

# Caregiver Tip Sheet for Pregnant and Parenting Youth

## Responsibilities:

### **Am I expected to transport the teen parent and the child to appointments?**

It is recommended that the caregiver, in coordination with the caseworker, help the youth explore options and/or coordinate transportation so that the needs of the youth and the child are met.

### **Am I expected to care for the child when the teen parent in my home wants to do typical teen things, such as go to the movies, hang with friends, etc?**

You can help with the care of the child and give the parent a break so the parent can participate in some typical teen activities. Ultimately, the teen is responsible for caring for the child.

### **Am I expected to care for the child when the teen parent attends school?**

No. You, the teen parent and the caseworker should discuss available child care options and make arrangements that work for both of you.

### **Am I expected to transport the teen parent's child to daycare?**

- If both the teen parent and the child are dependent, the expectation is that you would assist in meeting both their needs.
- If the child is not dependent, the expectation is that you work with the teen parent and the caseworker and create a plan to assist the teen parent with getting the child to child care.

### **Can I be paid to provide child care for the dependent teen's child?**

A licensed foster parent is not eligible to receive child care payments.



### **Am I required to provide parenting skills to the teen parent?**

No. We recommend you create a plan with the teen parent and the caseworker that allows you to coach and give advice. Your guidance should be consistent with any parenting program the teen parent is participating in. Keep in mind that the teen parent may have a different parenting style than you.

### **Am I expected to permit visitation at my home (the other parent, extended family, etc)?**

No. However, refer to the assigned caseworker guidelines that detail who is allowed to have contact with the teen parent in your home.



## Child Custody:

### Who has custody of the child?

- The birth parent or parents have custody of the child unless a court determines otherwise. A court order entered in a dependency action may give The Department of Children, Youth & Families care and custody of the child.
- The caregiver is encouraged to discuss with the teen parent and caseworker the roles and responsibilities when the teen parent and the child are placed through dependency actions.

### Is the child automatically a dependent of the state?

No. The child would only become a dependent if an identified safety threat cannot be managed with an in-home safety plan. The child may be placed in your home but remain in the custody of the teen parent. The child would count toward your licensed foster care capacity, which could put you over capacity. You must notify your licenser when the child is placed in your home.

### Do I have the option to adopt if the parent(s) decides adoption is in their child's best interest?

- You may have the option to adopt through a private adoption. However, that is the choice of the birth parents.
- In the case of an established dependency of the young child, we work with the parent(s) toward reunification. If reunification is not an option and the parents make the decision to relinquish their parental rights, you may be considered as an adoptive resource along with other viable adoptive resources.

## Parenting:

### Am I responsible for parenting the teen parent's child?

- You are responsible for parenting the teen parent placed in your home. The responsibility for parenting the child should be based on the plan created by the teen parent, you and the caseworker.
- Remember the teen is a parent and a youth at the same time. A learning curve should be expected, so you will need to practice patience.
- You are a mandated reporter. If you believe the child is being abused or neglected, you are required to make a referral and to notify the assigned caseworker.

### What happens if I disagree with how the teen parent is parenting the child? And vice versa?

Disagreements about parenting style should be discussed with the teen parent and the caseworker. Remember that the teen may parent differently than you and as long as it's not abusive or neglectful, it's OK. Again, you are a mandated reporter. If you believe the child is being abused or neglected, you are required to make a referral and to notify the assigned caseworker.

### What happens if the teen parent runs away and leaves their child with me?

Notify law enforcement that the teen parent has run away. Then make a referral to the local office or central intake (mention that you made the referral to law enforcement) and notify the assigned caseworker.

### What happens if the teen parent runs away with the child?

Notify law enforcement that the child is with the parent and note any safety concerns. Then make a referral (mention that you made a referral to law enforcement) and notify the assigned caseworker.

## Supports and Services:

### How do I get services for the teen parent and child?

Ask the caseworker for community resources.

### Who gets the dependent foster care "with child" supplement? What does it cover?

A licensed foster parent. It provides for the maintenance of the child of the dependent teen parent in your home. The supplement covers room and board and supplies for the child.

### How can I support the teen parent with their education (high school completion and beyond)

- Talk to them about their educational and employment goals.
- Explore all educational options in your area (staying in current school, GRADS, GED, etc.)
- If the youth is breastfeeding, try to get the mother a pump (available from the Women, Infants and Children program in your county) and try to find a school with child care on campus or close by. Programs such as GRADS can accommodate the needs of parenting teens.

*If you would like copies of this document in an alternative format or language, please contact DCYF Constituent Relations (1-800-723-4831 | 360-902-8060, [ConstRelations@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:ConstRelations@dcyf.wa.gov)).*