look at the budget again.
Budgeting tips

- Look up old bills to get an estimate of how much to budget for future bills.
- Always overestimate. Underestimation can lead to debt.
- Do lay-bys to afford things like birthday presents and extra things.
- Use pension concession cards to gain discounts on certain bills.
- Never just spend money because it is in your purse.
- Plan ahead and try to save money regularly.
- To make Christmas easier, do Christmas toy lay-bys and Christmas hampers that are paid throughout the year.
- Remember to treat yourself sometimes, otherwise you won’t want to stick to a budget. You also deserve it.
- Review your budget regularly.
- Use Centrelink payment cards to pay your bills regularly.
- Be careful of ads that offer “up to 9 months interest free”. If the items are not paid off by the 9 months, they will charge you interest on those 9 months as well, which can end up costing you double!

Cheap or free things

- There are lots of free/cheap things around but most are not publicised, because then everyone would use them!
  - Haircuts, Beauty treatments etc – TAFE/Clip Joint student cut around $10.
  - Massages at a College of Natural Therapy around $15 an hour.
  - Central Markets on a Saturday afternoon for fresh produce – they sell off things really cheaply.
  - Buy fresh food in season – it’s cheaper.
  - Share “bulk buys” with friends/family.
  - Torrens Island Markets Sunday 6am till 1pm for fresh produce.
  - Use Food Co-ops.
  - Filtered water is available outside the Brewery on Port Road – gold coin donation.
  - Right Price – Prospect and Clover Crest – sell mainly dry products close to their use by date.
  - Op shops, garage sales, fairs, fetes and markets are great places to get cheap clothes, toys and furniture.

Entitlement cards

Contact Centrelink to see whether you are eligible for a Pension Card. Pension cardholders are eligible for concession rates for things such as:

- Medicines, bus tickets, reductions on electricity, gas, phone, water rates, dental, doctors, low cost glasses, discount train fares, some free travel, hearing aids.
- A health care card entitles the person to concession rate prescription medicines – it is issued to people on low incomes.
- If your child is on a regular medication check with Centrelink about pharmaceutical benefits.

Child support

Both parents are financially responsible for the child until they are 18 years old. If you are separated the Child Support Agency can help you sort out financial arrangements. Contact the Child Support Agency on 131 272 or speak to a worker at Centrelink on 131 021 for further information.

Financial counselling and support

Help is available if you’re in a difficult financial situation or just want help getting your finances in order. Your local CYFS (Children, Youth and Family Services) office will give you information about concessions and grants.

If you wish to return to school or undertake courses, JET (Job Employment Training) – contact Centrelink on 136 150 and JPET (Job Placement Employment Training) on 8211 8466 may be able to help you financially, they may even be able to help you purchase electrical goods and nursery things if they are really needed. You do need to fit a certain criteria to be eligible.

It is often difficult to keep bills up to date, meaning a lack of money, food and other necessities. If you are unemployed, on a low income or studying there are places you can go to get extra help.
Childcare

I have to say that without childcare in this world there would be many crazy parents running around. The childcare services offered are amazing. There are so many different centres offering great care and early education for your child.

Being a parent can be quite tiring and stressful and sometimes you just need a break. That’s why childcare might be something to consider, as both you and your child benefit from it. It can be worrying deciding if you and your child are ready to be separated, or which childcare or family day care workers you are comfortable with.

To make your decision the best thing is to get as much information as possible.

Childcare Centres

Childcare centres have sections for different age groups. Children are looked after by qualified staff. They do activities throughout the day that help to develop different skills as well as how to communicate and interact with other children in their age group.

When deciding on which childcare to send your child to, a good number to ring is the Childcare Access Hotline on 1800 670 305. They give you up to date information on childcare centres in your area. It’s a good idea to then visit the centre and meet the staff. Make sure that you write up a checklist of what you expect and want from the childcare.

