To Increase Knowledge and Resources
A parenting course will help you become more knowledgeable about child development and raising children. It teaches you how to find information in your community, i.e. support groups, classes, activities for children, magazines, websites, etc.

To Cope in a Changing World
There are more experiences and opportunities for children:
- Technology changes; it teaches and entertains children.
- Parents need to ensure safety when using technology.
- Toys and activities are plentiful – parents need to find balance
Influences on children: Parenting education teaches people how to get through difficult times and possibly avoid some tough situations altogether.

To Build a Strong Society
1. Families First:
   - Families are the building blocks of society.
   - Family problems can spread through the community.
   - Our society has to spend time, energy and money in productive ways that help families.
2. Solutions:
   - Laws, programs resources are available.
   - Healthy families are created through parenting education.

To Gain the Rewards of Parenting
a. A youthful perspective (seeing everything through your child’s eyes)
b. A loving bond with a child
c. Family continuation
d. Parents learn more about themselves through their children
e. Children are a source of pride

To Meet Parenting Responsibilities
1. Nurturing children:
   a. Encourage growth and development
   b. Ensure every child reaches their potential
   c. Meet needs, give good care
   d. Children feel content, loved and secure
2. Protecting children:
   a. Learning safety principles and putting them into action
3. Teaching children:
   a. Promote brain development
   b. Provide opportunities to learn
4. Guiding children:
   a. Teaching values
   b. Your child becomes the kind of person people like to be around
Chapter 2: Developing Parenting Skills

1. **Patience**
   - being even-tempered, focusing on what is really important in life, valuing others enough to do what others want and need some of the time.
   - children need parents who are patient enough to let them explore and make mistakes.

   **Building patience:**
   - pay attention to your actions
   - count to ten
   - try a different approach
   - don’t push yourself or others needlessly

2. **Confidence**
   - believing in yourself, having faith in your abilities, having the courage to act. People who lack confidence are often afraid to make decisions.

   **Building confidence:**
   - realize that you will never be successful unless you try
   - identify your strengths and your past successes
   - talk with friends and relatives about any self-doubts and setbacks you might have
   - increase your knowledge
   - help build the confidence of others

3. **Taking A Realistic Approach**
   - have reasonable expectations for your children
   - have reasonable expectations for yourself and your partner
   - live by your own standards rather than those of others
   - understand and accept truths about children

   **Aiming for a Realistic Attitude**
   - look for the facts and then act accordingly
   - gather reliable information
   - ask questions if you need to

4. **Resourcefulness**
   - resources can be ideas, time, money, skills, possessions, and other people.
   - resourceful parents recognize what is useful to them and they put those things to work.

   **Becoming Resourceful**
   - learn to recognize your resources and how you can use them

5. **A Sense of Humour**
   - humour can ease a tense situation
   - children need to feel free to express themselves and to risk making mistakes. A light-hearted atmosphere makes that easier for them.
   - parents who model humour help children gain a healthy, balanced and positive perspective on life.
   - laughter is good for your health

   **Developing Your Sense of Humour**
   - you can make fun of yourself, but never of another person, especially a child
   - children are deeply hurt when someone laughs at them, so parents must use humour carefully
   - wise parents make sure that their sense of humour doesn’t hurt their children
Unit 1: Preparation for Parenthood

6. Sensitivity
   - sensitive parents try to see through a child’s eyes before they react.
   - sensitive parents know how their own actions affect a child's feelings
   - they guide children with a firm hand, yet preserve the child’s sense of self-worth
   - consider the situation as well as the child’s age, personality, needs and abilities.

   Developing Sensitivity
   - listen to what you say and how you say it.
   - think about why a person is saying or doing something
   - develop caring mannerisms (e.g. listen before you speak, look people in the eye, etc)

7. Working as a Team
   - parenting is a team effort that begins with the family and extends to those who provide support (e.g. doctor, teacher, child-care provider)

   Becoming a Team Player
   - parents must find ways to work well together and with others
   - learning teamwork takes effort and practice
   - learning teamwork can help prepare you to work well with everyone who may support and advise you as a parent

How do we learn these skills?

1. Learning from others
   - many positive parenting skills can be learned from parents and other significant adults in a person’s life
   - not all people parent the same way, and that doesn’t make one way right and another way wrong
   - parenting magazines, websites and books are good sources of information

2. Learning through experience
   - babysitting, volunteering, helping friends, neighbours and family members with their children are experiences that can teach you about parenting
   - the more you learn ahead of time, the easier it will be to make decisions with your own children

3. Learning in the classroom
   - parenting courses are very popular and easily available

4. Learning by observation
   - by watching adults interact with children, you see both positive and negative examples of parenting in action.
   - children will tell you a lot about themselves while you are observing them, without even realizing it.
Influences on Parenting

The kind of person that you are and the experiences that you have will help shape the parent that you become.

