

Great Expectations: Signs and Symptoms of Pregnancy

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.

NSES ALIGNMENT:

By the end of 8th grade, students will be able to:

PR.8.CC.5 – Describe the signs and symptoms of a pregnancy.

PR.8.CC.6 – Identify prenatal practices that can contribute to a healthy pregnancy.

TARGET GRADE: Grade 7
Lesson 4

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Worksheet: "Early Pregnancy Symptoms" – one per every two students
- PowerPoint: "Pregnancy Symptoms"
- LCD projector and screen
- Desktop or laptop with PowerPoint on it
- Teacher's Guide: "Early Pregnancy Symptoms"
- Index cards – one per student
- Shoebox with an opening cut in the cover large enough for students to push their cards through (anonymous question box)
- Homework: "What's It Like to Be Pregnant?" – one per student
- Pencils in case students do not have their own
- Pregnancy Options Handout - one for each student
- Pregnancy Trimester Highlights worksheet - one per student
- Pregnancy Trimester Highlights Answer Key - one per teacher

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Name at least three common symptoms of pregnancy. [Knowledge]
2. List at least two things a person can do once they discover they are pregnant to promote a healthy pregnancy. [Knowledge]

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar - using the pronoun "they" instead of "her" or "him", using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to "someone with a vulva" vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom, and should make adjustments accordingly.

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Explain that you are going to be talking about early signs and symptoms of pregnancy. Tell them that to get started, they will be working in pairs on an activity.

Divide the class into pairs. Tell them that they are going to be receiving a set of drawings that represent various signs that a person might be pregnant. Explain that they should match each drawing to the list of symptoms at the bottom. Let them know they will have 10 minutes in which to match the terms with the drawings. (5 minutes)

STEP 2: After 10 minutes, show the PowerPoint with the individual images of each drawing and ask students to provide the answers they came up with. With each slide, provide the information as described in the teacher's guide. (20 minutes)

STEP 3: Say to the students, "Once a person confirms they are pregnant, they need to decide whether they are going to have the baby and become a parent, have the baby and let someone adopt it, or end the pregnancy (at its earliest stage). The second two options are available for a number of reasons, including that the pregnant person may not feel they would be able to take care of a baby because of their age or life circumstances." Say something like, "**A person who is pregnant may or may not experience any of these signs. This is normal and each pregnancy can be different for a person. Just because a person doesn't have any of these signs doesn't mean that they aren't pregnant and just because a person does have any of these signs doesn't mean that they are pregnant. What is a way for a person to determine if they are pregnant or not?**" You are pushing your students to respond with a pregnancy test. Say, "**Yes, a pregnancy test is a great way for a person to know if they are or are not pregnant. Let's talk about how pregnancy tests work.**"

(15 minutes)

STEP 4:

Say something like, "Pregnancy tests can be taken at home and a person can find these home pregnancy tests at the grocery store, a pharmacy, and many other stores. Pregnancy tests look for a specific hormone that a person's body will produce if they are pregnant called hCG or human chorionic gonadotropin. This hormone will be present in a person's urine or blood. It does take a few weeks for this hormone to increase in a person's body in order for a home pregnancy test to detect the hormone. So therefore, a person would not get an accurate pregnancy test result if they take a test the day after unprotected sex. Typically, pregnancy tests will be able to detect the hCG hormone close to the time that the person would miss their period. A home pregnancy test will come with specific instructions on how to take the test to get the most accurate results so a person should follow these instructions carefully. Typically, the highest levels of hCG are found in the first urine of the day after a person wakes up so if the person is early in their pregnancy taking the test when they first wake up will get you the most accurate results. Home pregnancy tests are typically 99% accurate so if someone gets a positive pregnancy test they should follow up with a healthcare provider who will confirm the pregnancy with an additional urine test and blood test at the provider's office. Let's watch a quick video from Amaze on this very topic." Following the video ask the students what questions they have around pregnancy signs and tests.

(15 minutes)

STEP 5:

Say, "In the video we just watched there were three options mentioned if a person were to learn that they are pregnant. Can anyone remind us of those three options?"

As the students shout out answers push them to say the following three options: Parenthood, Adoption, and Abortion. Write all three options on the board. Say, "Who gets to make the decision around which option works best?" Motivate the students to share that the person who is pregnant gets to make the decision about what happens to their body.

Say, "Let's take a closer look at these three options and identify what a person should consider with each option. For example, with the option of abortion a person should consider if abortion is available in their local area or would require them to travel.