Family Day Care

Family Day Care is care offered in someone’s home by a registered child minder where the children will range in age.

After making your application you are sent a list of names and numbers of workers that are available in your area. You then contact and meet them and decide whom you feel most comfortable with.

Family Day Care ph: 8226 8700.

Some childcare centres will not allow your child to attend if their immunisation isn’t up to date. You may be eligible to receive a childcare assistance benefit. This will reduce your fees dramatically. Contact Centrelink on 136 150 for more information about these payments.
**Working after the baby**

*A working mother*

It's 7.35 p.m. and I'm ready for bed. This morning I woke up at 6.15 am. I have to wake up, get dressed, wake my daughter up, get her dressed, get her things together for day-care, gather my things together, then finally walk out the door at 7.30 am hoping to god that I haven't forgotten any thing.

I drop Christina off at day-care and I am at work by 8.30. My working day then starts. I spend it typing invoices and sales orders and anything else that may pop up. I enjoy what I do, but I am thankful when the clock is saying 4.30 pm. This means I can go pick up my daughter and start being her mum again. By the time I get home it's time to cook tea and get Christina ready for bed by giving her a bath and putting her in her pyjamas. Unfortunately my day doesn't stop once she's in bed; I still have my house to maintain. Usually I would do it during the day and Chrissy would help, but when we get home at night I don't get time until she's in bed.

Finally I get to crawl in bed and I am usually asleep before my head hits the pillow. The next morning I do it all again. Weekends were never anything special before, but now I can't wait till Friday afternoon so I can go home and spend the weekend with Chrissy and hope she hasn't forgotten what I look like.

I'm only working full-time for six weeks and it will be all over soon. I am extremely glad that I got to experience this. It makes me wonder how some mothers manage to do it all the time – especially with younger children. I miss my daughter terribly during the day and I'm so tired at night we don't get to see each other that much. Christina is three now and I'm glad I spent those first years of her life creating a special bond with her.

I'm not saying that I'll never go back to working full time but I guess this has made me open my eyes and realise that working is not everything. My daughter is ten times more important. I can't wait to go back to being her mother instead of a mother who works.

Sarah

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**Having another baby**

Hi, my name is Kristina and I'm 21 years old. I fell pregnant with my first child when I was 19 years old. I have a boyfriend whose name is Chris. We have been together for nearly 6 years.

Caleb, our son is now 17 months old and I'm pregnant with our second child. Caleb will be 22 months old when the second child is born. Chris is really good with Caleb. Even though he is studying full time he helps out a lot, changes nappies, bathes him etc. I must admit he wasn't too happy at first when I told him I was pregnant. We sat down and talked about it and we listened to what each other had to say. I knew it wasn't the right time to have a baby but I couldn't go through with having an abortion. I did take into consideration what Chris had to say.

Once he saw my stomach growing that's when he started liking the idea of having a child together. He was obsessed with putting his hand on my stomach to feel him moving,

Now I am pregnant with my second child. Chris is very happy about it. I suppose I'm happy Caleb will have someone to play with and share things with. I would like to have waited until Chris finished Uni and had a secure job and I had some sort of career. I guess it's better to get it over and done with first than start thinking about a career.

I was too scared telling anybody about my pregnancy, I didn’t know how people would react. I had a lot to think about with this pregnancy; I don’t want to go through what we went through with Caleb. He was a sick baby from about 3 months old. He was breast fed from birth to one month old then went on to formula. He was vomiting all of the time and not putting on much weight. We took him to doctors and they all said there was nothing wrong with him. When he was one year old they finally looked into it. They said he was under weight for his age. (We all knew that) Caleb was allergic to a lot of foods. Caleb is well now and on a diet he can eat.

I keep thinking to myself am I going to be able to handle looking after two children. I’m sure I can but I just have all the thoughts in my head: Am I going to have enough money for my children? Are people going to judge me if I want to go out and get a job? I had a lot of people asking me how old I was and telling me I should be still in school or what do your parents think? I mostly ignored them but some days it got to me.