**Personal influences**

- **personality**: your special blend of intellectual, emotional, and social traits; has a strong impact on children; as you get older you can control how your personality develops and affects your family

- **feelings about children**: your beliefs about children and childhood, and how children should spend their early years

- **parenting values**: what you think is most important for parenting: relationships, financial security, education, etc

- **parenting goals**: having clear goals for you and your children can help keep people on track; they force you to think about where you’re headed and what steps are needed to get there

**Outside influences**

- **families and culture**: culture is linked to locations, religions, and ethnic heritage; the actions of a parent are rooted in cultural experience; values and beliefs are also a part of culture; parents with different cultures may have different expectations, different approaches to setting rules, different social behaviours

- **economic situation**: economic conditions affect parents and children; people who have a good job and learn to manage their money well are less likely to have financial problems, which makes positive parenting easier; economic changes can affect families if they are not prepared for emergencies.

- **social policies**: protective laws are in place to ensure that parents meet their responsibilities; laws also cover areas such as domestic relations and violence, divorce, and child care

- **parental roles**: parenting roles used to be divided by gender (male/female); now parents share work and child-care responsibilities in a way that works best for their family.
Unit 1: Preparation for Parenthood

Parenting Styles

Authoritarian (Brick Wall or Rock): This parenting style is rigid, with many rules. It relies heavily on reward and punishment. While it might teach children what to think, it does not teach them how to think.

Children raised with this style of parenting may feel rejected by their parents. Often they have problems socially and emotionally due to lack of flexibility in their childhood. Punishment can sometimes turn to abuse.

Permissive (Jellyfish or Marshmallow): When parents use the jelly fish style of parenting, they offer no real structure to children. They do not provide specific guidelines for conduct and tend not to address bad behavior with appropriate consequences. These parents do not want to be seen as the “bad guy”.

Children raised with this style of parenting tend to be impulsive, irresponsible, and immature. They have not been taught to consider how their actions affect others.

Authoritative (Backbone or Tennis Ball): This style of parenting combines flexibility with structure. It requires parents to set reasonable guidelines for behavior while also giving age-appropriate decision-making and responsibility to the child. Consequences for poor behavior are consistent, predictable and fair.

Children raised with this style of parenting tend to be better adjusted socially and emotionally, and have a better self-concept.

Making it work

- choose a style that feels right for you
- consider the child’s personality
- use each style in moderation
- identify areas where two parents’ styles conflict
- parenting styles can be blended, but being consistent and predictable is important so that children aren’t confused.
Unit 1: Preparation for Parenthood

Chapter 4: Changing Roles of Parents

PARENTING IN DIFFERENT FAMILY TYPES
The most important role of a parent is to lead the family. There are different forms of families:
1. Nuclear: a family with a husband, wife, and one or more biological or adopted children.
2. Single-parent: one or more children live in a household headed by one parent.
3. Blended: a couple and one or more children from a previous relationship and/or from the present relationship.
4. Foster: parents in a foster family care for children on a temporary basis when children cannot live with their parents.
5. Adoptive: a family that includes children who have become a permanent part of the family through legal processes.

In any family, good parents use the following skills:
1. Effective communication: parents provide a variety of ways for family members to communicate with each other.
2. Diplomacy: using tact and skill in dealing with others, showing respect, listening and thinking before speaking, choosing words that won’t be offensive.
3. Decision-making skills: settling issues with skill and confidence, recognizing the best options, willing to take action.

PROVIDING FOR A FAMILY
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Needs maintains that basic needs must be met before higher-level needs can be reached. He believed that certain needs must be met before people can deal with other needs. Parents can help their children become adults who feel successful, content, optimistic and enthusiastic and reach their full potential.

ACTUALIZATION
Fulfillment Reaching potential
Feeling of success in relationships, career and community involvement

ESTEEM
Self-respect Self-esteem Achievement
Confidence Appreciation

SOCIAL
Love Affection Belonging

SAFETY
Freedom from bodily harm Psychological security

PHYSICAL
Food Clothing Shelter
Unit 1: Preparation for Parenthood

Chapter 5: Personal Readiness

THE WRONG REASONS FOR BECOMING A PARENT
1. To prove adulthood.
2. To please someone else.
3. For emotional benefits.
4. For respect and status.
5. To escape a bad situation.
6. Because society expects it.
7. To improve a troubled relationship.
8. To be like “everyone else”.

Having children for these reasons isn’t fair to the parent, the child or to society. Becoming a parent because you truly want to raise a child is the only good reason. However, you must also be ready for the responsibility.