Please find an elbow partner to complete the next activity. I am going to distribute a worksheet called the Pregnancy Options and you and your elbow partner should work together to complete this handout. Today I am going to ask you to focus on facts only and wait until later to include any personal opinions that you might have. What questions do you have about the directions?"

Distribute the Pregnancy Options worksheet and allow the pairs 10 minutes to complete the activity.

After the pairs have completed their task invite volunteers to share their facts around the three pregnancy options.

NOTE TO THE TEACHER: You might find that the students ask you about the right or ability for the other person who provided DNA to result in the pregnancy to decide on the option for pregnancy. Encourage students to return back to the statement that the person who is pregnant gets to make the choice because it is their body. The other person does not get to make the decision as the pregnancy is not occurring in their uterus. Consistent reinforcement of this will be key.

Additionally, you might find that students will share their personal opinions as opposed to sharing facts. It is important to clearly distinguish fact from opinion by communicating in your response. For example, "Thank you for sharing your opinion but the facts are.." Continue to

Pregnancy Basics

*A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect,
Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum*

remind students that they can discuss their personal opinions and beliefs at home with their caregivers and families but class is a place for content only so we are to only focus on the facts.

After hearing from a few students, say, **“While you might be tempted to share your opinion if someone you know becomes pregnant, it is important to just serve as a supportive person as they determine what works best for them and their body. The person who is pregnant is the person who gets to make the decision.”** If a person does choose to be pregnant there are some major things to expect during the pregnancy which is divided into three trimesters. I would like you to stay with your partner and I will distribute a handout to identify what are the key highlights for each trimester. What questions do you have?”

Distribute the worksheet *“Pregnancy Trimester Highlights”* to students and allow them about 5 minutes to complete the task. Once completed, review the handout using the answer key provided.

(20 minutes)

STEP 6:

In closing say, **“Pregnancy can be an overwhelming experience for a person whether it is planned or unplanned. If a person does find that they are pregnant they always have three options available to them. Talking with a trusted adult like a parent, caregiver, school counselor, family friend, etc. who can offer support during this time can help tremendously. Also, having supportive friends can make a large impact in someone’s life during a pregnancy. Imagine how big an impact not having support from friends and loved ones could be. Let’s be the people we would hope to have supporting us. Thanks for your work today and see you next class.”**

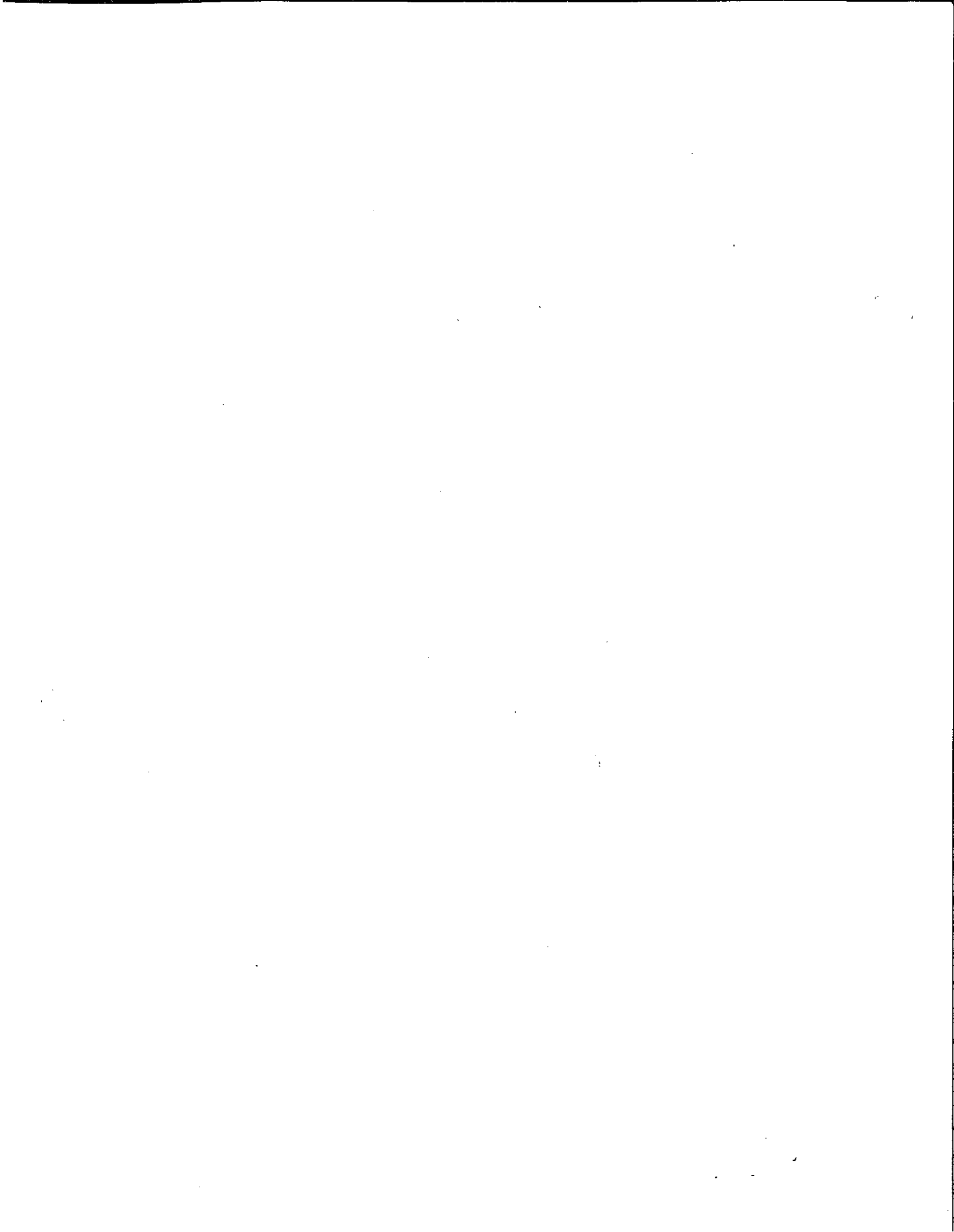
(3 minutes)

