

Adoptions  
with Love



*Pregnant in College?  
A Guide for Young Women*



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## *You are Not Alone*

Each year, more than 2 million college-aged women become pregnant. If you are pregnant and in school, you are not alone.

# Introduction



Discovering an unplanned pregnancy is one of the most frightening and overwhelming experiences a young woman can face. If you are pregnant and still in school, you may be feeling especially scared and alone. You may feel like you are the only college student this has ever happened to, or that you cannot tell anyone the news. If you have just started college, or are lacking transportation from campus, you may not know where to go for help.

It is important to know that you are not alone.

Each year, more than 2 million college-aged women – those who are 18-24 – become pregnant. Over 4.8 million undergraduate college students are raising children today, but the chances of finishing school while parenting are not as strong. In fact, unplanned births account for about 1 in 10 dropouts among female students at community colleges.

Because pregnancy in college is so common, there are many places you can turn for help. There are healthcare facilities that offer medical and emotional support. There are support groups – both in person and online – for women who have faced unplanned pregnancy. Finally, there are adoption agencies that can help you learn about your options as a college student.

Once you have absorbed the news of your circumstances, you can begin to consider your options. You may not have planned this pregnancy, but you have the power to make a positive outcome for your baby and yourself. You may choose between the three possible outcomes of pregnancy: parenthood, termination, and adoption.

If you are a college student who is facing an unplanned pregnancy, continue reading. In this guide, we will share important information about your options and available support.



## *This is Your Choice*

You may not have planned for this pregnancy, but you have the power to make a positive decision for your baby's life.



# Getting Support in College

When you find yourself pregnant in college, you may feel like you have the world on your shoulders. You may feel like there is no one who can relate to what you are feeling, or that you are the only person this has experienced this. This is not true. Unplanned pregnancies happen frequently at your age. In fact, 86 percent of pregnancies among single young women are completely unplanned.

Who can you turn to for help? You are facing an enormous, life-changing decision. Yet your friends may be concerned with their grades, their social activities, and their social media life. How could they understand what you are going through? Who else can you talk to? Who will give you honest, educated advice?

If you would like to learn more about your options, you can always turn to a trustworthy adoption agency, such as Adoptions With Love. Despite popular belief, adoption agencies are available to help you make a thoughtful and informed decision – even if that decision is not adoption in the end. Our compassionate social workers are ready to speak with you about the potential of parenting, adoption, and more. All of our meetings will be confidential, and we will respect any choice that you make.

There are many other support networks for pregnant college students. There are support groups specifically designed to help college students who are pregnant, and there are many online forums for students to connect with one another for peer support.

No matter how you are feeling about this pregnancy, you can find a group that will support you and guide you through this journey. You do not have to face this alone, and an adoption agency like Adoptions With Love will surely lend an ear, no matter what choice you decide to make.



## Finding Support

Pregnant college students may go to a local health facility, women's health clinic, or an adoption agency for unbiased support.

# The Impact on Your Life



Getting pregnant in college can feel like a complete crisis. You have spent years preparing for your education and future career. Now, you are faced with a major, life-changing decision. No matter what you decide, your life will never be the same again.

## What changes can you expect during this pregnancy, while in school?

Pregnancy will change your college experience, but it is important to know that **you can continue to go to school while pregnant**. You have every right to continue your education, attend internships, and participate in college activities. Under law, you may also miss classes due to medical necessity, which includes pregnancy leave. Despite what you might think, your teachers will likely be very supportive and accommodating of your situation.

During your pregnancy, however, you may experience some challenges in school. For example, as your belly grows, you may find it harder to walk around campus. You may feel more tired than usual due to the physical changes. Do not be afraid to talk to your teachers about your situation. Together, you can work on a schedule and arrangement that meets your needs.

For example, you may ask about online classes during late pregnancy. Online courses have become more common, especially since the outbreak of COVID-19. When you have the option to study from the comfort of your own home, you may find that pursuing your degree during pregnancy is a lot more manageable.

Depending on the timing of your child's birth, you may also take the summer off and take more classes in the fall. Or you may take a semester – or even year – off to focus on the birth and recovery period. This is completely normal.



### *Your Degree is Possible*

You can still attend college classes while pregnant. Teachers may be able to accommodate your situation and make classes manageable.

# The Impact on Your Life *continued*



## How will pregnancy impact your life in the long run?

The statistics are disheartening. An estimated 61 percent of students who have children in college do not go on to complete their degree. Their dropout rate is 65 percent higher than students who do not have children. It is important to know that you can still continue your education. You do not have to put your life on hold.