When I finally started telling people they were very happy for me. Chris thinks it's great having them both together so they are close in age.
About us

Sarah
I was sixteen when I fell pregnant with my daughter, Chrissy. She was one and a half when I became involved with Gossyp. I liked the idea of being able to give advice to other young women who found themselves in the same situation. I am now 23 and Chrissy is five and I have a six-month-old Jaimee.

Liz
I was twenty when I had my son, I was 37 weeks pregnant when I joined Gossyp. I wanted to help other young mums, as I didn’t have any idea about parenting when I had my first new born. I am now 23 and I’m expecting my second baby, and I’m still wondering how I’m going to cope with a newborn and a toddler.

Bec
I was 20 years old when my daughter Jessica was born. I became involved with Gossyp when they were suggesting a weekend workshop down in Victor Harbour. That never happened however I have enjoyed working on the book enormously.

Kristina
I was 19 years old when my son Caleb was born. I joined Gossyp because I wanted to help other young mothers by giving them some advice and support. Letting them know they are not the only ones. I also wanted to try and stop the stereotypes. Now I’m 23 and have another son, Kyle, He is 17 months old now.

Kylie
Hi my name is Kylie and I am a 24-year-old single mum. I have a four-year-old daughter Amelia. I am paying off a mortgage; own my own car and work. It’s certainly been tough raising her alone but definitely a lot of fun. Good luck and never give up. They are well worth the effort.

Hayley
Hi! My name is Hayley. I got involved in Gossyp about 2 years ago. I’m 20 years old and have a gorgeous little 2-year-old girl named Becky. Looking at her I realise it was all worth it.

Brooke
I was 17 when I got pregnant with my son Rory, and not long after, I joined Gossyp. Rory is now 2 and a half and we’re still going! This book has become so much more than we expected and I hope everyone can get as much out of reading it as I did writing it. Enjoy!

Tammy
I was 15 when I found out I was pregnant with Aidan who is now 4. There were so many different support services available it was confusing. I hope this book helps people in finding the help they need. Good luck!
Useful contacts

Pregnancy support

Pregnancy Advisory Centre
8347 4955 or 1800 672 966

Adoption and Family Information Service
8207 0060

SHine SA
8431 5177 or for country callers 1800 188 171
www.shinesa.org.au

Women’s and Children’s Hospital Drugs in Pregnancy & Lactation Service
8161 7222

Migrant Health Service
8237 3900

SANDS (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Support)
8277 0304

Streetlink Youth Health Service
8231 4844

Nunkuwarrin Yunti
8223 5011

The Second Story Youth Health Service
8232 0233

Pregnancy support and information

Pregnancy and Birthing Service in the Northern suburbs
8252 3711

Your local Community Health Service or Hospital listed in the white pages of the telephone book

Drug & Alcohol Services Council
8274 3333
24 hour telephone counselling
1300 131 340


Sexual Health Services

SHine SA
8431 5177 country callers
1800 188 171

Sexual Health Hotline
8364 0444 country callers
1800 188 171

Clinic 275
8222 5075 country callers
1800 806 490

www.stdservices.on.net/clinic275

Youth Healthline
1300 131 719

Breastfeeding Support

Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)
8411 0050
www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Parent Helpline
1300 364 100

Child and Youth Health
Ring 1300 733 606 for your nearest clinic
www.cyh.com

Kindergym
8294 8288

Playgroup SA
8344 2722

KidSafe
8161 6318

Breastfeeding Support Service at your local hospital

Legal Services

Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement
8211 8824

Childcare Access Hotline
1800 670 305
Education and Training
Specific programs for pregnant and parenting young women exist at these schools
Para West Adult Campus
8254 6300
Gepps Cross Girls High School
8262 3695
Edward John Eyre School – Whyalla
8645 7677
All schools are required to provide support and encouragement to pregnant and parenting women to continue their education. For more information contact the Policy and Program Officer, Learning Inclusion Unit, DECS.
8226 1721
Louise Place
8272 6811
JET – Centrelink
131 021 or 136 150
JPET – Service to Youth Council
8211 8466
TAFE SA
8463 6303
infoline 1800 882 661
www.tafe.sa.gov.au
Talking Realities
8243 5459

