



Center for Human Dignity at Family Research Council

15 TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR CHILD'S MOTHER CHOOSE LIFE

Under current federal abortion law in the United States, a father has no legal ability to prevent his child's mother from undergoing an abortion if she chooses to do so. However, studies consistently show that mothers considering an abortion tend to factor their partner's wishes into their decision. Fathers of unexpected babies should not only verbalize their desire for the child to be born, but they should also actively and lovingly persuade the mother to protect the life of their unborn child from the evils of abortion.

THREE THINGS TO SAY

1. *"You are not alone. We will care for our child together."*

The mother of your child might be feeling scared, vulnerable, and even ashamed. She needs to hear that you will be there for her as she carries your baby in her womb for nine months and that you will be present as the child's father throughout his or her life (unless the baby is to be put up for adoption).

2. *"You're already a mom, and I'm already a dad—and that's awesome! I can't wait to meet our little one."*

Your child's mother might believe the lies of the abortion industry that unborn children are not living humans. While avoiding a condescending or forceful tone, take the time to lovingly discuss the evidence that the child in her womb is a unique, unrepeatable, and valuable human life—a tiny one who just needs time to develop before he or she can be born.

3. *"This might not be the ideal circumstance, but God has a good plan for our baby and for us—and I will be with you the entire way."*

Facing unique challenges throughout this pregnancy does not make your child any less precious or valuable than a baby expected by married parents. Rather than allowing any guilt or shame related to an unexpected pregnancy to fester, celebrate your child's life with the mother and acknowledge that your baby will be a blessing to the world. Reaffirm your commitment to being a father and do what you can to eliminate the mother's fear.

THREE THINGS NOT TO SAY

1. *"This isn't my fault."*

This phrase is doubly harmful. In one sense, it puts your precious unborn baby in the role of being a problem to be solved rather than a blessing to be celebrated. In another sense, it assigns blame to the mother for actions that were not only her doing. You are equally responsible for your child's life, even though you are not the one physically nurturing him or her during pregnancy. It is time to move forward and accept that, no matter what could have been done differently in the past, you are now parents.

2. *"I will support whatever decision you make."*

You might have been taught that it is unjust or immoral for you to have an opinion about what a woman does with her body. However, when it comes to abortion, a mother is not making a decision simply about her body but also about the life of the defenseless unborn child in her womb. If the mother chooses to have an abortion, believing that she has your support, you are complicit in your child's loss of life.

3. *"I will take an active role in the baby's life—as long as we get married."*

Although you might feel that the logical next step after becoming pregnant is to get married, your child's mother might not feel the same way. If you pressure her into marriage as a requirement of having your child, she might turn to abortion as an escape. You must accept that you are the child's father even if you will never be married to the child's mother.

THREE THINGS TO DO

1. *Protect the mother and your child from the harsh words and scrutiny of others.*

Many women fear being pregnant outside of marriage because they could face judgment and shame from their friends, family, and community. Be physically present with her as she breaks the news of the baby to her parents and loved ones. It is important that you take responsibility to protect the mother of your child as much as possible from people in either of your lives who would treat her or your precious unborn baby with derision.

2. *Attend prenatal appointments with her.*

About 80 percent of pregnant mothers experience anxiety and worry related to their pregnancy and the process of childbirth. Your presence and support during the frightening moments of pregnancy and childbirth are essential. If the mother is actively considering an abortion, encourage her to have an ultrasound and accompany her to the appointment; seeing your child for the first time could be the evidence she needs to continue the pregnancy.

3. *Proactively make a plan for the child's future after being born.*

Discuss whether raising and parenting your child together is an option; if this does not seem to be possible, research adoption so that your child still has the chance to grow up in a loving home.

THREE THINGS NOT TO DO

1. *Do not expect her to drop out of school or quit her job or expect her to care for the child by herself.*

It is unfair to assume that your child's mother will abandon her education or career because she is pregnant; the lie that women are not capable of succeeding if they choose life for their children is a reason why many women have been coerced into having abortions. At the same time, putting unequal pressure on the mother to care and provide for the child might cause her to doubt if she should carry the baby to term. Commit to figuring out the future together.

2. *Do not take your stress out on her.*

While your concerns during this time are understandable, they are not justification for adding to the mother's anxiety. It is unfair to her and increases health risks for both mother and baby during pregnancy. Talk to someone at your church or in your family about your stresses.

3. *Do not believe the lie that you must support her choosing an abortion.*

According to a 2018 survey of male partners of mothers seeking abortions, over half of the fathers surveyed admitted that they wanted to keep their child but felt required to support their partner's decision to abort. Fathers must make their stance clear while there's still time to save their child's life.

THREE PLACES TO TURN FOR HELP

1. *Church leadership*

In times of fear or confusion, it is always wise to turn to church leadership for counsel and prayer. Be careful to ensure that your pastor or church leadership is aware that the conversation is intended to stay confidential and private.

2. *A local pregnancy resource center*

Pregnancy resource centers (PRCs) exist to support women (and their partners) needing assistance during their pregnancies. The approximately 3,000 PRCs throughout the nation seek to combat the stress and anxiety experienced as a result of an unexpected pregnancy by providing free services (such as counseling, pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, and STI testing) and material resources (such as food and clothing).

To find a PRC near you, visit Pregnancy Decision Line at pregnancydecisionline.org or call 866-798-9541. Pregnancy Decision Line provides confidential, free support to anyone facing an unexpected pregnancy. You can also visit Option Line at optionline.org or call or text 800-712-4357. In addition to offering emergency hotline support and information about pregnancy and abortion recovery, Option Line connects you with a PRC near you for local support.

3. *Supportive family and friends*

While using discretion about maintaining the privacy that the mother desires, make a point of building a community of family and friends that you and your child's mother can turn to for wise counsel and compassionate emotional support.