The impact your pregnancy will have on your life depends on what you decide next. Parenthood is among the top reasons young women drop out of school, as caring for a child while attending classes can be extremely challenging. Parenthood also has many financial implications, and may require a full-time job. This leaves less time for your education. Meanwhile, young women who choose adoption often go on to finish school and pursue a great career.

Of course, there are long-term effects of either choice. With parenthood, you will be raising a child for the next 18+ years of your life. With adoption, you may experience feelings of loss or grief after the adoption takes place. It is important to weigh all the pros and cons of each choice, and make the decision that is best for you and your baby. We explore this more below.



### *Parenting vs Adoption*

Parenting during college leads many young women to drop out of school. If you wish to pursue your goals, you may consider adoption.



# Options for College Students

When faced with an unplanned pregnancy, you have three choices: adoption, parenthood, or termination. This is your choice. While it may be difficult, no one else can make this decision for you. As an expectant mother, only you know what is best for you and your baby.

You may be considering parenting your child. This is not unheard of, as over 4.8 million undergraduate college students are raising children. Of course, with this path you will need to prepare yourself for the long journey ahead. Raising a child from birth to age 18 – not counting college tuition – costs an estimated \$233,610, according to the Department of Agriculture. There are other factors to consider, such as shelter, childcare, and support. Where will you and baby live? Who will help you take care of baby, while you are working or in school? Will you need to get a job? These are important questions to ask as you consider parenting.

One benefit of adoption is that you can provide a wonderful life for your baby, while continuing a wonderful life for yourself. You can complete your education and go onto a successful career. If you are considering adoption, you may be surprised to learn that there is flexibility in this choice. For example, you have the option to choose your child's adoptive family. Your adoption agency can provide you with profiles – packets of information, letters, and photos – of hopeful parents looking to adopt. Each family undergoes a long home study process, and several background checks, to ensure they can offer a safe, stable, and loving home for a child.

With the help of an adoption social worker, you can also design an adoption plan that makes you comfortable. You can choose to keep in touch with the family after the adoption is finalized. You can communicate with the family via email, phone, or even in-person visits. This is called an open adoption arrangement, and it is completely up to you.



## *Weighing Your Options*

Which option is best for your life and goals? Which is best for your baby?

As an expectant mother, only you know which choice is right.

# Adoption is a Positive Choice



There are many benefits of adoption. However, there is no pressure to choose adoption – it must feel right in your heart. If you are interested in making an adoption plan, Adoptions With Love can help guide you and share information along the way. Our dedicated staff can walk you through the adoption process. Our adoption attorneys can keep you informed on your rights as a birth mother. It is up to you, however, to make a decision with which you feel at peace.

When many people think about adoption, they think about it as “giving a baby up for adoption.” This is an old, outdated phrase. In reality, adoption is anything but “giving up.” Making an adoption plan is a selfless act of love that requires great strength. It gives expectant/birth mothers the power to make a plan for their baby’s life.

When you decide to place your child for adoption, you are thinking about your baby’s future, and planning for a life that is better than the one you can provide right now. You are a young college student. You may not be ready to raise a child, and that is okay. There are adoptive families who are ready and longing to care for a child. By choosing adoption, you can ensure a bright future for your baby, filled with safety, stability, opportunity, and love.

Adopted children have very positive experiences. Compared to their non-adopted peers, these children are more likely to be read to and sung to by their parents every day. Studies show they are also more likely to have family dinners, live in a two-parent household, be financially stable, and reside in a safe neighborhood.

Adoption also has many benefits for birth mothers. Research shows that birth mothers who choose adoption are:

- Less likely to live in poverty
- More likely to finish school
- More likely to be employed a year after giving birth
- More likely to delay marriage and other children
- More likely to marry and less likely to divorce
- Likely to have peace of mind, knowing their child is living in a safe and loving home

Adoption does not have to mean goodbye forever. If you are comfortable, you can remain in contact with the adoptive family through open adoption. Open adoption is positive for both birth mothers and adopted children. Children can grow up having answers to questions about their family background. Birth mothers can have peace of mind in seeing how their child is growing over the years.





# Making an Adoption Plan

To make an adoption plan, it is important to start with a licensed adoption agency. Adoptions With Love has been working with expectant/birth mothers since 1986. We assist expectant/birth mothers all over the country and offer many free services, including:

- Financial assistance with rent, utilities, maternity clothing, and more
- Free counseling, before and after adoption
- Free legal services throughout the entire process
- Free assistance with designing an adoption plan and matching with a family
- Communication arrangements with adoptive family

When you decide to place your child for adoption and contact Adoptions With Love, we welcome you to tell us all that you desire for your child. Perhaps you want to know that your child will be raised by a family with similar religious beliefs as yourself. Maybe you want to find a family that has other children. When you express what is important to you, our caring social workers will work to find you the perfect adoptive family.