Choosing Abstinence: Refraining from sexual intercourse means you don’t need to worry about unplanned pregnancy. Teens who practice abstinence can feel good about themselves because their actions show that they respect themselves and others. People who let their values guide their actions control the direction of their lives.

READINESS MATTERS: How do you know if you are ready to become a parent?
1. **Maturity:**
   a. Psychological maturity: your behaviour and attitudes show that your mind and emotions are well developed.
   b. Physical maturity: a woman’s body must reach the proper stage of physical growth and development in order to handle a pregnancy.

2. **Health:** Both parents should be in good physical health.
   This means
   a. a nutritious diet,
   b. enough sleep
   c. regular medical check-ups
   d. considering any medical conditions that might affect the pregnancy
   e. considering any disorders that might be inherited
   f. making sure that the mother’s immunizations are up to date

3. **The condition of the relationship:**
   Before having children, couples need to be sure that their commitment to each other is firm. This forms a strong foundation for building a family. Children will benefit from the stability of a good marriage.

4. **Lifestyle considerations:**
   a. Think seriously about how your lifestyle will change.
   b. What interests and activities are you willing to put off in order to concentrate on raising a child?
   c. Do you need more time for personal growth before having children?
   d. Do you need more time to explore your interests and the world before you begin raising a family?
5. **Considering goals**: Goals often change with the responsibility of raising children.
   a. Educational goals
   b. Career goals
   c. Financial goals

6. **Financial considerations**:
   a. A steady source of income
   b. Costs to consider from pregnancy, birth and parental leave
   c. Extended health care coverage
   d. Child care costs
   e. Will a larger living space be needed?
REASONS FOR TEEN PREGNANCY: too often, some teens act against their better judgment and give in to the pressures that can lead to teen pregnancy.

Internal Influences:

Sexual Feelings: Puberty results in sexual feelings that teens don’t know how to manage.

Reluctance to Talk: Teens are often uncomfortable talking about serious subjects. Lacking reliable information about sex and acting on misinformation can result in pregnancy.

Desire for Love and Attention: Some teens become intentionally become pregnant in order to satisfy needs for love and attention.

External Influences:

Societal Pressures: Teens live in a society that often seems to promote sexual activity. Sex is associated with pleasure, prestige and romance, but rarely with responsibility and the long-term commitment of marriage.

Pressure from Peers: Many teens feel pressured by their peers to have sex. Young men think it will make them more mature. But maturity means taking responsibility, and responsible people care about what happens to others. A mature male teen will not want to have children he can’t support. Some female teens may begin to think that early motherhood is a typical way of life, but most recognize that later parenthood results in a more fulfilling life for a mother and her children.

Pressure from Partners: Canadian statistics show that sexually active teens are not the majority. The pressure from partners may include arguments such as “everyone is doing it”, “it is childish to say no”, and “you would if you loved me”. None of these arguments is valid, and shows a lack of love and respect for the other person. All teens need to think ahead about how to say no effectively.

EFFECTS OF TEEN PREGNANCY

Effects on Teen Parents

Medical Problems: Young females are not physically mature enough to give birth. They are a high-risk group because of the complications that can occur and they require more prenatal care.

Financial Responsibility: Both teen parents are legally responsible for providing financial support until a child is 18. Some teens receive support from their families, but many teen mothers quickly fall into poverty if their families are unable or unwilling to support them. Teen fathers are rarely prepared to support a child financially.

Education and Job Concerns: Many female teens drop out of high school when they have a child, and almost half never earn a high school diploma. They need to get a job, but the jobs they can get don’t cover expenses, including child care. Male teens often get a full-time job to help support the child and don’t finish high school. They soon discover how important education and training are for a future, but the challenge to get these becomes more difficult.
EFFECTS ON THE CHILDREN

Many children of teens are born premature, or suffer from low birth weight which can result in medical problems. Since teen parents lack the emotional maturity to deal with the stress of parenting, their children are more likely to be neglected, abandoned or abused. Children of teens are more likely to become sexually active at a young age, and the cycle of teen pregnancy continues.

EFFECTS ON THE FAMILIES

Teen parents often live with their own parents. They require help providing the right food, health care, clothing, a home, stimulation, protection and guidance. This can cause strain in the parent and teen’s relationship, especially if the teen is not living up to his or her responsibilities.

IMPACT ON SOCIETY

Millions of dollars are spent on programs and organizations to help and support teen parents. Lost potential is a great cost to society. Many teens never regain the opportunity to develop their minds and skills in ways that would have been good for them and for society.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT (complete using textbook)

1. ________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

4. ________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________

5. ________________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________