

# BEFORE AND AFTER HAVING A BABY

- ✓ 1. For learners to consider the responsibilities and challenges involved in young parenthood.
- ✓ 2. To understand the effect that parenthood has on individuals lives and lifestyle, especially for young parents.
- ✓ 3. To understand some of the stresses parenthood can put on a relationship.

45 minutes

**Worksheet : 'Having a Baby - Day Planner'** (provided)  
**Example Worksheet** (provided)

## PROCEDURE

- 1 Hand out a copy of the Worksheet 'Before and After having a Baby - Day Planner' to each learner and ask them to plot out in the left hand column what they would do on a typical Saturday. Tell them to include all their activities of a 24 hour period, including things like sleeping, eating, bathing, chores, sports, leisure activities and the like.
- 2 After completion of the worksheet, ask the class to compile a list of everything that a new baby needs and which requires attention; for example, sleeping, feeding - breast or bottle, nappy changing, playing, entertaining, crying, being held, and washing clothes. Give learners some indications of how much time in a day these activities might require.
- 3 Ask learners to return to their Worksheet and, in the second column, write what a typical Saturday would look like if they had a baby in their life. Mention that the reason that the day planner has 24 hours is that babies don't keep regular hours and wake up several times during the night to play, feed and because they often need a nappy change.
- 4 Ask learners to reflect on how their schedules might fit, or clash, with having a baby in their life. You can use the Exmple Worksheet (provided) to guide the discussion. The following questions may be helpful:
  - a. How do you now spend most of your Saturdays?
  - b. How much time do you get to yourself?
  - c. Do you get to stay in bed late on a Saturday morning?
  - d. Would a baby allow you to do those things?
  - e. Would you be able to manage your school work while taking care of a baby everyday? Would you have time to hang out with friends? Could you manage to hold down a part-time job?
  - f. What would happen if you, or the baby, got ill? How would you cope?
  - g. Are the answers different for males and females? How? Why?
- 5 Now ask learners to break into pairs and to imagine that they are the parents of a baby. (It doesn't matter whether they are mixed-sex or same-sex pairs for the purposes of this exercise). They should figure out between them how they would divide the childcare responsibilities - in other words, who will look after the baby, when, and who will do which of the tasks necessary in caring for an infant.
- 6 Remind them that they will still live in homes different from their partners, still not be able to drive, and still have very limited resources including money. They will therefore also need to work out logistical issues such as where the baby will spend its time throughout the day while they are at school, how they will get the baby from one home to another, and who will pay for the things that the baby needs.
- 7 Now facilitate discussion by asking the class the following questions:
  - a. Were you able to agree on a schedule? How were the childcare responsibilities divided?
  - b. How difficult, or easy, was it to agree with your partner on a schedule?
  - c. What were some of the conflicts?
  - d. What do you think would happen on a week day when you had to go to school?
  - e. What do you think might be pressure-points or issues that could be a risk for domestic violence between partners?
  - f. What do you think might be pressure-points or issues that could be a risk for child abuse?
- 8 End the exercise by asking learners whether any of them are ready to have a baby. Ask them how they will try to ensure that they do not become parents before they are ready. Emphasise that parenting is a big responsibility and is something that has a big impact not only on themselves, but on their own families (parents and siblings) and on their future child.

## TEACHER TIPS



### General

If you have learners who are pregnant or who have children, do not single them out. Let them complete the exercise like everyone else and if they choose to, they may share their experiences during the discussion. Do not specifically ask them questions or to share their experiences.

Explain to learners that pregnancy is an obvious risk of having sexual intercourse, and that it can happen even if it is the first time that someone has sex or if contraception is used. Every school will have instances where learners are pregnant. These learners are just like everyone else. They should not be blamed or shunned (either by teachers or by fellow learners), instead they should be offered support, information and resources to help them manage their pregnancy and childcare, as well as to help them finish school.

If a learner gets pregnant, she may choose to have a Termination of Pregnancy, or give up the baby for adoption. Even if these options do not align with your moral views, or those in the classroom, it is important to allow learners to think about these choices and to know that they are legally supported options.



### Making the Link with Gender and Violence

Teen pregnancy affects teenage girls and boys quite differently, reflecting patriarchal and misogynistic attitudes towards parental responsibility.

Teenage mothers are especially vulnerable to discrimination, poverty (by lack of child support from the father, and diminished future earning potential), abuse and exclusion by their partner, friends, family members or their community.

In this exercise, the questions listed under 7 - specifically parts e. and f. - address the issue of pressure-points and how these give rise to violence. Here, you should discuss how anxiety about parenting, differing expectations, feelings of disappointment or regret, financial difficulties or fears about financial difficulties, limited time, balancing other responsibilities, and a lack of relaxation, time to recharge, and time to invest in the partnership, can lead to conflict and aggression, usually directed by men at women. These tensions can spill over into neglect, abuse, and violence toward the child from either parent. Take care, though, not to minimise the responsibility for violence on the part of the perpetrator (for example by blaming the crying baby), and instead encourage learners to think about whether they feel emotionally equipped to deal with these challenges.



### Assessment Ideas

Each learner can be asked to write a personal account of what they learned from the exercise. Learners should focus on the effects that a pregnancy would have in their own lives if it were to occur.



# 24 HOUR DAY PLANNER

Fill in all the things you would do on a typical Saturday. Include activities like sleeping, eating, bathing, chores, sports and leisure activities.

SAT	Before I have a baby	After I have a baby
1 am		
2am		
3am		
4am		
5am		
6am		
7am		
8am		
9am		
10am		
11am		
12 noon		
1pm		
2pm		
3pm		
4pm		
5pm		
6pm		
7pm		
8pm		
9pm		
10pm		
11pm		
12 midnight		

# EXEMPLAR: DAY PLANNER

Exemplar reflecting the reality of having a baby, for learners to compare to their own schedules.

<b>SAT</b>	<b>Before I have a baby</b>	<b>After I have a baby</b>
1 am	Sleep	Sleep
2am	Sleep	Change nappy, feed baby, walk around house
3am	Sleep	trying to get crying baby to sleep
4am	Sleep	Sleep
5am	Sleep	Sleep
6am	Sleep	Sleep
7am	Sleep	Feed baby, change nappy
8am	Sleep	Eat half breakfast while holding baby
9am	Sleep	Put baby to sleep
10am	Eat breakfast while watching tv	Start to shower but as soon as you are wet baby starts to cry
11am	Shower, decide what to wear, style hair	Play with baby
12 noon	Go to shopping mall	Wash bottles and baby clothes, while keeping an eye on the baby
1pm	Window-shop, meet friends,	Feed baby
2pm	Buy lunch/ have a coffee	Put baby to sleep and try to shower again, dress
3pm		Watch TV very softly so that you don't wake the baby
4pm	Go to weekend job	Call your friend to catch up. They can't talk, they are on their way to a movie.
5pm		Feed the baby, change the baby, change clothes after baby vomits on you.
6pm		Eat supper while holding the baby. Give up after baby knocks plate on the floor.
7pm	Have supper, chat with family	Clean up, try to get baby to sleep
8pm	Watch movie (on tv or at the cinema)	Bath baby
9pm		Try to get baby to sleep
10pm		Sleep
11pm	Read magazines/surf the internet	Sleep
12 midnight	Sleep	Walk around house trying to get crying baby to sleep