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Connecting Life and Careers

CTAE-FS-10 Career Development: Learners plan and manage academic-career plans and employment relations.

Understanding and Goals

Unit Understandings, Themes, and Concepts:

Enduring Understandings:

Students will learn how decisions made today can have lasting effects on their career.

Primary Learning Goals:

Essential Questions:

- How do life decisions affect a person's career prospects and income?
- What is the difference between active and passive decision making?
- What can a person do to improve their career outlook?
- What can a person do to balance their work and family life?

Objectives:

- Students will be able to define active and passive decision making.
- Students will be able to list ways to improve career outlook and life balance.

Students with disabilities:

For students with disabilities, each instructor should refer to the student's IEP to be sure that the accommodations specified in the IEP are being provided within the classroom setting. Instructors should also familiarize themselves with the provisions of Behavior Intervention Plans that may be part of a student's IEP. Frequent consultation with a student's special education instructor will be beneficial in providing appropriate differentiation within any given instructional activity or requirement.

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Love Won't Feed the Baby

Like some adults, many teens who fall in love allow their emotions to trump their better judgment. For both adults and teens, this can lead to a sexual relationship, especially if they are involved with a special girlfriend or boyfriend.

The one big difference between adults and teens involved in a relationship is that adults often have the income, education, and experience to help them get past hurdles and obstacles that life throws their way. For teens, the obstacles and hurdles can become almost impossible to overcome. Read Rob and Katie's story below.

When Katie discovered she was pregnant, she and Rob decided to keep and raise the baby. They hadn't planned on being teen parents, but they were in love and didn't like the alternatives.

Katie dropped out of high school and planned to get her GED after the baby was born. Rob completed high school and began working at a friend's service station. He hoped to learn to be a mechanic while he earned money. Even with overtime, though, Rob's pay check wasn't enough to support a family.

When the baby was four months old, Katie took a full time job as a receptionist at a hair salon. With both Katie and Rob working at low income jobs, they decided to live with Rob's family and depend on his mother to take care of the baby during the day.

Love Won't Feed the Baby (Continued)

Now, Rob and Katie work most of the time. They're always tired, and they have regular arguments about money and responsibilities. After one serious fight, Katie decides to take the baby and move home with her mother.

Katie tells her best friend, "I can't believe we fight. Rob still loves me, but he wants to be with his buddies more than with the baby and me."

She sighs, "My mom is tired at night, and she says it's my job to look after the baby, so I can't go out with Rob. He doesn't like it when I bring the baby along. I didn't think it would be this hard. Now, I don't know what to do."

Here are the consequences of Katie's and Rob's actions:

- Katie and the baby live with her mother who also works. Katie now pays for day care which takes a big slice out of her pay check.
- Child support payments are taken out of Rob's pay check automatically and sent to Katie. This will continue for the next 18 years, until the child is 18 years old.
- Rob's pay is low, so the amount for child support isn't much. Even so, Rob can't afford to live on his own. He's decided to move in with his brother.
- Katie plans to make time between working and caring for the baby to take a GED course. But, so far she hasn't found the motivation or energy to accomplish this goal.

Love Won't Feed the Baby (Continued)

- Rob learned there is no shortcut to becoming a mechanic. It's going to take time, more education, and certifications before he'll earn a good income. Now that he knows how hard and dirty the job is, he's not sure he likes the work. It also takes more of his time than he likes.
- Katie looks for better paying jobs, but she doesn't have the required experience or skills.
- Katie dreams of continuing her education after she gets a GED and a better job, but she has to plan for a career that will be limited. Having to care for the baby is something that will interfere.
 - She won't be able to travel for her job.
 - Working long or odd hours will be a problem.
 - She will need unexpected time off for child sick days.
 - She must work in an area where child care is available.
- Katie doesn't see much of her high school friends. She no longer seems to have anything in common with them, and she already feels older. Sometimes a girl friend calls her to go out, but she doesn't have free time or money to spend on herself any more. Katie is becoming more isolated and lonely.

Love Won't Feed the Baby (Continued)

- Rob is attracted to another girl, a friend of his brother's. She's fun to be around and she can go out anytime he wants. It's a relief to spend time with someone who doesn't depend on him for anything and who doesn't complain all the time. But he feels guilty about Katie, and he knows he is failing his responsibilities.
 - Rob and Katie's existence seems out of control. Life is controlling them instead of their controlling life. Both are disillusioned, anxious and sad.
1. In your opinion, what is the most important thing a teenager should think about before deciding to become a parent? _____

 2. Teen parents must cope with harsh realities about adulthood. Working to survive day to day becomes very important, and often teens aren't prepared for the demands. One reality Rob and Katie face is shown below. On the next page, list four others.
 - a. Katie and Rob didn't realize that working full time and raising a family would be so hard. Without an education, they can only get entry-level jobs where they do the same tasks for eight hours every day for very little money. That can feel more like slavery than independence.

Love Won't Feed the Baby (Continued)

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

Active and Passive Decision Making

Active decision making means choosing goals and taking steps to reach them. Passive decision making means going along with whatever happens in life. Rob and Katie are passive decision makers. They didn't choose to be teen parents; they let it happen. They didn't choose careers; they took jobs they could find. Katie is thinking about obtaining a GED but not following through.

List three active decisions Katie and Rob can make to improve their career outlook, overcome their negative feelings, and balance their work and family life.

Rob and Katie can do these things:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