Getting Out and About
Parent Helpline
1300 364 100 (ask for your nearest young parent’s group)
Youth Healthline
1300 131 719
ask for your nearest young parent’s group
Kindergym
8294 8288
www.gymsa.com.au
Playgroup SA
8344 2722
Fatherhood Support Program in the Western metropolitan area
8243 5544
The Second Story Young Parents Project
North 8255 3477
South 8326 6053
Central 8232 0233
Your local Community Health Service – listed in the White pages of the phone book

Support Services for Pregnancy and Parenting
Parent Helpline
1300 364 100

Open Access College
8362 2000

Child and Youth Health
1300 733 606 for your nearest clinic

SPARK (Resource Centre)
8226 2500

Migrant Health Service
8237 3900

Birthline Pregnancy Support
8331 1223

Helen Mayo House
8303 1183 or 1800 182 232

North
The Second Story – North
8255 3477

Mothercare- Lyell McEwin Hospital
8182 9729

Pregnancy and Birthing Services in the Northern suburbs of Adelaide
8252 3711

Northern Parent Resource Program Inc
8250 6555

Kids N You
8287 4855

Central West
Parenting Network
8243 5544
Young Parent’s Project at The Second Story
8232 0233

South
The Second Story-South
8326 6053

Baptist Community Services
8357 1755

Southern Junction Youth Services
8382 3554

Support Services for Dads
Fatherhood Support project
8243 5544

Country areas
In Whyalla we have a young parents support group ‘Kids R Us’ (at CYH), Community midwives, Plaza Youth Young Parents Program, Bethel Christian Centre, Centacare (a Catholic welfare organisation where you can do your washing and drying, there is a play area for children and they offer a cheap home gardening service too!).

If you live in a country area contact your local CYH, Community Health Service, Children Youth and Family Services office or Council to find out what services are available for young parents.

Housing
Aboriginal Housing Authority
8235 4333

Emergency Accommodation Services of S.A
1800 003 308

South Australian Housing Trust
13 12 99

Housing Advice and Support SA (HASSA)
1800 060 462

Residential Tenancies Branch
8204 9544

South Australian Community Housing Authority
8207 0233
www.sacha.sa.gov.au

Trace-a-Place
1300 306 046 or after hours
Crisis Care 131 611

Women’s Housing Association
8349 4460

Migrant Women’s Support and Accommodation Service
8346 9417

Central
Port Youth Accommodation
8341 2099

Salvation Army
8227 0199

South
Southern Junction Youth Services
8382 3554

Baptist Community Services
8357 1755

North
Centacare Youth Services
8252 2311

Northern Family Accomodation – Anglicare
8209 5460

Supported Accommodation
Louise Place
8272 6811

Malvern House
8359 1022

Coolock House
8382 6699

Crisis/ Emergency Services
Domestic Violence Crisis Service
1300 782 200

Crisis Care
131 611

SA Ambulance
emergency 000
non-emergency 1300 881 700

Police
131 444 or in an emergency 000

Poisons Information Service
131 126

Child Abuse Report Line
131 478

ACIS - Assessment and Crisis Intervention Service
131 465

Rape and Sexual Assault Helpline
1800 817 421

Yarrow Place
8226 8787

Lifeline
131 114

Emergency Accommodation Services of SA
1800 003 308

Migrant Women’s Support and Accommodation Service
8346 9417

General
Quitline 131 848

Women’s Information Service
8303 0590
My Local Contacts are

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