



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

ROBERT GORDON  
DIRECTOR

Dear High School Administrator or Educator:

Today in Michigan, there are nearly 10,000 babies born to teenagers each year. More than **47,500** babies are born to unmarried parents each year in Michigan, which is **43%** of the total births. Despite a one-third decline since the early 1990s, the United States continues to have much higher rates of teen pregnancy than many other countries. These trends in teen and non-marital births have immediate and long-term public costs that show up in high school dropout rates, increased public assistance expenditures, increased poverty rates, and a rapidly expanding child support caseload.

In the hope of reaching teens before a pregnancy occurs, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Child Support developed a teaching packet called "*The Responsibilities of Parenting - R U Ready?*" The materials in the packet provide a strong message for teens about sequencing their life: completing an education, choosing a career, and entering into a healthy and stable long-term relationship before having children.

The "*R U Ready?*" materials were designed to help teens understand the necessary time, energy, and tough decisions that come with parenting. The "*R U Ready?*" materials emphasize that a baby is a lifetime commitment and indicate the importance of appropriate timing and parental preparation before having a child. The materials encourage teens to consider the realities of parenthood and encourage them to make choices that improve their chances of academic and personal success. The "*R U Ready?*" materials do **not** contain sex education or contraception information.

The "*R U Ready?*" teaching packet includes:

- Information for Parents – an introduction and frequently asked questions for parents of teens;
- Student's Guide – five one-hour modules that include group activities, handouts and exercises;
- Student's E-Learning Version – online version of the modules in the Student's Guide;
- Teacher's Guide – an overview of the modules, answer keys and ideas for teaching the material; and
- Teacher's PowerPoint Presentation – can be used with the modules in the Student's Guide.

Family Support division staff from the county Prosecuting Attorney and Friend of the Court offices are often willing to assist teachers when presenting "*The Responsibilities of Parenting - R U Ready?*" materials. These child support professionals can answer questions regarding the many unexpected impacts of teen parenting, as well as the legal ramifications and the rights and responsibilities.

The "*R U Ready?*" materials are available on the [www.michigan.gov/childsupport](http://www.michigan.gov/childsupport) website. Educators may request the "*R U Ready?*" Teacher's Guide (with answer keys) by sending an email request to [DHS-OCS-PEP@michigan.gov](mailto:DHS-OCS-PEP@michigan.gov), or by contacting the Paternity Liaison at 517-241-7800.

Sincerely,

Erin P. Frisch, Director  
Michigan Office of Child Support