



"Aunt Sarah's* List"

Things We ALL Need to Say to Teens and Young Adults

Getting pregnant or causing pregnancy, having babies, and starting families are perhaps the most important things we ever do, with generational effects. These major steps need to be thought about carefully, not stumbled into. We think and talk about so many less important things all the time: what's for dinner, March Madness brackets, what movie to see this weekend... Surely the event of when to become a parent, with whom, and under what circumstances deserve at least the same amount of time and attention.

1. Babies need adult parents.
2. "If it happens, it happens" is no way to start a family. And "I just never really thought about it" isn't either.
3. Babies don't cement relationships; they often put great stress on them. Be sure you are in a solid relationship before you begin a family.
4. Sex has meaning, risks, and consequences. It's not a casual activity. Take it seriously.
5. Babies don't give unconditional love; they demand it from the adults around them.
6. Children do best when they are raised by parents who are committed to each other and to years of devoted parenting.
7. **To boys and men:** Making babies doesn't make you a man. Being a devoted partner and father may.
8. **To girls and women:** Sex won't make him yours and a baby won't make him stay.
9. Personal responsibility and parental responsibility mean it's not just about "me" the adult—it's also about what's in the best interest of children, communities, and future generations.

* Sarah Brown is the CEO of The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.