

The Pregnant Teen Trend

Story by Mantombazane Khumalo

It is hard to believe that one of the hardest journeys of life is treated as a fashion parade by some people! A long time ago, when our parents were growing up, young girls and older women who are able to bear children would do just that and stay at home to take care of that child, but now it has all changed.

Teenagers, who we all regard as children, between the ages of 12 and 19 years, have started to take this burden on for themselves. Some of my friends always say, "We should all have babies before the end of 2010 or we won't have any babies the next year." We all know it is not true but it all has been put in our heads and now it all seems like a fashion parade.

Pregnancy is now something competitive like "Cynthia will not have more babies than me". Fashion, fashion, fashion!

I remember listening to Jozi FM radio station and hearing of a woman aged 28 who had eight children! That is absurd! We as teenagers should know that a child is a flower that will never move away from you until death takes its course – or so my mother says.

We all like to feel loved but somewhere, somehow there should be boundaries. Yes, love is a thing between two people that includes communication, trust and care. It doesn't hurt to love yourself first, set

your goals for life, achieve them and then later become a baby maker so you are able to look after your babies.

We should remember that we are our parents' burdens, so how can we bring more burdens into their lives? If things are tough already, how can we take care of another human being?

Wanting and having a baby are two different situations. First you want one because everyone else is having one and then you're having one because you don't have a choice. It is easy to want a child in theory, but in practice, it is very difficult - even for adults who are established with jobs, money, homes, and all you need for this huge undertaking.

Teens who know what they want in life strive to work hard and have it all but a teenager whose life is not planned ends up in the streets of Jozi. Teenagers tend to let life rule them. You may hear a teenager saying, "At home things aren't really good and sometimes I go to school hungry." Well, let me give you a word of advice, I am also growing up in a family where you wake up in the morning wondering what you are going to eat that day, but with that in mind it pushes me to do more. Success is not measured by all what we have but by what we achieve.

Don't be rough, be tough and say no to sex until you are ready. Keep this in mind, if you are a teenager having a child: who will you be when you are thirty years old? We are supposed to be the teenagers of today and the parents of tomorrow but we are racing ahead and are already the parents of today! So what about tomorrow?