Adoption may seem like a good idea. You live with your consequences, finish your journey through pregnancy and then your baby is adopted. Today, pregnant teens can pick adoptive parents, choose to be in touch with them, and even opt to be sent photos and other information about their babies after the adoption. Adoption may be right for some pregnant teens, but it is not the best option out there for all of them.

Adoption comes with risks. Carrying a pregnancy to term is emotionally and physically difficult. The pregnancy will obviously change a teen’s whole life—from her daily routine to whether or not she graduates from high school. Not only does being pregnant come with emotional and physical challenges, but handing over the baby that you—or your girlfriend, if you’re a guy—has carried for nine months to another couple is emotionally difficult.

More Than One Option

Teens get lots of mixed messages about what to do if they or their partner is pregnant. One Tree Hill, 90210, Teen Mom, The Secret Life of the American Teenager—they all deal with teen pregnancy in one way or another. Most shows portray teens deciding to become parents, like that’s the best option. But the teen parents all seem to end up struggling with their babies, relationships, work and school. The MTV reality show Teen Mom reveals just how tough it is to be a parent. On the show, Maci, Amber and Farrah are working hard to raise their kids with the support of their parents and sometimes the support of their partners, while also juggling other responsibilities.

Parenting is clearly a very hard, full-time job, and it means making sacrifices and often putting the needs of your child ahead of yours.

Abortion is yet another option. It’s legal in the United States. But if it hadn’t been for my high school health class, I would have thought that abortion was illegal because of what I’d seen on TV! A show might hint at abortion by having a character visit a clinic and not go through with the procedure. This usually happened without any characters ever mentioning the word “abortion.” Though abortion is not often talked about on TV as an option for pregnant teens, it is one.

Having a medical professional perform a first-trimester abortion—within the first 12 weeks of a pregnancy—is physically a very safe medical procedure. Some people believe that abortion takes a huge emotional toll on women, but while the personal decision to have an abortion is difficult, having one can also be a relief when you don’t have to worry about dropping out of school and changing your life forever.

Adoption Is One Option

Every teenager’s life is different. Likewise, every pregnancy is different. Adoption may be right for some teens, like Catelynn and Tyler on Teen Mom, but parenting may be right for others. And others may opt for abortion. Deciding what to do is always an individual choice.

Comments From Our Facebook Friends

It all depends on the teens’ situations. If the teens felt like they could not support the child, then adoption is the best choice.
—Renee, 16, NH

It just depends. Teens really need to thoroughly evaluate their options. Making a decision as huge as this is hard.
—Zane, 15, OR

Not necessarily. Abortion should be an option, in my opinion.
—Ming, 18, China
Is Adoption the Best Option for Pregnant Teens?

Adoption is the best thing if they are sure they cannot take care of their child…. Plus, some people just want the best for their child, even if it means handing the child over to someone else.

—Jane, 17, IA

Panic must set in when you realize that you’re pregnant or you’ve gotten a girl pregnant. When she has to decide what to do about an unplanned pregnancy, two possible options usually come to mind: continue the pregnancy and become a teen mom or have an abortion. However, there is one more option: adoption.

If you already know that you don’t want to have an abortion and you’re clear that you’re just not ready to be a parent, adoption is the best option. Raising a baby takes a lot of maturity, and most teens haven’t matured enough to properly do it. And as we all know, it takes money to care for a child over a lifetime. It is also difficult for teen parents to achieve their educational goals while raising a baby. In the end, adoption is the best option for pregnant teens and their babies.

Adoption on 16 & Pregnant

Adoption isn’t something you hear people talk a lot about, but it got lots of attention during the first season of MTV’s reality show 16 and Pregnant. Soon-to-be parents Catelynn and Tyler made the hard decision to make an adoption plan. Having a baby would make it difficult, if not impossible, for them both to graduate high school and eventually go to and finish college. Catelynn and Tyler also agreed right away that it would be selfish on their part to try to be parents, since they are so young and inexperienced and don’t have stable households. In one episode, Catelynn talks to her friend and asks, “How am I supposed to raise a kid when I’m a kid myself?” This showed great maturity on Catelynn’s part. She had the foresight to not only think about herself but the future of her child as well.

Watching Catelynn and Tyler, I was surprised to find that making an adoption plan is just as hard for the guy as it is for the girl. Tyler is emotional throughout the whole process. We see him crying, yet he doesn’t second-guess their decision to make an adoption plan, even though it is so difficult to follow through with it.

As a girl, I personally never gave much thought to the guy’s needs in this process, because legally, what to do about a pregnancy is the girls' choice. But after watching 16 and Pregnant, I realized how important it is for the guy and girl to communicate (ideally before they start having sex) and come up with a decision together about what they would do if the girl becomes pregnant.

The Support of Adoptive Parents

There are loving couples who, for whatever reason, want to adopt. Maybe they can’t have a baby or just want to provide a home for a child. These couples will pay for all of the medical care associated with pregnancy and delivery, which can be a relief to teen moms who can’t handle the costs of doctor’s appointments during pregnancy and a hospital stay when the baby is delivered.

An appealing option for some teens may be to create an open adoption. An open adoption lets the teens have some communication with their baby and the baby’s adoptive parents. Catelynn and Tyler decided they were most comfortable with this option. They made a scrapbook, sewed a baby blanket together and wrote letters for their baby to read when she got older. Catelynn and Tyler, along with the adoptive parents, also decided on a name for the baby. They all agreed that Catelynn and Tyler would send the baby annual birthday presents and the adoptive parents would send pictures of the baby as she gets older. Catelynn was also given a bracelet that matched one the adoptive mother and baby had. It read, “Always in our hearts.”

All adoptions don’t work this way, but what’s great is that pregnant teens can create a plan that works for them, their baby and their baby’s adoptive parents.

A Better Life for Everyone

Pregnant teens who choose adoption know that they are doing the best they can do for their child by having an adoption plan. It means the baby gets a stable home, the teens get to grow up and follow their dreams and the adoptive parents get a child.