

Cafs parenting and caring

[Family](#), [Mother](#)



CAFS STUDY NOTES PARENTING AND CARING Becoming parents and carers

Being a parent or carer is one of the most demanding jobs there is. No one can make parenting or caring easy, but by understanding children, the cared for and their needs will make it a lot easier, as they require time and energy.

Biological parents Biological parents are the parents who produce and

provide the genetic material for a child. **Pregnancy** Pregnancy is the result of male and female intercourse or due to artificial insemination, which then

conception occurs. **Planned pregnancy** Preconception planning can assist the parents by ensuring that they are psychologically and physically ready to

parent a child. They may spend time discussing: x parent styles x child-care arrangements x discipline In a planned pregnancy, consideration can also be

given to the cost of raising a child and housing arrangements. **Unplanned pregnancy** Thoughts and feelings are often confused. When an unplanned

pregnancy occurs, there are choices to parent the baby, make a plan for adoption or abortion. These options must be clearly thought of before a

decision is made. **IVF and GIFT** When pregnancy doesn't occur naturally, IVF (into-vitro fertilisation) may be an option. This involves giving a woman

fertility drugs and then removing the eggs from one of her ovaries just before fertilisation. **GIFT** (gamete intra-fallopian transfer) is another option.

The egg and sperm are transferred into the woman so that conception occurs inside the body. **SOCIAL PARENTS** Social parents are individuals who

care for a child without providing genetic material. They may be adoptive, foster, step or surrogate parents. **Adoption** An alternative for parents who

cannot conceive a child. This is a legal procedure in which the children are no longer considered part of their biological family but of their adoptive

family. Fostering A temporary arrangement ranging from a few days to years, where children stay with a family for a short period of time. It is coordinated by DOCS (Department of Community Services). Foster parents have the day-to-day responsibilities for the children. Surrogacy Involves an arrangement between a woman and a couple who would like to have a child. Woman agrees to conceive, carry and give birth to the child for the couple. This is a very controversial form of parenting and is illegal in NSW. Step parenting When a man and/or woman marries or forms a de facto relationship with a partner who has children from a previous relationship, he or she becomes a step-parent. Step parents have no legal responsibilities but can fulfil all parenting requirements. CARER RELATIONSHIPS Carers can be professionals, parents, partners, brother, sisters, friends or children of any age. Carers may be paid or perform the role voluntarily without payment. Carers meet the needs of the individual, provide stability and access to family and social networks. Voluntary carers Statistically one in every five households provides care for family members or friends with a disability, mental illness, chronic condition or who is frail aged. Informal or voluntary carers provide the bulk of care in the community. Paid carers There are many types of paid carers. They include: * Foster carers * Nursing homes * Hospitals * Teachers * After school carers * Babysitters * Nannies

MANAGING PARENTING AND CARING RESPONSIBILITIES It is important that both the positive and negative aspects of parenthood be examined before pregnancy begins. A child affects the lifestyle and financial picture of a family, which can cause apprehension. Preparations for becoming a parent or carer There are many books, articles and magazines and classes to help people learn

about parenting. Most carers take on caring responsibilities because a family member or friend needs support and assistance.

Physical changes It is important for both parents to be as fit and healthy as possible to maximise the chances of a healthy baby. During pregnancy a balanced diet with plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables, cereals, dairy products, lean meat or alternatives is important. Regular exercise before and during pregnancy, will help the body to cope with the extra demands being made on it before and during labour.

Social changes Prioritise change and usually an extensive social calendar is not as important as spending time together as a family. More planning is usually necessary. Most parents share the parenting responsibilities to allow each other some time out to enjoy social, leisure and sporting activities. It is important that carers maintain social contact with people other than the dependant or they may feel socially isolated.

Emotional changes Family members can experience extra stress. Towards the end of pregnancy, the mother may feel large and unattractive, reducing self-esteem. Partner may feel neglected, also having to deal with the changing emotional moods of the mother. Siblings may also feel neglected. It is important to make time for each other. Caring for someone emotionally can be satisfying. However, frustration and distress may be experienced due to time demands on the carer.

Economic changes The costs of a baby vary widely, depending on the child's health and the parents' wants. There will be medical costs, they will vary depending on the level of private health care and hospitals. To save on costs, parents often join a babysitting cooperative (parents pay each other in time not money) or rely on friends or relatives for support. Assessing the financial situation and devising a budget ensures that a suitable work and