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

Objective 1 is completed in Step 3, objective 2 is completed in Steps 2, and objective 3 is completed in Step 4 and the homework.

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK:

Research the phrase Crisis Pregnancy Center which are centers that aim to block a pregnant person’s access to a safe abortion. Identify three key facts about crisis pregnancy centers that set them apart from healthcare centers.



Pregnancy Symptoms

Teacher's Guide

Instructions: Use this guide to share information with students about the signs and symptoms of pregnancy after they have completed the match game.

Shortness of breath – Lots of things can cause us to be short of breath at times. When a person gets pregnant, they can sometimes feel like it's harder to do things they could have done previously without getting winded. One example is going up a flight of stairs.

Swollen/sensitive breasts – One reason why it can be hard for a person to know whether they are pregnant is that the symptoms imitate the symptoms of having a period. Just like during a period, a person's breasts can swell slightly or be sensitive to touch – and not sensitive in a good way, more in an achy way. The breasts will continue to grow in size during the pregnancy as they prepare to make milk for breastfeeding the infant after it's born.

Feeling tired – Similar to being short of breath, pregnant people often find they get tired a bit more easily and often.

Feeling nauseous/throwing up – Many people have heard about “morning sickness” – where pregnant people wake up first thing in the morning feeling woozy or actually throw up. Sometimes, this happens only during the early stages of pregnancy; other people have it all nine months!

Going to bathroom more frequently (peeing) – Once a person is pregnant, they are peeing out the food and liquids they eat, as well as the food and liquids from the fetus growing inside. A “fetus” is what we call a baby until it is born.

Going to the bathroom less frequently (pooping) – As trips to the bathroom increase for urination, they actually may have a harder time moving the bowels during pregnancy. This has to do with the changes in hormones in the body – and later with the growing fetus pushing down on various organs inside the body.

Headaches – These are usually pretty minor, and usually during the first trimester. What causes these can be different depending on the individual person – but can be caused by not sleeping as well, being tired, feeling hungry, etc. Lots of pregnant people don't experience them at all.

Lower back pain/cramps – This is another symptom that can make a person think they are about to have a period instead of being pregnant. Cramping is common as the body is adjusting to having a fetus growing inside. The uterus is where the fetus grows – the baby doesn't grow in the stomach.

Weird food cravings – Some people get a sense that they might be pregnant when they start craving – or really, REALLY wanting – foods that don't typically go together – or foods they never ate before. For example, someone who previously never ate meat might start craving a hamburger.

Pregnancy Symptoms

Teacher's Guide

Weird food aversions – Opposite to food cravings, there may be some foods that a pregnant person always liked which they might suddenly not just stop eating, but actually feel put off by. This could be due to the texture, look, taste or smell of the food.

