

**Reality Matters: Becoming an Adult: Teacher’s Guide**

**Grade Level:** 9-12  
**Curriculum Focus:** Health  
**Lesson Duration:** Two to three class periods

**Program Description**

Adulthood is full of responsibilities, including having children. The program features what’s involved in bearing and rearing a child. When teens have babies, they can’t fulfill many of their responsibilities because it’s difficult to be an adult when they’re still growing up. Viewers explore how adolescence is the entry into adulthood, with a focus on the pitfalls for those who try to grow up too fast.

**Discussion Questions**

**Before watching the video**

- What does it mean to become an adult?
- What responsibilities will you have as an adult that you don’t have now?
- What are your plans for the future, and how will you reach your planned goals?

**After watching the video**

- What are life-changing events that occur as you enter adulthood? (continuing education, becoming a parent, beginning a career)
- What are some risks to having a healthy baby? (smoking, drinking alcohol, being overweight, having diabetes, improper nutrition)
- What consequences can result if a mother isn’t conscientious during pregnancy? (low birth weight, premature birth, birth defects)
- What is a doula? (see “Vocabulary”)
- What are some advantages and disadvantages to having a part-time job while in school? (Answers will vary.)
- How does becoming an adult mean taking responsibility for others? (Answers will vary.)
Lesson Plan

**Student Objectives**

- Explore options available to them as they become adults.
- Identify obstacles that may affect future plans.
- Devise personal plans for the future, complete with strategies for success.

**Materials**

- Computer with Internet access
- Library or media center resources

**Procedures**

1. Do a bit of brainstorming to get students thinking about their futures and the kinds of real-life decisions they’ll soon face. Where would students like to be in their lives at age 22? What kinds of jobs would they like to have? Do they plan to go to college? Would they like to become parents? Where would students like to be in their lives when they are 30 years old?

2. Ask each student to write down his or her goals for adulthood. Students should consider educational options, career choices, health, marriage, and parenthood, among other things. Explain that they will plot a course for the future. This course will be a “road map” to help them reach their desired life goals. Included in each roadmap should be the following:
   - Specific plans for the future, such as career choices and parenthood
   - Strategies to reach the goals, such as education, being secure financially, or enlisting in military service
   - Obstacles that could interfere with reaching the goals, such as illness, unplanned pregnancy, or job loss
   - Means of avoiding obstacles or coping with setbacks
   - A brief description of the type of person they want to be or how they’d like to be perceived by others

3. These resources can help students as they make their plans:
   - “Becoming an Adult: Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities,” from the Chicago Bar Association
   - Better Health Channel’s Life Events page
   - InteliHealth: Risks for Pregnant Teens
   - Kids Help Phone: Becoming a Young Adult

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- “Next Step” Magazine online
  http://www.nextstepmagazine.com/NSMPages/home.aspx

- TeensHealth: Having a Healthy Pregnancy
  http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/emotions/pregnancy.html

- U.S. Food and Drug Administration: Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby

- Women’s Health Channel: Teen Pregnancy
  http://www.womenshealthchannel.com/teenpregnancy/index.shtml

- Youth Corner, from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration
  http://www.doleta.gov/youth_services/yocorner/index.cfm

**Assessment**

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students’ work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students were highly engaged in class discussions and devised well-researched, fully developed road maps.

- **2 points:** Students participated in class discussions and devised adequate road maps.

- **1 point:** Students participated minimally in class discussions and developed cursory road maps.

**Vocabulary**

doula
*Definition:* A birth attendant who provides informational and emotional support to an expecting mother
*Context:* A doula helped Jen understand her nutritional and physical needs during pregnancy.

folic acid
*Definition:* A nutritional supplement that can help prevent spina bifida if taken before and during pregnancy
*Context:* Women should take a vitamin containing 400 micrograms of folic acid daily to help prevent spina bifida, according to the Spina Bifida Association of America.

spina bifida
*Definition:* A birth defect in which the spine fails to close properly around the spinal cord during the first month of pregnancy
*Context:* Getting the proper amount of folic acid prevents spina bifida and the complications it can cause, such as paralysis, learning problems, and the accumulation of fluid on the brain.
type 2 diabetes

*Definition:* Disease in which the body can no longer process sugar, which fuels the body’s cells; also called adult onset diabetes.

*Context:* Left untreated, type 2 diabetes can lead to eye, kidney, nerve, or heart damage.

**Academic Standards**

**National Academy of Sciences**

The National Science Education Standards provide guidelines for teaching science as well as a coherent vision of what it means to be scientifically literate for students in grades K-12. To view the standards, visit [http://books.nap.edu](http://books.nap.edu).

This lesson plan addresses the following science standard:

- Science in Personal and Social Perspectives: Personal and community health

**Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)**

McREL’s Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit [http://www.mcrel.org/](http://www.mcrel.org/).

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Language Arts—Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media; Reading: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of informational texts

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**Support Materials**

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- [http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html](http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html)

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**DVD Content**

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.
How To Use the DVD

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

*Play Video* — This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

*Video Index* — Here the video is divided into four parts (see below), indicated by video thumbnail icons. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. Brief descriptions and total running times are noted for each part. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

*Curriculum Units* — These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher’s Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

*Standards Link* — Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

*Teacher Resources* — This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

**Video Index**

I. Parenthood (2 min.)

The challenges of being a parent are introduced. Young mothers and doctors discuss the spectrum of responsibilities that young adults need to consider before deciding to parent a child.

II. A Good Beginning (9 min.)

This segment on preventable birth defects explores the connection between a healthy baby and a mother with healthy habits. A mother’s responsibility to learn about infant care is also discussed.