care arrangement is chosen. **FACTORS INFLUENCING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT** Having a baby or the responsibility for someone in care affects a family's life. Resources have to be assessed and perhaps used differently to the arrival of the additional dependant. Dependants affected by the caring relationship When a baby enters a family, there may be some jealousy felt by siblings. x Age there is no ideal gap between siblings. No matter what the age jealousy or resentment may occur. The age gap between parents and child will affect their relationship. Older parents may have less energy, while younger parents may have fewer financial resources and life skills. x Skills and capabilities depends on their age and level of development. Dependants who have developed skills to prepare meals and assist in household tasks will be of benefit to the family. x Special needs some children have a temporary or permanent physical or mental disability. It is estimated that one in five children has special needs. Resources Resources that need to be managed include time, energy, finances and housing. Decisions have to be made about which resources to use or allocate. Time The tasks that are accomplished in that time will depend on values, goals and other resources available. Energy Greater demands placed upon their energy when they have a dependant to care for. Children and adolescents generally have more energy than adults, and carers may find themselves physically drained while trying to satisfy the needs of their dependants. Finances Families can receive payments, such as the Family Tax Benefit as well as the Child Care Benefit, which reduces child-care costs. Housing Is a basic need. Families should consider housing location with regard to transport, parks, child-care facilities, medical facilities, distance

from family and friends and location of schooling and employment. Access to services There are many community and government groups and services available to parents and carers. However, many families are unaware of the resources available to them. PARENTING AND CARING RELATIONSHIPS

Parents will form new relationships with one another and the child, or carers with the dependant. Roles in parenting and caring There are many changes in the expectations the community has of both men and women in the parenting and caring role. There will be differences between cultures and religious and different emphases placed on tasks for males and females.

Individuals and groups Those who adopt parenting and caring roles vary greatly in Australia, including: x parents x grandparents x relatives x teachers x paid carers x significant others (friends, doctors) Parents should share the role of parenting. Parent/s Non-custodial Non-custodial parents usually have to provide maintenance and come to an arrangement regarding their access to children. It is in the best interests of children to maintain a relationship with both parents. Foster Legally, the foster carers maintain the daily responsibilities of the child, while the long-term welfare of the child remains with the state government. Foster parents must be dedicated, offer affection, flexibility and open communication. Adoptive Is a lifelong commitment. Parents should only decide to adopt if they want and love children very much. Adopted children often come to parents with emotional and physical problems that require special care and attention. Grandparents Grandparents can offer an economical child-care alternative. They can play a very special role, often developing strong and lasting bonds with their grandchildren. But they can also add extra stress to the family by offering

unwanted/needed advice. Relatives/siblings Older brothers and sisters often take on parenting and caring roles. Siblings can be important carers in families. Extended family can also provide support by offering child care, respite for carers, positive role models and meals. Extended family allow relationships to develop between larger groups that assist in the socialisation of children. Teachers Teachers build on the knowledge and skills of children. They also act as role models. Children learn to become more responsible for their own decisions and actions. Teachers in schools, are legally considered to act 'in loco parentis' (in the place of parents). Paid carers The increase in child-care services has resulted in paid carers taking more responsibility for the upbringing of children. Significant others May be professionals such as doctors and social workers or those close to the family such as neighbours and friends. Parents should find a doctor that they trust. Social workers are trained to treat behavioural problems. Neighbours and friends can offer support. Role expectations of parents and carers Society holds expectations for both men and women in the parenting and caring roles. Some of those expectations are: x providing basic need of food, clothing, housing and medical care x establishing family goals and moral values x providing an incomes and financial security x recognising individuality and developing responsibility in children x providing positive role models Factors influencing parenting and caring relationships Parents and carers make decisions and bring up their children and dependants according to their beliefs and life experiences. Age As the age of the parents increases, so does the chance of them being financially able to support a child. The choice to delay children is available nowadays due to reliable contraception. Women may also decide to

start a family as a sole parent. Culture and religion There are often differences in child-rearing methods from culture to culture. In many cultures, such as Aboriginal culture, the brothers and sisters have the same responsibilities for child care as do the mother and father. Religious or spiritual groups provide a set of rules and behaviours. Parenting decisions many also be influenced by religion. Education The parents' education includes information that is gained through informal and formal sources. Formal education comes from schooling. The parents value of education influences their goals for their children's education. Gender Traditionally, women were seen as the primary caregiver in families. However, this is changing and men are sharing the responsibility of care for the dependants. Children's concepts of gender roles develop from their own experiences and observations. E. g. Girls don't need to be dressed in pink frilly dresses, or boys excused from washing up because of their gender. Previous experiences and own upbringing Parents and carers previous experiences and their own upbringing influence how they themselves parent. Parents have ideas about what parenthood involved and their own capabilities. E. g. If a dependants experience is that the female has always undertaken the caring responsibilities then, as they become adults, they will expect this to happen. Socioeconomic status Family income determines the resources utilised for maintaining relationships. For parents with low incomes, there are less expensive ways for their children to develop their socialisation skills and relationships. Socioeconomic status is often very significant for carers. This may mean that they cannot earn an income and must rely on government payments and beliefs. Media The media — particularly mass media —

transmits images of how different groups in society should act and behave. Parenting decision-making styles can be seen on television. Parents may not wish their children to be influenced by this. E. g. showing no respect to the father in *The Simpsons*. The media can be used in a positive way to enhance parenting experiences. Nature of relationship Love is a basic need of every individual, and parents who accept their children will truly love them. The nature of the relationship is particularly important in the caring role. E. g. it can be difficult for an adult son to take on the role of caring for his father from whom