

Young, Poor and Pregnant



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"I like it when people notice I'm having a baby. It gives me a good feeling inside and makes me feel important."-a teenage mother Teenage mothers are often poor young girls who define themselves through motherhood and who see getting pregnant as less frightening than finishing school or getting a job. In this book an expert on adolescent pregnancy discusses how psychological pressures of adolescence interact with the problems of being poor to create a situation in which early sexuality, pregnancy, and childbearing-often repeated childbearing-seem almost inevitable. Drawing on her experience as founding director of one of the nation's largest and most successful programs for teenage mothers, Judith Musick sheds new light on what is required to significantly improve the life chances of teenage mothers and their children. Frequently quoting from the diaries of teenage mothers themselves, Musick looks at the family and community problems that accompany poverty and shows how they influence the psychological development of young girls, examines the sexual socialization (and exploitation) of disadvantaged females, and analyzes the role played by mother-daughter relationships. She describes how adolescents feel about and raise their children. Musick concludes by recommending strategies for intervention programs that will help promote the developmental, psychological, and environmental conditions necessary for teenage mothers to change their lives.

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