III. Increasing Responsibilities (6 min.)

The progression from childhood to adulthood and its responsibilities is explored in this segment. The focus is on balancing the desire for freedom and independence with earning money and other responsibilities.

IV. Reaching Out (4 min.)

This segment examines another aspect of adulthood — becoming responsible for more than ourselves and taking an active role in our communities. A teen who became involved in suicide prevention is profiled.
Curriculum Units

1. Responsibilities During Pregnancy

Pre-viewing question
Q: What’s the connection between becoming an adult and being a parent?
A: Answers will vary. Revisit this question after viewing the segment.

Post-viewing question
Q: Why is it important for mothers to take care of their own health during pregnancy?
A: A baby’s health depends greatly on how well the mother takes care of herself. Most mental and physical problems for babies occur in the first three months of pregnancy.

2. Smoking’s Impact on a Baby

Pre-viewing question
Q: Do you think smoking during pregnancy affects the baby
A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question
Q: What negative effects can smoking during pregnancy have on a child??
A: Babies of mothers who smoke are likely to have low birth weight, but future metabolic problems are the greater concern. When a mother smokes, the baby is four times more likely to get Type II Diabetes. A child’s chance of becoming obese is 40 percent higher when the mother smoked during pregnancy.

3. Alcohol’s Impact on a Baby

Pre-viewing question
Q: Does drinking during pregnancy affect the baby?
A: Answers will vary, but most students should know that drinking during pregnancy is risky.

Post-viewing question
Q: What are the health risks to the baby when the mother drinks during pregnancy?
A: One of the biggest risks is related to brain development. Children whose mothers drank are more likely to have mental defects, including problems with concentration, reasoning, behavior, and learning ability. Drinking during pregnancy can also cause miscarriages and stillborn babies.

4. A Mother’s Weight and Her Baby

Pre-viewing question
Q: How does a mother’s weight during pregnancy affect her baby?
A: Answers will vary, but students may think that a heavy mother would have a large baby. Use their answers as an introduction to this section.

Post-viewing question
Q: How is an unborn baby affected by a mother who is overweight?
A: Children born to mothers who are overweight tend to be premature and suffer from low birth weight.
5. Other Health Risks for a Baby

Pre-viewing question
Q: What is diabetes?
A: Students’ knowledge will vary, but most students should know that diabetes is a disease that requires life-long treatment.

Post-viewing question
Q: What advice does Dr. Lindsey give?
A: Most birth defects occur during the first three months of pregnancy, when the organs are first developing. Dr. Lindsey advises women to plan before they get pregnant and to check the general state of their health.

6. Spina Bifida

Pre-viewing question
Q: Do you know anyone who has spina bifida?
A: Answers will vary. Medical science has allowed many children born with this birth defect to live almost normal lives, so there may be students in your school with a shunt.

Post-viewing question
Q: What causes spina bifida?
A: Spina bifida is a neural tube defect. It occurs in the first few weeks of pregnancy and is linked to a deficiency of folic acid in the mother’s diet. A healthy diet with folic acid supplements is recommended for all women who have a chance of becoming pregnant. By the time a woman knows that she is pregnant, it is usually too late to prevent problems.

7. Learning To Be a Parent

Pre-viewing question
Q: Where can a young mother learn how to take care of herself and her baby?
A: Answers will vary, but many students will only know about doctors.

Post-viewing question
Q: What are doulas?
A: Doula is Greek for birth attendant. These health care professionals work with pregnant women, teaching them about nutrition and other self-care issues during pregnancy, as well as how to care for infants.

8. Becoming Independent

Pre-viewing question
Q: At what age do teens become independent of their parents?
A: Answers will vary and can lead to a lively discussion. You may want to record responses and continue the discussion after viewing the segment.
Post-viewing question
Q: How can teens demonstrate a readiness for more independence?
A: Examples given in the program include following rules, getting good grades, helping around the house, getting a job, and managing their own money. The general message was for teens to demonstrate that they have become responsible for their own behavior.

9. Losing Independence

Pre-viewing question
Q: What should parents do when their teen is “out of control”?
A: Answers will vary and can lead to a lively discussion. You may want to record responses and continue the discussion after viewing the segment.

Post-viewing question
Q: How did Abby demonstrate responsibility for her own behavior?
A: After going through the wilderness program, she quit using drugs. She worked at school, made new friends, and followed the rules set out by her family.

10. Benefits of Working

Pre-viewing question
Q: What motivates teens to get a part-time job?
A: Answers will vary, but many students will talk about wanting to buy things for themselves.

Post-viewing question
Q: Besides spending money, how do teens benefit from having a part-time job?
A: Teens learn to manage their money and sort out priorities when they take on the added responsibility of a job. It can help them develop time-management skills and learn to make better decisions. Some teens said it motivated them to do better in school, and one young man talked about how his part-time job helped him identify what he wanted to study in college.

11. Being Responsible for Others

Pre-viewing question
Q: At what age do you become responsible for other people?
A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question
Q: How did Rene demonstrate responsibility for her school and community?
A: Rene involved others in a support group that reached out beyond their friends. Group members actively looked for fellow students in need of friendship.

12. Helping Prevent Teen Suicides

Pre-viewing question
Q: Why might a teen commit suicide?
A: Answers will vary based on their experiences. After viewing the segment, review the reasons given by Rene.
**Post-viewing question**

Q: What did Rene do to help prevent suicides in her school?

A: When she or one of her friends noticed another student who looked sad or lonely, they talked to them. Rene wanted to make sure that they knew there were people who cared and would listen to their problems.