More sensitive sense of smell – Speaking of sense of smell – some pregnant people have a really heightened sense of smell. They may be more sensitive to negative smells, such as garbage, or even to typically positive smells, such as perfume or cologne.

Mood swings – You may remember talking about mood swings as something you go through during puberty because your hormone levels go up and down. Same thing in pregnancy. Some people feel very emotional for seemingly no reason.

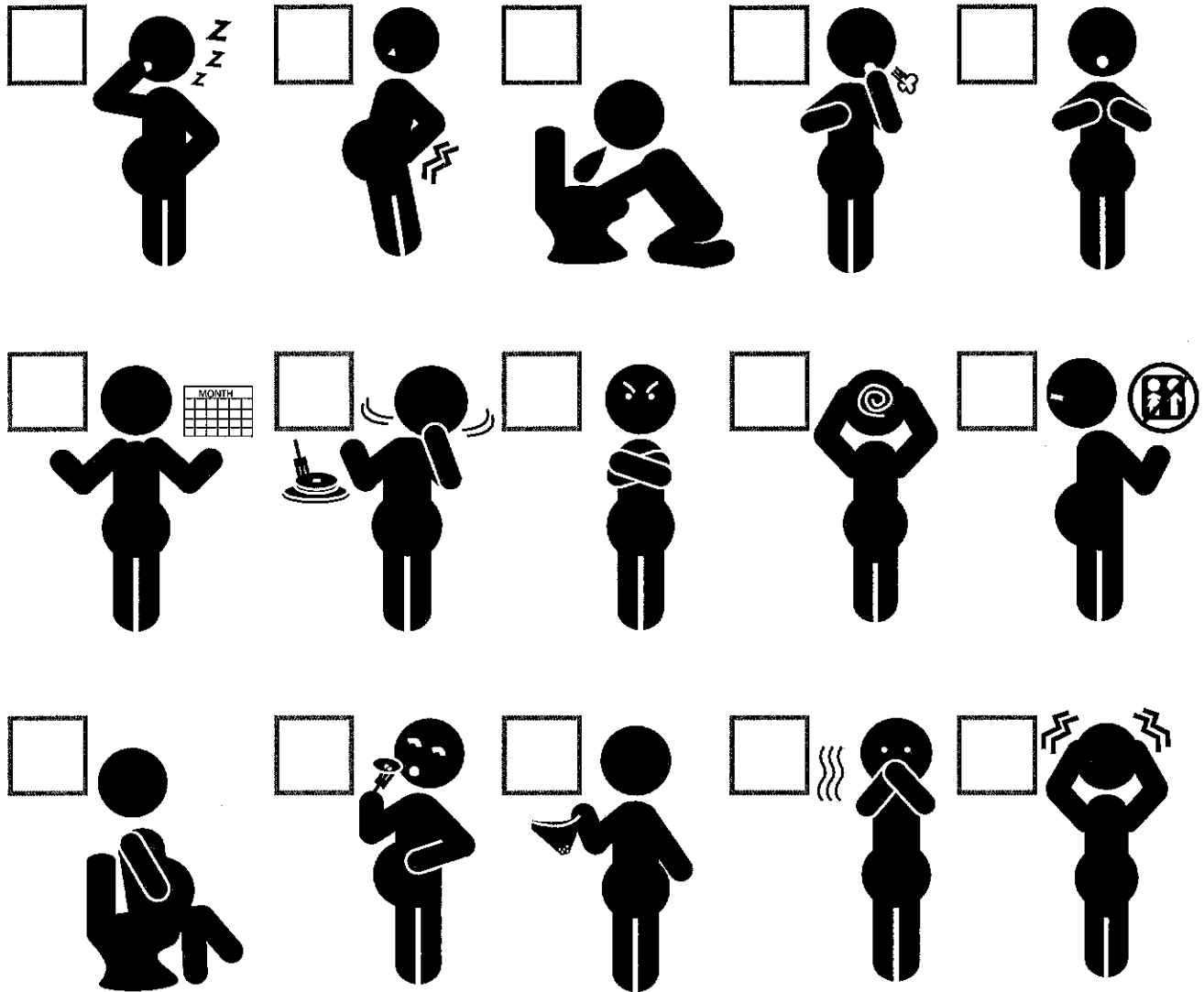
Dizziness – Many people do not feel dizzy, but slight dizziness is common, particularly at the very beginning.

