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#### MY PARENTING PLEDGE

#### **About the Organization**

Education for Successful Parenting (ESP) is a nonprofit organization launched in 2005 to offer pre-parenting education to teenagers and young adults. In addition, ESP offers educational programs for parents of teens, pregnant and parenting teens, foster youth and caregivers, and health and social work professionals.

#### About the Founder and Author

Ms. Randi Rubenstein founded Education for Successful Parenting (ESP) to bring a blend of health and planning perspectives to pre-parenting education. Prior to ESP, she had senior-level roles in several health research and education organizations. Ms. Rubenstein has a Masters of Science degree in Public Health from UCLA. It was her experiences as a foster and adoptive parent that inspired Ms. Rubenstein to assist adolescents in life-planning, enabling them to create stronger foundations and healthier beginnings for all children and families.

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## THE DREAM OF FAMILY

# 1. Importance

In taking charge of our lives, we make choices every day about what is important to us. Let's look at your overall life priorities, and then decide how parenting fits into your life.

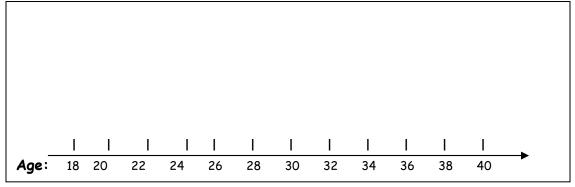
# a. Priorities - Here is how I rate these goals and priorities for me:

1 = Super Important, 2 = Would be Nice, X = Not a Priority for Me

 Finish High School
Finish College or Trade School
 Get a job that I like / pays well:
 Buy my dream car:
 Live in a place of my own
 Kick back with friends
Flirt and date before I settle down
 Travel - places I'd like to travel to:
 Save up some money
 Sleep in late on weekends
 Help take care of my parents and family members
 Enjoy the freedom of not having to answer to anyone
 Get married
 Have a pet:
 Parent a child
 Other goal:
 Other goal:

# The timeline I imagine for accomplishing my goals:

(Write your #1 goals on the timeline, over the age when you hope to accomplish them)



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# 5. Timing and health

## Here are the facts:

- Being a parent is an enormous responsibility 24-hours a day, 7-days a week
- Teen parents and their children have more health and life challenges
- Prenatal exposures to alcohol, drugs, and tobacco can cause permanent damage
- Early prenatal medical care and good nutrition can prevent infant health problems
- Because many pregnancies are unplanned, it is important for both the future mother and father to develop a healthy lifestyle throughout their child-bearing years.

Planning and preparing ahead of time will give my future child the best start in life. Here is what I plan for these specific activities:

Yes	Maybe	No	
			I plan to postpone pregnancy until I am self-sufficient and can take care of myself.
			I plan to <b>avoid risky behaviors</b> that could lead to an unintended pregnancy.
			I plan to <b>avoid illegal activities and incarceration</b> , making me unavailable for parenting my child.
			For Females:
			I plan to <b>not smoke cigarettes</b> , before and during the pregnancy.
			I plan to <b>not drink alcohol</b> if possibly pregnant and while pregnant.
			I plan to <b>not take illegal or street drugs</b> , before and during pregnancy.
			I plan to take daily multivitamins with folic acid supplements, before and during pregnancy, to prevent neural tube defects.
			I plan to <b>avoid obesity</b> to prevent medical complications during pregnancy.
			I plan to <b>visit a doctor</b> for preconception and prenatal health advice.
			For Males:
			I plan to not pressure anyone I date into drinking or doing drugs.
			I plan to support a low-stress lifestyle for my partner, free of abuse.
			I plan to <b>not smoke cigarettes during the pregnancy</b> to prevent exposure to second-hand smoke.

#### The "Safe Haven" Laws

What can you do if you and your partner suddenly find yourselves with an unplanned pregnancy? Unfortunately, without a plan, some new parents panic and abandon their newborn baby. To avoid these tragedies, most states now have "safe haven" laws, allowing distressed new parents to surrender their baby to a safe place, like a hospital emergency room or fire department, without legal penalty.

There are many options available to you, and many community health and financial resources to assist you. One well-known organization that works to prevent the abandonment of babies is the National Safe Haven Alliance. If you are overwhelmed and scared about what to do, you can call their toll-free crisis line any time (1-888-510-BABY). It's totally confidential.

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# 7. Protect

In the United States, our children are at much greater risk of dying due to accidents and homicides than children in other industrialized countries. The leading causes of accidental deaths are: motor vehicle accidents, drowning, burns, guns, and suffocation. A leading childhood illness, asthma, is affected by exposure to secondhand smoke. Our rates of child abuse are also extremely high compared to other nations. All these conditions are preventable!

Need

Yes Maybe No To protect my child's health and safety, I plan to: More Info

162	Maybe	140	to protect my child's hearth and safety, I plan to:	MOLE THIS
			Properly secure my child with a car seat or seatbelt in a car	
			Supervise my child while near water and while swimming	
			Keep plastic bags and curtain cords out of infant/toddler reach	
			Store medicines out of the reach of small children	
			Store poisonous household cleaners and insecticides safely	
			Keep guns out of our home or stored in a locked cabinet	
			Have smoke detectors in the home	
			Identify and remove hazards from our home	
			Get help for any addictions that I may have	
			Be sober while "on duty" caring for my child	
			Control my anger or get help with anger management	
			Refrain from smoking cigarettes around my children	
			Learn CPR and First Aid	
			Only leave my child in the care of trusted adults	
			Never leave my child under age 9 alone at home or in a car	
			Arrange for adequate supervision of my child at all times	

# Applying my protective skills in real-life situations

Case 1 - You are bathing Jan, your 2-year old, in the bathtub. The doorbell rings. You think it could be a delivery of an important package you've been waiting for. What should you do?

Case 2 - Your partner gets angry easily. This morning your baby was crying and your partner started yelling and then hit Baby Zoey. What would you do?

Case 3 - Your 4-year old child, Riley, is asking whether he can stop using a car seat and ride in the car with just a seatbelt like a big kid. How will you decide if that's OK?

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