

Youth in Washington state foster care



- **Childproof your home.**
 - > Childproofing the home where your child will live helps reduce risks of choking, poisoning, burns, falls and furniture tip-overs. For simple safety tips go to: www.safekids.org.
- **Be prepared for the baby.**
 - > A new baby is life-changing and you can never be fully prepared. A few things you can do before the baby comes include:
 - Pack a bag for the hospital in case your baby comes early.
 - Wash all your baby's clothes, bedding and blankets.
 - Purchase or obtain a car seat and make sure you know how to correctly install it (many local fire departments will help install the car seat free of charge).
 - Set up interviews with pediatricians and be sure to discuss immunizations, breastfeeding and any other questions you have about your baby's care.
- **Know your medical background.**
 - > Do some research and talk with your social worker and family members about medical history of your mom and dad and other relatives. Doctors look most closely at the medical history of siblings, parents and children. Your medical history, including miscarriages, abortions and births, is also important in terms of knowing how well you may cope with your current pregnancy.
- **Breastfeeding and its benefits.**
 - > Breastfeeding is best for your baby to provide the nutrition and immunities for healthy development. The Washington State Department of Health has information about breastfeeding:
 - www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/WIC/BreastfeedingSupport.aspx
 - > Within Reach has information about breastfeeding and nutrition for your baby:
 - www.washingteehelp.com/pregnancy/breastfeeding
- **Eat** five or six small meals a day, eat fruit or vegetables with each meal, and drink milk.
- **Take** a prenatal vitamin and iron. Ask your OB-GYN or midwife which ones are best for you.
- **Drink** plenty of fluids – at least eight to 10 glasses of caffeine-free drinks a day.
- **Don't smoke** or let anyone else smoke around you or your baby.
- **Don't drink** alcohol or use any street drugs, or prescriptions that have not been prescribed to you by your doctor. Consult with your OB-GYN or midwife before taking any prescribed medications, over-the-counter medications or herbal remedies.
- **Exercise** at least 15 minutes a day but don't get overheated.
- **Get** plenty of sleep – at least eight hours per night.
- **Wear** comfortable shoes and put your feet up throughout the day to keep your feet and legs from swelling.
- **Wear** a seatbelt. Wear the shoulder strap across your collar bone and the lap belt under your belly, across your hips.
- **Play** with and talk to your baby! That is how they learn. You are their best and favorite toy.
- **Ask for HELP** because babies do not come with instructions.

- **Take care of yourself** so you can take care of your baby.
- **Keep** doctor appointments for yourself and your baby.
- **Read about Safe Sleeping Environments** (bedding, animals, crib, smoking, co-sleeping).
- Understand the purpose of a parenting plan because babies **NEED** both parents, unless seeing or being with a parent is not safe. Find a way to keep track of all the appointments for you and your baby. (You may wish to use the planner\calendar on your cell phone).