Light spotting – It's very common for someone to experience some light spotting when they're pregnant. "Light spotting" means they might notice a little bit of blood in their underwear or on the toilet paper when they use the bathroom. Some people mistakenly think that means they are either about to get or having a light period, but light spotting can be a sign of pregnancy.

Missing a period – This is perhaps the most common symptom of pregnancy. People who don't have their period when they're supposed to often take that as a sign to take a home pregnancy test or go to a doctor's office or clinic to be tested. When people are younger, their periods are often less regular so it's important for a person who skips a period to take a pregnancy test as well. Plus, if they have never had vaginal intercourse, it's impossible for them to be pregnant.

Worksheet: Early Pregnancy Symptoms

Names: _____



- 1 - SHORTNESS OF BREATH
- 2 - SWOLLEN/SENSITIVE BREASTS
- 3 - FEELING TIRED
- 4 - FEELING NAUSEOUS/THROWING UP
- 5 - GOING TO BATHROOM MORE FREQUENTLY (PEEING)
- 6 - POOPING LESS FREQUENTLY (CONSTIPATION)
- 7 - HEADACHES

- 8 - LOWER BACK PAIN/CRAMPS
- 9 - WEIRD FOOD CRAVINGS
- 10 - WEIRD FOOD AVERSIONS
- 11 - MOOD SWINGS
- 12 - MORE SENSITIVE SENSE OF SMELL
- 13 - DIZZINESS
- 14 - LIGHT SPOTTING
- 15 - MISSING A PERIOD

Pregnancy Options Handout

PARENTING

PARENTING is when a pregnant person decides to continue the pregnancy to 40 weeks, give birth to a child, and then parent that child.

A PERSON SHOULD CONSIDER: *Ex – the costs of raising a child.*

ABORTION

ABORTION is when a pregnant person decides to end the pregnancy by accessing a safe medical procedure or medication to remove the pregnancy from the person's uterus.

A PERSON SHOULD CONSIDER: *Ex – is this medical procedure available in the local area.*

ADOPTION

ADOPTION is when a pregnant person decides to continue the pregnancy to 40 weeks, give birth to a child, and then place that child with a family they selected to parent the child. An adoption can be open where the birth parent still has contact with the adoptive family or closed where the birth parent does not have contact with the adoptive family.

A PERSON SHOULD CONSIDER: *Ex – if and how they would want to be involved in the child's life.*

Pregnancy Trimester Highlights

1ST TRIMESTER	2ND TRIMESTER	3RD TRIMESTER

<p>Zygote grows and multiples and potentially becomes an embryo</p>	<p>Person can notice movement of the fetus from within the uterus</p>	<p>Embryo grows and potentially becomes a fetus</p>
<p>Major organ systems are created</p>	<p>Continued growth of the fetus, towards the end of pregnancy the fetus can gain a pound a week</p>	<p>The fetus practices swallowing and even breathing inside of the uterus</p>
<p>By the 12th week a person can see via ultrasound if the embryo has a vulva or penis</p>	<p>The fetus prepares for life outside of the uterus</p>	

Pregnancy Trimester Highlights

(Answer Key)

1ST TRIMESTER	2ND TRIMESTER	3RD TRIMESTER
<p>Zygote grows and multiples and potentially becomes an embryo</p>	<p>Embryo grows and potentially becomes a fetus</p>	<p>Continued growth of the fetus, towards the end of pregnancy the fetus can gain a pound a week</p>
<p>Major organ systems are created</p>	<p>Person can notice movement of the fetus from within the uterus</p>	<p>The fetus prepares for life outside of the uterus</p>
<p>By the 12th week a person can see via ultrasound if the embryo has a vulva or penis</p>		<p>The fetus practices swallowing and even breathing inside of the uterus</p>

Homework: What's It Like to Be Pregnant?

Name: _____

Parents/Caregivers: Please help your child to identify someone either in your family or a close enough family friend who experienced a pregnancy, gave birth and became a parent. Please be sure to choose someone for whom the pregnancy outcome was a positive experience so that the focus of the homework stays on the experience of being pregnant.

Person you interviewed (first name and relationship to you, like, "my aunt Denise"):

Interview Questions:

What made you think you might be pregnant? _____

How did you know for sure? _____

How did you feel when you found out you were? _____

Did your body feel any different during the first few months of pregnancy? If yes, how?

What was the coolest thing about how your body changed when you were pregnant?

What was something you didn't like about being pregnant? _____

What was the best thing about being pregnant? _____

Signature of person interviewed: _____