

The Responsibilities of Parenting – R U Ready? Information for Parents

An innovative teaching packet, intended for teens and young adults.
*This teaching packet does **not** contain sex education content.*

The Michigan Office of Child Support sincerely hopes that teens will make the decision to delay parenting until completing their education, securing employment, marrying and/or establishing stable homes. However, for those who are already parents or soon to be parents, we believe the information contained in the teaching packet will have value.

Key themes:

- The rights, responsibilities, and realities of parenting
- The value of paternity establishment
- The financial and emotional challenges of marriage and parenting
- The benefits of having both parents involved in a child's life
- The importance of financial and medical support
- Healthy relationship skills

“R U Ready?” provides teens with a larger picture of the time, energy, and tough decisions that come with parenting. It is not a how-to-parenting guide (i.e., changing diapers and feeding), but a teaching packet about what-to-expect-when-you're-a-parent.

“R U Ready?” emphasizes that a baby is a lifetime commitment and indicates the importance of parental preparation before deciding to have a child.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS:

Can I see the materials?

What if I have questions about “The Responsibilities of Parenting – R U Ready?”

Where did “The Responsibilities of Parenting – R U Ready?” come from?

What does “The Responsibilities of Parenting – R U Ready?” teach?

Why do my children need a course in parenting at school?

How can I continue the discussion with my child about these issues?

Can I see the materials?

Yes. You are invited to browse the “R U Ready?” [student guide](#) and [PowerPoint](#) materials online.

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What if I have questions about “The Responsibilities of Parenting - R U Ready?”

If you have specific questions, please e-mail your inquiry to DHS-OCS-PEP@michigan.gov

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Where did “The Responsibilities of Parenting - R U Ready?” come from?

In 2008, Michigan Department of Human Services Office of Child Support staff developed “**R U Ready?**” to update materials about child support and parental responsibility for teens and students in Michigan schools. The first version of the “**R U Ready?**” teaching packet was finalized in 2010.

At its initiation, “**R U Ready?**” was reviewed and endorsed by Department of Human Services, Office of Child Support managers and training staff, Office of Child Support performance management, a teen focus group, current and former Michigan teachers, and staff of the Department of Education and the Department of Community Health.

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What does “The Responsibilities of Parenting - R U Ready?” teach?

The goal of “**R U Ready?**” is to promote responsible parenthood; provide a basic understanding of paternity and child support laws; and encourage involvement of fathers in the formation of strong, stable families. The key message is that becoming a parent is more than giving birth; the responsibilities of parenting impact all areas of an individual’s life, regardless of one’s age when becoming a parent. It should be noted that “**R U Ready?**” is not a sex education curriculum.

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Why do my children need a course in parenting at school?

Four out of five children will grow up to be parents someday. “**R U Ready?**” is a tool for parents and teachers to use in conveying important life lessons. “**R U Ready?**” provides introspective exercises about the many challenges of marriage and parenthood and will help students apply the information to their own lives. “**R U**

Ready?” gives students an opportunity to consider their own futures and to evaluate their readiness for marriage and/or parenting.

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How can I continue the discussion with my child about these issues?

“**R U Ready?**” emphasizes the expectations of responsible parenthood and exposes students to skills needed to build strong families. “**R U Ready?**” does not take the place of parental guidance; parents are a child’s most important teacher! Parents can use this information as a framework for conversations, providing teens with opportunities to express their views and perspectives.

Talk to your child about the rewards and challenges of being a parent. Tell them real-life stories about marriage and/or what it takes to be a parent and how you are different or similar to your own parents. A child’s participation in “**R U Ready?**” provides an opportunity to explain and reinforce family beliefs and values.

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