

## A Big Decision

**Directions** Two decisions are basic to becoming a parent, as this question illustrates: “Do I want to become a parent, and if so, when?” Read the passage below about parenting and answer the questions that follow. Then complete the Discovery activities.

Becoming a parent is a big decision, perhaps the biggest anyone can ever make. Some people feel sure all their lives that they want to have children, while others are just as sure that they do not. Many people waver on the subject for years. Even if they think they would like to have children, they just are not sure whether they are ready.

Although raising children can be incredibly rewarding, it is pointless to pretend that it does not involve sacrifice. Children demand massive amounts of time and energy, especially when they are young. Becoming a parent may mean that everything else in your life—career, friends, hobbies—has to come second, at least for a while. People who are working and raising children at the same time can feel torn between the conflicting demands of job and family.

Raising a family is also a major financial commitment. The basics—food, clothing, and medical care for the children—are only the beginning. Starting a family may mean needing a larger house or a second car. It may mean that one parent or the other has to give up work to care for the children or else pay for outside child-care arrangements that may leave parents and children little time to spend together.

Despite all its difficulties, many people do find parenting to be a wonderful and joyous experience, but it certainly is not a decision to be taken lightly. Before taking the plunge, it is worthwhile for potential parents to take a good hard look at themselves—mentally, emotionally, and financially—to be sure they are really ready.

1. The passage above describes some of the difficult aspects of parenting. What are some reasons for having children?

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2. Examine your own interest in children. Do you enjoy spending time with them? What do you like or dislike about it?

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**CHAPTER 12 Understanding Parenting (Continued)**

**Focus on *The Future***

3. In some schools, students are asked to take care of a pretend baby for a number of days. They might use a doll as though it were a real baby. What do you think the parent would discover? Give specific examples.

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4. What do you think children need most from parents? What can get in the way of providing that?

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5. What do you think young people should do in order to prepare themselves to be effective parents?

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6. What age do you think a person should be before becoming a parent? Explain your reasoning.

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**Discovery**

**A. Book Review** At the library, look up “parenting” or “parenthood.” Spend some time browsing through the books available. Choose one that you think is most likely to address what you would like to know about being a parent. Read this book and write a paragraph or two summing up the most important things that you learned from it.

**B. Interviews** Talk with someone who is a parent. Prepare questions to ask, aiming to learn about the positive and negative sides of parenting. Share what you learn in class.

## Guiding Children Effectively

**Directions** Guiding children’s behavior can be a challenge. What would you as the caregiver do to handle each of the situations below effectively?

1. Four-year-old Dominic accidentally spills his milk at lunch.

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2. While riding in the shopping cart, two-year-old Tessa keeps pulling items off the shelves. She screams when told “no.”

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3. Two-year-old Benjamin has uprooted several plants in his home.

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4. Three-year-old Angie keeps getting out of bed at night, wanting to play. She will not stay in her bed or go to sleep.

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5. Four-year-old Zane is coloring on the table instead of the paper with his crayons.

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