



## **What are the Parenting Options for Your Child?**

When you are pregnant, it is important for you and your child's birthfather to consider the parenting options that are available for your child. You each have legal rights and responsibilities no matter what parenting option you choose. There is no "right" and "wrong" decision; there is only the decision that is best for you and your child given where you are in your life right now.

When considering the parenting options available to you, you will probably experience emotional ups and downs. You may feel lonely, scared, overwhelmed, guilty, confused or anxious. You may find it helpful to seek counseling or an appropriate support group during your decision-making process or afterwards. Bright Futures does not charge pregnant women or couples for counseling or support regardless of the parenting option they choose.

We hope that the alternatives described below will help you begin thinking about the parenting decision and help you make a decision that will be best for you and your child.

### **Parenting Your Child:**

A decision to parent your child involves a commitment to providing a permanent, loving and capable home for your baby, now and for many years to come. A decision to parent your child involves considering where you will live, who will help with financial support, medical care, emotional support, advice on child care and child development, babysitting and day care, now and in the future as your baby becomes a toddler, preschooler, child, teenager and young adult. A decision to parent your child involves planning for your future and your child's future. You will need to consider how parenting a child will affect your ability to complete your education, your ability to work full or part-time, your social life, and your personal time.

State and federally funded programs may be available to assist you with meeting your housing, medical and food needs for you and your baby if you are a single parent or a low-income family.

**5 Broadview Street, Acton, MA 01720, 978-263-5400 (phone),  
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### **Adoption:**

A decision to have someone else parent your child through adoption is another way to provide a permanent, loving and capable home for your baby. In Massachusetts and in most other states, adoptive parents are screened by licensed adoption agencies or social workers to determine if they are capable of parenting a child and if they can provide an emotionally and financially stable environment for the child. Adoptive parents who have "qualified" to adopt a child often prepare a letter to birth parents with pictures and information about themselves that you can read to see for yourself what type of parents and what type of home the adoptive parents could offer your child. Adoption agencies have different ways of working with pregnant women and couples and you may feel comfortable with one agency and uncomfortable with another. An adoption agency should treat you with kindness and respect, should involve you in selecting the adoptive parents, and should encourage you to be involved in creating an adoption plan that is right for you and your child.

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