You may be young, but you are in charge of your adoption plan. It is completely up to you whether your child's adoption is open, semi-open, or closed. Most adoptions today are open, but this does not mean that it will work for you. If you feel like you would like to make a fresh start and focus on school, then you may wish to have a closed adoption. That is okay. Adoptions With Love will respect whatever decision you make. We keep photos and updates on file in case you decide to open up the adoption later down the road.

If you decide that you would like an open adoption, that is okay, too. At Adoptions With Love, all prospective adoptive families agree to at least a semi-open adoption, which involves regular updates from the adoptive family (sent to the agency). Most families also welcome FaceTime, texting and face-to-face meetings over the years. Making an adoption plan is not saying goodbye forever. Your child will have an understanding of where he is from, and who his birth mother is, right from the start. Your adoption story will be shared in a positive light. Your child will know that he is loved deeply, no matter what.



# What About the Father?

As you consider your options, you may be wondering if you need to involve the father of your child. While adoption laws vary by state, presumed birth fathers typically have rights, but less than the birth mother when the two are not married.

Specific laws regarding termination of parental rights or adoption proceedings for unmarried fathers are still determined by individual states, so it is important to contact your adoption agency to understand the laws. Each state also has its own definitions as to what legally classifies a man as a father.

In some cases, college students who are pregnant do not wish to have any contact with the child's father. They may not want to tell them about the pregnancy at all. If this is how you feel, that is okay. You do not need to get in contact with him before pursuing an adoption plan. This is your pregnancy, and you are the one who is in charge of this decision. Adoptions With Love can help you navigate these uncharted waters and the agency can contact the biological father if needed.

If you are on good terms with your child's father, or even in a relationship together, he may be able to serve as a supportive partner through this pregnancy. Adoptions With Love is open to working with birth fathers and offers free counseling for both expectant/birth parents.

Matters of the birth father can bring up some strong emotions for some expectant/birth mothers. If you are looking for support on talking to the biological father, your counselor can help you work through it. Your needs and wishes must be put first.



## *The Biological Father*

Adoptions With Love offers free counseling services for birth fathers, if he is supportive and/or involved in your adoption plan.



# Conclusion



If you are a college student who is facing an unexpected pregnancy, it is easy to feel overwhelmed. Remember, you are not alone, and you can turn this difficult situation into a positive, loving decision. You should never feel pressured into a decision. Only you can choose what is right for you and your baby.

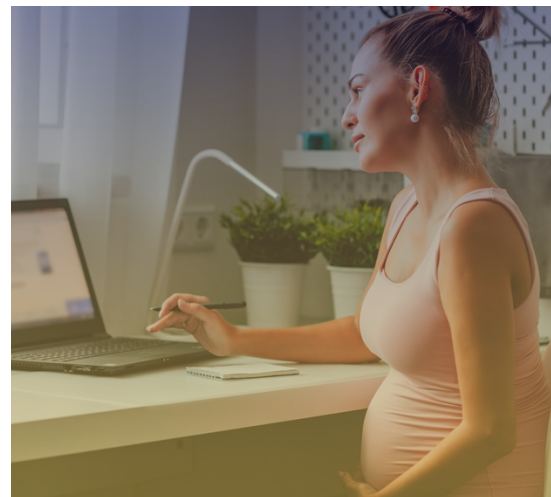
As you weigh your options, however, it is important to know that support is out there. Whether you are thinking of raising your child, you wish to terminate the pregnancy, or you are considering placing your child for adoption, there are support groups out there to help you.

If you are thinking about making an adoption plan for your child, you will want to find a knowledgeable, experienced adoption agency in whom you can trust. This pregnancy may be putting a wrench in your future plans, but it does not have to mean an end to your education and career. Adoptions With Love can walk you through the entire adoption process, holding your hand every step of the way. We have done this with many women in the same situation.

We recognize that making an adoption plan for your child is not an easy decision. It is one that often puts birth mothers on a rollercoaster of emotions for years after giving birth. Knowing your child is in a good place, however, can make all the difference in your grieving process. Seeing photo updates as your child grows can help you rest easy, knowing you made a positive, loving decision for her to have an amazing life.

If and when you are ready to talk about your options, reach out to Adoptions With Love. There is zero risk, zero pressure, and zero fees in speaking with our social workers. Contact us today for help as you navigate this challenging situation. We can help you come out of this on the other side, better and stronger than ever.

Call us confidentially at 800-722-7731.  
Or, [visit us online](#) to contact our agency now.



## Contact Us Today

AWL offers free services for pregnant college students. If you would like to learn more about adoption, we are here for you.