

Some women realise quickly that they are leaning towards a termination. Others realise they're leaning towards continuing the pregnancy. Sometimes they want to weigh up whether they're ready to parent – even when it's not their first time. Each pregnancy in your life will have a different set of circumstances. Factors like your age, financial situation, supports and physical and mental health will all differ at various stages in your life. All of this will affect your decision about if and when to parent.

- Shock
- Disbelief
- Panic
- Concern or worry
- Fear
- Excitement
- Exploring fantasies of parenting associated with your hopes, dreams and goals
- Exploring realities of parenting associated with your hopes, dreams and goals
- Practical decision-making (the reality)
- Coming down to earth (reconciled to the decision)
- Moving on after the decision is made.

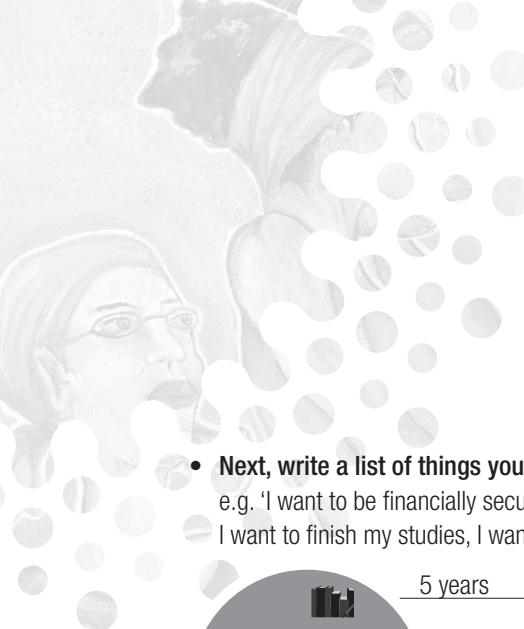
The following activities will help you look at the 'hopes' and 'realities' of your decision on whether to become a parent at this time. You can complete them on your own or share them with a trusted friend, partner, family member or support worker. A diary can also be used to keep a record of how you came to your decision.

These activities work well with our *Pregnancy and Parenting Resources* information sheet.

- **Write a list of things you value in your life at the moment**
e.g. 'I like having my independence, going out with my friends, having money to spend on myself, babysitting friends' children, looking after my dog'



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- **Next, write a list of things you want in the future – in 5 and 10 year sections**

e.g. 'I want to be financially secure, I want to travel overseas,
I want to finish my studies, I want to have children before I'm 30'



5 years

10 years

- **Think about what your lists tell you about yourself right now.** Is being independent something I really enjoy? How important are my goals? Do I think I can reach them? How will I feel if I don't reach them? Has the unplanned pregnancy changed any of them?

Exploring the fantasies of your heart – building a picture

- Now put aside any fears, worries or questions – let your heart speak. Allow yourself to explore the fantasies of your heart – building a picture of an ideal world (we'll get to the 'reality' world later). Write down what your heart is telling you.

- If your heart is saying that you want to become a mother, think about all the good things (leave the practical, hard stuff to later). Allow yourself to build a picture of what life would be like as a mother. Write down how you see yourself and the child in 1 year or in 5 years time?

- How do you feel?

- If your heart is saying that you don't want to become a mother at this stage in your life, allow yourself to explore that. Write down what are the good things about your life now? What freedoms do you enjoy and value?

- How do you feel?

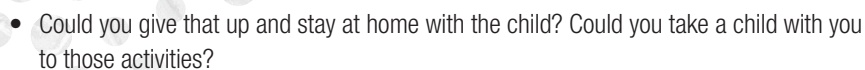
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More questions – for first-time parents²

- What do you do on an average weekend? What do you look forward to?

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- If you are still at school, can you continue? If you are working, when will you be able to return? Who will take care of your newborn? Who would take care of your child if you get sick?

- Where would you live? Is it a reasonable setting to bring up a child? If not, are there options for you to move?

- Is he involved in your life? If so, how do you want him involved?

- Does he want to be a father to his child?

- Does he have children already – how many?. If so, does he spend time with them – how often?

- Does he provide financial support for his children – how much?

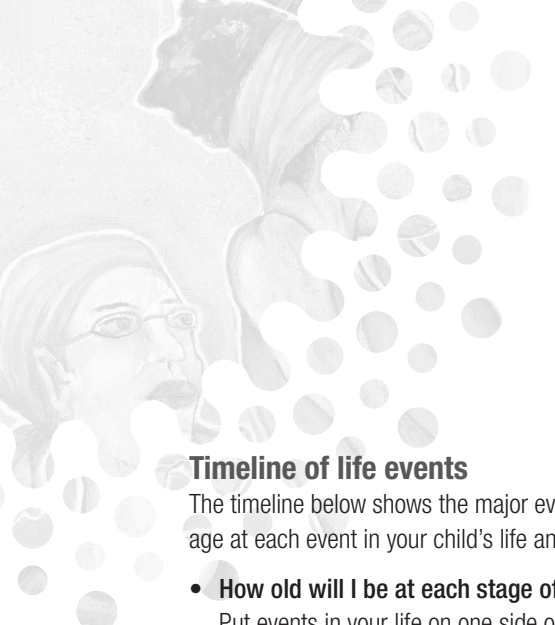
- Do you expect him to be involved in raising your child – does he want to?

- Do you trust him to be involved in taking care of your child?

- If he is not involved, how do you feel about being a single parent?

Notes 

PAS – Considering having your first child? Hopes & realities – February 2011 D10-147



Timeline of life events

The timeline below shows the major events in your life and the age at each event in your child's life and yours.

- **How old will I be at each stage of my child's life?**
Put events in your life on one side of the timeline and your child's on the other.

- How old will I be at each stage of my child's life?

18 years
(job and/or TAFE/University)

16-18 years
(VCE)

12-13 years
(teenager and high school)

6-11 years
(school/after school activities)

4-5 years
(pre-school/school)

2-3 years
(toilet training)

12-14 months
(walking and talking)

6-9 months
(can crawl)

me child

- 1 Activities adapted from Council of Single Mothers and their Children Inc. (CSMC), 'Making a Decision Exercises', 'Life with Baby: young mums tell', Carlton South, 2007, pp.19–22.
- 2 Adapted with permission from 'Activity 4: Having a baby/Being a parent', Johnston, Margaret R, 'Pregnancy Options Workbook', Ferre Institute, New York, USA, <<http://www.pregnancyoptions.info>>, viewed 7 June 2010.

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